

# Gabrielle L. McNeillie

## Teaching Philosophy

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It is my belief that the discipline of dance can add tremendous value to education. Students who study dance learn life lessons that assist their future success, regardless of career choice. Guiding students of dance down a path that will allow them to discover their inner artist can be an arduous journey and I believe that students need guidance in a positive and respectful manner. Therefore, I strive to create an enthusiastic and encouraging environment that fosters creativity, discipline, and a desire to learn. In order to build this positive atmosphere I incite respect and appreciate my students individually so they are able to explore their physical and mental boundaries. Gaining a better understanding of my students backgrounds through frequent assessments of both their progress and my own, allows me to tailor my classes and create lessons that will both challenge and inspire. I encourage my students to assist each other and to offer suggestions so that I may support them more efficiently. Allowing this open line of communication generates discussions that often lead to moments of clarity for both the students and the instructor. In addition, I believe a mix of positive feedback and constructive criticism is essential to any student's progress and the creation of an open and productive atmosphere.

Beyond my goals to create a positive and healthy learning environment my objectives as a dance educator are as follows;

- a) Foster critical thinking skills
- b) Facilitate the attainment of lifelong learning skills
- c) Support students in becoming active participants in the learning process
- d) Assist students in discovering their artistic voice.

Versatility in the dance world is essential and the ability to teach varying techniques is important to me. Alongside teaching movement, I have an invested interest in teaching and researching injury prevention, anatomy, and kinesiology for dancers. With this knowledge, I hope to increase my students' awareness of a mind – body connection. This greater awareness allows students to have an increased consciousness of their body, emotions, and behaviors. By integrating these ideas through imagery and exercises, I can aid students in discovering new ways to access their inner artist. My research in injury prevention and commitment to healthy teaching practices is infused throughout my classes. I incorporate anatomically sound teaching, conditioning exercises, and important warm up and cool down techniques in all my classes. This produces students who have an enhanced cognizance of their bodies and therefore a greater possibility of a longer and healthier performance career. As my students become professionals and teachers, they will extend this knowledge of healthy practices to the next generation.

As my students move on, I know that they will have the tools to be successful regardless of their chosen path. I aspire that my students will leave my tutelage with the ability to realize their full potential inside

and outside the studio through the attainment of life lessons in cooperation, collaboration, self-analyzation, and reflection. Above all I would like my students to discover a passion for the art of Dance so that it may live through them regardless of how they choose to share this passion with the world.