In today's school systems, we as educators are facing a generation that primarily relies on media for their information. Often times children lose such important skills as differentiation, comprehension, and synthesis, because the answers to almost any questions are right at their fingertips. We as educators now have unique jobs that not only require us to be skilled in our field of specialization, but also to be empathetic to children in chaotic home situations, children who have cultural barriers that stand in the way of personal growth, and their own electronic lives, of which many are not yet psychologically capable of handling on their own.

When teaching music, educators are more likely to have a majority of the student population in their supervision at one point or another. Because of this, we have a greater responsibility to help create not only great musicians, but great people. Teachers of all fields should strive to teach students the pertinent content within that field, but also teach how the students can use the content they learn to become great citizens of the world.

In the past, my main musical philosophy focused around promoting music programs within our schools. However, now that I am an experienced teacher and in graduate school, my focus has turned more to the advocacy of teaching character and cultural sensitivity within the music program and school district. I believe every teacher, whether a music teacher, or a general education teacher, can use music to reach their students. I also believe that teaching children about their own cultures and the sub-cultures within them. When we utilize music as the tool to accomplish this, will help students in the world at large become more culturally aware, understanding of the differences (and likeness) of the people around them.
I believe that music is a social tool. Many public events are centered around music, or have musical elements within them. As advocates for music, people within musical professions have unique opportunities to use their skills of responsibility, creativity, and personal professionalism to reach out to organizations within the community. Music teachers are constantly at public venues and in social situations, perhaps even more than most other professions. As professional people, musicians should hold themselves to higher professional standards than are expected from the non-musician, or those in less high profile professions. When we carry ourselves with professionalism and dignity, we set an example for those around us.

Music is a wonderful way to teach self-efficacy to anyone. As professional musicians and teachers, we have an obligation to help people (young and old) within the community learn about music. Although we all may have different musical tastes, it is my belief that every person is capable of appreciating all types of music. Teaching people how to appreciate all musical styles links to cultural sensitivity. When people value others, they tend to be more appreciative and proud of their own accomplishments and the accomplishments of those around them.

As a music teacher, I teach these sensitivities and appreciations through exercises such as classroom sharing and reflective listening. Allowing students to share their own musical heritage not only allows students to differentiate between their lives and the lives of those around them, but helps them connect with their own family and develop a healthy social understanding. Eventually, students will be overall more responsible, creative, and sensitive people, learning to care about others. Through providing musical examples from different cultures and genre and allowing students to access the differentiating,
processing, and synthesizing areas of the brain, we are teaching students to think in a “whole world” mind-set, rather than a “my world” mind-set.

Music belongs to the humanities, and as such, should be centered around creating a meaningful appreciation of the musical art form, developing an appreciation for all other art forms, and used functionally to help our students learn about their own strengths and weaknesses. In doing so, this will teach students to reflect upon their own life situations and come to reasonable conclusions about who they are and what type of future they would like to achieve.