

Summary Observation Report

Faculty observed: Dr. Brianne Borden

Faculty observer: Professor Heather Wheeler

Class: Musicians' Wellness

Date: November 17, 2022

- For this Musicians' Wellness class, approximately 20 students were in attendance, sitting in a circle in one of the Crane large rehearsal halls. Dr. Borden started the hour with a "temperature check" of the class: one by one, each person rated their mood, and if they wanted, the reason for their chosen rating. Throughout this process, the class offered feedback and affirmations to each other, creating an open and safe space to share.
- Dr. Borden reminded the class that their *Integrating Wellness into the Classroom* project proposals were due on Monday. She opened the floor to questions and invited students to workshop their ideas with the class. Students freely shared their proposals and brainstormed creative ideas and solutions to each other's project dilemmas. Throughout this process students were supportive and engaged and showed excitement with each other's ideas.
- Dr. Borden moved on to discuss *Integrating Wellness into your Practice* and the avoidance of nervous system elevation during practice sessions (techniques originally designed to combat performance anxiety). She spent the next several minutes guiding students through a routine they could integrate into their daily practice plan:
 - Dr. Borden started by guiding students through a relaxation/deep breathing exercise, leading them through finding a relaxed stance, inhaling/exhaling through the mouth and nose, gently rotating the head, and finding a centered seated position. She finished with a mini meditation, then asked students to set an intention for music making.
 - Dr. Borden asked for a quick tune of students' instruments and followed with a Bumble Bee Breath Exercise: students covered their nose and ears and hummed on concert F with teeth barely touching, creating a buzzing sensation in the body. Dr. Borden followed with several sets of 8 beats of intentional inhalation/exhalation, alternating with 8 beats of playing concert F on instruments, ascending and descending by half steps.
 - Dr. Borden asked students to be mindful of how they felt in their bodies, and how their approach to playing their instruments may (or may not) have changed throughout this exercise. She finished with some deep breathing and then invited the class to reflect openly about the process. In general, students were relaxed and found the exercise to be quite beneficial.
- Dr. Borden concluded by guiding the class through an Anxiety Friend Exercise. With feet flat on the ground, and relaxed shoulders, she asked students to close their eyes or look down at the ground with an unfocused gaze and:
 - recognize that we all deal with performance anxiety;
 - imagine what their performance anxiety feels like when they are experiencing it;
 - create an image for their performance anxiety, giving it color, size, shape, a disposition...
 - name their performance anxiety;
 - imagine their performance anxiety was a friend, and as with all friends, recognize that they need to set boundaries;
 - imagine they were in charge of the power dynamic with their performance anxiety "friend". Dr Borden gave examples of how anxiety might try to take over in daily situations or performances. She suggested that students' intrusive thoughts on stage don't originate from them but from their anxiety "friend", and that setting boundaries with their anxiety "friend" can help them feel a sense of control.
 - Dr. Borden ended this exercise with some guided breathing, and students were invited to share their anxiety's name and image with the class.

Dr. Borden appeared to have a wonderful rapport with her students, and it was clear she had established a classroom atmosphere that was safe, welcoming, and supportive. Class activities were well paced and relevant. The experiential nature of her class was clearly beneficial, and all students in the room were given multiple opportunities throughout class to participate both verbally and physically and at their level of comfort.