

# Lauren Smith

## *Teaching Philosophy*

The art and business of theatre has a highly interdisciplinary form. The beauty of this is that the skills theatre practitioners develop practicing their craft often translate into other disciplines as well. My goal as an educator is to foster a form of critical thinking that allows students to always find the practical application of what they are learning. This is whether it is related specifically to their career and employability, goals they may have for their personal life, or even the now infamous "adulting".

In higher education, we are tasked with teaching students how to think for themselves, rather than regurgitate knowledge for a test score. Often I believe that this can begin in hands on disciplines, because the thought of being able to make something with one's own hands sparks interest for many. A student who is able to follow a dye recipe in safely and successfully in the craft room, should also be more than capable of applying those skills to cook a meal for themselves and vice versa. Students who have already taken stage craft should have no difficulty measuring/marking/ and cutting fabric because the principles are the same, only the tools and materials have changed.

Learning how to make those connections is crucial to getting the most out of a higher education. Making connections, is not just important for the students but important for me when I teach. I prefer to adapt as necessary with a combination of lecture, visual aids, and hands on projects. I believe that I cannot teach my students how to adapt if I am unable to do so myself. When the slip stitch becomes "finger choreography" for a dancer and a pattern piece becomes a "pants blueprint" suddenly someone who is nervous about learning to sew automatically feels more comfortable and confident in their abilities and will retain the information given to them better.

As an educator, my wish is to not only teach my students everything I can, but learn everything I can from them as well. By creating an environment where someone can not only learn to think independently, but develop confidence in their own thoughts and abilities, I believe we can foster a desire for learning that will be used far beyond the classroom.