

## Statement of Teaching Philosophy-Kevin Frazier

I am a story-teller. The act of telling stories is wired into my soul. Whether I'm working on a show, at a social gathering, at the store or in a classroom, I can't help but tell stories and enjoy the telling of stories. This intrinsic connection to the DNA of theatre is the basis of my teaching as well. In connecting with the next generation of artists and students, I am continuing to write my story, but also creating something new, only possible with both the instructor and the student. The students' stories, struggles and journeys change my perspective and engage my passion for my craft. This exchange is a two-way street as well. My goal is always to reciprocate even a fraction of the joy and insight I gain back to the students by sharing my own story. It's the way this exchange resembles the collaborative process of theatre-making that draws me to teaching.

The best teachers lead by example, and I strive everyday to connect the material I teach to the work I do in the field. In some cases, such as in the teaching of a design course, the connection is straightforward. However, even when I'm exploring the history of theatre with students, I want to connect those historical traditions with the living tradition of contemporary theatre. Understanding our place in the greater flow of history helps craft a discerning and self-aware new audience out of students to help the theatre survive and thrive in a cultural climate made of change and forward momentum. This urgency to survive and thrive also propels my own work forward, as I work to remain relevant in the same culture of forward momentum I prepare my students to face.

I believe that a hands-on approach breeds students better prepared to engage with material on a critical level, as opposed to the simple retention of information. In a world where the objective quality of a thing is often reduced to a score or percentage, we can often lose track of the deeper questions that fuel our individual stories or paths through life. The most important pillar of my teaching is that I am more often interested in why a student came to a conclusion or made an observation rather than always seeking the objectively correct answers in a given situation. Especially in design, whether I enjoy or like a choice is rarely, if ever, the point. I insist that my students make bold choices and that they justify those bold choices, which allows them to grow into well-rounded and engaging artists and collaborators. It was exactly this approach that allowed my own art to grow and improve over the years, and I'm rarely happier than when I'm watching a student explore the limits of their creativity, whether that exploration is in a design project or a play review.

As the product of a liberal arts education, I believe in the value of cross-disciplinary studies. Without a chance to explore the breadth of the human experience, we lose value as artists and as collaborators. In theatre, a chance to cross-train gives us a greater understanding of how the pieces of the puzzle come together, but it also opens doors to other possible paths one can take on life's journey. My own story is comprised of many such detours and turns made possible by the wide focus of the liberal arts education. In my teaching I work to ensure that this philosophy of a broad lens is applied to my craft. I want my students to understand the broader context of the world and the subjects they study and I also want to equip them with the skills needed to approach a problem from many perspectives, using the educational foundation of the liberal arts to create a repertoire of techniques for facing life's myriad challenges.

The aspect of teaching I find most challenging lies in balance. Sometimes it's balancing my desire to create and collaborate in the field with my desire to educate and inspire in the classroom. (it turns out these concepts are not mutually exclusive!) Sometimes it's the need to reach a wide range of students from all walks of life. The beauty of theatre is deeply rooted in its connection to the entire globe, that the history of story-telling is the history of humanity. Capturing that continuity and inclusive spirit is the most rewarding challenge I face as a teacher. Often these difficulties collide in exciting ways, when I'm able to take on a project that speaks to a unique or under-represented voice in our global community. When given that opportunity, I'm able to bring the work into the classroom to provide a new perspective on both the story-telling medium and of our shared history and culture. It's this connection between my professional and pedagogical work that ignites my spirit more than anything else I do.

Helping students find their deeper connection to the world and to their community is a critical part of teaching. By utilizing the broad lens of a liberal arts education and by constantly striving to connect my art and a need to explore every perspective, I hope to create students with a strong footing in the world. I hope to create students who will act as stewards of the under-represented in their communities, as theatre is nothing if not a conduit for those perspectives in a given community. I also aim to create an inclusive community in each of my classrooms, where we can learn these techniques by living them. As a teacher, all of my hope and passion rests in teaching by living. And by living, I'm continuing to tell my story.