

Alizah Ferguson – A Teaching Philosophy

If I had to choose one thing to love most about teaching it would be the connection a student makes between school subjects and ‘real life’. That connection is what I strive to make in every student's life. Teaching theatre allows for that connection to be made in several ways. Theatre is more than an extracurricular activity. It is an outlet for emotions. It is a breakthrough to discoveries. It is a gateway to success. It is anything you make it. That is what I love most.

My classroom is one that fosters compassion and success. I do not utilize desks because frankly they just get in the way. My classroom changes based on the needs of the students in each of my classes. If they want a large table and chairs so everyone can sit together, so be it. If they want to sit on the floor, so be it. If they want to sit in all separate areas of the room on various items, so be it. I believe if a student is comfortable and happy in their working environment, they will enjoy the work they are doing much more.

My teaching style is influenced heavily by Augusto Boal and arts integration. I believe heavily in listening to the student and supplementing instead of forcing every student to do the same exact assignment. Each student learns differently. Therefore, I do my best to teach to all the different learning styles.

I am an advocate for change on all levels. A change in mindset. A change in attitude. A change in your surroundings. The only thing you have full control over is your reaction to events that happen to you. I do my best to foster an environment where my students can speak their mind and be heard and have the opportunity to take action. That is what theatre is. Taking action.

I believe in a well-rounded student. I want every single one of my students to leave my department with experience in every aspect of theatre from the very beginning of concept drafts to the last day of striking the production. Each student will have a part in productions and will have the opportunity to work in every area from playwriting, to directing, to stage managing, to being on run crew, building sets and costumes. Everything it takes to put a production together. In my experience, this has come in to save my day. The fact that I can sew a costume as well as stage managing a production has gotten me a long ways. I also believe that with more experiences in different areas, my students will have more chances to decide what they would like to do for their career. I do not pigeon hole anyone.

“Theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it.”

-- Augusto Boal