

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

As a student, we have all had good and bad teachers but the ones that stand out are the ones who make a positive impact in our lives. What does the phrase teaching mean to me, and what makes a great teacher? These are very important questions when your career is helping guide and educate the minds of young students.

Teaching comes in many formats from a K-12 teacher, to private lessons, to running costume labs, to a traditional classroom setting. But it can also be so much more. I come from a multi-generational teaching family where value of the individual and the importance of learning are prevalent. I have had the opportunity to teach in many non-formal ways like running day and overnight camps for people of all ages with developmental disabilities, to running wardrobe crews for theatrical productions, to teaching sewing lessons within a costume shop. These were places where we could all gain skills and have fun, but most importantly it was a place that I could help craft a safe, supportive learning environment for all. Dynamic learning happens when everyone experiences this type of pedagogy; personal success and joy being evident. To me this is what teaching is all about.

To strive to be a great teacher one must constantly be evaluating their teaching style, material being taught, the effectiveness of their teaching approach, and how much their students are absorbing that material. These few considerations are vastly important to recognize and revise as you grow as an educator. My drive as a teacher is stated by one phrase, "How can I do more?" I analyze how I utilize my skills and reevaluate what I can do to elevate my craft. When I start the design and costume rendering process for a show, I ask myself, "How can I do more than I did with the last production?" Every interaction, every class, every moment is a learning opportunity. Tony Horton, a famous trainer with *Beachbody.com*, always states, "Do your best and forget the rest." This motto resonates with me, because to me if you sincerely and honestly give as much as you can in any given moment using constructive methods, you can succeed at whatever you set your mind to.

The use of lectures, active based learning, visual, tactile, and group discussions was really important to me when I was a student. This was such an impact during my educational growth that I believe in teaching in a similar approach. While teaching, you need to be constantly sharpening and adding new tools to your toolbox. A great teacher will be doing this non-stop as well as being flexible, thinking outside the box, and helping students learn how to learn. The most important things for me as a person, a teacher, and a colleague is to give and receive respect, be patient and flexible, and to approach every situation professionally. I believe this approach will encourage students to use their own passion for a subject to help themselves become successful, life-long learners.