

0086c

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ANNOTATED
INSTRUCTOR'S EDITION

Wie, bitte?

INTRODUCTORY GERMAN FOR PROFICIENCY

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Classroom Management

Instruction Paradigm

How, then, should the *Wie, bitte?* materials be used? Activity in the classroom must focus on the communicative use of German, whether or not the teacher chooses to limit severely or even virtually eliminate the use of English. Extremely effective, we think, are partner and small-group exercises, primarily in speaking. But other exercises, and most likely tests, will also be regular parts of the class time. Grammatical structures should be presented in class, though briefly and tied to communicative exercises; dialog imitation and guided speaking exercises will be useful preliminaries to speaking situations; and contextual reading, listening, and writing exercises should be undertaken, though the majority of such work should be left to study with the Study Text outside of class.

In our view, the teacher's primary functions should be: 1) demonstration or modeling of language; 2) provision of functional exercises and challenges; and 3) cautious, generally indirect error correction suitable to the student's current level of proficiency. Those functions are addressed at length in subsequent sections of this Introduction; annotations throughout the Instructor's Edition, as well as additional page-by-page comments below, offer detailed aid.

The student's activity in class should consist, correspondingly, of energetic language production and management rather than deliberative analytic study and disquisition. The virtues of stamina, risk-taking, and desire for effective communication should be cultivated. You may want to establish the notion that a proficiency-oriented language class is much like a class in music performance or physical education. Field-testing with ordinary rather than exceptional students suggests that more students will be more productive – and happier – when the chief (but not the only) goal is communication rather than analysis, since all can participate with some degree

of accomplishment. Some students, though, whether because of their intellectual proclivities or previous conventional language study, may seek to turn the class into a sort of linguistics seminar. In general, for a proficiency-oriented classroom resolutely resist that impulse – in them and yourself; but there is nothing wrong with an occasional disquisition on language, and indeed *Wie, bitte?* offers historical and grammatical stimuli for such discussion.

Many students will need some guidance in how to study, if not because they have poor study habits, then at least because *Wie, bitte?* is not a conventional textbook package. One aspect of proper outside-class study has to do with simple logistics, another with proficiency modalities, and a third – one common to all communication-oriented language study – with philosophical or psychological attitudes. First, introduce your students to the notion that the Class Text and Study Text complement each other and should be studied – quite literally – side by side. Remind them to alternate modalities in their study and to use the “stage” indications to challenge themselves steadily but not immoderately.

Second, explain that oral proficiency, though it is the focus of classroom activity, is not the only skill. The other modalities are also of considerable importance, and indeed the Study Text assumes the major share of their instruction. You should make it clear as well that, although a proficiency orientation places less emphasis on knowledge of analytic grammar in isolation, they must indeed develop structural competence. *Wie, bitte?* is not a tourist's phrase book, and we do not advocate broken German (“Where hotel?” “Food good.”).

Lastly, students have to be convinced that they must indeed work outside class, that steady study is vital, and that their work outside class – like that in class – must involve active exercise of German for communication, rather than just absorption of vocabulary and concentration on abstract structural principles. While your students should be told – and

shown! – that there is no substitute for the proficiency-oriented classroom, they should also learn that work outside class, and the Study Text itself, are not simply supplements or extras. We recommend that the serious student who has average aptitude budget two hours of preparation for each class hour. In order to prevent anxious, unproductive assaults on large, undifferentiated blocks of material we have divided the Study Text chapters into modules of varying modality and reasonable length. The individual exercises have been set up in such a way that virtually any student can achieve something with them.

The best advice you can give is to tell your students to talk when they study – not merely because oral proficiency is important in itself, but also because such active iteration of language helps to impress it upon the mind.

Before the details of instruction are addressed, we must deal with several controversial issues that are made all the more sensitive because people – teachers and students both – leave neither their egos nor their preconceptions about language learning behind them when they enter the foreign-language classroom. Here the teacher will find ample evidence that successful proficiency-oriented teaching is both a skill and an art. Our remarks here are addressed not only to novice teachers but also to veterans – including those who teach teachers.

Wie, bitte? is designed for the classrooms in which people talk German rather than talk about German. The student-centered structure of *Wie, bitte?* reduces the role of the instructor as an authority or source of principles of grammar and lists of vocabulary. Put more positively, *Wie, bitte?* aims to encourage instruction in which German is learned and used as students who see value in learning a language for communication interact closely and humanely with teachers who believe in teaching a language for communication.

Proficiency-oriented instruction virtually demands teachers who are – or can seem to be – exuberant, supportive, and oriented toward function rather than form. In such a classroom you must be ready to leave behind the spotlight of the podium and become an apparently unobtrusive rover in the classroom, perhaps even spending much of the hour conversing on your knees, squatting on your heels, or just occupying a vacant desk, in order to close quarters with and yet not appear too foreboding to students who are struggling to use German with some level of proficiency but are still unnerved that someone is actually insisting that they do so.

Most students will affirm that they want to learn how to use the language, but many will evidence serious discomfort or even panic when you ask them to take that first step: actually speaking the language and dealing with authentic reading and, particularly, listening materials. Compassion is definitely in order, but you should immediately establish – by vigorous exercise, exposure to realia, and even reference to testing and grading criteria – the attitude that language students “of course” do such things as negotiate for transportation, scan schedules of cultural events, listen to weather reports, and write quick messages. The first few attempts at such exercises may be upsetting, and the anxiety will recur each time you push your students to higher levels by posing more complex tasks or demanding more accurate management of features already presented. Our class testing, however, showed that students soon develop a calm acceptance of such activities, an attitude that can border on fearlessness. Years of experience in oral testing and commensurate teaching have led us to think in terms of a sort of pedagogical magic charm. We notice a distinct and rather sudden increase in proficiency in students who gain the insight that it is better to attempt to use the language and to register the consequent achievement than to attempt not to use it for fear of being penalized for each error – which should be a false fear in a classroom claiming a proficiency orientation. Whether or not they actually learn some new linguistic material at that crucial time, they seem to register the effect of a verbal release or permission to use what they know. Whatever the case, during the early part of the course you should do all you can to allay your students’ fears, particularly about speaking and listening.

