Andrew Cao

Teaching Philosophy

Teachers are very special people. We have a unique and incredibly important opportunity to pass the knowledge and skills that we learn in our lifetime on to the next generation. As leaders, the lessons we teach and examples we give can profoundly shape what tomorrow will look like. We have a responsibility beyond the specifics of our trade to guide our students toward being the best person they can be and toward making this world better tomorrow than it is today.

This is why I am passionate about helping students achieve greatness in a positive and joyful environment. I insist on cultivating a supportive atmosphere where students are inspired to work hard, challenge themselves, and be better humans because they want to, not because they're afraid of what happens if they don't. Long after a student has graduated from under our guidance, the lessons we teach them will only continue to permeate if they have discovered and embraced their own, personal drive for greatness along the way. I maintain that the clearest path toward unlocking this drive is by teaching them how to love the journey.

In addition, I believe a great leader intentionally creates a room where every student feels proud of their uniqueness and free to be exactly who they are. We are at an important point in history where students need to know they are supported by not just words and statements, but by a demonstrated commitment to listening, learning, and most importantly, action. Please check out my "Diversity Statement" to learn more about the steps I've taken to advance diversity, access, equity, and inclusion in this way.

Each student's specific artistic skillset is also unique and must be approached with a strategy that fits their individual needs. As someone who had no experience in musical theatre or dance until late in high school, I can effectively understand and communicate with students who are just beginning their journey or whose particular strengths might be elsewhere. In fact, I might consider my skill in this area as one of my greatest assets. Conversely, I have risen to the top of my field and studied under and worked with some of the greatest actors, singers, dancers, directors, choreographers, and teachers on Broadway and in the world. These experiences allow me to offer invaluable training, insight, and perspective to more advanced students, as well. And as a performer who has made a career from succeeding in many different performing arts related areas—Broadway, television, dance, commercials, Shakespeare, choreography, print work, directing, just to name a few—I am able to relate to students coming from all different backgrounds and help them grow and develop into the best, most well-rounded artists they can be.

While it is important, being a well-rounded performer is not enough by itself. I believe it is crucial to approach a young artist's education with a substantial emphasis on crafting a reliable and sustainable business. The product we sell is ourselves: our talents, physical attributes, work ethic, reliability, creativity, knowledge, patience, perseverance, teamwork skills, etc. The more things our product provides and the more reliably our product provides them, the more likely it is that someone will need what we have to offer and take our product off the shelf. Understanding the key concepts of this business world—auditions, unions, marketing, advertising, publicity, networking, websites, social media, expenses, cash flow, taxes, etc.—is a vital element to a successful performance career. Because of my wide range of knowledge, experience, and success, I feel confident that I can guide young artists toward growing their business into one that has many branches, reaching far into the array of opportunities throughout the industry and thus increasing their chances at finding their own success in this highly competitive market.

I believe I can truly make a difference. I've taught hundreds of theatre and dance classes for tens of thousands of students of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds from all around the world and I am confident in my educational value to each and every one of them. I have been blessed with an insatiable desire for greatness which is consistently present in all that I do and every part of who I am. Regardless of the manner in which I interact with others, I know that my influence can have a tremendous impact on the world around me. I hope for the good fortune to make a difference with you some day…