

As an educator I aim to empower students when they learn music with me. I think that many musicians aren't necessarily born with this gift rather it comes through a sustained and dedicated practice. I absolutely love seeing a student start from zero experience to being able to perform challenging material. With the right direction, proper mind set, and sustained effort they will achieve! I also believe that this characteristic spills out into other areas of their lives, not just music. In this way, the students will improve not just as musicians but also as human beings who will have positive impacts on their immediate family, communities, and beyond. I plan on achieving this goal in the following ways:

1. Student centered learning. Every child learns in a unique way and I will adjust my teaching to their learning styles and abilities. I will encourage open dialogue and active learning so that they can take ownership of their learning.
2. Encouraging critical thinking. I honestly believe that teachers are not gatekeepers of knowledge but rather we are tasked with teaching children "how" to learn and not necessarily "what" to learn. Students should be empowered to analyze and evaluate information and arrive to their own conclusions.
3. Encouraging resilience. Music, like any endeavor, is not easy. It requires a great effort and thought. This fact coupled with the realities of life—including setbacks and challenges—require that students develop perseverance, determination, and self-confidence.
4. Practical application. I will show students how to apply what is learned in the classroom in real-world scenarios and situations such as musical performances. It is this heuristic approach that contributes to a student's self-empowerment.
5. Nurturing diversity and inclusion. It's highly important that students learn in an environment that is welcoming to peoples of all backgrounds. Students should also be exposed to a wide range of perspectives and values as this is embedded in the very fabric of art and music. This ties in to my initial statement where students will grow and develop as human beings as well as musicians.
6. Modeling lifelong learning. I think it's critical that a teacher lead by example therefore students will know that I, too, am a student! There's always something to learn and improve, the work is never done. I will share with them my personal journey of development and curiosity.

There's a funny epithet I've come across in life "Don't let school get in the way of your education." Through the process of learning music with me the students will feel empowered that they can take charge of their own learning even as they journey through life as full-fledged adults.