Teaching Philosophy 2017

 We experience music in everyday life without even trying. This is what I love about music. It is all around us and we do not have to seek it out. My goal as a music educator is to give my students the tools to appreciate music and experience it in new ways.

The best music classes that I have been a part of had rules and procedures for how we came in, where we sat, and what we did while we waited for class to start. This way we did not waste time searching and waiting around for directions. Having rules and procedures takes away loud volumes, helps manage classroom behaviors, and encourages higher learning.

Allowing students to have input in what the music or goals for the year is important for a classroom. If the students have input, they are more likely to be interested in what they are learning about. Although it is impossible for teachers to meet the request of all students at once, hearing everyone’s opinion matters as well. This way all students in the class know that the teacher was paying attention to their suggestions and gave it some serious thought.

What made music so enjoyable for me when I participated in ensembles is that if we did not understand something we were singing or playing we could always go to the teacher for help. Most of my music teachers had their door open and were available if we had any questions. Many of my classmates felt that they could talk to our music teachers about more than just music. Some of us would talk about our days, ask questions pertaining to other school subjects, or just go in there for a quiet place to study. Because I have experienced a safe place in the music classroom, it is one of my main focuses as an educator to make my classroom a place where the students feel safe to be themselves. If a student does not feel safe in their learning environment they do not learn to their highest potential. I believe it is important for each student to have an adult they feel comfortable talking to.

I also want to make sure that I am giving my students the skills and tools to become good musicians. When they go on to higher ensembles I want my students to be able to feel like they are not playing catch up. As a music educator, it is important to connect other subjects to music, especially history. Students usually connect with a piece of music better after they have heard a little bit about the history behind it. The era of the music, the details of the composer, and why the composer wrote the piece are key concepts that will allow students to connect with the music. When the students connect, it allows them to play musically and to use their emotions in playing or singing to convey the piece.

Lastly, I feel that it is important to not let the level of the ensemble shy away the student. There should be ensembles that everyone can participate in. Even students with a learning disabilities should feel welcome and should have the sources available to help them succeed in music. Depending on the size of school, it is important to have a variety of ensembles. The level of the ensemble should be mixed around so that those students who love music but are not at a high playing level can still participate. Auditioned ensembles should exist for students to strive to want to audition but still feel good enough about their abilities that it is okay if they did not get a spot. It is still important that, even though the ensemble is not the highest ensemble, it challenges the students but does not detour them away. This comes from the encouragement from the teacher. The teacher creates a place for encouragement rather than negativity.

Music teachers must have a safe and friendly environment for a variety of students. Some may want to pursue a career in music and others may not want to pursue a career in music but want to experience music by participation. When a student feels safe they are more likely to absorb more information and have fun. Music should be something students can use in everyday life since it is all around us.