

Teaching Statement

My teaching philosophy centers on building a thriving percussion culture that serves every student's pathway from beginner to professional. I view myself as a studio director and ensemble coach; in this capacity, I design a curriculum that guides students through progressive skill development (snare, multi-percussion, and marching percussion; mallets, jazz vibraphone; drumset, improvisation; timpani; and experimental/expanded percussion), while also mentoring them in performance, collaboration, and creative thinking, producing students who are knowledgeable, flexible, and technically adept across the board. In practice, each lesson and rehearsal combines technique-focused transfer (teaching percussion concepts that apply across instruments and styles) with expressive artistry. For example, a fundamental sticking or rebound exercise is not an end to itself but a means to musical goals: clarity in an orchestral excerpt, precision in a drumline feature, or freedom in an improvisational study. This transfer-based approach ensures that students gain durable skills – knowing why a certain motion or rhythm works – so they can adapt to any genre or instrument.

I build a supportive studio culture where learning is active and iterative. Performances and end-of-semester projects have clear, scaffolded steps: proposal, practice (with video/recording feedback), peer review, public performance, and reflection. Regular in-class playing sessions and ensembles (whether the percussion ensemble, orchestra, or snare line) give students low-stakes “checkpoints” where they practice new skills live. Written reflections and process logs are required, so students document how they improved and plan next steps. These multiple modes of engagement (performance, writing, listening) respect diverse learning styles and busy schedules. I also use technology thoughtfully: online practice-tracking tools, extensive course design within learning management software, and shared recordings let commuting or working students rehearse on their own time and still participate in the group’s progress.

Because UTPB emphasizes student-centered instruction and community service, I prioritize equity and access in my classroom. I design clear weekly structures and materials ahead of time (syllabi, handouts, and online modules) so that working students know exactly what to prepare each week. My rubrics reward progress and effort (not just polished final results), so students with uneven preparation still earn credit for disciplined practice and growth; this is something I take directly from my studies at the University of Central Florida: famously, whenever students were unprepared with etudes in lessons, our dean would give them insights on how to sightread those etudes as effectively as possible, so those students would still be able to gain valuable insights. By nature, the extensive size of the family of percussion instruments and the fast pacing of a semi-professional or professional percussion career force the modern percussionist to learn to perform at a high level with minimal time spent per task. Instead of designing a studio so as to force students to learn this schema by assimilation, stretch goals offer realistic insights without imposing a heavy workload to all students equally. I regularly offer alternate assignments or remote submission options (e.g. video-demonstrations) to accommodate differing schedules and abilities. Drawing on UTPB’s engaged-teaching resources (for example, Heimmermann Center workshops on inclusive pedagogy), I use Universal Design for Learning strategies: presenting musical concepts through sound, notation, and demonstration; offering choices of repertoire or project formats; and fostering peer mentorship. For instance, in an ensemble class I might pair veteran students with newcomers for joint practice sessions, building community and reinforcing fundamentals for both.

Importantly, my role as Director of Percussion extends beyond the classroom to program leadership and student success. I see recruiting and retention as part of teaching: introducing local high-school percussionists to our studio through percussion days, summer student festivals and sectional clinics, and welcoming transfers by providing a clear path to catch up. On campus, I plan public percussion events (guest-artist masterclasses, student recitals in Wagner Noël or community venues) that give students professional-facing performance experience and inspire recruitment. Throughout, I emphasize cultural breadth: our ensemble will continue programming non-Western music and works by underrepresented composers (as UTPB already practices), not only to diversify repertoire but to connect our region’s broad student body to global percussion traditions.

In sum, my teaching philosophy is a holistic, student-centered percussion pedagogy that combines rigorous technique, creative performance, and community engagement. I aim to be an accessible mentor, a demanding yet supportive ensemble

leader focused on excellence and integrity, and an active collaborator with UTPB's engaged-teaching culture. By leveraging faculty-development resources (backward design of learning goals, transparent assessment, peer teaching models) and UTPB's infrastructure (the Heimmermann Center, Falcon Free outreach), I will ensure that UTPB percussion students thrive academically and musically in a program that truly "lives local" while training global artists.