

## Teaching Philosophy

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I teach because I enjoy the human interaction in this particular environment. I have recognized many of my shortcomings as a student and have overcome many of them in my life. I have entered all areas of the performing arts, and have fought to rise to the top of them. I can see all of the struggles the individual students have, and, because of my experience, I can help them overcome them. If they have the desire, then my position as a teacher is to expose the talent and ability that is already present.

The student largely decides the purpose of teaching in theatre. They define the ultimate end of their education. My purpose is to help them find this end, and when necessary, share my personal goals with them. I attempt to show the student the passion for the humanity living inside them, or 'the art in themselves' (Constantine Stanislavski). If this is their foundation and goal in the arts, all other aspects fall into place. This aids their desire to further their career, and take the necessary steps to do so. Whatever their specific discipline in theatre may be, it inspires them to pursue various aspects of performance, design, or other theatrical avenues.

I give the students a combination of reality and success. Students need to be able to build upon accomplishments. My classes culminate in a heavier focus on a celebration of the semester's achievements rather than scrutiny. They need to have a sense of a completed progression. I believe in positivity. Coupled with this however, I am rather Pavlovian with my teaching. If I constantly ring the bell on their missteps they salivate when the bell is absent. Professors from the UK with a touch of the old school Oxford Dons trained me. Nothing insincere or irrational was ever allowed to pass through a moment of the class. If they receive nothing but unearned opportunity and praise, we create a self-entitled student with a lack of talent. I show them a silver lining, but I do not lie to them.

So, why is it important to give these things to the students? Much of my philosophy up to this point has been somewhat relativist and focused on the individual. While I speak in these terms I am neither devoid of an objective view of education nor the purpose of the big picture. However, my path starts with the individual. The fostering of this serves the greater whole where it is needed. John Henry Newman said, "An academical system without the personal influence of teachers upon pupils, is an arctic winter; it will create an ice-bound, petrified, cast-iron University, and nothing else." This is one of the many reasons I am drawn to both theatre and academia. In the classroom and in a theatrical production, we nurture individuals that create the function and beauty of the grand design.