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Philosophy of Music Education

My philosophy of music education is rooted in the belief that all students, regardless of background, should have access to musical experiences. I am committed to creating an environment where students can develop technical proficiency, musical expression, and a lifelong appreciation for music. My approach to string pedagogy emphasizes inclusivity, technique development, creativity, and community-building within ensembles.

One of the central tenets of my philosophy is ensuring equitable access to music education. Historically, string education has been reserved for those with financial means to afford private instruction and high-quality instruments. However, my own music learning opportunities from my time as a student in Title I schools to my current work with community string programs such as LRBS and PAL have reinforced my commitment to breaking down barriers. The community partnerships I am working in through UNCG provide underserved students with access to free lessons, quality instruments, and a supportive learning environment. By fostering diversity in music education, we can empower students from all backgrounds to discover their potential and develop confidence in their musical abilities.

Culturally responsive teaching is an essential part of inclusivity. I strive to incorporate repertoire that reflects diverse cultures and traditions, allowing students to see themselves represented in the music they play. Additionally, differentiated instruction plays a crucial role in my teaching, ensuring that students with varying skill levels and learning needs receive the support necessary to succeed. Peer mentorship, student leadership opportunities, and creative activities such as composition and improvisation further enhance student engagement and inclusivity.

Effective string pedagogy requires a balance of structured technique development and creative musical expression. My approach prioritizes foundational skills, including proper instrument positioning, tension-free playing, and the development of good tone and intonation. From the outset, I emphasize body mapping and awareness to help students prevent unnecessary tension and potential injury. Technical checkpoints, such as bow hold flexibility and left-hand frame, are reinforced daily to ensure long-term success. I employ a rote approach when introducing new concepts, developing aural skills and confidence on the instrument. This method aligns with the pedagogical models of Rolland and Suzuki, which emphasize technique and aural development. Additionally, I integrate the Allen model, which separates musicianship, left-hand skills, and right-hand skills before gradually combining them. By structuring instruction in this way, students develop a strong technical foundation that supports their musical growth.

Another key component of my pedagogy is fostering student independence and creativity. While traditional method books serve as valuable tools, I supplement instruction with activities that encourage improvisation, composition, and musical exploration. I also prioritize the inclusion of repertoire by underrepresented composers, ensuring that students experience a broad range of musical styles and cultural perspectives. Beyond technical and artistic development, music education should support a sense of belonging and emotional expression. Creating a positive classroom culture is paramount to fostering long-term engagement in music. Cultivating a strong sense of teamwork and camaraderie within ensembles is essential to my teaching approach. By emphasizing mutual respect, shared goals, and group problem-solving, students develop essential communication and leadership skills that extend beyond music. Retention is just as important as recruitment in string education. Students are more likely to continue playing if they feel successful and connected to their musical community. By emphasizing a student-

centered approach, providing diverse musical opportunities, and maintaining high expectations with compassionate support, I aim to inspire students to pursue music beyond the classroom.

In conclusion, my philosophy of music education is driven by a commitment to accessibility, effective pedagogy, and community building. Through inclusivity, emphasizing strong technical foundations, and encouraging creativity, I strive to prepare students for a prosperous K-12 music teaching career.