

PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING

Often language teachers get caught in using surface examples when studying a country's culture. I believe that it is imperative to utilize our position to teach beyond the stereotypical lessons of food and dance to help illuminate the underlying perspectives of all races and ethnicities that live in the countries that my class is exploring. By creating a classroom atmosphere of inquiry, I can push my students to investigate beyond that which is surface and delve deep into the very contents and contexts of culture, history, and identity. I want to create multidimensional projects that guide students to deeper questions that allow them to understand their own place in the world first, so that they can then intellectually and academically make comparisons. This creates an honest connection between the lesson and the students. I'm not afraid to ask the hard questions. I feel that I have a unique position to change the narratives that our students are often fed and give voice to lost artifacts, people, places, and languages, so that I can help our students evolve into accepting, loving, and intellectually curious citizens of the world.

I also want to teach with joy. I have been in the classroom for over twenty years now, in one facet or another. I have taught all levels of Spanish, and am also an English teacher who has had the pleasure of teaching Creative Writing and Public Speaking and will teach AP Seminar next year. No matter the subject matter that I am teaching, joy is of the utmost importance. If I demonstrate that I find excitement and enjoyment in the learning process, I hope that it then becomes contagious. And it does. I'm a fool in front of the class (or in front of the computer) and am willing to show my real self to students. I don't put up a facade; I let them see me for me. I then do the same for them. This level of relationship with students helps them feel safe and free to move forward in their studies. I make mistakes and apologize. I ask for grace. I open the dialogue so that they too can fumble, trip, and ask for forgiveness as well. Then we all get up,

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brush ourselves off, laugh at ourselves, if necessary, and move forward. Life is funny, hard, and everything in between. I want them to see that I experience those things as well.

This then lends itself to the idea of leading by example. I want my students to be ambitious in what they want, but delve deeply into their own ideas of what success looks like to them and evaluate if these ideas align with their ultimate goals of their place in the world and who they want to be as people. I want my students to see that the way in which they approach their studies ultimately is a reflection of how they will react to the world. I want them to see the big picture while understanding the intricacies that create it. I want them to find awe in the details and the vastness. If it's verb conjugation, it links to how humans understand time and people; if it's in-text citations, it links to the thousands of years of humans gathering knowledge and giving voice to those that completed such a service. Each and every detail is an articulation of the expanse of human knowledge. Yeah, they may hate doing noun/adjective agreements, but if I lay the foundation that they are building bridges in their brains that will let them see the universe, then perhaps that is something.

Oh, and we will probably be playing some sort of game and laughing while we do it. And I'll most likely make myself snort while giggling.