In our own courses we have found it beneficial to make the first oral test a serious but non-counting experience. Moreover, to reinforce the emphasis on oral proficiency – students so often think that the only real test is a paper test – we make that test the first major test of the course. The student is assigned a grade, and is told to take it to heart, but the first “counting” oral test comes only after the student has had a chance to find out what an oral interview is like. The policy has the added benefit of partly neutralizing the advantages of students who have previous exposure to German, whether from classes, family, or travel. If they get a high grade from their inherited proficiency, it does not count; if they are not as good as they think they are, we try to put a bug in their ear – but it is indeed saddening how a

low degree of proficiency previously acquired can impede further progress by giving a false sense of ability and encouraging lax study habits.

Listening comprehension exercises, especially those conducted with authentic materials, are also stressful occasions. The students, accustomed as they are in our culture to the notion that to study is to use printed materials, are troubled that they cannot depart from essentially linear assimilation of language directed at them, as they can when they read, since there they usually may have direct, repeated recourse to the entire text in any sequence. The students' frustration is compounded by their impression that those speaking German at normal speed are "babbling," or that the sound fidelity of recorded materials is low. The phenomenon can be explained in one way by observing that, to the low-level language learner, even carefully selected speech offers such a richness of sounds that it is extremely challenging to map them against a grammar and lexicon, particularly if the grammar and lexicon have been acquired analytically and visually. An equivalent explanation would be that the students need practice in listening rather than just seeing, and that they must develop the ability to increase their comprehension of linear linguistic input by acquiring sheer stamina, the strategies of inference, and the confidence that the message will contain adequate so-called "redundant" information. In short, they need lots of listening practice.

Still another form of anxiety or misconceived expectation may emerge, whether because the class includes students who have studied German in more traditional ways, or because Americans have certain general preconceptions about foreign-language study. Whatever their stated reasons for learning a foreign language, and whatever their rational understanding of the process, under the pressure of instruction – and particularly in the face of an upcoming test – many students will fall back on the stereotype. They will clutch to their bosoms the notion of rule-memorization and vocabulary-list drill, and will be preoccupied with mastering the small segments of pronunciation (e.g., how most properly to say *ich*) that supposedly constitute a "native" accent. We have found, in contrast, that students in a proficiency-oriented classroom learn vocabulary better in context, and that grammatical "monitoring" is best encouraged by showing how structural competence contributes to superior function. Moreover, we offer no pronunciation exercises of the "Staat/ Stadt" type, because in our classes we find that stu-

dents who are encouraged to speak the language for proficiency readily produce speech whose pronunciation satisfies the criteria for comprehensibility at the target level. They do this not by magic. Practice makes (sufficiently) perfect is the trick, and strategic error correction is the key. The student who speaks a lot of German and who hears native or near-native models will make progress in accent and intonation. Progress is facilitated by the teacher who evaluates pronunciation errors in accord with their effect on communication, and corrects accordingly, rather than insisting on precise *Bühnenaussprache*.

Students whose prior knowledge of German comes not from "street" or "osmotic" learning experiences, but rather from traditional grammar-translation study, will be anxious in another way. They may want to know, for example, why the *du*-form is not introduced at the beginning. More serious will be their tendency to desire lengthy grammatical explanations and what they consider coherent presentation of structures. In their production of German they will be hesitant, expecting frequent correction or even confirmation of even the smallest segments of language; in their reading and listening they will cling to linear translation. The best of such learners, however, can become excellent proficiency-oriented students.

The issues of grammar presentation and error correction, and the emphasis on partner and small-group work – not, of course, unique to *Wie, bitte?* – raise yet another question. Will students who work together reinforce each other's errors? We think not. Students doing the *Situationen* and similar exercises together are not proceeding in grammar-translation lockstep, but rather concentrating on function and individual expression; they do not recite vocabulary lists and patterns in unison. Instruction in both music and athletics often includes partner and small-group exercise – and not merely because one teacher must teach many students and because diligent practice improves skills. Important also is exercise in context; a discrete-point element or form (a musical technique, a karate move, a past tense) is made functional by being integrated into a context. It becomes part of a larger individual performance, and it is brought into relation to other people.

A final advantage of partner and small-group work is serendipitous or simply secondary. It increases the students' aural tolerance, in that they must become accustomed to hearing someone other than the teacher – and in a good classroom they will also learn to tolerate background noise like that en-

countered in real settings. Of course such aural tolerance should not be induced solely by such imperfect means; instead, the *Wie, bitte?* aural realia should be used. The broad principles are that the student should not be allowed to become dependent on the instructor's voice, and that there should be constant exposure to speech which is natural – in pace, intonation, and vocabulary. "Caretaker" speech, which is characterized by a distinctly unnatural slowness of pace, exaggeration of intonation, and restriction of lexicon, should clearly be avoided.

Class-time Budget

The notion of "year" as a useful measure of foreign-language study is becoming ever more questionable, not just because proficiency, rather than mere "seat-time," would seem to be a better gauge, but also because the number of hours of instruction in a "year" varies greatly, commonly from 3 to 5 per week (with or without an outside language lab session). The following recommended class-time allocations presume a 4-hour week. Obviously, they can serve as gauges of proportions for classes meeting more or less often. We cannot say too emphatically, however, that "finishing the book" – *Wie, bitte?* or any other – is not a virtue if the students do not survive the process.

