Irène, ILCF instructor with a passion for singing

A dual national holding French and American citizenship, Irène has been teaching French as a Foreign Language (FLE) at ILCF since 2004. She currently teaches French language classes and courses on French History in Film. She also teaches university-prep "general knowledge" classes.



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From teaching singing to teaching FLE

Before becoming a teacher, Irène studied literature and theatre at the university, while also taking courses in operatic singing with the hope of becoming a professional singer.

One day, she was spotted by Gabriel Dussurget, founder of the Aix-en-Provence Festival and operatic talent scout, and she decided to launch her singing career. Unfortunately, this “great man” suddenly died before granting Irène the opportunity to prove herself before the conductors.

So, she decided to start giving private singing lessons.

She later realized however that she wasn't satisfied and notably desired greater human contact in her work, so she began a distance Master’s programme in French as a Foreign Language through the Université de Grenoble.

“My experience abroad allows me to understand what my students are experiencing.”

Her studies by correspondence allowed her to pack her bags for Egypt, where she began teaching French to young learners. “Egypt is a wonderful country” – she remembers the beauty of the Nile and the particularly lovely light. “There,” she confides, “I had my ups and downs.”

Irène at times had difficulty adapting to Egyptian culture, so different from that of France. Fortunately, she would make the acquaintance of a Jesuit, who would allow her to comprehend this different culture.

Today, this experience abroad allows her to better understand the difficulties occasionally facing foreign students in France.

Innovative instruction at ILCF

Serge Gainsbourg, Camélia Jordana… Irène loves French singers and songs, and so naturally takes a lyrical approach to teaching French.

In her mind, French songs are a precious tool for teaching phonetics, while also helping foreign students comprehend French culture. “My French class is a stroll through the language,” she says. In her courses, she makes great use of game playing, reading and writing; for instance, her students are given the opportunity to write a novel as a group.

For Irène, teaching at ILCF means sharing and exchanging in “a place where the richness of the world’s soul blooms in the heart of Paris”.

Kind, attentive and creative, she is the teacher that all of us would like to have.

**On the photo, Irène has written the lyrics to a French song, letting you guess the singer.*

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