

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

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Some students enroll in a foreign language class because they know somebody who knows the language, others know something about the culture and desire to learn more, while others live in the country and need to learn the language in order to succeed. At first, they are excited and are willing to put forth the effort to learn, but, in time, the challenging nature of language courses becomes overwhelming for some. As an instructor, I believe it is my responsibility to help students stay motivated, encourage them, and help them become lifelong learners. From the beginning of the semester, I want my students to know that they can be successful. Once they have that confidence, I try to use it towards gaining real knowledge of the language. As I teach, my goal is to create an environment that is conducive to learning, fun and engaging.

Motivation plays an important role in determining how a student performs in a language course. In my classes, it begins on day one. On that day, I usually walk around the class introducing myself in the target language. I then encourage my students to do the same. Through my smiles and thumbs up, I let them know that they succeeded and that they will continue to do so throughout the semester. The use of technology in my classroom has also become an important tool in motivating students to continue learning. For example, we watch videos and listen to music that explore the cultural aspect of the language. This gives the students a broader appreciation for the language since it becomes more than a classroom discussion. It increases the students' motivation to continue learning.

My experience as a student of languages showed me how important encouragement can be in the learning process. In my teaching, I have used many types of encouragement that have proved effective. Sometimes it is a smile. Other times, students just need a little more one-on-one help outside of class. I strive to encourage my students to become independent learners as I believe learning is mostly done outside the classroom. I typically draw on the board, show pictures on the internet, or even act out the definition of a new word instead of simply giving them the English equivalent. This creates a more relaxed atmosphere that encourages them to use the target language and helps them feel less nervous about making mistakes.

My expectations for my students help them become lifelong learners. One principal expectation is that they do not rely solely on me for answers to questions, but that they try to find those answers themselves. One way is by participating in study groups and in campus activities that are created for that purpose. Also, they can learn new words and phrases on their own and draw parallels with what they learn from their teacher.

In my classroom, I try to create an environment that will offer my students the same enthusiasm and passion that I have for learning foreign languages. I strive to provide them with the tools that will enable them to continue to learn on their own. I love seeing the satisfaction on my students' faces when they are able to communicate in the target language without any help from me. I love their excitement when they discover that they can succeed.