

Peter Tijerina | Trombonist/Educator/Composer/Arranger

Teaching Statement

As an educator, nothing makes me prouder than seeing students develop the skills to accomplish their musical goals. More specifically, as a brass player I find exploring fundamental and creative skills with students deeply gratifying because these are lifelong skills that can be applied to both collaborative and performative contexts. As a result, I aim for a balance of lecturing, demonstrating, and application in my teaching and maintain a keen sense of awareness of each student's individual growth. Likewise, I encourage my students to seek information from a variety of sources and then, by means of pragmatic settings, investigate what best suits their individual goals.

My years of teaching jazz arranging/composition, improvisation, jazz history, and coaching jazz ensembles at both the precollege and college levels has led me to establish a learning process with three key elements: observation, application, and performance. I believe that observation is the first step in grasping any music-related topic as it exposes students to varying amounts of stimuli which they can later examine and refine. For an arranging/composition course, I find authoritative big band recordings and scores extremely beneficial for students. In an improvisational or ensemble setting, recordings and live demonstration (e.g. instrumental and eurythmics) prove to be highly valuable. In terms of teaching jazz history, a combination of books, articles, anecdotes, and films noticeably helps keep students engaged.

Applying new concepts and ideas is the next step in this learning process and is the stage that students generally spend the most time in early in their course work. The ability to understand and utilize new ideas by means of practicing or working on projects is an essential component of scholarship, so I dedicate a lot of time to this material in class and additionally assign homework to extend these studies outside of the classroom.

By the time a student reaches the performance phase, they typically have a good grasp of the topic. In preparing students for successful content delivery in the form of project submissions, live performances, or oral presentations, there is a need for refinement of the "big picture" perspective. Therefore, students spend the remainder of their time focusing on larger details such as ensuring all rehearsal markings are present on all parts of a composition, or having a clear idea of how many solo choruses to take on a tune, or reading through a final paper several times before presenting it. I provide students with ample time when it comes to performance preparation and make certain to accommodate students varying degrees of comprehension by designing adjustment-friendly course schedules.

Regarding teaching trombone, a large portion of my approach is dedicated to showing students how to establish a lifelong relationship with music listening and with brass fundamentals. Active music listening supplies students with a tangible guide for creating and achieving musical goals. The fundamental aspects of brass playing—sound production, technical studies, and music making—must be practiced in a regimented fashion and my students recognize this early in their studies. I strongly believe that the two elements of music listening

and brass fundamentals should be practiced daily if a student is to realize their full potential as a trombonist.

Throughout my life, playing music has been an extremely meaningful outlet for expression and means of connecting with and contributing to society. Keeping the individual interests of students in mind, I aim to help students realize their potential in arriving at such a means of musical expression by encouraging the lifelong learning habits of establishing fundamental routines and exploring creativity.