

# MARTA ELISA GRECCHI

E-MAIL: [marta.grecchi@gmail.com](mailto:marta.grecchi@gmail.com) TEL: 917-647-6693

## **Teaching Philosophy**

In teaching language, I draw heavily on my own experience as a second and foreign language learner, my students' needs and learning styles, and a personal commitment to student empowerment and cross-cultural understanding. Having emigrated from Italy to the U.S. as an 8-year-old, I have first-hand experience with both second-language learning as well as the often-disorienting process of acculturation. Guiding and supporting students as they embark on L2 socialization, and equipping them with the language for successful attainment of personal objectives in a new culture is paramount in my mind. This goal has special resonance given the macrosocial factors that can frame language learning – from geopolitical / economic inequality to the differing status attributed to varying L1s - which may result in students finding themselves “othered” in ways that feel limiting. My goal as an instructor is therefore to develop a simultaneously challenging and supportive classroom environment that acts as a safe space for language exploration, self-discovery, and community building.

## **Take the Best and Leave the Rest**

Though I place myself firmly in the communicative and proficiency-oriented camps of language instruction, I draw on the strengths of a variety of methods to best meet identified outcomes. Because of this, an understanding of, and openness to, most all methods is important to inform which elements should be brought into the classroom. For instance, while I don't subscribe to the Silent Way methodology, Fidel charts can be useful in helping students with limited L1 literacy make

# MARTA ELISA GRECCHI

E-MAIL: [marta.grecchi@gmail.com](mailto:marta.grecchi@gmail.com) TEL: 917-647-6693

sense of English's difficult correlation between pronunciation and spelling. Finding the right approach for the task and the population at hand is my goal.

## **Engage Student Learning Styles and Interests**

My focus in teaching both second and foreign languages is to start with learner objectives. Who are my students? What do they need to be able to do in the new language? I then craft level-appropriate lesson plans around functional and grammar objectives that encourage meaningful oral and written language use, peer interaction, and fun. I often kick off the class inductively, asking students to activate existing knowledge and puzzle out linguistic information in groups. I also incorporate authentic cultural artifacts as much as possible, from music videos and quotes to poems and documentary clips. These multimedia prompts peak student interest and act as springboards for discussions of target language culture and pragmatics.

## **Empower a Community of Practice**

My goal is to create a classroom environment where student identities are affirmed while building a collaborative community and a sense of empowerment in relation to future prospects. Key to this process is the modeling of interest in, respect for, and validation of student knowledge. Indeed, although I am the English "expert," in the classroom community I am also a learner, receiving and offering information in a productive exchange. Student collaboration is encouraged, reflecting a reformulation of the Vygotskian novice-expert relationship to embrace peer co-construction of meaning.

# MARTA ELISA GRECCHI

E-MAIL: [marta.grecchi@gmail.com](mailto:marta.grecchi@gmail.com) TEL: 917-647-6693

## **Validate and Explore Identity**

Learning a new language involves more than syntax, phonemes, and semantics. The moment a student is put in contact with speakers of their L2, s/he will begin to navigate cultural adjustment in a process that is often deeply transformative. I believe that the language-learning classroom can play a critical role in determining whether a student's acculturation process is additive or subtractive. My objective is to create a safe zone, a place where students can voice emerging language and identities with others undergoing a similar process. For instance, students might compare the differences in norms between home and target culture, and then journal regarding which values from their home culture they wish to maintain and which from the target culture they would be open to adopting. This type of self-reflection empowers by validating personal agency, while simultaneously demonstrating to students they are not alone in this process.

## **Mobilize Flexibility, Feedback, and Self-Reflection**

Each class represents a unique collection of personalities, objectives, and learning styles that combine to create a group dynamic that is likewise one-of-a-kind. Instructor flexibility is therefore key, for even if the same lesson plan is applied across classes, the dynamics of the learning experience will never be repeated. Because of this, I strive to continuously "read" my class, testing and adjusting activities in real time based on what is working in situ. Post-lesson, gathering feedback from the class as to what worked, what didn't, what structures need further practice, etc., helps me refine my plans while allowing students to actively co-create their educational experience. Opportunities for student feedback can be informal or formal, via a short form filled out after class. I also engage in my own post-class reflection, noting ways activities could be fine-tuned to improve student engagement.

# MARTA ELISA GRECCHI

E-MAIL: [marta.grecchi@gmail.com](mailto:marta.grecchi@gmail.com) TEL: 917-647-6693

## **Engage in Ongoing Research and Professional Development**

Because Second Language Acquisition is a young and evolving discipline, attending conferences and workshops, sharing best practices and resources with colleagues, and reading recent publications allow me to stay up-to-date and ground my instruction in the latest research. In turn, I can bring insights I've gathered into the classroom, testing interventions and techniques of interest via action research to determine which are most effective for my specific context and student population. It is through an ongoing cycle of research, action, and reflection that I hope to grow my toolbox and work toward the development of effective ESL curricula that meet language-learning objectives while addressing the affective and sociocultural dimensions of accessing a new cultural world.