Philosophy of Education

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 Every student deserves to taught, and every teacher has the responsibility to provide that education. A teacher is one of the few people in a child’s life that has a real connection to his or her growth as an individual. While many people will come and go throughout a child’s lifetime, the teachers will have lasting effects. Knowing this, it is extremely important for teachers to understand their role in the life of a student. Teachers must be responsible for the classroom, educated and proficient in their discipline, and professional. Most importantly, however, they must be devoted to the success of the classroom and every individual in it.

One of the key components of teachers is that they take responsibility for their students’ learning. A student cannot learn if the teacher is unwilling to teach that student. While this statement seems rather self-explanatory, it is the basic starting point for all teaching. A good teaching strategy can be created by combining elements from the nine intelligences: logical, existential, musical, spacial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, kinesthetic, natural, and linguistic. By combining these intelligences, education can be balanced with student interest, student growth, and the instructor’s strengths. The balance of these intelligences must be taken into account on a personal level, as each classroom is different. It is important to look at the students in a class to determine which learning styles should be weighted at that time. By balancing the learning styles appropriately for the individual class, the best learning environment for that group can be achieved. When the time comes for that particular group of students to move on, it is important to reflect on how the class went, both for the instructor and the students. Notice all of the great aspects of the class so those elements can be kept for future classes, and take note of the things that were less appealing so they can be improved upon. The perfect class will never be achieved, but the teacher can create the best environment possible for the students.

 Another very important characteristic of a teacher is that he or she understands the discipline being taught. Effective teachers know their trade well and can help the student to reach a well-rounded understanding of the subject. For example, a good music teacher should be able to help all students to understand musical concepts and how to apply them. It is not enough to simply know that a crescendo means “get louder.” Students should be able to understand where to start, how loud to get, how to pace a crescendo, and why the composer wrote the crescendo. Is it meant to be an expression? Is it placed with the idea of a swell? Is it leading into a new section? Is some high point about to occur? Students deserve to know these details as much as the conductor. These musical terms and ideas do not always need to be delivered in lecture or aside format thought. This may result in branching out to new styles of teaching. It may require consulting with other teachers and faculty to determine the best way to help students learn. In the end, students should leave the classroom feeling enriched and have a greater understanding of music as a whole.

 Part of being able to convey music to students is understanding music on a first hand basis. Just because musicians become teachers, it does not mean the teacher is no longer a musician. In any field in the realm of teaching, it can be easy to lose touch with the basis that grew into becoming a teacher. In the case of musicians, teachers should make an effort to stay active in their discipline whether it be performing with a community ensemble, small chamber group, or even keeping up with a solo career. Though it can be difficult at times, it keeps teachers in tune with their practice, and keeps their ears open to live music making.

 The final trait that is important in any field is the display of professionalism. Teaching, like many careers, is not a job to be done alone. A school system is made up of many different ideas and personalities, and it is a wonderful thing for those ideas to be shared. However, in order to have any authority in a situation that calls for it, an individual must have good communication skills. By communicating in an effective way, teachers will have their ideas heard and possibly seconded by other colleagues with similar ideas. This sort of communication in a healthy environment creates a support network that blooms into amazing functions within the system. In this way, it becomes easy for all persons involved to remain engaged in the practice, and find joy in it as rewarding careers often provide.

 By combining the three basic principles of education and practice, professionalism, and responsibility, teachers can provide the best environment for their students. By creating this environment, the student can learn to have a love of music and appreciation of the arts and be the most enriched. This in turn will provide the most rewarding experience for the teacher. Music works in a cycle; when the teacher can help students make beautiful music, the students provide the teacher with that experience and music which we as musicians want to hear. Music is a field that requires a lot of dedication and work outside of the job, but it is a lasting career that will impact lives far beyond the short amount of time spent inside the classroom.