Music Education Philosophy

     Education is important to everyone in the United States.  I would be willing to bet that every parent wants their child to succeed and counts on education to give them the tools they need in life to do so.  Whether it is home, charter, public, or any other school, education is a fundamental part of our society.  This being said, I feel that becoming a teacher is one of the most important jobs out there.  As a society we need only the best people to come forward and work in this noble profession and lead the youth of our country to the future.

     Educators need to prepare students for the future by aiding in personal growth, expansion of knowledge, problem solving skills, independence, and critical thinking.  In helping students to attain these crucial skills, teachers provide students with the tools to accomplish their aspirations.  I want to be one of the essential resources for students in achieving their goals.  The most vital parts of achievement are discipline and creativity. Discipline promotes hard work and determination while creativity promotes problem solving and uniqueness.  In this day and age, American students can be successful in all endeavors if they possess these two critical skills.

     My first thought is that these skills are most prevalent in music classrooms.  The cooperation yet personal accountability of the musical ensemble setting encourages creative discipline. Musical students need individualized practice to master their instrument as well as teamwork practice to perform with the desired ensemble balance and blend.  I have chosen to go into music education as a profession to elevate the creative mind of children. I plan to foster an atmosphere that cultivates creativity and nurtures critical thinking.

     “The fact that children can make beautiful music is less significant than the fact that music can make beautiful people.”(Cheryl Lavender)  Human beings are emotional and every person, especially youth, deserve an artistic outlet to express themselves. Music education provides that outlet while bridging the gap between listening to and understanding music.  It provides students with personal growth and emotional development through originality, skill building, and imagination.  Because music possesses the power to give students goose bumps, to make students happy, sad, excited or on edge, it is an integral part of students sensitivity learning.

     I want to be a teacher to motivate students to accept music in their hearts in a way that is stronger than the ordinary bond of thumb to MP3 player.  I feel that the function of music and music education in schools, communities, and society is to enrich the lives of the American public and further musical understanding. The function of music in schools is to encourage.  Encourage appreciation of and learning about music in both students and the community. The pep band encourages school spirit by supporting athletes and pumping up the crowd, the marching band performs the fight song to encourage student loyalty to the alma mater as well as plays the national anthem to encourage patriotism. The band provides an necessary service to the community in exposing the public to music.

     Music can function as an easy way to reinforce information taught in all other subject classrooms as well. Eric Jensen’s, *Arts With the Brain in Mind*, reports that teaching through the arts motivates children and increases their aptitude for learning (Jensen, 2001). In addition, *Empathy, Arts and Social Studies* by Konrad R. R. found that music enhances the process of learning. The systems they nourish, which include our integrated sensory, attention, cognitive, emotional and motor capacities, are shown to be the driving forces behind all other learning (Konrad, 1999).

     Learning to play and keep rhythm develops coordination. The air support necessary to play a trumpet, flute, or even a saxophone requires abdominal engagement and therefore promotes a healthier body.  Dr. Frederick Tims, reported in AMC Music News, that during moments of musical euphoria, blood travels through the brain to areas where other stimuli can produce feelings of contentment and joy-and travels away from brain cell areas associated with depression and fear (Tims, 1999). Not only can music advance a student’s health, but it cultivate a life long love for the arts. Music appreciation is something that everyone can partake in and by itself is a massive goal to accomplish.

     The most important part about music education is that the students begin to understand music for more than just sound and discover what a powerful tool it can be. I plan to use music to cultivate intuition and independent thought within the musical student body of the school I work at. My job is to give students the necessary skills to succeed in life after K-12 schooling. I will prepare students for the job field and create good citizens along the way.

     Parents would be pleased to know that in ensemble classes their children are not going to be considered students to me.  I consider every person who takes part in the music making process a musician and family member.  To be a musician means that you are responsible for playing your part within the group.  Every individual musician in the classroom is part of the musical family and is key to the success of the entire class.  Parents know that every single student is a respected and valued member of our team of musicians in the classroom. The music classroom is a safe zone where students can express themselves and develop cooperative and critical thinking skills through collaboration of group music making.  That being said, parents will see their children become more responsible because they will be held accountable for learning their music and performing it in the classroom during every rehearsal.

     The band family should come together to perform music of all kinds.  I believe students can benefit greatly from learning music that has stood the test of time as well as new music.  Musicians need to be exposed to a wide variety of literature to become knowledgeable on music history and on what direction music is headed.  In the end, what matters to me is that students are gaining creative and critical thinking skills by combining their thoughts of interpretation and performance in the process of music making everyday.

     Music education is the most effective way of cultivating independence, accountability, responsibility, creativity, and innovation within students.  American citizens all possess these traits, so why not use music education to illuminate them.  My practical philosophy of music education revolves around a daily routine of positive music making habits. When an efficient system of positive practice is set in place, in a safe judgment-free zone, students will be more inclined to take creative liberties; discipline and creativity are benchmark traits for critical and independent thought processes.