

Trinity Stevens

Dance Teaching Philosophy

Learning is the ongoing process by which we come to better understand ourselves and the world around us. Learning takes place anywhere and everywhere, but when applied to my dance classroom, I enter my work with the expectation that I am preparing my students for a better future, regardless of whether that is in dance or not. Being both a physical and intellectual endeavor, dance has the potential to be applicable to many areas of life, and in more ways than one.

My definition of dance is, “the use of movement of the body as a vehicle for inner expression.” It is in this definition that we, the students and teacher, uncover the unity of our pursuits. Dance not only provides connectivity between those who choose to partake in it but can provide a common ground to work to unify and better understand larger communities. To truly value the process, it is necessary to understand the greater impact, and interconnectedness that dance holds, not only in your life, but in humanity in general. Dance teaches discipline, empathy, problem solving, physical communication, spatial awareness, and teamwork, amongst many other real-world skills.

I think that there is a direct relationship between the understanding of pedagogy and how learning occurs. The educational process is more engaging for all participants if they can see how a task or lesson corresponds and fits into a larger goal. With that being said, I aim to keep my students well informed on my reasoning behind what is being taught. Most things have a process that goes behind them; you are building on one idea to get to the next. Just as one would plan or

map out an event/task, the steps of the teaching process need be broken down in a way that is comprehensible.

Learning for me comes best kinesthetically, but I seek to recognize that everyone has different learning styles and build upon them. I have had many teachers and mentors influence my growth as a learner, in dance as well as in other areas of life. Attributes that I admire from these influences are being relatable and realistic, open and understanding, calm and professional, passionate and knowledgeable. Similarly, I hope to have a positive impact on my students and allow them to feel like they can connect and be themselves.

An appreciation and respect for the artform are required by the students at all points in time. It is given that they will present the best version of themselves as they step forward into the immersive study of this art. It is also assumed that with the respect for this artform, comes the respect of the people involved in it.

My definition of an effective learner is, “one who is open and willing to learn, while demonstrating that they are actively trying to do so. They are respectful of their peers and teachers. They are able to follow directions and work with others while participating and contributing their own creativity.”

Likewise, the expectations placed upon me in my role as an instructor are no less strenuous. The same respect is required by me as I work to ensure that students have a safe environment in which to foster growth. My definition of an effective teacher is, “one who facilitates the learning process in a way so that guidelines are set forth and lessons are clear. They are respectful and inclusive of all students, engaging them in the learning process; all while maintaining a professional figure of authority.”

It should also be noted that while an instructor should be one experienced in their field, they are always still a learner themselves. As a teacher, I aim to continuously better myself and remain open to the fact that I will not always know everything. As my students go through the learning process, I am on that journey with them. I seek to let my dedication, enjoyment, and passion for the art that I am teaching guide me in my efforts to push my students towards their own successes.