Teaching Philosophy

I want students to be engaged in my classes and to take initiative, so I believe it is important to create an environment where the student is encouraged to ask questions and suggest alternatives to what they learn, not an environment characterized by dominance and submissiveness. Students’ questions and ideas are often the most revealing, and can prove an invaluable part of the classroom experience. An environment that requires that students synthesize questions and their own unique ideas necessarily requires critical thinking as well. When students are asked to find solutions to problems or critique and examine information that is given to them, they think about content in different ways than if they were passively receiving it. They become more engaged in the learning process, which is my main goal as an educator.

Language is learned through speaking and working directly with the language, not by passively receiving information, so my classroom is student-centered, giving the students the responsibility of asking and answering questions, providing meaningful speech, and interacting with their classmates. Classroom activities should be varied, interesting, engaging, and allow room for students to explore their interests and express themselves creatively. If students are interested and engaged, they are much more likely to learn language.

Each student learns in a different way, so I think it is important to incorporate Spanish into each class in as many different modes as possible. Students are exposed to printed texts, audio and video recordings, films, and songs. They are also expected to engage with the language and demonstrate their proficiency in a variety of ways, such as speaking aloud, writing, and creating projects such as songs, films, poems, and drawings that allow me to assess their knowledge of course content. Multiple modalities will be particularly useful for students with exceptionalities. Students who have trouble with speech will be able to express knowledge in written or visual form. Students with disabilities that affect their ability to comprehend written language will benefit from audiovisual presentations of language and may find this a more effective way to learn Spanish.

Lastly, I believe that culture should be incorporated into each and every language class. Spanish is inextricably linked to the cultures of the people who speak it, and as such is an integral part of any language class. I will strive to incorporate cultures of many different Spanish-speaking populations in meaningful and engaging ways. The only way for student to truly acquire a language is for them to understand the context in which it is used.