

It has been expressed before in countless iterations, but that doesn't make it any less true or important for me in the classroom: "in learning, you will teach; in teaching, you will learn." As a relatively new educator, and ever a work in progress, I can't say that I consistently or perfectly bring out the teacher in my students, nor the student in myself, but I do certainly strive to encourage this type of student-led learning in the classroom as much and as often as I am capable. Jacques Rancière's *Ignorant Schoolmaster* has been, and continues to be, an influence on this central principle of my teaching philosophy. This is to say that by incorporating inductive and communicative teaching methods as often as possible, I aim and hope to empower the students to be curious and to take their learning into their own hands.

I instruct French language courses, which means that I have the privilege of exploring the notion of communication with my students. It's a concept that seems so basic on the surface level - it is, after all, one of the mainstays of the human experience. And yet, it always seems to be the simplest of ideas that turn out to be the most difficult to define or truly fathom, and communication is no exception here. One of the first questions I ask my students at the beginning of every semester goes something like, "Why French, and why now?" Usually, students respond excitedly about wanting to study abroad in Paris, or they cite having francophone family members or coveting a dream job as the impetus for their journey into the language. And while I do my best to help get them one step closer to achieving these goals - being able to order a meal at a restaurant or ask for directions, to comprehend a conversation between older family members, or even to translate for a company - my ultimate priority is to help them to communicate their ideas meaningfully with other people, including with themselves.

When they're in the throes of writing an essay, for example, the students often stress over translating the complex and interesting ideas in their heads to words on paper in their new language. In these moments, I ask them what a former excellent teacher of mine used to ask me: "What is at the heart of the idea you're trying to express? And how can that idea be simplified - in words, not in meaning?" To see a student's face illuminate upon the realization that they already have the tools they need to get their message across continues to be one of the most rewarding aspects of this position for me. Of course this doesn't come without moments of self-doubt or intimidation on the part of the students (or even myself), especially when prompted to share their ideas out loud in class. But through my attempts to foster an open-minded, mistake-welcoming, and participatory environment - and one that is centered around their interests, curiosities, and goals in the language - I often find our class discussions to be animated, friendly, and thought-provoking. In the best of cases, my facilitating voice eventually blends into the background while the students' voices emerge to explore the intricacies of linguistics, culture, communication, and human connection.