

## Teaching Statement

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*“I really enjoyed the wide variety of topics that we went over in class, especially in regard to addressing recent events. It was interesting to learn about different cultures' perspectives on different events, and having to discuss them in French helped me to understand French better.” Student in FREN 2030 -Spring 2016*

*“I like that this course provided us with experiences that are useful in other contexts outside the class. The class has a professional atmosphere so the students were expected to act and speak in such a manner that is acceptable in different situations” Student in FREN 4150 – Summer 2016*

Research has shown that the communicative language teaching method is the most adequate for students to speak the target language, to learn about cultural components and to retain information in the interpersonal phase of learning. Having learned from teaching in a French immersion school and at two different college institutions as instructor of record, I will describe what a typical day in my French classroom looks like, the assessment techniques I have developed for lower and higher-level courses and how I use technology inside and outside the classroom.

A typical day in my classroom starts with French music from a YouTube playlist that my former students and I put together. This seemingly-superfluous gesture has three concrete objectives. (1) It fits in the **realia and cultural components** of class. Students get to hear what French people of their age listen to, what a genre they like, such as rap, pop rock, or jazz might sound like in French, creating in them a desire to learn more about those kinds of music. (2) It immerses the student right away in French. The moment they step in my classroom, they step into the French and Francophone **immersion**, allowing their thoughts to slowly switch gear towards speaking French. This practice has been a successful one, as students have often mentioned it in their evaluations, so did my language supervisors. (3) It is another way to create **a sense of community**. This playlist is shared from day one on our course webpage and as the semester passes, and as songs get added, students often talk about the new song they listened to while studying. It adds another point of commonality which is not just about homework and quizzes. By the end of the semester, the playlist becomes more cooperative and students suggest more artists, or offer gossips about those artists, *en français!*

Once class starts, I announce the program of that particular session, stating the vocabulary theme, the grammar section and the cultural points that will be discussed. In addition, I include a “*oui, je peux*” (“Yes, I can” statement) to which we will come back to reflect on whether or not the goals in question were achieved. I also use different types of activities. I try to have a quick warm-up and partner review of the day before, no longer than twelve-minute of teacher input, two to three guided practice, one longer independent practice and a cultural discussion. For me to assess my students’ learning and retention, I have adopted two techniques. In lower-level classrooms, students will often have a “*ticket de sortie*” (ticket out of the door), which the students will write at the end of class stating one main cultural aspect, new words, a conjugation or anything that they learned during class. In higher-level classes, as the students are usually quicker to speak up, we usually have a two-minute recap

when students, in a spontaneous manner, say out loud what they have learned as I jot those down on the board. I also encourage the students both in lower and higher level to reflect on their “*oui je peux*” statements, to see if they achieved it, and if they fall short, it is a concept that will be addressed the next class period at the warm-up review.

As I stated earlier, I use the university’s online platform as a resource for my students. It is important that there is as much transparency as possible when it comes to providing access to the syllabus, class PowerPoints, and their grades. This platform also comes in handy when it comes to cultural components of the class. In lower-level classes, the cultural components usually start online and we finish the discussion in class. For instance, students in 101 were asked to discuss the differences between a French family and an American family. Bringing in their personal experience of families, they would then write a short post about these differences online, and once we come to class, they would be better prepared and more willing to participate in describing these cultural differences. In higher-level courses, I often use an online discussion platform in order for the students to continue to engage in the material and in the real world outside of class. For instance, every week in “The Migrant Experience in France” class, I prompted one third of the students to both post a piece of news about French immigration. The remainder of the class would have to select a piece of news and react to that piece of news and to the student’s view on the matter. At the beginning of class, we would bring back those threads and discuss them a bit further, and within the week the students also had to post an updated answer in the light of what they had learned in the week of learning.

I strive to provide a safe and inclusive environment in my classroom. I have created a statement which I put on syllabi and on our online platform to remind students that they have to formulate their thoughts in a respectful way. In class, I also advise them to first acknowledge their partners responses, ask them to reformulate before formulating a critique. This helps providing a safe environment both online and in class. I built-in two written and informal feedback to assess how comfortable they *feel* in the class, twice a semester.

Finally, I think of myself as a facilitator, an advisor, and I am always ready to hear my students and respond to their questions. This is why I usually stay after class for an extra ten minutes, should any of them have a question for me, thus lowering the anxiety towards going to my office.

As a growing and constantly evolving scholar and teacher, I look forward to updating this teaching philosophy as my students and I change and continue to apprehend the world through different eyes.