

SIX: Teaching Effectiveness

Candidate Statement:

My violin students, at the core, are developing interdisciplinary artists. In violin playing, as in any other art, each artist must have an individual approach based on broad rules that will be flexible enough to accommodate the changes we all confront throughout our career. Finding what is natural and individualistic for a student is part of my continual focus, whether they are advanced graduate students or first-year students just beginning the collegiate process. My main goal for my students is to nurture their innate gifts. By expanding their technical/musical repertoire, helping them to find their musical strengths within supportive communities, and equipping them with tools to find long-term job opportunities, I am proud to be a part of their growth as a violinist.

As each violinist is unique, I assess their backgrounds of training, repertoire, and technical ability. I have a systematic approach, beginning with basic technique, which is imperative to have in place to express one's musical ideas. Our applied lessons are completely "one-on one", allowing me to be flexible and supportive of each student's needs. I use yearly templates with to plan for their juries, solo recitals, and Graduate Doctoral Projects. This gives students indirect support, allowing them to oversee their success. Having a combination of private lessons, studio class, string area, and extra opportunities for masterclasses (including bringing in accomplished artists) gives students time to try new repertoire multiple times. We video all performances onto a shared platform, allowing for each student to learn from watching their own playing, which is one of the most effective ways for students to become more confident and independent.

Another important area for my violin students is including more music written by Black, Indigenous, people of color, and women in their overall curriculum. There are numerous resources for finding new programming and creative opportunities for commissions. With careful planning throughout their degree, they can create recital programs that truly inspire and add depth to our repertoire. Violinists have started websites with excellent lists of lesser known but important works, and our TTU students have supported this important direction within classical music. As much of my studio is internationally based, new repertoire is woven into our curriculum through their curiosity in finding new works from their homeland.

As most violin studios have experienced, practice time is at a premium because of the demands of academics, rehearsals, and the need to make extra money in order to stay in school. Because of this, I have created a practice manual that attempts to help with the efficiency of private practice time. I am an advocate of only doing as much as one can do while keeping lives in a healthy balance, and I support students by extending deadlines for scale exams, bringing physical therapy specialists into our studio class, prepare detailed "warm-up" plans for each student, and use Alexander Technique concepts to help with violin set-up. I believe that we can perform longer without pain if we are physically set-up in a way that supports our own individual body. Overall balance is my main goal with individual practice goals.

Once a student has a plan for repertoire, recitals, and proper technical setup, I am an advocate for discussing and supporting their choices for after graduation. As there are many violinists with higher degrees, it is of the utmost importance to find one's secret special abilities that will support their violin playing and set them apart. Whether it's an interest in the business side of music, education, technology, or the medical field, I suggest ways to support their skills and begin building their resumes early within their degree. I encourage mentors outside of TTU, allowing students the opportunity to meet others in the field and make new connections. I also pair up students in my studio so they have a built in support network within our school of music. The *Clifton Strengths* metric has been beneficial in aiding my studio to find more about their gifts, and how to grow what they already have within themselves.

Building a community of supportive violinists has always been at the forefront of my teaching efforts. Within our own studio, we have created strong ties with current students and alumni, creating a "Boyle" network of colleagues. I have also started to work across studios, including Daniel del Pino's students in a "Salon Project", pairing up pianists with violinists for a joint studio recital that has been highlight of the entire academic year. Violin Professor John Gilbert has swapped studio classes with me, allowing our unique studios to gain perspective on different pedagogical ideas. I also created my summer festival, the Lake City String Academy, to connect an entire rural community with violinists, having some of the local residents "Adopt-A-Violinist" for a week, creating life-long connections even after the festival has ended.

Our music making is beyond the practice room, even beyond the walls of TTU. We must connect with others through our music and equip our students to succeed by guiding them to these wonderful opportunities to connect with the greater community while balancing their time and energy. TTU allows us to create these experiences for each student, as individuals. I am proud to be a part of this community of musicians.