**Teaching Statement**

My teaching is driven by three principles: cross-cultural sensitivity, inclusion, and customization for relevance, principles I have developed and refined through attending a variety of workshops at the Center for Key Competencies at Saarland University and the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching at the University of Michigan. I have found these principles effective for addressing some of the most important debates of our time, whether pertaining to challenges shared by a number of societies globally – population displacement, preserving the languages of minority cultures confronted by the domination of the perceived world language of English, or currently particular to French-language cultures, territorial inequalities in the Francophone world being just one example. These principles also inform my teaching objectives: to develop advanced speaking, reading, and writing skills in students and help them achieve a high level of proficiency in French; to train skilled and inquiring intercultural learners and critical thinkers; to help students identify how learning French may serve their sense of purpose, their values, and their commitment to lifelong learning, extending even beyond their career objectives.

My exploitation of cross-cultural communication theories in my language and thematic courses, drawing on findings from my core research interests, encourages cross-cultural sensitivity in students and, in particular, the ability to reflect on how communicative dysfunctionality in cross-cultural encounters can undermine harmonious communication and cooperation, even where there is goodwill. The findings of the key theorists I draw on in this regard (Barmeyer, Hinnenkamp, Müller-Jacquier) were first applied to areas such as the business world and school exchange, but they offer a broad range of lessons pertinent to university language teaching too. I have found such theories useful for introducing beginner students to greeting rituals across Francophone cultures, for example, allowing them to appreciate cultural conventions. I provide them with learning materials from radio and television interviews and movies that testify, for example, to variations between France, Germany, and Spain in relation to the modalities of interrupting one’s interlocutor. I take students on more advanced courses beyond introductions to analytical models for such conventions and explore these ideas with the class comprehensively. I have found Müller-Jacquier’s 10-component model most useful in providing students with tools for the appreciation and analysis of aspects such as: register (including humor, irony, and emotiveness); paraverbal and non-verbal factors; and values and attitudes that may be perceived as culturally specific, such as the relationship with time.

I find my use of fictional texts that challenge preconceived notions of identity in my teaching highly valuable also. I find using such inclusive content also makes learning French more appealing to an increasingly diverse student body. The works I chose for my course “L’Écriture migrante au Québec,” for example, help students explore how writers with a relatively recent immigrant background have understood and responded through fiction in various ways to the key models and concepts that have been developed in Canada and Quebec to deal with cultural diversity (“multiculturalism,” “*interculturalism*e,” etc.), as well as to the problematized category of the “migrant writer.” To ensure that these texts are accessible to students, I have devised a multistep approach to guiding their reading and analysis. This approach has proven especially fruitful in studying Marco Micone’s 1982 play *Gens du silence,* for example. This is a play in which the Italian-Canadian characters speak in a vernacular that Micone imagines Italian-Canadians of Montreal using at the turn of the twenty-first century, a constantly evolving hybrid language in which French is predominant, but with a certain presence of Italian (especially in word endings) and English. Before they read the play, I provide students with a list of Quebec French expressions and highlight the difficult French grammatical structures within it to help them navigate the text. This approach also helps to address inequalities of background and education present in the classroom. I give a short lecture, in the first session, on the play, along with background on key linguistic issues and debates in Quebec. We role play excerpts to render difficult passages more accessible, then pursue rigorous textual analysis through small group discussion. Central to my multilayered approach to Micone’s text is my provision of a wide array of assignments. Among other types, these include online quizzes which I set to test comprehension and which students answer individually; online discussion threads; short reflection papers on the play’s use of English and code switching; longer “response” papers in which students prepare to act as classroom respondents on perspectives on the play. I developed this multistep approach over time, having twice adapted my course on “Migrant Writing in Quebec” from earlier incarnations of it. I ask students to submit four-page essays on the play about four weeks after the last classroom session devoted to it and have found that the results testify to a sharpening of analytical skills among the cohort. I have been thus able to measure the added value of my multilayered approach to fostering accessibility to interesting yet challenging texts and to creating an inclusive classroom experience.

I always aim to make my teaching as relevant as possible to each student’s aspirations. As a teacher, I view my role to be that of an expert companion who helps students identify their intrinsic motivation. Even high-achieving students majoring in a foreign language will experience moments of difficulty and frustration, wondering, for example, whether they will ever be able to write with a high level of proficiency in the target language. In the classroom, of course, the needs of the student cohort collectively must be taken into consideration, but I also try to gain a clear sense of individuals’ needs as well. In language courses, I promote an inclusive communicative approach in which students’ own background and creative use of French are foregrounded. My intermediate discussion class FRENCH 290 engages in a unique activity based on exploring the various accents found in the French-speaking world that allows me to gain a real sense of my students’ individual goals in relation to French. After introducing the subject by asking students what they know about various accents of French speakers around the world, I give an overview of the accent “zones” in metropolitan France and a general picture of the creolized influences on overseas French. I then provide students with a digital “carte des accents” (<http://www.cite-sciences.fr/au-programme/expos-temporaires/la-voix/exposition-la-voix-jeux.php#view>) and play a game with them in which they try to identify where recorded French speakers are from on a world map by their accent. While this is a challenging activity for intermediate level students, it is generally very-well received and helps them to reflect critically, in subsequent small group discussion activities, on the factors which may influence the evolution of languages and accents. It also, importantly, allows them to reflect upon discrimination through language use in general, a form of discrimination which I believe is often overlooked in contemporary diversity, equality, and inclusion policies in North America. The class continues with an activity founded on the website “RFI Savoirs,” in which students read Miguel Zamacoïs’ poem “L’Accent*.*”After developing an interpretation of the poem through focusing on its fourth verse, in which Zamacoïs evokes scenes from his native region with which he associates his own accent, students are asked to write short poems that include descriptions of images, sounds, odors, and other elements from the place they feel they are from and through which they feel they can describe their own idiolect in French. This not only fosters a creative use of French and provides for an emotive experience for student and teacher alike, but also allows me to understand how my students view themselves as both language learners and citizens of the world.

I am also committed to my own growth as an educator, beyond simply attending teaching workshops. As a scholar whose research focuses on theories of cross-cultural communication and the empowerment of immigrant, asylum seeker, and refugee characters in recent narratives of migration from Quebec and Germany, I am also keenly aware of the ways that power, misunderstanding, and exclusion have often shaped the curriculum in French and German Studies departments in North America. I would thus be especially interested in selecting course materials for St. Francis Xavier that confront exclusionary narratives about Quebec and (French-)Canadian culture and history. The issue of empowering the voices of the marginalized could be reflected through offering a course on Canadian French-language indigenous literature and culture from the perspective of “resistance” to the European colonization of the Americas. This would draw on works and artifacts that directly address the vigor of current indigenous resistance movements in Canada, or, for example, highlight indigenous warriors’ most important victories against invading European troops. I would also like to develop a translation course for advanced students of French tied to community engagement, collaborating with a Nova Scotia non-profit legal services organization for asylum seekers. This would allow students to engage in supervised translation work with the organization’s legal department. As a woman who identifies as a member of the LGBTQ+ community, I would also be eager to develop other forms of collaborative courses for your students with organizations that support refugee or immigrant members of this community, such as the Rainbow Refugee Association of Nova Scotia.