

MATTHEW T. DRISCOLL

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

Students have unique developmental and learning needs; therefore, I tailor my teaching to the individual student and how he/she learns, while always expecting a high level of dedication and preparation. Some students learn techniques through explanation of the procedure, and others may not comprehend unless they can hear and see to what the teacher is referring. Ultimately, imitation can be a useful tool in music.

I believe younger students need a teacher who demonstrates proper fundamentals and techniques upon which to build. In addition to fundamentals and phrasing, musicality also can be learned from imitation. Older students, however, need to be able to make their own decisions regarding musical phrasing and how they want to sound. As a teacher, I like to play examples of fundamental exercises and excerpts of the literature my students are practicing. The older student is typically more mature and should, therefore, have a mental picture of how they want to sound on their instrument on a particular piece they are currently practicing. This does not eliminate imitation altogether, but forces the student to become his/her own teacher. When the student reaches this level, that skill incorporates good rehearsal and teaching techniques. A student who is a music education major needs to learn these important practice skills, incorporate them into their routine and understand them in such a way that they can convey those skills to their future students.

A teacher's role is to guide a student and provide access to information rather than being a primary resource. A student must put forth the effort on their behalf whether it be practicing or studying, to find answers to their questions and solutions to help with weaknesses. As a teacher, I too, have limitations. As an educator I will acknowledge that I do not know a specific answer and will seek to find the solution. I will refer to colleagues in the field and related resources for further research to help assist a student in a better understanding of the subject.

I feel, as an educator, it is important to keep enhancing my skills. One way I do this, and will continue to do this, is through professional workshops. Events I have attended include The Midwest Clinic, state music education conferences, Eastern Trombone Workshop, and summer master classes at Northwestern University (what about the thing in California in 2008). These experiences have helped my professional development as a student and teacher, which is important because even though I am a professional, I am a student for life. Regardless of my age and level in my career, I want to be constantly learning. With the ever-changing technology, it is even more crucial to continue learning new methods and skills.

As an educator I believe it is also important to supply music to the community. One source of community involvement is through performing at the local churches, social organizations and local schools. Low brass instruments sound great at churches and small chamber groups from the studios can play short recitals or hymns for a congregation on Sunday. Another community activity is through the community schools and being a reliable resource for the area music educators to use.

My philosophy is broad yet I feel that my experiences with professors and teachers have helped me reach this point in my career. I know my philosophy will continue to evolve as I do as an instructor, performer and colleague. I realize that I will encounter students that will encourage this evolution and help me to broaden my perspectives.