*Progress is impossible without change,*

*and those who cannot change their minds*

*cannot change anything.*

*(George Bernhard Shaw)*

If I had to sum up my teaching objectives, my motivation for being a teacher, and my criteria for measuring teaching results, I would say: the success of my students. Nothing is more gratifying for me than students reporting back that they have achieved more than they ever thought possible. During my past education and my current involvement at LMU Munich, I have been continuously working with this goal in mind, always reflecting on what “success” means for students.

At the beginning of my career, I believed that a student’s success in learning is directly connected to the factual academic knowledge of the teacher. I therefore chose my path of education thoroughly to achieve a solid theoretical and practical foundation. During my graduate studies at UCLA, I moved away from this singular notion, as I discovered that success also had a lot to do with experiencing the joy of innovation, creativity, and building a growth mindset. I experimented with different teaching techniques and developed a fundamentally optimistic view on learning: I am convinced that all of my students are able to overcome their difficulties; all I have to do is find the right tool and technique for them.

I believe that self-empowerment leads to success in education. Therefore, my students always have a choice in the classroom. They can decide which materials, discussion topics and assessment methods fit best for the group and/or student. Personalizing the curriculum does not only make my students more self-aware, but is also a method of inclusion. Therefore, I let my students co-develop the syllabus. It is extremely gratifying for the students (and for me) to see how they become the captain of their progress by the end of the semester.

Helping prepare students to use their education for their career motivated me to create a new Teilstudiengang at the LMU, the Intercultural Communication Certificate Program. I am delighted to hear from my students that they can successfully use their knowledge acquired in my courses in real-life, and that they often find a job and/or receive a promotion because they had gone through my program.

I am convinced that great achievements in learning require a growth mindset. This also means a continuous professional development of the teacher, even after excellent student evaluations and teaching awards. Therefore, participating in teaching workshops and conferences is as important to me as giving talks on research. Indeed, another key in my development as a teacher has been teaching other teachers. During my career, I trained and mentored many teachers and young scholars. This allowed me to observe the beauty of my profession from another angle and see that successful teaching can be done in a myriad of different ways.

When looking back at how my definition of student success has evolved, I am curious to see how my understanding will develop further. *My students´ successes will always be connected to mine, but my focus will always be on theirs.*