

Teaching Philosophy

Connie Crawford

It is my responsibility (and my privilege) to help my students become the creative thinkers and doers they choose to be.

Inspire the Search

Within a playful search, failure is an opportunity for discovery. In my studio, we search and fail and succeed and discover and discard and embrace. It is sloppy and sometimes painful. I work hard so that students know how and where to search with compassionate curiosity, productive honesty and intellectual rigor.

Expose the Pathways

I guide the student's search by introducing them to various performance techniques contextualized by history, theory and philosophy. Their search within and around these praxes inspires them to develop their own method and beliefs. I encourage the young theatre student to study traditional performance practices rigorously so that they can embrace, explode or incorporate those practices as they explore contemporary, innovations. Ultimately they will develop their own modes of interdisciplinary expression.

Within the liberal arts environment, students have more places to search. They can search across disciplines to awaken questions they never knew they wanted to ask. Our performance practice expands from the study of history, neuroscience, the visual arts... We step out of the studio to be inspired by nature, by science and by one another. I am a firm believer that liberal arts education fosters theatre studies in profound and unexpected ways.

Support and Challenge the Journey

I inspire entrepreneurs: of art; of scholarship; of commerce; of contemplation. I work to develop the ability of my students to express themselves with clarity and courage. They learn to stand within or without a group. I push my students to go deeper and root their work in research. I am a successful teacher when my students use their newfound skills independently, bravely.

Art excites the imagination. Sustained by research, the excited imagination widens the artist's worldview. Our world is more globally connected than ever before. I encourage my students to be culturally curious. Embodying someone different from self can make the actor a better citizen. A performance class requires personal interactions, deeper than a simple exchange of facts. These interactions enrich our understanding of and compassion for our neighbors. A broad view of the world opens doors for the young person to walk through and out and into the world, in whatever way they choose. I love guiding this process. Teaching makes me a better artist and a better citizen.

My students teach me, every day.