Of course, *Wie, bitte?* offers more material than any student can assimilate perfectly, but, in contrast to other texts, we hope it shows understanding of what should be demanded and can be learned for true proficiency. Good students in a well-run program ought to be able to progress comfortably through *Wie, bitte?* in one year; note that when a book is organized according to the "spiral syllabus," absolute mastery of one unit is not required before the subsequent unit can be undertaken. You may decide

that *Wie, bitte?* is not a "first-year" book, but rather a "zero to Intermediate-High" book. You might then "cover" up to, say, chapter 20 or 21 in the first year, quickly review that material and "finish" the book in the first quarter or semester of second year, and then continue with a congenial package that promotes proficiency at the Intermediate-High or Advanced levels.

We suggest the following allocation of classroom time for the various language modalities and sections of the *Wie, bitte?* package in a two-semester or three-quarter sequence. The outline assumes a target level of Intermediate-Mid in speaking for good students, but it does not demand that the "A" student attain Intermediate-High.

(1 week = 4 nominal classroom hours)

Class Text <i>Gespräche</i>	1/2 hour
Class Text <i>Struktur</i> sections with exercises	1/2 hour
Class Text <i>Situationen</i> listening, reading, writing exercises (practice or test)	1 1/2 hours
warm-ups and overt review (recent or old material)	1 hour
	1/2 hour

The chart below presents a reasonably equivalent budgeting of day-by-day class time for a course that meets for 4 hours (or 50-minute periods) a week. Nominal minutes recommended are in (); "a" and "b" refer to the first and second halves of chapters; "integrative" refers to activities that involve two or more of the modalities (e.g., use a map while giving oral directions); "Q&A" indicates "safety-valve" time allocated to management of students' inquiries. Specific teaching strategies appropriate to the various segments are discussed further below.

	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4
(2)	warm-up	warm-up	warm-up	warm-up
(15)	(a) <i>Gespräche und Strukturen</i>		(b) <i>Gespräche und Strukturen</i>	
(15)	(a) Stage 1 Ex/Sit	(a) Stage 2 Ex/Sit	(b) Stage 1 Ex/Sit	(b) Stage 2 Ex/Sit
(15)	reading	listening	reading	writing/integrative
(3)	review/Q&A/enrichment		review/Q&A/enrichment	

Quarter/Semester Schedule

QUARTERS	SEMESTERS
1: Prelim-9	1: prelim-13
2: 10-18	2: 14-26
3: 19-26	

Programs on quarter schedule may have to do slightly more than one unit per week in first quarter.

The pace at which chapters are covered lessens later on in the course, in order to provide time for review.

Reformat

Teaching Techniques

Discussion here will focus shortly on classroom exercise of oral skills, especially in partner/small-group work. Teaching of listening, reading, and writing is mentioned further below, but exercise of those skills can emulate the items in the Study Text, and in any case does not require the careful management of students that is necessary in oral work. See the Bibliography for further discussion and advice.

Despite the emphasis on partner and small-group work, other techniques will be of value in the development of speaking skills in the classroom. Nothing in *Wie, bitte?* discourages choral repetition of phrases, rapid-fire drills in which students are called on singly, or memorization of dialogs. Certainly repetition and individual checking are appropriate to introduction of the material on the *Struktur* pages. Another technique, one valuable in itself and useful as preparation for other activities in any of the modalities, is fast-paced vocabulary refreshment by association. A single word serves as a departure point for the listing of others words that might plausibly have to do with it, either because they fit the context it suggests (*Restaurant – essen, trinken, Suppe*), or because they also share some structural affinity, such as speech part (*Wir essen im Restaurant – Wir . . . bestellen, trinken, fragen, zahlen*). While the communicative use of German is the goal, there may well be reason to conduct exercises that target structure or grammar rather than just context. Examples are quick checks of noun plurals, *ein/kein* negation, or participles. And quite likely some students will need intensive instruction in pronunciation.

Here we must address two sensitive issues: error correction and pronunciation. By both many teachers and the public, error correction is generally taken to mean vigorous attack on any and all errors in grammar, and acquiring "correct" pronunciation is generally assumed to be a high priority and to require sedulous exercise.

Long-suffering students have learned to say that their chief problem is "grammar," and even novice learners are preoccupied with sounding like native speakers in their pronunciation of single words. Some teachers quickly intervene at the slightest error, and many students – often those intellectually most ambitious – laboriously construct their utterances by rapid vocabulary conversion and mental rule application while constantly looking to their teachers for careful correction – and then sound absolutely mechanical, or are simply nonfunctional, because they

cannot communicate their message in a reasonable time. Seldom is the concept of error correction extended to overall sentence intonation or to discourse strategy, and far too often students get preoccupied with the intricacies of pronunciation. They demand from themselves in the rendition of single words an accuracy that they cannot presently achieve and, for communicative purposes at their level, need not achieve. They thereby ignore – and thus prevent themselves from acquiring – a sense of overall intonation that actually contributes more to proficiency than does precise mastery of single sounds.

It is our view, then, that error correction should be conservative, indirect, and sensitive to proficiency level. Our emphasis on encouraging the effort to communicate goes hand in hand with a conviction that fossilization of uncorrected error-patterns is not a great danger, at least when the errors that one lets pass have to do with structures that are distinctly above the student's current level. The student should not be corrected in the midst of speech, error by halting error; instead, the willingness to produce utterances of larger size should be encouraged, even if grievously erroneous speech must later be dissected and corrected quite rigorously. Rich though distinctly flawed speech is better than virtually uncommunicative but formally accurate language. Learn when to leave well enough alone, to see that the glass is not half empty but rather half full, and to elicit more language by praising what has been produced.

