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Statement of Teaching Philosophy

Versatility has been a guiding principle throughout my career, for myself and my students. My goal has never been to be only a saxophonist, but to be a whole musician. This is a mindset I cultivate in all of my students, whether I'm teaching applied saxophone privately or teaching music theory to classroom full of students. Regardless of their degree, whether it be classical or jazz performance, music education, composition, or theory, I assign my students work in a multitude of genres and areas. All of my classical saxophone students do jazz transcriptions regularly – at the very least one per semester. Conversely, my jazz students work on classical excerpts and etudes. Furthermore, I constantly incorporate music theory and ear training in every applied saxophone lesson I teach – my 'saxophone lessons' are never *just* saxophone lessons, rather, they're wholistic musicianship lessons.

Considering the large amount of work already placed on our undergraduate music majors, asking them to do even more by diversifying their skillset is a big ask. If we want our students to study music broadly, we must ensure that they are achieving a level of proficiency in all areas. Their knowledge needs breadth *and* depth – not one or the other. In order to achieve this, they have to work intelligently. Time management and practice efficiency are two aspects of musicianship I talk about with my students extensively. The topic of my dissertation is practice efficiency, and in it I bring attention to numerous areas of research that offer insight into how musicians can optimize their practice time.

My emphasis on making my students study a wide range of skills, and on making them do so efficiently, aligns with my broader goal of making them capable self-learners. In a word, I want them to be autodidactic. The time my students will spend with me during their formal education is minimal in comparison to the rest of their professional career, so I aim to equip them with the tools that will ensure they can be life-long learners with a growth mindset. In addition to self-teaching, I also use chamber music as a means to foster peer learning and teaching in my saxophone studios. All of my students participate in chamber music to some extent, whether it be saxophone quartets, trios, or duos, jazz combos, or any other assortment of mixed-instrument ensembles. Since I only get to see my students for a few hours a week, I depend on the fact that students learn from each other more often than they do from their teachers – not to mention, they often learn better from their peers.

I strive to push my students to be the best musicians and academics they can be, but perhaps even more importantly, I stress the significance of mental health and sensitivity. In the competitive environment of music academia, it can be quite easy for students to suffer, whether it be from imposter syndrome, depression, or anxiety induced by the stress of a college-workload. I make it clear to my students that, although I want to prepare them as best as possible for their careers post-graduation, their own well-being should never be jeopardized for the sake of their musical pursuits.