

Teaching Philosophy

The relationship between private teachers and their students is a very personal one, and thus requires a great amount of trust and respect. I build that relationship by showing I care deeply about my students and am completely invested in them. Every lesson begins by me asking the student how they are personally doing and then by asking how their week of practice went. If a student is going through a difficult time, I will offer support in the ways I can, and will mentor them to find solutions in the ways I cannot.

Whether my students decide to play their instrument for their lifetime or not, my goal is for them to love music. I make it a priority to introduce many different types of music and performers. I ask my students specific questions about the music, prompting them to critically think about how the piece was composed, what makes it sound interesting, and why it was composed in the first place. I share carefully chosen recordings of music in lessons with great enthusiasm so that my students can see my own passion for music firsthand, and will encourage them to share the excitement and joy.

I place tremendous value on teaching instrumental technique at a high level of proficiency, so that my students can make music in an uninhibited manner and express themselves confidently. I dedicate a substantial amount of time teaching students how to play their instrument effortlessly in all the technical skills, such as: lip slurs, long tones, articulation, range, flexibility and dynamics. If a student has trouble with one of these areas, that skill becomes a focus of our lessons until the deficiency becomes a strength. There are no shortcuts to learning technique. Therefore, I teach my students that making improvement takes intentional effort on a daily basis. They must always show up with a positive attitude and an inquisitive mind towards getting better. When my students make progress, I unapologetically celebrate their improvement so that they feel a sense of pride in their work and the process.

I also place a strong emphasis on music literacy and musicianship. I ensure that my students know how to listen to music, sing music, read fluently, sightread, understand how music is structured, and have a strong idea of how they want to sound. I remind my students that we are musicians first and instrumentalists second. I demonstrate playing as much as possible for my students to help them develop a sound concept and to train their ears to learn the music, rather than their eyes. I coach my students how to practice music, ensuring that they understand the “what“, “how” and especially the “why” of what they are doing. I believe in pushing all of my students to be the best they can possibly be. If a student is not exerting their best effort, it is my responsibility to teach the student to maintain a standard of excellence in their music.

Music is the most powerful source of inspiration, and I encourage my students to go see live music concerts whenever possible. I share concerts that I think would be particularly interesting for my students and assist them to find a way to attend. Along these lines, I encourage my students to participate in as many music activities as possible, such as: community ensembles, all-state ensembles, competitions, recitals, and masterclasses. These activities push the student to put in their best work, and more importantly, expose the student to how incredible it is to make music with other people. I want my students to have a memory bank filled with music memories collected by performing often with others.

My overarching goal for my students is that they will have an enthusiastic attitude towards music, will be able to function effectively as an independent musician, and will have all the tools necessary to accomplish goals they set for themselves. I help develop a habit of critical thinking and independence by asking many inquisitive questions in lessons. These questions prompt students to listen to themselves deliberately, assess what they hear, and direct them to find methods to improve. Over time, my students learn to listen critically to how they sound and will be able to find practical solutions on their own. There is no greater joy than seeing a student get to a level of self-sufficiency and capability in music, and it is my hope that all of my students feel a sense of this during our studies together.