

Philosophy of Teaching

An instructor must serve as a catalyst to instill a creative fire and passion within the students they teach. Subsequently, a balance between lectures, discussions, readings, research, and application are crucial to my philosophy of teaching.

In order to apply given instruction, one must learn. Hence, organized lectures provide structure and a sense of discipline students expect. Although this routine automatically enables students to listen, take notes, and review, I have discovered by incorporating the application of ideas taught within a lecture, I find more students are able to recall information explored through in-class exercises and examples explored than lecture alone.

In theatre especially, application of projects provide the hands-on opportunity necessary to mesh the intellect and creative spirit together. In teaching *Introduction to Theatre*, for example, after discussing the role of a director, I typically give the students an assignment to complete as a class. The instructions involve the students working together to become a human typewriter. To begin the exercise, each student selects a letter starting with the first letter of the alphabet and moving correspondingly to Z. A sentence is given. As a class, the students have to work together to spell the entire phrase by clapping on their particular letter. The entire ensemble will clap on the spaces between the letters, thus, each student is involved. Initially, after hearing the instructions, the students anticipate their ability to collectively execute the expectations given as extremely easy. Once they have an opportunity to apply the exercise, the students understand the importance of collaborative and collective contributions. After the exercise is completed, we consider the elements deemed successful versus the tactics that did not. This discussion session provides an opportunity for students to initiate and explore the importance of learning lines, coordinating rhythms, intensity, rehearsals, confidence, trust, collaboration, design, and non-verbal communication. In the discussion(s) that follow, the students are able to draw links and use the lecture given to support their ideologies. This exercise, entitled "The Human Typewriter," can be applied to small and larger group settings alike.

Providing the students with a foundation in which to grow and explore is essential to creating an effective learning environment. Interaction and application can be unexpected, exciting, and rewarding for students. Nevertheless, interaction and discussion without lecture is counterproductive; exercises without lecture are difficult to develop and maintain. In teaching Script Analysis, for instance, I introduce terms such as objectives, tactics, given circumstances, theme, inciting incident, dramatic action, and polar attitudes. After being exposed to terms and definitions while visually seeing how they are applied, the students can read, appreciate, and apply the concepts learned.

Hence, in teaching theatre, I stress research, experience, and application. Though I enjoy the intimacy of smaller classrooms, I also enjoy and am able to teach large sections utilizing PowerPoint, Turning Point learning clickers, lectures, discussions, online resources, and special projects.

Finally, my philosophy of teaching involves sharing the commitment and passion I have for theatre by allowing others to learn through example, research, and application.