Bryan Stanton - Statement of Teaching Philosophy

"No one is born fully-formed: it is through self-experience in the world that we become what we are." – Paulo Freire

I understand teaching as an act of intentional design rooted in liberation, rigor, and care. As a queer theatre educator, director, and scholar practitioner, I view performance classrooms as sites of inquiry where artistic training and institutional context intersect. Students should be challenged technically while also experiencing belonging, agency, and intellectual affirmation. My pedagogy is grounded in Universal Design for Learning and culturally responsive practice, with particular attention to actor training, ensemble methodology, and ethical rehearsal structures.

In acting and directing classrooms, I approach performance training as both technical and relational work. Students develop skills in voice, movement, text analysis, and characterization while also cultivating habits of listening, collaboration, risk-taking, and accountability. Drawing from traditions such as Stanislavski, Meisner, Adler, and Hagen, I scaffold technique while encouraging students to critically examine how these methods intersect with culture, power, identity, and access. Technique is not neutral; it is historically situated and must be adapted thoughtfully to serve diverse bodies, voices, and lived experiences.

My teaching centers belonging as a structural condition for artistic risk. I design classrooms and rehearsal spaces that are transparent, consent-forward, and clearly scaffolded. At the beginning of each course or process, students and I co-create shared values that guide our collaboration. I name my positionality and artistic journey not as confession, but as pedagogical modeling that situates learning within lived experience and institutional systems. This practice has consistently supported ensemble cohesion and deeper artistic engagement.

Student agency informs my curriculum design. I provide multiple pathways for engagement and assessment, allowing students to demonstrate learning through writing, performance, research, discussion, movement, or creative reflection. In rehearsal, students lead warm-ups, propose staging solutions, interrogate textual interpretation, and engage in structured process reflection. These practices reinforce that students are collaborators in knowledge production and that their choices shape both the artistic product and the learning community.

My classrooms are intentionally trauma-aware and access-centered. I do not require personal disclosure, nor do I frame vulnerability as compulsory. Instead, I design tools and prompts that allow students to participate at sustainable levels. Activities are adaptable for neurodivergent learners, multilingual students, and performers with access needs. Mistakes are normalized as part of iterative artistic practice, and reflection is cultivated as an intellectual skill rather than a performance of correctness.

My current research examines actor training for belonging and the role of UDL and culturally responsive pedagogy as structural interventions within performance education. I am particularly interested in how intentionally designed acting and directing curricula can function as affirming

practice for queer and marginalized students while sustaining artistic rigor. This inquiry informs both my scholarship and my teaching, allowing theory, research, and rehearsal practice to remain in active dialogue.

Ultimately, I view theatre education as an essential cultural practice. When students rehearse conflict, embody character, or design performance environments, they are engaging systems of representation and power. My goal is to design learning spaces where students leave not only as stronger artists, but as critically aware, collaborative, and intellectually grounded practitioners.