

## **My Principles as a Classroom Educator**

I have chosen to focus on aspects of teaching which apply to both the Music Classroom and the General Classroom.

- Minimal talking, more teaching
  - Showing instead of telling, inviting to participate instead of instructing
- An understanding of what may be most age appropriate is crucial, from Kindergarten students to Senior Citizens
- Scaffolding through example and identification, not instruction
  - Build up the concept, do not just talk about it, ask questions and involve the students at every stage of the learning process
- Take it slow
  - Speak slowly, teach slowly, layer slowly, remain calm, consistent and focused
- Be the source of inclusion
  - Sometimes people are different from each other, and that is ok as long as we are able to learn together in a healthy environment.
- Be the example of humanity
  - Students learn compassion, mercy, forgiveness, fairness, justice, consistency and equity from the adults in their lives.
- Be the example of socially accepted behavior
  - If I behave in a negative manner, I am giving my students permission to do the same.
- It's never about me
  - It's never "I want you to", or "I am sad that...." or "I am so happy that....", it's never about me. It's about them. Every adult in that building is there solely for benefit of the education, protection and development of the children in their care.
- Use resources around us, everything is a potential learning tool
  - As a traveling teacher, I cannot bring Orff instruments into my classrooms, I cannot use puppets, I cannot point to expensive wall posters or welcome my kids into a brightly colored room. On the other hand, I am forced to use the one resource I have, the same resource that children used prior to smartphones: my imagination.

- Engage students fully
  - If the back row/cluster/group/clump is not engaged, the class is not engaged. An engaged student is one who must be engaged intellectually and physically.
- Listen to students
  - Teaching to the test, teaching to the lesson or teaching to the standard will result in the child being left behind. Teaching to the children in the classroom and their needs on that day, in that moment, for that topic, will provide them with the information they need.
- Learn from students
  - Kids often know their needs. Observing them and “reading” a classroom is as helpful as having classroom management honed to an art.
- Identify needs based on the tools directly in front of me
- Classroom management is an art which is perfected through time and effort
  - No two classes are the same, and no two days are the same. Every day is an education. Keep calm, carry on, and when a First Grader says that they are about to throw up: take them seriously.
- Expect that EQ will be part of my life
  - Alan McClung at the University of Northern Texas refers to EQ as what should be taught in the home and IQ as what should be taught in school. Sadly, he also states that this is no longer the case. As long as I teach, I will be teaching Life Skills in every demographic. This will continue to be a growing part of my lesson, whether through prep or organic experience in the classroom.
- What I consider important may not be important
  - The carefully spun lesson which involved changing tempi, language arts skills and an engagement game may just turn into an incredible chance to work on teamwork.
- What I consider to be unimportant may be crucial
- What worked in a classroom twenty years ago may not work in a classroom today, and the same rule applies twenty years from now.
  - Education changes as we learn more about our own minds. Children change as we introduce new demographics, challenges and even more technology into their worlds. We must change too.
- Rote without concepts may not help my students
  - Memory without understanding becomes just meaningless syllables which may or may not be carried into a later year when they are applied to knowledge. Without

understanding at the time of memory retention, the concept is not being developed to its full potential in a child's mind.

- Working within a group or team is an essential skill for every student
  - Every snowflake is unique, and so is every child. However, you cannot see the uniqueness of each snowflake in a snow pile and you often cannot see the full uniqueness of each child in an overcrowded classroom. Sometimes we must learn how we are to behave in a group, not just as an individual. Our potential as a member of a group and of a team is equally important to our potential as a healthy individual.
- There is no such thing as a perfect school
  - There will always be parents who are either completely absent in a child's life or hovering over them until they cannot breathe. There will always be administrative personnel who do not appreciate music in public schools, there will always be observers who do not understand discipline issues, there will always be issues. Teaching is messy, it's exhausting, it's overwhelming it is constantly evolving and is grossly underpaid. None of these things will be a good enough reason to quit making a difference in the lives of people who need it most.