

Statement of Teaching Philosophy  
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My earliest memories of learning German are filled with laughter; I associate language learning with fun, and as a language teacher, I want to inspire that joy in my students. I hope that the students in my classroom have positive language and cultural experiences that prepare them to communicate with other German speakers in real-life situations. By the time students leave my classroom, I want them to feel inspired and well-equipped to continue developing their language skills in another class or on their own.

My students are typically learning German as their second or third language, so they enter my classroom with a wealth of knowledge and skills in their first language. In order to help them develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in German, I always start my lessons by activating their background knowledge. This means that I tap into what students already know by setting a relatable context for the lesson (e.g. going grocery shopping), showing them pictures or short video clips, or having them record what they already know about a certain topic in a graphic organizer (e.g. mind maps). Also, at the beginning of each lesson, I introduce vocabulary words or grammatical structures with gestures, visuals, and choral repetition, and I make sure that the vocabulary and grammar make sense within the context (e.g. items in a grocery store).

Throughout each of my lessons, I give students the opportunity to practice new vocabulary or grammar in authentic, meaningful ways. For example, students might practice new vocabulary by reading a shopping list, discussing what German recipe they want to make for the class with a partner, writing a shopping list for that recipe, and presenting their shopping list to the whole group. As students are working on tasks like this individually or in small groups, I

provide positive and corrective feedback on pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. This approach helps students see errors as a necessary and productive part of language learning.

My students demonstrate their learning through a variety of assessments including role plays, creative writing prompts, self-reflections (e.g. written or video recorded), and exams with multiple choice and short-answer questions. I provide my students with a rubric that I use to evaluate their work on each of these formal assessments. I informally assess students by asking them to evaluate their understanding with gestures (e.g. thumbs up/side/down), answer a question individually as they walk out the door, or write something they learned on a notecard at the end of class. I also ask students to write anonymous feedback on a notecard twice per semester about what is going well in the class and what could be improved. I value this feedback because I want to tailor my instruction to meet my students' needs.

Every student who enters my classroom brings with them a unique set of experiences, language abilities, and social identities. I strive to foster an inclusive learning environment by valuing student choice and voice. In other words, I create language learning activities that allow students to explore their own interests and show a variety of perspectives. For example, my students can choose to engage with materials from across Germany, Switzerland, and Austria and hear from different German speakers who have been traditionally marginalized (e.g. Turkish migrants). I also build inclusivity into grammar instruction. For example, I teach gender-neutral pronouns (e.g. xier) and the associated verb conjugations, and I use the words "noun gender" instead of "masculine and feminine" when referring to the articles "die, der, das." This inclusive language helps students feel seen and heard in the classroom, and it sets them up for successful conversations outside the classroom as well. I know that I have met my goals as a language teacher when my students leave each lesson smiling, laughing, and speaking German.