

Katharine L. Robey

1121 W Lexington Ave

Elkhart, IN 46514

574.304.5842

katharinerobey@gmail.com

Teaching Philosophy:

An educator's job in democratic society is to guide students to becoming critical thinkers, informed citizens, and, I believe, empathetic human beings. As a theatre educator, I have the unique privilege of being able to guide students to all of these things. Art classes allow students to express their thoughts and feelings, but theatre allows them to process not only their own experiences, but the experiences of others through research, performance, and production. My goal is to facilitate a community of creators that leave my classroom more socially and personally aware than when they entered.

Theatre education takes place mainly in two spaces; the classroom and the rehearsal room. My classroom is shaped by my belief in student centered learning. As an art form, theatre must reflect those creating it. While I will be conscious of the bounds set by my administration, I will allow my students to choose the theatrical materials they feel will best enhance their learning. Plays and musicals may reveal themselves to have relevant themes to my students, and I believe they should have a safe place to explore those ideas through the process of creation.

Therefore, due to the creational nature of theatre, many units in my classroom will have a project-based learning format. Students will identify the material they wish to explore, and then go through the steps of the theatre creation process. They will identify themes and concepts, discuss these thoroughly with each other and myself, and then work in production team groups to build concepts for the world of the play. This gives me the opportunity to differentiate by product, allowing groups to present the material they feel best communicates their artistic vision. This also allows for a breadth of formative assessment. I can assess and give feedback on each step of the analysis and production process before the summative presentations.

My rehearsal room cannot be as content-driven as a classroom allows, but is nonetheless shaped by my belief that students should have access to a wealth of diverse material. A diverse casting pool would be ideal, as well, so that I could give them plays like August Wilson's *Fences* or José Casas' *la ofrenda (the offering)*. But I understand that such programs may not currently exist, and may need cultivation and support. I also commit to producing works with culturally relevant themes that allow students of all backgrounds to participate and offer unique perspectives on classic stories; such as an adaption of *It's a Wonderful Life* or a production of *Hairspray*. These materials allow my students to explore historical events, diverse backgrounds, and difficult situations within a safe space. With informal assessment through the rehearsal process, they learn how to respectfully discuss these situations and perform important stories that may not be their own. They will practice their critical thinking skills, and learn how to be more empathetic in the process.

This focus on student centered learning and diversity allow students the space to express themselves, and learn to listen to the ways others express themselves, too. My classroom is a training ground for empathy, and grounds for critical thinkers and informed artists to thrive. I hope my students may use these skills to be a positive force in the world, and help create the change they want to see.