

## **Diversity Statement**

In Brazil, my home country, population diversity is a critical issue since we have a very complex ethnic composition and unjust income distribution among our population. By adding these factors alongside the population's instruction level, the diversity of Brazil's population becomes massive, with part of the citizens below the poverty line and functionally illiterate. Brasília, the city where I am based, has an extra diversity factor. As it was built from 1955 to 1960, right at the center of the country, Brasília received workers from many regions, which created its population with unique cultural diversity. Moreover, teaching in a Brazilian public university, which does not charge tuition and fees, it is common to have to deal with diversity in every class, even more in a field that is not financially attractive such as music.

For the past 26 years, I have been learning how to deal with this situation in all my classrooms. A few students would come to school in their car, with a well-crafted musical instrument, up-to-date computer, and expensive music software and apps installed on it. However, most students would travel by bus and have a standard musical instrument when they have it, dated computers, and no access to music software and apps. This situation made me construct strategies and redirect my goals so, students could develop a deep understanding of music, a good instrument technique, and connect with their audience, besides becoming a future music teacher.

My diversity philosophy stands by giving support to the ones that would need extra time and assistance by feeding them with cultural, technical, and historical information that will enhance their learning and contribute to their whole formation. One of the basic exercises that I utilize is exposing them to performances and historical facts attached to the studied subject. Listening is a crucial musical skill that should be stimulated and trained. Most students that come to a university-level course in music have insufficient ear training due to the lack of formal music education programs in schools. Through developing their audition, students will be able to understand music better and improve their skills. Additionally, I encourage them to share their

previous musical and non-musical experiences with colleagues, which allows them to develop a sensation of belonging that is crucial in a teaching and learning environment.

My goal is to reach every student, no matter their socio-economic, cultural, or ethnic background, and help them feel like part of a group, where their experiences and values would be respected and admired by all participants.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, sweeping 'A' shape with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Vadim Arsky