

## CLAIRE KRAMSCH: TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

### Exercise

#### Preparation

Work on the Socioconstructivist-Language unit, particularly

*Kramersch*

*intercultural competence*

*teaching culture*

#### Exercise

Try the exercise below, using the Kramersch teaching philosophy activity to access the site cited.

#### Sample answers

Download the answer sheet from the same page.

Read this Statement of Teaching Philosophy by Claire Kramersch.  
<http://teaching.berkeley.edu/dta00/kramersch.html>

*It is often said that teachers teach the way their teachers taught them and their teachers' teachers taught them. But teachers who emigrate from the intellectual culture of their teachers have to reinvent themselves. What I learned to become a teacher of German language and literature in France, I had to rediscover, when I came to the U.S, to teach German to American students. My field of research, Applied Linguistics, captures the paradox of language learning and language use in various social contexts.*

*Whether they study foreign languages or any other subject, our students have come to academia because they want to achieve goals they have formulated for themselves in their own non-academic way. But learning the foreign discourse of an academic discipline will make them reach perhaps other goals than those they had intended, precisely because the language of academia is not the language of everyday life. It is this paradox that I try to understand in my teaching and my research.*

*In each of my classes, I do my best to spark students' interests while challenging their intellect. I try to create a context in which together we can experience new ways of seeing things that, at first sight, might look familiar-through a provocative text, an unsettling question, an insightful connection. These experiences may be triggered by the readings or the lectures, but it is in whole class or small group discussions that we highlight them, contextualize them, put them into relation with what others have said before, stress their significance within the totality of the syllabus. I never cease to be amazed at the fount of knowledge, life experience, and wisdom the students bring to the subject matter. Since my classes attract students from a variety of disciplines-education, English, foreign languages, political science, biology, cognitive science, linguistics-I always leave room in the syllabus for individual students' projects and presentations, in order to capitalize on this diversity.*

*Do I teach like a French person? Like a German? Like an American? I believe I have taken the best of all three traditions-the importance of language in intellectual pursuit, the love of the foreign and the paradoxical, the sensitivity to learners' interests and the passion for dialogue. And I have found at UC Berkeley the appropriate ground for them to flourish. That, at least, is what my students show me.*

1. In what sense is Kramsch a living example of intercultural competence? How does she characterise each of the cultural/linguistic groups to which she belongs?
2. Which terms and expressions can you find in this text which place the author in a socioconstructivist framework?
3. How does Kramsch view the roles of teacher and learners in her classes? How are her views of teaching culturally defined?