Some errors are the result of completely false assumptions and therefore have no compensatory value ("*Was machen Sie da?*" "**Mich? Ich bin schreiben ein Buchstaben.*"). Other errors show a laudably diligent if incorrect extension of a principle, such as happens when the student industriously learns the concept and morphology of noun case and then fails to realize that verbs may be followed not only by direct (accusative) objects but also by (nominative) predicates ("**Das ist einen Regenmantel.*"). But, as we have observed in class testing, cautious error correction and the consequent encouragement of risk-taking may have surprisingly beneficial results, beyond the simple but gratifying tendency of students to use the language without much inhibition. Thus when one has introduced in Chapter 9 the "-te-" preterite pattern for *haben* and the modals, one may well find students producing, by fortunate analogy, *sagte-, hörte-*, etc. Such serendipitous accomplishments should be encouraged, even at the expense of tolerating – but only for a while – **trinkte* and **gehte*. Since *Wie, bitte?* is not oriented primarily to a grammatical syl-

labus, there is nothing wrong with tacitly countering such tendencies by offering speech in which the forms are correct, even before the relevant morphology is introduced explicitly. And of course the *Wie, bitte?* realia will be exposing the student to many such structures along the way.

Often error correction, if it is deemed necessary, can be applied indirectly and in a manner that imitates genuine communication so well that students will claim that the teacher seldom corrects them, or even complain that they do not get sufficient coaching in grammar or accent. Quite often it is sufficient to echo the student's speech, but in correct form, with slight emphasis on the specific correction ("So. *Sie möchten eine Fahrkarte nach Freiburg.*"). In so doing one reinforces the discourse strategy of echoing that is emphasized throughout *Wie, bitte?* and is so much a part of genuine conversation.

Sometimes indirect correction poses more of a problem, particularly when pronouns and differences in perspective are involved. Student: "*Das ist *mein Schwester.*" Teacher: "*So. Das ist Ihre Schwester.*" Student: "*Oh, oops. Ja, das ist *Ihr [instead of the desired *meine*] Schwester.*" There are many ways to clear up such misunderstandings or insufficiencies without abandoning the friendly communicative persona and resorting to analytic grammar. Thus one might turn to a more proficient student nearby and perform the same exercise, with emphasis on the problematic feature, and then turn to the less proficient student for a reprise.

Above all, error correction should take into account the current and target levels of performance. Here it is important to note that many linguistic features that are treated as unitary concepts in traditional works are presented in *Wie, bitte?* by gradual steps. A gross distinction concerns the difference between incidental use of some word or structure, intended only for current lexical knowledge, and the later inclusion of that same item in an overt presentation of structure. Thus *wenn* and even *wenn Sie aussteigen* occur quite early in *Wie, bitte?*, but they are intended for lexical absorption only, and thus there is no explanation of verb-last syntax or separable prefixes. At this stage you should simply look the other way when the earnest student indeed uses *wenn*, though without the verb last, or produces "**Aussteigen Sie dort!*" as the imperative. Similarly, in Chapter 12, where the chief point concerns establishing the basic concept and morphology of participles, hyper-correction of "**Ich habe gereist.*" or even "**Ich haben*

gereist." would be stiflingly inappropriate. Much the same can be said for the treatment a few units later of "**Ich bin gefährt.*" Be thankful for the *bin*, the solid participial structure, and the relic of stem-vowel transformation in the main verb.

Small-group work

If the goal of instruction is proficiency, the means is intensive practice augmented by strategic demonstration and correction. Most reasonably mature students, whether they have elected language study freely or under the duress of curriculum requirements, greet quite amicably the prospect of learning a foreign language for genuine communication. That favorable theoretical disposition will likely remain, even in the poorer learners, and in any case the early part of the course – of any course conducted reasonably well – will likely be a sort of honeymoon in which the student revels in being able to do so many things heretofore unimagined or considered impossible. Over the long haul, though, the teacher must be able to motivate the class and to further the learning process day by day. It is of no small advantage that the proficiency-oriented teacher can blithely "teach to the test"; if there is to be an oral test, then students can be encouraged to realize that they should practice talking in class and even at home. But one must teach, not simply exhort or threaten. And, since in the ordinary classroom there are many students and only one teacher, ways must be found to encourage the student to assume much of the responsibility for using and exercising the foreign language. A mainstay of such exercise in the *Wie, bitte?* program is partner or small-group work, primarily though not exclusively in speaking.

Small-group exercise in *Wie, bitte?* includes many types. The *Gespräche* may be rehearsed thus, though we do not recommend extensive memorization and performance. The practical application of the *Struktur* principles and paradigms is important. Vital, however, is the ability to use German in context. In accord with the teacher's preferences, instruction in that ability will include varying amounts of attention to the Class Text *Struktur* or *Situationen* pages, to the Study Text speaking exercises, and to the several other resources, such as the *Drucksachen* and *Bildwörterbuch*.

Use of the *Situationen*, which are modeled on elements of the standard oral proficiency interview, involves several principles. Most are in English, so

that the student does not need to wade through (too) high-level German in order to be prepared to speak, and so that target vocabulary and structures are not revealed. Moreover, the English is periphrastic, so that wrong-headed inclinations to translate may be hindered. Early in the course you may have to explain such features.

