

James Bicigo Teaching Philosophy

Approach

We all have something to offer those around us! Every teacher, student, child, and community member, of every age, who comes into my classroom has something to teach us and something to learn from us. When we realize this and are open to these lessons, our learning is infinitely enriched and meaningful.

I have something to offer those around me! Every teacher, student, child, and community member, of every age, who comes into my classroom has something to learn from me and something to teach me. When I realize this, my teaching and learning is infinitely enriched and meaningful,

To realize these two statements, I must establish a learning environment of mutual trust, respect, and unconditional caring. I must teach boldly, and with confidence, while remaining open to the teachable moment. That moment when my knowledge and expertise can be enriched and given meaning by the life experience of someone else. I must remain open to the question or the observation from within my classroom and ready to incorporate it into my teaching. I must seek out people who can enrich and add meaning to the teaching and learning that occurs in my classroom under my guidance.

My role is to teach and lead, and to learn, while guiding and encouraging others to learn from me and to contribute their own teaching to our learning environment. In this way, my classroom is an environment of rich and meaningful learning.

Practice

How does this come into practice? In an ensemble, I present the information. This can be reading a new piece that we will perform on a concert. I conduct and the students play through the piece and we experience how it sounds, its most basic form, tempo, texture, and mood. It can be a guided listening experience of that piece. Listening to a recording of the piece with the sheet music in place and specific questions or features to answer and notice. Then we begin to share our learning experience in rehearsal working from hearing and producing correct notes and rhythms in tune and in time, to imagining the sound in our minds before we produce it, to imbuing our individual and group performance with meaning from our own experience. These basic landmarks represent levels in the Bloom's Taxonomy from the basic level of remembering to application, to synthesis. We also reach evaluation through rehearsal with questions such as what do you hear? And I hear this, can you hear that as well?

In the private lesson studio, this same process holds true. We present information through reading, listening, and playing. We perfect the basic techniques of playing the instrument, producing correct notes, rhythms, with characteristic sound, in tune and in time. We move to imagining the music, hearing it in our minds before we play, and on to adding meaning and evaluating the performance.

In the classroom, presentation can take the form of lecture, guided listening, role playing experiences, peer (practice) teaching, and observations. Students move from remembering, to application, to creating and evaluation through these activities.

Goals

It is my goal to help students achieve their highest potential as musicians, teachers, and scholars. I seek to provide rich and meaningful learning experiences that encourage higher level thinking and meaningful performance. Through formative and summative assessments that involve the student in self and peer assessment as well as instructor assessment, I seek to guide the students through the learning experience in a way that helps them reach their highest potential.

We all have something to offer those around us! It is my goal to take advantage of every opportunity to teach and to learn and to create an environment of mutual trust, respect, and unconditional caring where learning is rich and meaningful, where students and teacher engage in higher thinking skills, and where formative and summative assessments measure and guide further teaching and learning.