

Rachael Swartz

EDUCATOR | SDC DIRECTOR

Teaching Philosophy

📞 330.464.8785

@ RSwartz08@gmail.com

🌐 www.RachaelSwartz.com



An Artist & Educator's Teaching Philosophy

Through my time as a Teaching Artist, Education Director and now as an Assistant Professor, I have passionately sought opportunities to guide, nurture, and sharpen the skills of our next generation of theatre professionals. Performing arts training serves as a medium for the development of life skills from cultivating better communication skills to fostering the desire to be a part of a greater whole. By providing quality arts education to **all** students and by creating bold and inclusive works, we can provide means to challenge opinions, to bolster feelings of empathy, and to create understanding for peoples and cultures to which students may otherwise never be exposed. We can ensure that these opportunities are accessible for generations to come by ensuring that current students find value in performing arts. It is essential that we train future theatre artists to continue to produce meaningful work of the highest caliber and to train future audience members to demand that of them. We can play an active hand in the education that changes lives.

We have the responsibility as artists to commit to a vastly inclusive environment; to be more rigorous in casting nontraditionally; to choosing to give voice to playwrights who have traditionally been denied having voices and by doing so, give voice to the students who need to be heard. As said by Chay Yew, artistic director of Victory Gardens Theater, in Chicago, "We can't be twenty-first-century Americans if we don't know African American, Latino, Asian, Native, and white histories and narratives. They make up our complicated collective history as citizens, as a nation, and we need to own them." Through understanding the inherent and necessary call for intersectionality within our own art form (and therefore scholarship), we can truly "to confront multiple identities and recognize the wholeness of a person," (as wisely and aptly stated in the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Project in *Nonprofit Quarterly*).

We must learn the arts through experiential based courses, through self-analysis and discovery, through permission to fail. This requires flexibility in teaching methodology, in personalized assessment and mentorship and investment in the student as an individual. This also demands an ethical and compassionate classroom where students feel safe and supported. I strive to take part in a high caliber of student mentorship - in artistry, in the business of our art, and in the craft therein. It is my goal to remove barriers between students and a lifetime of creative efforts. It is critical for me that this is modeled in high level professional engagement within my own artistry.

We must learn the arts through experiential based courses, through self-analysis and discovery, through permission to fail. This requires flexibility in teaching methodology, in personalized assessment and mentorship and investment in the student as an individual. This also demands an ethical and compassionate classroom where students feel safe and supported. I strive to take part in a high caliber of student mentorship - in artistry, in the business of our art, and in the craft therein. It is my goal to remove barriers between students and a lifetime of creative efforts. It is critical for me that this is modeled in high level professional engagement within my own artistry.

The call to create relevant and socially interesting work is particularly essential in the higher education module - we have the opportunity to reach students of all majors and career paths through quality art while demanding thought and critical social engagement next generation of artists. The overwhelming perspective is that theatre is for someone else - someone. We forget that each student's individual voice can be heard somewhere in this incredible medium, and if it not yet being heard, they have the ability to make it heard and to make that message lasting. The empowerment is truly awe-inspiring. I bring an excitement about new trends and voices in the world of theatre as well as an excitement to retell stories in inclusive ways.

I would be thrilled to bring opportunities for productions and scene work explored through a new lens, to introducing students new and exciting literature and trends, together, we can create, explore and educate. To consistently create dynamic and intellectually stimulating work, we must provide young artists with a wide variety of tools and methodologies to hone their instruments, to have the ability to effectively tell these stories that urgently need to be told (for the sake of the artist and for the sake of the world as a whole). We must help them to use their bodies and voices at maximum and healthy capacities so they may create to their fullest potential. We must provide them with positive guidance and the freedom to create works that challenge them as human beings. We must provide them with the permission to fail, to learn from their mistakes, and to stop fearing to make them. This will create bold, and game changing artists who create with a sense of reckless abandon. We must provide them with the support that they need, to mentor and guide them, and to help them find their personal voices as artists. To carve out their individual space in their art for the betterment of the artist and humanity.

**Sincerely,
Rachael Swartz**

Rachael Swartz

EDUCATOR | SDC DIRECTOR