While the "Stage 1" exercises, with their "walk-through" scripting, can be rather easy, the "Stage 2" and *Versuchen Sie doch* sections offer a freedom of imagination and expression that may seem daunting to some students. Throughout you will have to aid the student who is called upon to assume the role of the native speaker. You may do that by having the class work up "generic" native-speaker utterances likely in the given situation, by supplying useful utterances on a cue card, etc. Here the material on the *Strategie* pages can be useful, as can a familiarity with discourse theory. Occasionally you yourself should play the native speaker role in a demonstration situation, which can serve not only as a speech model but as an impromptu exercise in listening comprehension. Perhaps you may wish explicitly to assign certain situation exercises for preparation outside class.

We list now a number of "generic" techniques useful in partner and small-group work.

- Refresh vocabulary with quick group exercises in contextual association and list-making. Later in the course you may, in German or English, pose questions like *Was tut/braucht man, wenn man* [target activity]? Earlier on, you might simply list target vocabulary on the board, perhaps divided by part of speech, gender, etc. The "ham" teacher might imitate a psychoanalyst and encourage students to generate vocabulary lists by association. Whatever the technique, the goal is just as much to get the class warmed up as it is to produce useful vocabulary lists; virtually any word should be accepted and, if offered by poorer students, generously praised. All students should feel that they can accomplish something and thus can indeed speak German. The technique can be combined with other strategies; noun lists, for example, can be incorporated into case-oriented pattern exercises, or verbs can be checked for tense formation.
- Get the class up and moving, and emphasize the communicative value of gesture and emotion. Students tend to cling to accustomed seat locations and partners, with the poorer students joining their companions in misery at the back of the room. Be sure to get to the back of the room yourself to exercise those who need it most. But also be sure to break up other comfy pairs and get everyone up and moving, as befits the notion of proficiency as the ability to communicate with a wide variety of interlocutors. Students can be encouraged to "meet" a certain number of classmates within a specified period of time, remembering certain vital statistics (majors, interests, family members, native countries) in a "cocktail party" atmosphere. Three minutes of *Stehparty* can yield a lengthy time of active and enthusiastic recall once students have returned to their seats. This activity can take place far into the year, including subordinate clauses (*Als X sieben Jahre alt war, wohnte seine/ihre Familie in Y*), if-clauses (*Wenn A Zeit hätte, würde er/sie B machen*), etc. Breaking the pattern of nestling in the customary classroom desk will have several other positive effects: 1) it will reinforce use of the "gambits" that are so important in real communication (*Entschuldigung. Eine Frage, bitte.*); 2) it will increase aural tolerance; 3) it will get the students' noses out of their books and into real communication, which will have – eventually if not immediately – a salutatory effect on intonation, accent, and gesture; 4) it will give you as the teacher some breathing space to adjust the further course of the hour; if you are doing the job right you will feel rather superfluous for a minute or two. Note here how effective the introduction of realia can be, including the use of props such as menus and money.
- The teaching of function and form can be alternated. You may wish to introduce group or situation work with a short demonstration of target structures (e.g., prepositions and cases). Or you may pose a function-oriented exercise ("Tell/Find out what is where in X's room."), halt conversation after a few minutes to spotlight the target structures, and then redo the exercise, to show how advantageous it is to learn new skills.
- Situation work (and indeed other communicative exercises) can be livened up by adding more players or kibitzers to the conversation. The kibitzers might tactfully be selected from the better students while the poorer students bear the main responsibility for communication. These nattering supernumeraries can be given two functions: 1) they may echo, in part or whole, what the main participants say, and thus provide another perspective (*Er sagt, es kostet zuviel?*)

or even help the instructor carry out indirect error correction (*Ja. Es kostet zuviel.*); 2) they may keep the conversation active and challenging by parodying the companion who speaks no German but always has some special wish ("Ask him if the shower costs extra." "Tell her I need to know whether I'll be charged for the pictures that don't turn out OK.")

- Whether you are presenting grammatical patterns from the *Struktur* pages, seeking to establish good warm-up patterns, or simply encouraging the general exercise of speaking in small groups, you can use the blackboard, overhead projector, or cue cards to set up in schematic form communicative activities that can yield each time many minutes of targeted conversation. Columnar (vertical) rather than paragraph (horizontal) outlining of conversational elements seems better, since it permits clearer outlining of stages and makes convenient extension of the conversation once the basic material has been exercised and a foundation thus laid for the "situation with complication" that is so characteristic of the Intermediate level of oral proficiency. The respective advantages and disadvantages of German and English as the language of presentation are clear. More important are terseness of formulation and awareness of the proper mix of prompts that outline a function (*Erklärt warum.*) and paradigms or samples that model the language (*Sie haben > Ich habe, ein/kein, . . . weil ich kein- X habe*). Obviously, as students progress through *Wie, bitte?* they acquire greater communicative ability and thus need less guidance in performing tasks that are now comfortably within their level. Therefore a brief task description ("Negotiates shelter for family.") can replace the detailed cues needed to lead the student through the same task in earlier chapters.

Here are classroom-tested examples from various chapters:

– third hour of course (Preliminary Chapter 1)

groups of 3 students

blackboard cues for target questions: *Name, wie alt, nationality, who that?*

STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2	STUDENT 3
Q [= a question]	A [= an answer]	echo Q or A
<i>Sind Sie Kanadier?</i>	<i>Nein, Amerikaner.</i>	<i>Oh, Sie sind Amerikaner.</i>

– fifth hour of course (Preliminary Chapter 2)

groups of 3 students, with #1 and #3 directed to use Class Text country maps or *Zugbegleiter* in the *Drucksachen* collection

STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2 (NO MAP)	STUDENT 3
[city name]	[ventures guess about country]	[echo, kibitz, show]
<i>Zürich</i>	[<i>Das ist</i>] in ____ .	In ____ ? <i>Ja/Nein . . .</i>

