

# David Wynen: Teaching Philosophy

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*Good teachers demonstrate an ability to transform and extend knowledge, rather than merely transmitting it; they draw on their knowledge of the subject, their knowledge of their learners, and their general pedagogical knowledge to transform the concepts of the discipline into terms that are understandable to their students. In other words, they display their pedagogical content knowledge. ... Good teachers show respect for their students; they are interested in both their professional and their personal growth, encourage their independence, and sustain high expectations of them.*

(Ramsden, P, Margetson, D, Martin, E & Clarke, S 1995, Recognizing and rewarding good teaching in Australian higher education, Committee for the Advancement of University Teaching, Canberra).

Teaching is a value laden activity. What I teach and how I teach are an expression of the values and goals I have as an artist and educator.

Within arts, especially the performing arts, artists engage with various mediums for various reasons; whether they do this for self development, confidence and reassurance, or whether they are just drawn to artistic endeavors. As a result of education they may or may not continue into the profession or related arts practice. However, it is the drive for excellence through teaching and insistence on precision through repetition, and reflection, and practical experience that I believe artists with potential for greatness are formed. Indeed, through looking for exacting skills and precision I seek to teach practicing artists and create independent thinkers. Although theatre, especially Music Theatre often involves a designated creative brief and a very strong framework I would expect my students to understand how to engage with such work whilst developing modes of independent thinking and engaged citizenship. This philosophy comes from first-hand experience in the industry and a realization that as an artist one is in control of their own destiny and must learn correct techniques and strategies for maintaining their art within the real world constraints of an industry being driven more and more by commercial interests. I personally strive for quality in the classroom. My aim is to ensure that the graduates I have taught have the technical expertise to engage with the industry, that they achieve career longevity through correct practice and the ability to analyze and adjust such practice whilst engaging with the work and the broader community with integrity. I would also encourage them strive for continued excellence and contribute to a future industry that will strengthen and flourish on the back of their enthusiasm and drive for excellence.

I also believe that to know the future students must engage with the past and learn from the discoveries of leaders within their field. However, discovery is not only about the sheer volume of knowledge, but the quality of knowledge gained through engaging in practice driven learning and enquiry. Students also need to understand artistic differences and how to resolve such matters in a positive and collegiate manner as well as build an appreciation and awareness of diversity.

Underpinning my activities in these areas is a commitment to engaging with critical issues in learning and teaching and aligning these with creative arts practice. In

summary, these issues relate to the: development of students' approach to, and understanding of, art and culture; fostering of intellectual independence and integrity; students' knowledge and understanding of the responsibilities of responsible and engaged citizenship; and the embedding of graduate attributes into the curricula taught. On this final point I demonstrate a strong commitment to the development of "graduates with knowledge, skills and competence that enable them to stand out as capable and continuous learners who are self-reliant, ethical and engaged citizens"

*The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires. – William Arthur Ward*

# David Wynen: Teaching Statement

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Teaching has been the mainstay of much of my career. In quite straightforward terms teaching is my passion as I very much enjoy working with people who are keen to learn, but am also very willing to take on the challenge of encouraging those who are perhaps less keen! Through actively engaging students I strive to provide them with the means to access, process and learn material that is relevant, challenging and inspiring.

I have an excellent track record and receive outstanding student and peer feedback. Further I believe that my learning and teaching is, and has always been, focused on developing and writing, and delivering courses that influence, motivate and inspire students to learn. I ensure currency and relevance of the curricula and resources and have a deep knowledge of the discipline of theatre, dance and music. I am conscious that I work for continuous improvement so that, for example, assessment tasks and teacher feedback are designed to foster independent learning. In essence I see myself as a reflective practitioner and work to ensure that teaching and learning activities, both in terms of my undergraduate teaching and public performance outcomes, are of the highest order. Student Evaluation surveys have been utilized wherever I have worked but I also incorporate a range of more informal feedback opportunities during each course. This survey feedback, and the ongoing evaluation in class, has allowed me to improve my teaching and the courses over time.

Course improvements are influenced by Student Feedback and my awareness of the principles of sound curriculum design and assessment. In order to deal with the diversity of experience and levels of achievement of students the courses include a range of streamed activities based on developing essential skills that then feed into the larger required task of creating full- scale performances. I ensure that all tasks are meaningful in the context of the course, and indeed the program outcomes.

I have had leadership experience in the development, implementation, coordination and evaluation of performing arts programs. This has involved an in-depth understanding and consideration of the programs concerned in terms of scope, demand, currency, bench marking and other measures of strengths and weaknesses. I have lectured and tutored in a broad range of courses including: Tap, Jazz, Music Theatre Dance, Music Theatre History and Performance Project. I have also produced, directed and choreographed full-scale main stage productions.

Additionally, I have authored new music theatre programs and written course materials for all subject areas including: acting, singing, dance, voice, critical studies, music theory, professional practice and project placement. Throughout my teaching career I have mentored other teaching staff, acted as moderator, and delivered courses by distance mode. I have also taught collaboratively in short courses and programs such as folio preparation courses and audition workshops.

