Kira Dunton's Teaching Philosophy

As a teacher of English as a second or foreign language, I am committed to combining research-based pedagogical theory and my own practical in-class experience to develop a principled approach to teaching English. I see myself as a facilitator of language development, taking a functional approach to language learning that is grounded in meaningful context and experience. I believe in fostering a community of learners, and I hope to empower my students through language skills.

Approach

Rather than pigeonhole my teaching philosophy to follow just one method of language instruction, I would categorize my approach to the language classroom as an *informed eclectic approach*. My language pedagogy is shaped by well-informed beliefs stemming from my practical, in-class experiences as a language teacher and from a researched, global understanding of language pedagogical theory. Some examples of the general approaches I weave into my methods include learner-centered instruction, task-based language teaching, project-based learning, and collaborative learning. I recognize the uniqueness in each of my students and design my language classrooms to empower them to meet their individual language goals. Through hands-on, contextualized learning, my students will discover language in meaningful ways, leading to even more meaningful language development. By taking an anti-racist approach to language teaching, I will equip my students with the tools they need to recognize perceived "standards" of language and to make well-educated choices in order to suit their individual needs. I plan to integrate global Englishes into my coursework, to provide students with a more accurate representation of how English is used by its speakers than what has historically been taught in the language classroom.

Role

As a teacher, my role in the classroom is an adaptive and dynamic one—intuitively ranging from manager, facilitator, and resources as it best serves the needs of my students. Overall, I take a more nondirective approach to language instruction, but I do recognize that effective teaching requires the ability to see directiveness on a flexible continuum rather than a strict binary. I believe that the best learning happens when a student is able to inductively reason for themselves and discover the language, but I also see the value of occasionally using a more deductive approach when necessary. By integrating all four language skills into my classroom, I hope my students will be able to draw on their experiences and knowledge (or *schema*) to achieve their language goals. By implementing tools such as group or pair work, my students should discover their own agency and motivation in the classroom, while working in a collaborative, language-learning community.