TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

My teaching is guided by the following principles:

1. Input, input and input again: Language is an abstract and implicit underlying representation and cannot be taught with a classical grammar instruction with explicit rules (VanPatten, B & Rothman). That is why more than evaluating knowledge, I evaluate skills (what students can do) via writing activities for example. Instead of using explicit rules, I try to give my students a large quantity of good quality input in my classroom. I frequently introduce authentic materials -made by French native speakers for French native speakers- such as videos or songs. Before and after class, my students are still exposed to input with online activities. During class, while speaking to my students, I want to be understood and I use modified input: short sentences, pauses and repetitions. Even though it has been demonstrated that input is essential to create a linguistic system, naturally created input seems not sufficient to develop mechanics for language production and gain in fluency and accuracy. Students need to focus on form (VanPatten, B., 2003). That is why I often use some techniques such as text enhancement for example. With the text enhancement, I put the accent on written input. Through italicizing or highlighting the chosen text usually on a PowerPoint, I draw learner attention to formal properties of the language while the student is reading for meaning.

2. Implement tasks for a communicative classroom: A communicative classroom involves both expression and interpretation of meaning. In this context, the majority of the communication is cognitive-informational purposeful (Lee, J. F. & VanPatten, B. 2003). Especially, students are invited to get to know their classmates or the world they live in. Instead of proposing exercises where students practice a particular aspect of language, I propose tasks. They are clearly defined in the syllabus as goals of the day. More than a teacher, I become an architect, planner and facilitator, whereas students become builders, co-constructors and self-managers. Therefore, I do not assume the responsibility for both teaching and learning but let the students ask questions. These questions can be synchronous or asynchronous, via email when they feel stuck on online activities for example. I usually put my students in pairs so that they can be active and stay motivated. For the communication to happen, I also encourage projects such as a screenplay project. Students need to re-write a dialogue with peers, play it and record it. This group project is a real challenge that contributes to make students communicate in order to finalize a common product.

3. Be patient, and diversify: Second Language Acquisition cannot be either instantaneous or guaranteed. It consists of three minimally fundamental ingredients, which make it complex: input, Universal Grammar and processing mechanisms (VanPatten, B & Rothman, J). Because internal ingredients are necessary for acquisition to happen, it does not depend only on instruction. Dynamic and slow, acquisition is also different from a learner to one another. Conscious of this phenomenon, I am patient toward my students. I also take into account students' heterogeneity since every student progresses at different rates. Once again, online activities are a good way to individualize the learning, since students can spend more or less time working on them. Using technology is also important because students are more motivated in learning while working online. Finally, I try to use different kinds of input that can help the different kinds of learners (aural, written).

References:

Lee, J. F. & VanPatten, B. (2003) *Making communicative language teaching happen.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

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VanPatten, B & Rothman, J. *Against* 'Rules'. From Benati, A., Laval. C., & Arche, M.J. (Eds.), *The grammar dimension in second language learning* (pp. 15-35). London: Bloomsbury Press.