# **Denise J. Murphy**

# Teaching Statement

# As a student, my most vital learning experiences were those in which I became immersed in a supportive learning community, one that fostered respect and encouraged openness to new ideas and left me with a deep sense of curiosity. Drawing on my education, teaching experiences and independent creative and scholarly research, I shape my experiences with students in order to nurture individual growth within a community.

# I believe students must develop skills to think critically about their technical and scholarly work and discover ways to engage with the world by appreciating differences and exchanging ideas. I encourage them to become critical readers, thinkers and writers, as well as, critical dancers, performers, educators and choreographers. It is my goal in the technique and theory classroom to develop their intellectual engagement with material and help them cultivate both a reflective and reflexive relationship with their education. In both theory and practice courses, I recognize the importance of understanding diversity within the class and engage multiple learning styles in order to connect individually with students. I am an adaptive teacher, using questions and observations to influence the structure of my courses.

# In studio practice, I promote inner awareness so students may develop an active understanding of their bodies. My contemporary/modern class is informed by my training in techniques such as Graham, Limon, Horton, Cunningham and Hawkins and a variety of release approaches to contemporary dance. My movement style draws on the use of breath, momentum, velocity, and weight while encouraging regular self-reflection in the practice.

# I seek to model strong and effective communication, sincerity and trust, enthusiasm for dance and openness to ideas and questions. I greatly value a diverse population and endeavor to always create an environment where students feel comfortable asking questions and sharing ideas. Dialogue amongst students is essential to their learning and it is my mission to ensure students approach discussions with reciprocity, listening to and respecting diverse opinions. I believe that discourse comes in multiple forms and as such create assignments that require students to engage with one another through writing, speaking and moving.

Inclusivity is deeply rooted in my creative and scholarly work. Having worked and taught in some of the most diverse schools of dance, it has become a priority to embody and practice inclusion in all my work, recognizing my individual responsibility to understand my students and instill respect and empathy amongst the members of the communities I am a part of.

As a teacher and artist, it is essential that I continually immerse myself in communities willing to work across disciplines to study contemporary practices and cultivate the further development of learning and creative environments. My philosophy of dance education has been strongly influenced by my experiences as both a dancer and teacher in diverse communities. I do not expect my philosophy to remain static, but rather envision it as a design in motion. I take great pride in continuing my education and expect my philosophy will grow through research and experiential work in the field of dance. This will enable me to bring new concepts to my class and further develop my philosophies and goals as a dancer educator.