

## Philosophy of Music Education

---

S Matthew Kryztopik

My job as a music teacher is to create a safe, welcoming environment where students are excited to explore a variety of musical concepts and styles. My goal is to foster a lifelong appreciation of music in my students through the performance, analysis, critique, and experience of music.

Students should experience music in the classroom primarily through the performance of various music styles and concepts. Students learn first by doing, then by understanding. Therefore, most of my lessons are spent rehearsing and performing music, rather than discussion or written work. Students should be actively involved in the creative nuances of music performance instead of relying strictly on my interpretation of the music. To encourage this creativity, I often ask students how they want to express different musical elements, and I frequently model different sounds for my students. Likewise, I encourage them to explore different sounds, techniques, and styles during rehearsal. In my experience, when students feel that our performances recognize their individual choices, they are more engaged in learning.

My classroom is a safe and inclusive community where students are excited to learn. I always greet each of my students at the door, ask them how their day is going, and attempt to gauge their mood. My students also share the responsibility of creating a positive learning environment. I hold them to a high standard of citizenship, and believe that each student has a duty to be respectful to each other and responsible for our classroom. Student leadership, both formal and informal, helps with these everyday responsibilities. If students bear the responsibility of maintaining the band room, and creating a sense of community, they will take more pride in the success of the band program — they can directly see the results of their hard work.

My hope is that students will maintain these citizenship characteristics both in and outside of my classroom. The band class is a great model of broader society, and it is a great tool for teaching students the value in adopting individual responsibility for the greater good of the community. I firmly believe that each student has the potential to change the band program. Through teamwork, students can create an incredibly positive band experience — which in turn creates the best experience possible for all individual students.

Ultimately, I hope to create a community of strong musicians, and upstanding citizens. I want to leave my students with skills in performance that allow them to participate in and enjoy music for the rest of their lives. Music is an important part of every culture, and through my teaching, I hope to spark a lifetime of musical exploration and enjoyment in my students.