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Photo by Jason Hunter, SUNY Potsdam

Statement on Teaching

With enthusiasm and a positive, encouraging approach, I aim to work with students in a mindful, holistic learning environment with both physical and intellectual challenges and opportunities for creative expression. I also aim to support students in developing stronger intrapersonal abilities through critical thinking, problem-solving, reflection, and regular practice of interpersonal skills, like collaboration. This can evoke in students inquisitive thinking, research, finding understanding, and envisioning possibilities from within their bodies to outside in the world.

I also seek to provide meaningful opportunities for students to connect their experiences in dance with other aspects of their lives, with other domains of knowledge, and with their perspectives globally, while also giving opportunities for real-world learning. An example of this is viewing our physical language (dance) as aspects of our human experiences, and I believe in helping students align emotions, thoughts, and physicality through dance, whether it is for the accomplished dancer, the student new to dance, or anyone in between. By honoring individual perspectives and building a supportive, collaborative learning environment, students will connect more successfully beyond the studio walls and through individual, direct, and creative engagements. It is the idea of teaching with the bigger picture of our world in mind, and in turn, this form of learning has the potential to develop individual insight and opinion.

This methodology is informed by the joy of taking risks and emphasized through courage as a pathway towards vulnerability and creativity. I believe in the capacity of students, and success requires their investment. In so doing, I don't impose my voice on students' ideas, but rather, I help them to discover and deepen their own voices. I encourage students to activate their curiosity and experiment, question, feel, think, reflect, and communicate their experiences with honesty, compassion, fluidity, and strength. I believe that this helps them make sense of the world and the role of artists as citizens.

As an educator, I strive to maintain my own physical practice and seek additional opportunities to hone those needs. I attend professional development courses and dance workshops, and I learn from my students and colleagues on a daily basis as well as with individuals in my creative practice and academic communities. I reinforce my own excitement of movement with my students during every class, working attentively through the joy of creating and dancing. Observing students as they investigate and discover new ideas reminds me that there is always so much that dance offers. Through teaching, I am able to be a part of a learning culture, providing a nurturing and carefully planned educational environment, while passing on tools of my discoveries initiated by my mentors. Additionally, teaching dance helps connect me to the future and with the skills that will be manifested in students, even long after our time together is finished.

See further research on teaching: [Continued Appointment](https://www.cynthiadufault.org/copy-of-fall-2020) - Reflection, Syllabi, Coursework, Evaluations: <https://www.cynthiadufault.org/copy-of-fall-2020> and REMOTE: Connected Faculty Summit hosted at Arizona State University, 2020, TED-like talk on Virtual Dance Instruction: Community Hubs: <https://youtu.be/OBAwwm5HsW8>