– during Chapter 5

groups of 3 students, using urban transit maps, deciding themselves what time it is and maybe inventing own time-tables

STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2	STUDENT 3
<i>Wann kommt der nächste Bus nach [Endstation X, etc.]?</i>	<i>Um X Uhr V und dann um . . .</i>	<i>Also alle Z Minuten</i>

– during Chapter 12 (targets: review earlier accusative structure, but with recent vocabulary; review *zum/zur* + noun; simple use of *wenn*)

STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2
<i>Ich brauche/habe kein ____ X</i>	<i>Sie müssen zum/zur V, wenn Sie ein ____ X brauchen.</i>

– during Chapter 13 (targets: body parts, causation, *seit*)

STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2
<i>pain/X tut mir weh/ ____ Schmerzen</i>	<i>echo (dir/Ihnen); sympathy; tut leid</i>
<i>why/how long/Seit . . .</i>	<i>advice/zu viel, sollen</i>

– during Chapter 17 (target: nationalities, with humbling review of earliest chapters of book)

STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2	STUDENT 3
<i>Ist X ____ ?</i>	<i>Nein. Kommt aus ____</i>	<i>Also, er/sie ist ____</i>

– also during Chapter 17 (targets: *jemand/niemand*, review of tenses, cases, and prepositions)

STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2	STUDENT 3
<i>Wo ist mein ____ X</i>	} <i>Nein, niemand hat . . .</i>	<i>Dein ____ X ist</i>
<i>Jemand hat mein ____ X</i>		<i>[in, auf . . .]</i>

Such schematic exercises can be expanded in several dimensions by the addition of new tasks, vocabulary, or participants. Very important is the notion of repetition with variation – not mindless recitation of grammar-oriented substitution exercises, but instead structured yet creative manipulation within a meaningful context. Useful here are

parallel lists of elements to be combined and recombined (e.g., column 1 – people; column 2 – activities; column 3 – companions; column 4 – buildings; column 5 – reasons). More students can be involved in the same conversation by assigning them roving functions appropriate throughout many kinds of conversation (echoing, asking *Warum?*), or by making them “resource” persons who provide vocabulary or essential “facts” in the simulated context. Thus in chapter 9 or so, the resource student might “spin the dial” to select the day and time, and thus determine the rest of the conversation:

STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2
Heute ist Sonntag, und es ist 11 Uhr.	[building] ist geschlossen, aber wir können zum/zur [building] gehen.

An exercise of *schon/noch nicht* with present and past tenses (chapter 19) might be set up similarly:

STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2	STUDENT 3
Ich möchte essen, etc.	Es ist 23 Uhr.	Du hast noch nicht gegessen?

Lastly, the basic pattern and situation can be expanded by posing, on repetition, a complication or need for elaboration. An example from chapter 13:

STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2
(stage 1) [body part] hurts	[echo and sympathize]
(stage 2) [same as above]	[same as above] + Wann? Nur wenn . . .
	[Then don't . . .]

There are several expansion techniques that can be regarded as virtually generic, at least after the structures and vocabulary they involve have been introduced. One that may be used the very first day of class is echoing, the consciously undertaken version of a tactic that we employ unconsciously in our native language. Repetition of part or all of another's utterance both fixes the linguistic pattern and helps maintain conversation. Very soon the echoing can include alteration of perspective (Student #1: *Ich bin Amerikaner.* Student #2: *So. Sie sind Amerikaner.*). Somewhat later on the roving student or teacher can apply prompts like *Wie, bitte?* or *Was sagt er/sie?* to elicit the echo, with or without introductory *Er/sie sagt (, daß)*. The same effect can be attained with an “information pass” built into the exercise (Student #2: [reports to #3 about #1]). The unfortunate confusion of the pronouns *Sie* ‘you,’ *sie* ‘she/her,’ and *sie* ‘they/them,’ and of *er* ‘he,’ *ihr* ‘her/you/their,’ and *Ihr* ‘your,’ guarantees trouble – trouble that will

emerge in speaking even when the student has apparently acquired the analytical grammar information. The feature should be checked over and over, and review late in the course will likely show serious deficiencies that fully justify information-checking and passing of information as regular tasks.

Much the same can be said for reformulation of situations from present to past. The student groups are led through present-tense utterances that establish vocabulary and overall structure, as in the chapter 13 example above (*Ich habe Kopfschmerzen, aber nur wenn ich lese.*). The past tense version would be something like:

STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2
[has recovered; lists symptoms]	[had it too]
[Wonder what #2 did to get better]	[Describes treatment]

The transformation of present into past can be introduced even as early as Preliminary Chapter 2. After present-tense conversation the teacher may simply wave a sweeping hand and declare, “*Aber das war alles gestern,*” and then model the reformulation. The encouragement of past-tense practice, both early on and recurrently throughout the course, is a prime example of “spiral syllabus” instruction and should become second nature in the classroom, especially since improvement of communication in past time is a prime part of the transition from Intermediate to Advanced. In general, systematic review is vital, and *Wie, bitte?* has been designed to further it.

Three other strategies have to do less with the details of teaching speaking skills and more with establishing the overall function and atmosphere. Sometimes it is useful to give each member of the group information that the partner or the rest of the group either lacks or does not need. Perhaps one wishes to introduce an unexpected complication, or else to conceal target vocabulary from one speaker and provide it to the other, who is perhaps charged with emulating the friendly native. That may be done impromptu by a whispered or partly concealed written message, or even by having one partner in each group face away from the blackboard. By preparing in advance one may provide cues to one or more of the partners by writing them on different parts of a single (duplicated) sheet of paper, partially separating the sections, and then letting the partners choose their own roles much in the same manner that people pull wishbones.

