

## **TEACHING PHILOSOPHY**

The power of language has always intrigued me, and I have a passion for exploring this concept with others. Language is so much more than just vocabulary and grammar. A new language can open a different world—be it literary through reading or cultural through traveling. As a trilingual language teacher, I see myself as a mediator between different cultures, helping to convey thoughts rather than words. By speaking German, English, and Spanish, I can immerse myself into a huge spectrum of cultures, traditions, and people, and explore the connections within that diversity. My students and I embark together on this journey of negotiating meanings, interpreting texts, and understanding new ideas. Each language has its own unique way of expression. Personally, I find untranslatable expressions to be the most intriguing part of a language, and they serve as perfect examples for my students to learn how language is used differently in different cultures. Teaching a second language is a fruitful cultural exchange, where I can always discover new ways of reading and speaking. I enjoy conveying the etymological history of a compound word, the double-sense of a bon mot, the emotions of a poem, the wordplay of a song lyric, or the irony of a remark. In short, I love sharing with my students my experience of being immersed in the new culture of a foreign language.

My teaching philosophy is based on my experiences learning different languages and living in different countries. As a life-long language learner, I empathize with my students' initial struggle—the confusion of grasping a challenging grammatical structure, a new pronunciation, and/or a different communication style. It is my responsibility to work with my students' strengths and support their individual differences in order to prepare them for a study-abroad, pen-pal, family, or work experience in Germany. Being immersed in a foreign culture is the best way to master a new language. That being said, my students need to feel comfortable speaking in order to get the most out of their experience abroad. To reach this goal, I strive to create a joyful, comfortable, and open teaching atmosphere where everyone

can ask questions. In addition, I teach with various audio and video resources: German movie scenes, social media clips, and sing-along songs, for example. My students participate in phone calls to Germany, and I sometimes bring in German-speaking friends with whom they can interact. Furthermore, I suggest different mnemonic devices to make their studying more efficient, such as color techniques, tables, rhymes, and “Eselsbrücken.”

In this globalized and digitized world, different cultures and languages come closer together. While we may all be connected via the internet and increased mobility, we still have many language barriers to overcome. Given the heterogeneity of cultural backgrounds in a foreign language classroom, it is important to provide students with tools to navigate various cultural language usage. For example, it is essential for students to differentiate between oral and written language use in a colloquial chat or a skype interview. One of my goals as an educator is to teach my students how to master the distinctions between accuracy and appropriateness of language. This knowledge will help them during their travels abroad by smoothing out the transitions between colloquial and professional language use.

I strive to teach an authentic use of language and give my students the problem-solving abilities to be independent. They are encouraged to reflect on their initial cultural stereotypes about a foreign language and to keep track of their learning and thinking progress. The goal is for them to overcome their prejudices and enjoy the advantages of learning a new language. In our multilingual world it is important to value the uniqueness of each language and the connection between language and culture. Language is always evolving, and young people are the source for new language usage. Therefore, working as an instructor has also provided me with a variety of opportunities to learn from my students.