

# TEACHING PHILOSOPHY NARRATIVE

## TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

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Teaching enables me to practice life-affirming values and engage in unique experiences of growth, interconnectedness and exchange.

As a teacher I aim to enhance the student's holistic development, expand their musical skills and perspectives, and create resonant learning experiences for them at both individual and community levels. I promote a nurturing learning environment that inspires the stimulation of ideas, supports a vision for the realization of aspirations, and celebrates development and progress.

My teaching emerges primarily through collaborative, dialectic, and integrative processes. I encourage the exchange of individual ideas and motivate my students to become their own teachers, think outside the box, and find and effectively articulate their own 'voice'. Skills and perspectives from the students' areas of interest, the arts, and life-values are integrated into their music learning, teaching, and performing experiences. I work with a vocabulary unique to each individual's learning style. This vocabulary is developed through a process of inquiry and dialectic exchange.

The art of one-on-one teaching is, in a sense, also the work of shaping the inner topography of the studio body. Values and practices cultivated at the individual level emerge in the landscape of the studio community. My teaching includes the work of orienting community standards and commitment, establishing and supporting group momentum, and cultivating positive group synergy and rapport.

In these capacities I am a teacher who actively participates and promotes individual and studio community growth with enthusiasm, skill, and commitment to artistry and excellence.

## COLLABORATIVE AND DIALECTIC PROCESSES

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A collaborative approach to teaching and learning emerges through processes of inquiry and dialectic exchange. Insight into the students' passions, goals, interests, work ethics, learning styles, career hopes, etc, serves as an integral component to this approach and process. This process is initiated each semester with a review of the students' aspirations, an assessment of where they stand and in the case of new students, a 'New Student Questionnaire'.

The students and I explore learning goals and the ideal tools for self-directed accomplishment. We discuss topics of work habits, disposition, perspective, balance, and time management. Students draft a semester plan incorporating weekly lesson, practice, and performance agendas. Criteria for accomplishment and evaluation are established and standards for success are defined.

Coaching the student in articulating and exercising personally effective pace-setting and goal-realization skills includes a process that explores and evaluates various approaches to practice-time management. New students are coached in the use of three to four approaches enlisted for a period of three weeks each over the first twelve weeks of study. These approaches include methods of arranging, recording, and evaluating goals and tasks in manners that explore various learning and accomplishment styles. Students are asked to keep practice logs that reflect the methods we are exploring and review its personal effectiveness. We review these making and discussing revisions and alternatives. Students complete their first semester with a greater understanding of and ability to articulate their own best practices that they may employ throughout the remainder of their study.

A digital min-DVD video camera used during lessons supports review of skills and processes taught and explored and is an effective tool for self-observation, inquiry and discussion. Students and I may review recorded portions of their lesson together to facilitate understanding. During the week they compile weekly lesson notes that include personal observations and information from topics discussed and recorded. This strengthens their ability to articulate technical and musical skills and subjects and supports efforts to develop self and other teaching skills. The use of the video camera in this manner is a supportive tool for the interactive learning experience.

Score study and detailed attention to ensemble are additional areas of focus in my teaching. Collaborative instrumentalists who work with the flute studio are included in inquiry and the collaborative learning process. Score study and analysis are included as part of the students lesson and practice preparation.

Students maintain a portfolio which includes the above mentioned lesson notes, practice logs, and repertoire analysis/ research information, in addition to 5 listening sample logs, notes taken from

master classes, and an up to date resume and repertoire list. These portfolios are collected and reviewed during midterm for students in their first semester of study and at the end of the semester for all students. Students receive feedback on their portfolios with special attention given to their lesson notes and practice logs.

Dialectic interaction provides the information necessary to ensure a customized approach in my work with each student. In addition to the college administered teaching evaluations, an independent evaluation dealing both with student learning and my teaching processes, is completed by each student after two years of study. These assist in gathering information important to my teaching practices that cannot be sufficiently gained from the college administered course evaluations.

All the above has supported effective teaching skills and the shaping of a thriving learning community.

### INTEGRATIVE PROCESSES

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My teaching is creative and inquiry-based. I integrate musical skills and perspectives with discussion of life values, student interests, and the humanities. I use methods that incorporate visual narratives, metaphor, demonstration, and hands-on experimentation create an integrated learning experience.

Students are encouraged to create texts, stories, or visual sketches of the repertoire they are studying, research the historical and cultural contexts of the composers and their works, and give pre-performance presentations on this material in studio class and public performances.

These integrative processes are especially pertinent for students studying to become music educators in public school arenas where cross curriculum arts-integration is both encouraged and evaluated through national education content and achievement standards.

### PERFORMANCE AND TEACHING SKILLS

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I consider the body the primary vehicle through which technical and artistic mastery of the flute emerge. I coach students to play with physical and mental balance, poise, and centeredness. Efficiency of breathing, resonant tone production and finger dexterity are important areas of my teaching focus. I integrate areas of research such as vocal singing techniques applied to flute performance in my teaching of breathing, articulation, tone production, and vibrato. Students use the mirror in lessons and individual practice to observe the use of their body, develop physical awareness, and practice self-teaching techniques.

In the area of theoretic and technical skills the BGSU flute studio students progress through a series of technique juries ranging from levels one through four which the majority of them complete within a three year time period. These juries occur during mid-term each semester and cover approximately the entire range of diatonic and chromatic finger patterns in addition to including etudes and a 243 note microtonal scale.

Students are coached to apply skills they are exploring to the artistic effective expression of value, contrast, texture, emotion, and contour in music from the baroque through twenty-first century eras. Discussion of art fundamentals emerges in these contexts. I also offer coaching in areas such as creative programming, stage presence, and public speaking. These skills and perspectives are further developed in weekly studio classes. Students are encouraged to become familiar with a wide variety of composers and repertoire styles and engage in a variety of performance opportunities including competitions, public master classes, and non-degree recitals.

I present these skills and perspectives in a manner that engages the students and enhances their abilities to articulate these practices effectively. Students are challenged to describe changes they are making and explain what techniques they employ in arriving at successful outcomes. I demonstrate teaching tools for working with beginner through advanced students and coach and challenge students to articulate how they might present material to a variety of ages and learning styles. I assign and oversee the creation of teaching exercises, musical games, and hand-outs that students prepare for teaching use. Students present these tools in studio class where they receive constructive critique and have the opportunity engage and inspire their peers.

### THE STUDIO COMMUNITY

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I am committed to cultivating a thriving learning community that excels academically, musically and interpersonally.

BGSU flute students are united through group practices that support positive learning experiences and collective synergy. Additional opportunities to engage in these practices and related activities at more involved levels are offered through the campus organization Flute Studio Enrichment & Outreach (FSE&O). FSE&O is a student led organization dedicated to supporting collaborative learning, student leadership and community arts engagement and is open to all interested BGSU students.

Examples of community practices that support positive learning experiences include:

- Studio classes; on campus recitals; community outreach concerts; flute festival and guest artist master class participation and hosting; peer lesson observation; and social get-togethers

Examples of community practices that support collective synergy include:

- Annual studio pictures; Black Board, Facebook and MySpace online communities; a studio bulletin board; an online Photobucket account; a studio code of conduct; and community evaluation discussions

Opportunities provided through FSE&O include:

- New student Mentoring teams
- Technique and repertoire mentoring teams
- Educational enrichment teams
- Community performances and educational outreach teams
- Prospective student outreach teams