



LLRC Faculty Spotlight

Come to Learn German to Explore Its People, Culture, and Society.

Professor Andreea Mascan joined SBU this fall semester. She currently teaches elementary and intermediate German courses at SBU. She adopts Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), a teaching approach that aims at fostering fluent communicative competence in the target language (TL) by using only the TL in classrooms as much as possible, even for giving instructions for activities.

Through CLT, students learn to talk spontaneously, fluently, and context-appropriately. However, teachers sometimes face difficulties in resolving confusion among students because they are supposed to speak only in the TL to maintain the TL-only atmosphere. Professor Mascan's creative solution is to have students translate for other students when needed. She says this boosts students' confidence and allows her to stay in the TL unless a misunderstanding arises.

When she taught German at Cornell University in the past, translating was quite essential because her students were graduate students and faculty who needed to learn German for their research in fields such as archeology and history, mainly for understanding texts written in the 19th and 20th centuries. Her students were mostly multilinguals who were learning German as the second, third or fourth language. They often shared their knowledge in other languages they knew, comparing it with the one in German, which clarified concepts in vocabulary and grammar. In her classes, code-switching was the norm, facilitating the understanding of the content and the language. She says, "For me, code-switching is perfectly normal, and in my class, code-switching is always a "steppingstone for learning."

She finds it most rewarding when students bring their diverse linguistic backgrounds to the classroom, sharing them with others, and connecting them with their experiences. She hopes many students continue to learn German beyond their first year. She plans to offer Germany Today (HUG 229) to be taught in English next semester, where she will focus on general views, debates, and policies on environmental issues in Germany in relation to those in the United States. According to her, Germany and other German-speaking regions are dynamic and constantly changing. Professor Mascan says:

Learning German will open doors to opportunities like internships and study abroad programs, which will help you grow personally and professionally. For this, you don't need very advanced proficiency.

Professor Mascan is eager to welcome more students to her classes. She says that German is an easy language if you speak English!



Interviewed and written by Eriko Sato

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