

Philosophy of Teaching Applied Guitar

I believe that in order to effectively teach is important to focus on why a path of learning needs to be followed, rather than only teaching how to become a professional guitarist.

Understanding the reason why certain methods and habits need to be preceded will not only guide a student, but it will cultivate the culture of “perfect practice makes it perfect.” In addition, my goal as a teacher is to create a guitarist that is not entirely dependent on the teacher. The quest is to naturally allow the student to discover the answers of their questions independently. The study of guitar lies under the category of performing arts. My philosophy of teaching is to prepare the student to become an expert performer by applying three important traits:

1- Be true to Themselves 2- Humility 3- Confidence

1- A performer must always **be true to themselves** know and where they came from. It is extremely important to “be yourself because everybody else is already taken.” Music is such a diverse art that is more than likely that each student will have a preferable music genre. Encouraging the performer to embrace their type of art will create a genuine identity. This is the first trait of creating a successful performer; allowing them to have a clear vision of the message that their art is trying to send to the audience. Allowing the student to develop a ground base on what type of performer they hope to become will grant me to carefully analyze what specific sets of skills they need to learn in order to achieve their goal. In addition, the study of contrasting music genres will be carefully added to student's class curriculum. Different forms of art only add additional knowledge to the performer's most comfortable style. Igor Stravinsky once told that “you must first give a lollipop to the audience and later present them with something

deeper.” Before presenting my student with something that will challenge their skills because it may be genre that is outside of their comfort zone, my job as an educator is to make them feel proud of what they already know. By giving them the prize to work on a craft that they would like to pursue helps to eliminate any possible barrier against what I would like to teach them.

All in all, it is crucial that the performer understands what message their art is trying to send to the audience, after all I see musicians as communicators rather than merely artists. As a teacher I must learn to make my students feel comfortable before presenting a more complex set of skills to be studied.

2- Humility is where the discipline, critical thinking and sacrifices must be made in order to create an expert guitarist. After establishing what message the performer desires to tell their audience, my job as a teacher is to show the honest path of learning that needs to happen. An efficient time during the practice time will produce a secure musician on stage. As an instructor my goal is to create a routine of exercises that need to be followed during the practice time. This is where I stress the importance of letting the student understand why certain set of skills must be mastered; why proper body posture is important to play the instrument. The final product that leaves the practice time and enters the stage is what matters, making the student aware of their deficiencies will create a critical-thinking student. The deep study of music is more than just producing a unique form of art; the study of music is to learn how to solve problems. In a lesson scenario where struggles often happen, the following traits must be followed for an affective learning:

- A- Identify the problem.
- B- After identifying the problem, isolate the issue from the given context.
- C- Form a hypothesis of what set of skills must be mastered in order to solve the problem.
- D- Execute the set of skills that will eliminate the problem.
- E- After overcoming the problem, desolate the issue and apply into the music.
- F- Conclude if the hypothesis was indeed correct and if the problem has been solved.

In a practical environment the student will always seek for additional guide, but my job is to create an independent learner. A musician who is aware of their struggles understands that they need to be overcome a problem in order for an effective learning to happen. A critical thinking musician will learn that one shall always remain humble about their art, there is always something to be improved. There is always an artist that communicates better and more efficient. My job as an educator is to create a life long student, who is willing to face their struggles and respect the art of studying guitar. This where “perfect practice makes it perfect” becomes absolutely important. Discipline alone will not secure that the student will make a progress in their studies. It is crucial that they are always seek for new ways to make their daily practice more efficient. When a student practices a certain set of skills to the exhaustion but, the understanding of what needs to be done in order for the improvement to happen is missing, then nothing has actually been accomplished. Before a routine of practice can be established, an understanding of content is required.

With discipline comes sacrifice, I want my students to understand why is important to follow a practice schedule and to learn that certain sacrifices must be made in order to meet their desired goal. Professional musicians need to think of themselves as professional athletes. Even a college guitar performance student is required to treat themselves as professionals; their careers do not begin after they acquire their diplomas, it begins as soon as they are enrolled into the program.

A professional musician like an athlete needs to constantly be exercising their body and mind in order to learn how to communicate their message to the audience. Technique is essential for a guitarist to be able to express their musical ideas clearly. In a performance setting, a performer needs to bring their technique level to their music interpretation and not lower the musical ideas because of their lack of technique. This is a process that requires discipline, constant work in order to meet the higher goal of performance. I believe that if my students develop the habit of constant practice following the method of problem solving, they will learn how to become experts in their art.

Sacrifices must be made in order to create a routine of disciplined practice. Like a professional athlete, healthy habits such as proper sleep, a well balanced diet, and proper care of the body will affect the overall product of performance during the practice time. Playing the guitar at a high level requires a great deal of physical control and proper posture. In addition, it is crucial to respect body limits in order to not create problems in the future.

3- Confidence is only the consequence of an expert performer. If my student understands what message they hope to pass on to the audience, then the first goal has been achieved. Through the act of discipline and critical thinking my student understands the need of a constant study of their art. By the time that the performer arrives on stage, their art becomes an authority. Being true to themselves comforts the audience that this performer believes on the product being presented. A constant study of their craft serves as a foundation to demonstrate the audience that not only the message is clear but, it is well executed. A great performer comforts the audience that the art is being well presented. There is nothing worse than attending a concert, recital or even an informal type of performance and notice that the performer is not secure of their product.

Whether my student desires to become a professional performer or a guitarist that will play music for their own enjoyment, my philosophy is to teach them in how to become a communicator of their art. Through genuinely, humility and confidence my student can excel their desired goal. My job is to teach students why it is important to learn guitar and follow a method of study rather than only showing how to perform a certain set of skills.