

# **Certification in College Teaching Institute, May 8-9, 2025, Michigan State University**

## ***Worksheet for Reflections and Applications for Teaching and Learning***

### **Session: Creating Effective Learning Environments - Thursday**

#### **What skills and techniques did I learn that will help me become a better educator?**

This session helped me think more intentionally about how to create a learning environment where students feel welcomed, supported, and able to take risks. In the French courses I teach at the basic level, the curriculum is already designed to be inclusive and incorporates many examples that highlight voices from minoritized populations. It also places a strong emphasis on linguistic diversity and brings forward the experiences of people of color, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and women. While each instructor may approach this differently, the classes themselves are highly inclusive. The workshop reinforced practices I already implement in my classroom, such as using introductory surveys to get to know students, asking about names and pronunciation and the pronouns they prefer to use, as well as inviting students to share what might support their success in the course. I particularly appreciated the emphasis on being relatable as an instructor. For example, I often share aspects of my own learning experiences and acknowledge that language learning can be challenging. As a language learner myself, sharing my own struggles with students helps build stronger relationships and a more supportive learning environment. Finally, the workshop highlighted how important it is to make expectations explicit for students by sharing examples of strong final work and consistently linking everyday activities to the larger goals of the course.

#### **What things am I still uncertain about regarding this topic that I need to investigate further in the future?**

I personally believe that because every student is different, assessment is never fully equitable. Making it more flexible to reflect individual needs can quickly become difficult to manage (for example, in grading), so I often find it challenging to balance fairness and flexibility while still aiming for equitable assessment.

#### **How can I apply materials from this session to my own class to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning?**

I can apply what I learned in this workshop by being more intentional in how I design my lessons. For example, I will continue to use and refine step-by-step activities that lower cognitive load before class and allow for more meaningful interaction during class time. I also plan to make expectations more explicit by sharing examples of successful work and clearly connecting activities to broader course goals. Finally, I want to further develop inclusive practices, such as creating more opportunities for students to bring their own experiences into class activities and continuing to build a supportive environment where speaking and participating, both in front of the class and during peer group work.