Although I have taught in many teaching environments, from private lessons to large lecture halls, third graders to graduate students, music majors to non-music majors, my focus remains to teach students by meeting them where they are in terms of knowledge and leading them to become independent learners, without overwhelming them with information. My approach is indeed student-centered, and by giving them the tools to help them describe music and what they are hearing, I hope to encourage them to think beyond what is written in a textbook or an article and consider their own positionality to the music.

Teaching in a large-lecture format with students who have no musical background alongside those who are music majors can create an unusual environment, especially considering my teaching goals. Providing all students with vocabulary and concepts that they can use in discussion is one way to give everyone the same groundwork to start and to communicate with each other, no matter their musical education background. In my Music Videos course, I assign several readings from a variety of scholars who have established ways of describing types of music videos that consider the aural and the visual elements together rather than separate entities. By establishing this groundwork, all my students can communicate with each other using language and terms familiar to everyone. In the music history sequence that I TAed for, I guided students in creating a Frayer diagram to help contextualize new words and concepts. This activity involved students writing a word in the center of a piece of paper, then dividing the page into four quadrants. In one of the quadrants, students wrote the exact definition of the word. In the next quadrant, I asked them to write characteristics of the word. In another quadrant, I asked them to list examples of the word. For example, when we were making a diagram for polyphony, students would write examples of pieces that we studied that were polyphonic. In the last quadrant, I told them to write non-examples of the term – to use the above example, they could write in homophony. Students can add to these diagrams when we listen to more pieces throughout the semester. Once students are used to creating these documents for studying, they are now able to create Frayer diagrams for other words or concepts they have problems remembering in other classes.

One of my goals is to provide space for students reach out for help. I have recently adopted a new-to-me practice for the first day of class. Before I even dive into the minutia of my syllabus, I ask all students to send me an email introducing themselves to me, including how they wish to be named in class, their pronouns, what they are most excited about learning in class, and a favorite picture of themselves. After class, I go back to read and respond to each student's email. This activity establishes several things. Students now have my email address and know that they can send me an email and that I will respond to them in a timely manner. Although I ask them to attach a favorite picture of themselves to better remember everyone's name, I have found that students will select photos that best represent their personalities or identities. I note in my syllabus that I have a flexible extension and attendance policy, but the students must communicate with me beforehand. This email activity establishes a line of communication for the student and encourages them to reach out for help. I have found that my students are more willing to let me know if they will be running late or if something has come up instead of simply not showing up to class.

Honing my students' listening skills and then learning how to write about what they are hearing is an important aspect of understanding music, no matter if students can read music or not. I incorporate ways of thinking about how music and moving image media interact with each other. For example, in a film music class designed for music majors and non-music majors, I selected four or five musical themes in a film. In addition to playing these excerpts in class, I gave students access to these recordings and asked them to listen to these the week before showing the film in class. I had my students fill out cue sheets while they watched the film in class, noting the time, the leitmotif they heard, and a short description of the scene. Obviously, I did not expect my students to note each and every time themes are heard, but I wanted to make them more aware of the soundtrack and show them how much the music and the visuals are closely related in films.

In music history classrooms, I have found that even music majors sometimes struggle to listen to early music. In my discussion sections, I provided them with one or two musical elements to listen to – perhaps it was the way a composer resolves dissonance or the tenor line having the main melody in an organum or how the piano line is repeating earlier thematic material from the violin. I also recommended them to write details about the piece itself on mini Post-It notes to be put in their scores. For example, I pointed out the first instance of hocket in a composition, then asked students to identify other places in the piece where the hocket is heard. This activity provides them with another musical element to hone in on when they listen to the recording outside the classroom. I do not support the idea of students listening to pieces that will be on an exam on endless repeat or as background noise while they are studying. By having students interact with the score, they will get used to examining the score *while* they listen to the piece, and they will know what they are looking and listening for and why.

Teaching music provides me the opportunity to vary modes of instruction within a single class session to keep students interested in learning. I switch from talking, playing musical examples, and encouraging discussions with my students. I often implement "Think-Pair-Share" even in a large classroom of eighty music history students. I have students first write down their initial thoughts, discuss these thoughts with a few other classmates, and then have someone from their group share their findings with the whole class. For example, in a lecture about Don Giovanni, I shared with them a variety of directors' visions for Mozart's opera, from historical to modern interpretations. I then asked them to put themselves in a director's shoes and think about how they would put on a production in 2019 and how they would change (or not) certain scenes in the wake of the "Me Too" movement. They then separated into groups and discussed these points. I noticed that even students who were usually quiet became animated while talking about what they had written down, and I hoped that they felt more comfortable sharing their ideas since they had formulated them ahead of time.

My student-centered approach with a focus on not overwhelming students with information has guided how I teach. I truly want my students to feel as though they have a complete understanding of the subject material. By structuring my courses and lessons around this goal while encouraging independent learning, I hope that my students develop an appreciation on a subject that may have once been entirely unknown to them and will continue expanding on their knowledge even after they are finished taking my class.