

Teaching Philosophy for Spanish Classes

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Education should be obtained in a safe and engaging environment. To achieve this, I find the following three characteristics to be essential: 1) student-centered approach that considers individual needs, 2) intrinsic motivation stimulated through real life tasks, 3) and a constant use of Spanish. To attain this, the incorporation of technology is fundamental.

My classroom is always student-centered. That is to say, I like to serve as a facilitator while the students inquire and seek for information gaps. Group collaboration and activities are fundamental component in my philosophy of teaching, whether they are introductory or advanced Spanish courses for L2 or Heritage Learner students. Role-playing-debates, and group discussions are some of the dynamics I promote in class. Student general comments about these types of activities is that they feel more confident practicing Spanish and sharing their ideas with a smaller group before class discussion. I strongly believe that collective work makes students active rather than passive learners. This allows the, to develop and reinforce social skills as well as other important aptitudes such as negotiation, communication, and the ability to share diverse perspectives. To obtain this, I rely on teaching methods such as the Communicative Approach as well as the Total Physical Response (TPR), among others, and consider ACTFL's 5C' standards.

I understand the importance of teaching with different styles so everyone can benefit from their own learning abilities. For this reason, I incorporate visual, auditory, and kinesthetic activities in every lesson plan, including but not limited to: online videos, satellite maps, music, movie clips, art, and everyday objects. I promote students' creativity and imagination in every activity I assigned, as I believe this can benefit in their learning process as they are innovating.

I consider the most meaningful learning experience to be that where students add a personal meaning to the class activities, which in turn enhances their intrinsic motivation. I believe this motivation is central to their self-determination and autonomy. With this in mind, I design my class activities with real-life situations where students must use their communicative abilities to succeed. This is a relevant component with Heritage students since at all times their prior knowledge and their cultural and emotional relationship with the language is validated.

In my advanced Spanish classes, I implement blog posts led by students to initiate a dialog among them prior to class, which then facilitates in-class discussions. Students have also been responsible to create or correct Wikipedia entries, after a long process of research, and review approved by me. To practice communicative and listening skills, I often require the students to record podcasts that they develop in groups and share with the rest of the class before discussing them.

My teaching philosophy is constantly evolving, since I believe there is always something new to learn that can be put into practice. This includes new technology development, pedagogical approaches, and equally important, student's feedback.