

Julia Lewandowski: Teaching Philosophy

I strive to embody the principles of leading by example and content mastery. I firmly believe that as an educator, I must trust myself to know what I already know, confidently mastering the material I am currently teaching. Through this mastery, I aim to inspire confidence in my students, showing that learning is an ongoing journey.

In teaching, expectations for learning are essential. I strive to understand the cognitive development of children and teens, adapting my lessons to meet their needs. I engage students as intelligent individuals, talking to them as if they are adults, introducing concepts and meeting them where they are at. Enthusiasm for the material is contagious, and I make a conscious effort to show students that I love the content I am teaching.

My approach to teaching incorporates a theoretical aspect. I believe music is a means of creative expression, but also a valuable tool for improving cognitive function. Learning music from a theoretical standpoint helps the learner improve in other subjects such as math and reading. Because it can be a communal activity, it also helps improve socialization skills and builds trust between cohorts. Learning music from a theoretical perspective will help the student sharpen analytical skills and open up possibilities for creative expression. Mental health is a crucial aspect of the learning process. A healthy mind absorbs material more effectively, unclouded by external or internal factors. I listen attentively to my students, providing a space where they feel heard and valued as individuals. Sympathy is paramount, acknowledging that sometimes students may need a break to express what is going on in their lives before they can fully engage in learning and play.

Creating an environment where students feel open and comfortable to express themselves fosters personal growth. I encourage curiosity, understanding that the more students talk and ask questions, the more they learn. Human, face-to-face connection is particularly important for students who have experienced online schooling during the pandemic, and I strive to maintain this connection, fostering a sense of community and support in the classroom. My desire to create an environment where students feel open to expressing themselves can lead to a better understanding of where they are in their development, which aids in what content I can present to them. By giving the student time to process information, it is my goal to make sure they understand and are ready for more complex concepts before moving on.

When faced with a question that I do not know the answer to, honesty is the best policy - I tell them when I am unsure. Acknowledging my limitations not only demonstrates humility but also models the importance of curiosity and the continual pursuit of knowledge. My goal is to hone in on what I already know, continually refining my expertise to be the best guide for my students.

I cannot be everything to every student, but I aim to be their biggest champion and their harshest critic. Discipline, I believe, is the key to life. Understanding the unique needs of each student allows me to tailor my approach to discipline, recognizing varying levels of discipline required for different individuals. My role remains constant – that of a guide, a friend, a confidant, and a shoulder to cry on.

In essence, my teaching philosophy revolves around leading by example, mastering content, building discipline, setting expectations, promoting mental health, and nurturing personal growth. I am dedicated to creating an environment that inspires curiosity, embraces individuality, and cultivates a love for learning and creativity that extends beyond the classroom.