

Naoko Skala

Statement of Teaching and Design Philosophy

My teaching and design philosophy is structured by three elements. 1: Provide hands-on experience. 2: Support students with diverse backgrounds and academic interests. 3: Be a good role model as a theatre practitioner.

I believe one of the best ways to learn theatre arts is learning from experience. My approach to a classroom project begins with demonstrations of techniques involved with the project. I schedule time during the class for students to work on the project so I can talk to them individually and support their understanding more deeply. It also allows me to see where students might struggle with parts of the project. I have found that this approach builds students' confidence and helps to create an environment where students are comfortable asking questions or asking for help. It also helps me to grow as an educator.

As an educator, I am excited to work with students from diverse backgrounds. I also enjoy working with students who are not pursuing a career in theatre because I believe the opportunity to study theatre as part of a liberal arts degree encourages critical thinking and communication skills. As an educator in a liberal arts environment I believe an important part of my job is teaching technical skills but I also believe teaching people skills is more important.

There is a Japanese expression "*Children learn from what their parents do, not what their parents say*". I think this expression fits my teaching philosophy because one of the great ways to teach technical theatre is showing how people work together in the theatre. For instance, I am always conscious what I am doing or how I discuss or negotiate with other production team members or how I approach challenging situations. I always try to remember or imagine how people who influenced me would act if they were in the same situation. I always try to be a good role model as a theatre practitioner and influence people by showing what I do instead of what I say.

In conclusion, my teaching and design philosophy is based on supporting student's success before and after graduation. Even though students are not working in theatre, if they find a way to carry their passion for theatre and survive this world happily, I think they will utilize their liberal arts degree successfully and I am a part of supporting their success.