At some point it becomes necessary to progress beyond the simple pattern of prescribed stimulus and predictable response that characterizes the Class Text Stage 1 situations and similar exercises. Moreover, students doing any kind of frequent oral exercise may fall into the natural but pedagogically harmful patterns of communicating in sentence fragments or, if they are producing creative sentences, of just wanting to convey information with their current facilities rather than focusing on newly introduced resources. The Stage 2 *Situationen* should be used in a manner that encourages or even demands the production of longer utterances or groups of sentences. And indeed that is good preparation for oral tests, where the examiner may well offer such situations as special items, and throughout the test may often offer not questions that invite replies, but rather declarative comments followed by loud pauses to be ended by the student (*Es scheint, Sie müssen viel arbeiten.*). Our overall advice is this: habitually engage your students in vibrant conversation, but know when you should back off and let them deliberate as they seek to work their way through the *Situationen*. In a well-run classroom there should be enough noise that occasionally silence will be golden. Pauses are productive.

Two functions, circumlocution and description, can be regarded as broadly generic; those functions are tied neither to a particular exercise type like small-group work, nor to a proficiency modality, though they are manifestly important in speaking. Circumlocution and description are vital to proficiency at and beyond the Intermediate-High level. The two skills should be practiced constantly, with ever greater demand for management of complexity and an occasional view down from the heights to show how much better one can perform an earlier task, or how the current task could have been performed earlier, though not with as much facility.

There are many ways to prompt the student for circumlocution and description. One may simply offer a list of imaginative and challenging items, either for the class as a whole to work out, or secretly to one partner, who must then communicate the idea in verbal charade form to others in the group, who in turn offer useful questions. Examples suitable to Chapter 18 would be: antacid, dandruff, lens-cleaning kit, flexible watchband, earphones, dental floss, appendix. Similarly, with an eye to structural circumlocution, one can point out the compensatory relationship between grammar and vocabulary, and also urge students to cross the boundaries that tradition-

ally isolate from each other the various parts of speech and structural categories. The language of the *Situationen* is intended to further such conceptual habits. Thus after modal verbs have been introduced the student can be encouraged to realize that communicating the informational content of a pattern such as "It is necessary for X to [verb]" does not require one to know or look up the word "necessary"; employing the simple modal pattern "X + *müssen* + verb" will do. Similarly, the past subjunctive with modal (*Du hättest nicht so viel trinken sollen.*) can often be expressed by an indicative past formulation (*Schade, daß du so viel getrunken hast.*). Part of the battle is won when the student is convinced, negatively, that translation is often unfruitful, and, positively, that it is all right to use any available resources, whether from knowledge already acquired or else information available by reference. Among the latter resources is the *Bildwörterbuch* – not only its various contextual vocabularies, but particularly the final "Categories/Kategorien" spread (pp. 308–09).

While the terms *beschreiben* and *erklären* are valuable words and are thus featured prominently in chapters 12 and 18, the functions themselves are introduced very early in the book. Correspondingly, description, circumlocution, explanation, and elaboration can be elicited by German prompts much earlier on, without the use of *beschreiben*, *erklären*, etc. One may use, for example, leading yes/no questions (*Hat Ihr Vater auch braune Augen?*) to initiate the elicitation or help out a struggling student; the latter, particularly after a lapse into English, will often benefit from a hint to classify and differentiate (*X? Oh, das ist ein — Y, aber . . .*), contextualize (*Wo findet man das?*), or describe function (*Was tut man mit dies — X?*). Often the simple charm-phrase, *Das können Sie mit anderen Worten sagen*, will promote relief and progress. The elicitation may be integrated into a situation, which then specifies not only the function, but also the context/content and standards of accuracy (*Ich kenne Ihren Vater nicht, aber ich muß ihn am Bahnhof abholen. Es sind viele Leute da. Wie kann ich wissen, wer Ihr Vater ist?*). Similar tasks can be posed in writing exercises or tests.

The other modalities in the classroom

Although acquisition of oral proficiency should be the main goal of classroom activity, the other modalities should not and cannot be totally ignored. In class it is pragmatically useful to undertake frequent if brief checks of the students' progress in skills that

they are – supposedly! – pursuing largely through the Study Text; help with study skills and habits will be necessary periodically. Secondly, the idea of simulating actual communicative contexts strongly implies that the modalities cannot be kept in strict isolation from each other. People who are deciding what they want to order in restaurants generally have menus to read; often they listen to the waiter or waitress; and sometimes they even write out their food and beverage orders. But lastly, exercise in speaking is an intense activity. Students deserve a change of pace, and they will also benefit from the introduction of the rich selection of *Wie, bitte?* print and sound realia.

The Bibliography includes discussions of what can be treated only briefly here. In proficiency-oriented instruction, learning by doing is vital. In classroom treatment of reading, listening, and writing you will likely want to take your cue – and even your exercises – from the Study Text. The skills that the student is offered there should be reinforced in class, whether you actually carry out or just emulate the Study Text items.

Here we offer some reminders about general principles and a few remarks about technique. Chief among them is an admonition to discourage the urge to translate, not just in speaking but also in writing, reading and listening. If cautious and indirect error correction is important in encouraging oral proficiency at the Novice and Intermediate levels, it would seem appropriate also in the teaching of writing. Beyond that notion as it pertains to the so-called “production” modalities of speaking and writing is the formulation of its equivalent with regard to the so-called “reception” modalities of reading and listening: the student must be encouraged or even laboriously taught to exercise the techniques of skimming, scanning, inferring, and risk-taking. With some hope one can remark that those are skills that most students know how to apply when they listen or read *outside* the classroom, i.e., when they are listening or reading for everyday proficiency – not for academic achievement – in their native language. With some sadness it must be said that many students instead regard academic study in general, and foreign-language study in particular, as a matter of precise analysis, rote learning, and avoidance of risk.

