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Teaching Philosophy

My teaching philosophy has always been centered on what I describe as my “three-I” system: inspire, impart, and impact. As a Spanish instructor, I focus on creating a safe and engaging place where my students feel like they can succeed at acquiring Spanish as a second language. As it is often said, students succeed when they feel like they belong in the classroom. I also focus on creating pedagogical materials that facilitate performance development.

Second language acquisition, a process that may appear simple, is a complex one. Language is not the only part of this multifaceted process. Culture, subject matter, human relationships, learner attitude, motivation, age, and personality are some factors that contribute significantly to it. For my students to use language as a meaning-making resource, it is imperative that they understand that language thrives in culture, and, by extension, in daily social interactions with people. I teach them Spanish by guiding them to identify different types of real-life contexts in which we use language. I also guide them to be cognizant of relationships that exist between interactants, and the various types of texts that can be produced from them.

I tend to use a variety of different teaching techniques and approaches in my classroom, but my go-to approach is the PACE (Presentation, Attention, Co-construction & Extension) model. I use this model to teach grammatical concepts to my students in Beginning Spanish I. Unlike the traditional call and response format for teaching grammar, the PACE model allows students to engage with grammar through story-telling, giving them the opportunity to be exposed to and use their L2, and, in that way, be active participants in the classroom. I use the model to introduce grammar using interpretive texts, first with an emphasis on both comprehension and interpretation. Once texts are understood, our focus moves to attention to form. After this is done, students are placed in groups, and they are guided to reflect on the forms present in the text. For example, they focus on consistencies, and then make predictions on the grammatical concept being discussed, thus making them co-constructors of grammatical conceptualizations. After this, they apply the new grammatical concept to the completion of different communicative tasks.

My teaching style facilitates classroom participation, specifically in the three modes of communication as established by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), i.e. interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational. By engaging in classroom activities, my students learn to work in groups, thus, taking advantage of the opportunity to learn from their colleagues. In addition to facilitating classroom participation, my teaching style helps students learn by involving them in the process of knowledge creation, making them co-constructors of knowledge. Also, students not only learn how to approach collaborative work, but also to be tolerant and respectful. These two virtues contribute to maintaining the classroom space as an engaging, safe, welcoming, and enriching learning environment.

To develop myself as a language teacher, I commit to attending L2-pedagogy workshops, seminars, and presentations on and off campus. I also learn from other instructors when I informally observe their classes. I also commit to reading materials related to L2 pedagogy and incorporating my takeaways into my teaching.