

Teaching Philosophy

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As Abigail Adams once said, “Learning is not attained by chance; it must be sought for with ardor and attained to with diligence.” Just as students learn with ardor and diligence, the art of teaching is also learned with ardor and diligence. Such excellence is achieved by relentlessly striving for authenticity in teaching, reflecting critically, and holding students accountable for their personal bests.

Authenticity in foreign language instruction comes from an intimate and thorough knowledge of the subject material. This allows for a certain flexibility and spontaneity in instruction. Instructors who have been radically transformed by the culture and language that they teach are passionate about sharing this knowledge with their students. Such instructors, confident in their knowledge, do not cling to textbooks or pre-made materials. They are enthusiastic about teachable moments and are eager to incorporate new materials or resources into their curriculum. They embrace successful teaching methodologies and discard the ineffective, regardless of their trendiness or pretentiousness, with intuitive acumen for success.

Critical self-reflection is key to adapting instruction to meet the needs of all students. The expert instructor takes self-reflection seriously and continually records, evaluates and responds to the events that take place in the classroom. Through self-reflection, activities are discarded, improved upon, or perfected for future student gain.

Students who are challenged and held accountable for their performance become good language learners who can independently continue their growth outside of the classroom. Like Vygotsky, I believe that students should be taught by scaffolding instruction slightly above their

current level of ability as this mirrors the initial acquisition of their mother tongue. Students should consistently be pushed to reach the next level in their language abilities which will help them develop implicit procedural knowledge and explicit metalinguistic strategies that will be necessary in their pursuit of the ever-elusive abilities of the “native-like speaker”.

The next generation deserves, and will demand, an education that will help them excel locally and globally. To achieve this, instructors must have strong content area knowledge and the ability to facilitate the language acquisition process through the use of meaningful tasks and authentic resources. Through continuous self-reflection and adaption to student and situational needs instructors must constantly evolve and grow as is the natural course of development and progression. And, most importantly, instructors should demand and encourage all students to strive with ardor and diligence to reach their personal best.