But be that as it may. The common problem in the foreign-language classroom is how to convince students that they can jump right into what *Wie, bitte?* offers. Since the very first few hours of a course

may well determine its overall tone, the habit of resolutely facing mature realia should be established immediately. It is thus very important that realia be introduced in class and that the Study Text exercises for the preliminary units be taken seriously. After much experience we are convinced that, to a significant extent, proficient is as proficient does. Language teachers can find a lesson in *The Music Man*.

More specifically, the exercise of reading and listening must not be allowed chronically to degenerate into translation exercises and the tedious, analytic processing of language. In psychological terms, the student must expand the “catch as catch can” comprehension skill to accompany the common tendency to work word by word. In terms of pedagogical theory, it would seem that reading and listening comprehension at or around the Intermediate level is founded less in detailed application of grammar than in efficient application of lexicon and skillful inference from structural information acquired by bits and pieces throughout the passage. In the quite practical terms of classroom activity, the teacher should emphasize rapid processing of natural language and industrious listing. Here one should note the prominent mention of note-taking skills in descriptions of listening and reading proficiency. Teach your students to underline or jot down apparently useful information. Repeated, structured effort at comprehension is very useful. Initially the teacher sets a very few global comprehension points, and perhaps one or two more difficult comprehension points, as targets of the first encounter with the reading or listening sample. In subsequent stages of the same exercise, or even later on in the course, the student is encouraged to build on previous knowledge. The desire for such repeated encounters was a major factor in the organization of the *Drucksachen* and the audio realia.

As for proficiency-oriented writing, which should not be confused with writing out analytic grammar exercises, the instructor will likely want to assign and collect regularly at least some of the Study Text writing tasks. It would not be a waste of class time to devote some minutes each week to discussion of such exercises; attention should be given both to form (vocabulary and grammar) and to function (organization, efficiency, phrasing, cultural aspects). Also beneficial will be an occasional writing exercise in class, perhaps as small-group work, with the instructor as roving commentator and resource person. Such exercises can grow organically out of exercises

in other modalities. Thus in Chapter 15 or so one might use a listing of hotels in scenic areas to elicit first a low-level review of reading and speaking skills (kinds of room and their prices, etc.). Then might come deliberation about alternatives, with planning of a week's stay (comparative, dates, modals). As a third stage the class might draft letters to the proprietors of the hotels, including details about preferences and contingencies (*wenn, weil*, adjectives). Thereafter, the several small groups might be directed to assume that they are in the midst of their stay and that – now up on their feet and strolling through the classroom! – they are to discuss their experiences during chance encounters with other travelers (past tense, *seit* + present tense, prepositions, reportage and expression of opinion with *daß*). A last stage might comprise the composition of a thank-you note or postcard – if time allows; the previous stages could easily occupy an entire class hour. Field-testing argues strongly that the hours spent in such activities are neither unpleasant nor unproductive.

We conclude the discussion of teaching strategy with two points and a paradigm. 1) In the proficiency-oriented classroom work and play (*Formtrieb* and *Spieltrieb*?) may often overlap, and so often it becomes apparent that language and culture are inseparable. The *Wie, bitte?* package gives prominent place to listening activities, and throughout the text we have mentioned music that is appropriate in theme, grammar, and vocabulary. We encourage you to let your students listen and sing. 2) *Wie, bitte?* is filled with print realia that can do much to further communication and convey atmosphere. We urge you to use it.

Alice Omaggio and Judith A. Muyskens, writing in the classic volume *Teaching for Proficiency: The Organizing Principle* (ed. Theodore V. Higgs), offer language teachers the best advice we have encountered. Omaggio (p.51) proposes five hypotheses about the proficiency-oriented classroom. Muyskens (p.189) complements those hypotheses with practical advice.

- *Hypothesis 1:* Opportunities must be provided for students to practice using the language in a range of contexts likely to be encountered in the target culture.

Corollary 1: Students should be encouraged to express their own meaning as early as possible in the course of instruction.

Corollary 2: A proficiency-oriented approach pro-

motes active communicative interaction among students.

Corollary 3: Creative language practice (as opposed to exclusively manipulative or convergent practice) must be encouraged.

Corollary 4: Authentic language should be used in instruction wherever and whenever possible.

- *Hypothesis 2:* Opportunities should be provided for students to carry out a range of functions (task universals) likely to be necessary for interacting in the target language and culture.
- *Hypothesis 3:* There should be concern for the development of linguistic accuracy from the beginning of instruction.
- *Hypothesis 4:* Proficiency-oriented approaches respond to the affective as well as the cognitive needs of students.
- *Hypothesis 5:* Cultural understanding must be promoted in various ways so that students are prepared to understand, accept, and live harmoniously in the target-language community.

Checklist for daily progress toward proficiency

1. Did I include a warm-up activity which asked students to perform a function or a contextualized or personalized activity?
2. Was most classroom interaction in the target language?
3. If I presented vocabulary or grammar, did I do so in context?
4. Were any exercises I did contextualized or meaningful?
5. Did I include some speaking practice which required students to interact or be creative with the language?
6. Was small-group work included in the class hour?
7. Did the students participate in some type of role-playing activity?
8. Did I include sufficient listening practice to help my students understand utterances in situations?
9. Did I include or assign writing practice which gave students practice in writing on topics of interest to them?
10. Did I provide a context for culture and an opportunity for students to express a culturally appropriate act?
11. Did I correct students in a way that was helpful to them?