

# CYNTHIA DUFAULT ERNESTI

**Address:** Dürrnbergerstraße 5, A-4020 Linz **Mobile:** +43(0)660 3230552 **Email:** c\_dufault@hotmail.com



Photo by Cynthia DuFault Ernesti, SUNY Potsdam

## Statement on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) + Belonging

I strive to create learning environments in which all students can develop essential life skills and experience the true joy of learning and dancing, regardless of racial or gender identity, social or class status, ethnic background or country of origin, range of emotion or physical abilities, or any other classification. This is how students discover new insight, feed their creative spirit, and access that part of themselves that is deeply ingrained in their DNA. The content below describes how I translate the IDEA+Belonging components, personally, in my teaching, and through my artistic work.

**INCLUSION** – (Presence) It provides equal access to opportunities and resources by building an understanding of belonging through active engagement and dialogue. I believe every person adds value, and by welcoming and including all voices, we create a sense of shared ownership toward our work together and beyond. With an inclusive community-type atmosphere, all individuals participate in all aspects of discovery, critical thinking, and problem solving through creative and collaborative work.

**DIVERSITY** – (Individualism) It is the countless ways we are different (no two individuals are the same), while also recognizing the strong similarities that we all share. Diversity has many dimensions, including ethnicity, race, gender, age, nationality, socio-economic status, religion, sexuality, and abilities, as well as different ways of expressing, communicating, and doing things. Diversity cannot always be seen and can often go unseen. The presence of acknowledging differences (or uniqueness) continually brings value into learning and has generated deeper learners and mindful creative work.

**EQUITY** – (Fairness) I believe that it refers to fairness and justice and the quality in which it is done. Recognizing that we do not all begin from the same place, equity acknowledges and seeks to level the playing field by going above and beyond to ensure fairness in treatment, opportunity, and access to opportunities and resources. In so doing, I strive to identify and eliminate barriers that could potentially prevent the full participation of some students. Equity requires ongoing action and assessment and a consistent commitment toward respect for all.

**ACCESSIBILITY** – (Equal opportunity) Accessibility celebrates and respects everyone's individual ability and experience. Therefore, I hold myself accountable for providing high-quality instruction to all students to help them succeed as learners and grow as people. I am mindful that the way information is presented, how students may respond, the characteristics of the setting, and the timing and schedule of instruction can all play a role. As an example, I aim to provide students with information through a variety of different formats and through methods to easily access accommodations, which I found can help level the playing field, making it possible for everyone to have equal opportunity to learn, understand, participate, and interact to the full extent of one's abilities.

**BELONGING** – (Union) IDEA works together to boost learning dynamics such as discovery, creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, and innovation. IDEA also lends to creating collaborative opportunities within a respectful, safe, and community-based atmosphere for all, building morale and inspiring a union of belonging.