

## JACQUIE SOCHACKI PITTMAN

### Teaching Philosophy

I support and motivate students to utilize their creativity, imagination and educational inquiry through their physical expression in movement classes. I ensure that every class has focus and awareness, balanced with honesty, openness and laughter. I promote an inclusive and equitable environment for students, and encourage them to understand and communicate their unique learning style and needs. I believe dance education is for people of all ages and abilities, and I promote the recognition and utilization of students' prior knowledge of dance while teaching movement practices.

In each movement-focused and theoretical course, I invite students' ideas to be shared. I facilitate scaffolding for constructive and respectful dialogue through a student-created community agreement that we generate at the beginning of each course. I actively cultivate and respect the value of community among students and myself. I recognize that personal connections among students and educators provide space for vulnerability and deep creativity while exploring dance forms in higher education. I begin every class and rehearsal with a verbal, written or kinesthetic group check-in dedicated to measuring how dancers are emotionally, mentally, and physically coping. We then share this information with each other in order to be emotionally inclusive and aware of how to best learn and work together. This process also allows dancers to look at their time spent in class not only as a time to learn, but also as a time to process their emotions and thoughts through their kinesthetic explorations.

My teaching approach balances attentiveness between students' physical and mental relationship with movement. I frequently incorporate breathing exercises, body awareness, and injury prevention interwoven with anatomy visualizations to encourage students to cultivate a deeper understanding of themselves. I accompany students' search for kinesthetic knowledge with dance theory and history discussions where we research and answer questions like the following: how can we effectively de-center Whiteness in dance history, theory and movement studies, how can we decolonize our physical movement and rehearsal processes, how do current events affect our physical bodies, and how can we be fully present in the learning opportunities that are offered to us?

I practice direct, honest communication with students and colleagues, and I actively search for artistic collaborators, whether that is with other professional artists or with students. With continued self-evaluation, I strive to continually grow as an educator, dancer, artist and citizen. I believe that collaboration among diverse people allows for the strongest creativity to occur. All of my pedagogical strategies are dedicated to creating a more inclusive, holistic dance education system that continues to benefit each student long after they complete their degree.