

# Edie Johnson

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## Teaching Philosophy

A successful teacher helps students learn to teach themselves, grow in their self-esteem, and develop their full potential as individuals. As both a private and classroom instructor, I desire to foster each student's growth as a unique individual and not solely as a musician. The private instructor often becomes a mentor who has a lasting impact on the lives and perspectives of his or her students. I believe that a music teacher may influence students of all levels most profoundly by guiding them to listen thoughtfully, ask questions and experiment with new ideas and interpretations.

One of my main goals is to help students develop individual interpretations within a historically-informed context. When a student possesses knowledge about the historical context of a piece, contemplates a composer's true intentions and tries various interpretations within appropriate historical guidelines, he or she has the tools for powerful communication with an audience.

In addition to encouraging students to experience various interpretations, guiding students to incorporate mental rehearsal and imagery both at and away from the keyboard is an important part of my teaching style. This practice, which may be adapted to students of all levels, heightens one's awareness and makes learning and retaining music more solid and expedient. In lessons, I work closely with students on balance, posture and relaxed technique. Mental rehearsal, visualization and relaxation under pressure are also excellent tools for coping with and accepting performance anxiety. Incorporating these techniques yields a relaxed, confident performer who conveys musical meaning in a natural and convincing manner. When the body is free and balanced, the mind guides the actions and the music.

Just as a professor has a lasting impact on students, an effective teacher must be open to influences from both students and colleagues in order to grow professionally, personally and musically. I believe that the less I dictate interpretations and information to students, the more I empower them to make their own discoveries and develop a spirit of inquiry and discernment. Through this process, all of us are able to communicate more clearly and grow not just as musicians, but as thoughtful leaders. These important skills will resonate in all areas of a student's life.