

ANNOTATED  
INSTRUCTOR'S EDITION

# Wie, bitte?

**INTRODUCTORY GERMAN  
FOR PROFICIENCY**

**William B. Fischer**

*Portland State University*

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*Linfield College*

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# Overview

Sprache ist Verhalten in einer Situation. Spielend löst man sich aus der Situation.

HARALD WEINRICH,  
*Tempus: besprochene und erzählte Welt*

*Wie, bitte?* has but one purpose: the promotion of proficiency and practical competence in elementary German. To our minds, there is nothing more important in our field than the teaching of introductory German, and we have found – as we hope you, our colleagues, will also find – that there is nothing more challenging or rewarding.

*Wie, bitte?* seeks to promote proficiency. The modern notion of proficiency is reflected not only in its theoretical orientation, but also in its major structural features, its smallest details, and in the conception of the teaching techniques that we consider appropriate to the package. Oral proficiency is emphasized, in part because oral proficiency is vital to communication in most realistic situations, and in part because a talking classroom is a happy and productive classroom. But the *Wie, bitte?* package also carefully seeks to nurture skill in reading and listening, those skills often termed “passive” or “recognition.” The collection of visual and aural realia is rich, and the material is actively employed. As for writing proficiency, we have tried to encourage the notion that writing in a foreign language means far more than using a pen or pencil to perform grammar, vocabulary, and dictation exercises, or to write intellectual essays.

The *Wie, bitte?* package is tightly integrated. The various linguistic skills or modalities are not merely cultivated individually but also developed jointly. Nor is the cultural aspect of language neglected; we have striven to provide the student with an insight into many features of German culture – with “culture” understood in the broadest sense of the word, and yet with a concentration on material of lasting importance rather than ephemeral popularity. Above

all, we have sought to show how closely language and culture are interrelated.

## SUMMARY OF MATERIALS

*Wie, bitte?* comprises the following resources:

1. The Class Text is a medium-length book intended for intensive use in the proficiency-oriented classroom. Model dialogs and contextual communication tasks are prominent. Grammar is presented by pattern and brief comment rather than by analytic exposition. Vocabulary is presented in highly visual, thematic displays; there is also a German-English glossary. A section of “recyclable” realia provides resources for situation exercises and texts for reading practice. The end papers offer ready reference materials.
2. The Study Text is a workbook intended for individual use primarily outside the classroom, but also useful in it. The volume contains: 1) an orientation, with advice on study methods; 2) chapter-by-chapter exercises in the various proficiency modalities and in analytic grammar; 3) English renditions of the Class Text dialogs; 4) chapter vocabulary lists; 5) a reference grammar, to whose various sections the student is directed by marginal annotations in the brief grammar presentations in the Class Text; and (6) a collection of recyclable realia which parallels that in the Class Text.

*The Study Text is an integral part of the package.* It contains many resources that are ordinarily found in the main “textbooks” of conventional packages.

3. The tape set is divided into two parts: 1) renditions and expansions of the textbook dialogs; 2) aural realia and cultural offerings, organized by theme and linguistic structure; these items are the material for homework exercises, for some listening tests, and for cultural enrichment.

The development of listening comprehension with taped materials is an integral part of the package. The student must use the tapes when working with the Study Text, and the model syllabus envisions the use of tapes (or live renditions of the dialogs) in class.

4. The Test Bank contains: 1) materials for proficiency-oriented speaking, listening, reading, and writing tests; 2) answer keys or guidelines for those tests and for selected Study Text exercises; 3) a set of recyclable realia that parallel those in the Class Text and Study Text and are therefore suitable for use in the tests provided in the manual; they can also be used in exercises and tests that the teacher devises. The construction of proficiency-oriented tests requires considerable effort, and it would be inadvisable to teach from *Wie, bitte?* while still intending to rely primarily on conventional tests of grammar-transformation ability and vocabulary memorization.

5. The computer software includes: 1) contextualized listening, reading, and writing exercises; 2) computerized versions of tests in the testing manual; 3) administrative software intended to aid the teacher in record-keeping, test administration, and development of auxiliary materials. Supported computers are the IBM PC and compatibles, Apple IIe/c/gs, and the Macintosh; for the last there is special courseware with natural speech recorded digitally on the disks.

### **Pedagogical Orientation**

*Wie, bitte?* can be used by teachers espousing many different teaching methods. Its subtitle, however, makes clear our commitment and debt to the ideas of language proficiency developed by colleagues formally or informally associated with the U.S. Government Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR), the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), and the Educational Testing Service (ETS). The ILR/ACTFL/ETS concepts of linguistic competence and methods of evaluating it, though they were decades in development, began to invigorate our profession so much just a few years ago. Here we can only summarize that work, particularly as it applies to our first-year German package; the

interested reader is referred to the publications listed in the bibliography below.

Central to the ILR/ACTFL/ETS notion of proficiency is practical knowledge of the language, the ability, that is, to use it effectively for communication. That notion of competence does not at all deny the usefulness of analytic knowledge of the language, or grammar in the traditional sense. But it does suggest that in language instruction such knowledge should not be an end, as it has often been made in our classes and our textbooks, but rather a means. Here we might note that, whatever language teachers have done in the classroom, this concept of proficiency lies close to our hearts, and to those of our students. We all want to be able to use the language.

It is, or at least has been, far easier to test and to attempt to teach analytic knowledge of a foreign language than it is to teach and test for genuine proficiency. A worthy achievement in itself has been the evolution of the proficiency guidelines now widely familiar to our profession. Their chief feature is the careful description of proficiency by profiles that take into account function, context, and accuracy. Equally beneficial has been the evolution of corresponding testing methods, particularly for oral proficiency, but lately also for listening, reading, and writing. Thus the "oral proficiency interview" is a widely known register of language proficiency, though still not commonly part of mass instruction programs – and for good reason, since such oral testing is extremely labor-intensive.

A more controversial aspect of the ILR/ACTFL/ETS work in language proficiency has been the transformation of standards of measurement into descriptions of and prescriptions for language acquisition. In other words, do the proficiency guidelines constitute a syllabus for language instruction, rather than just a methodologically neutral description of performance? In offering *Wie, bitte?* we share the view of those who have declared that the proficiency guidelines can indeed be a learning syllabus, and that there is nothing wrong with "teaching for the test," if the test and the teaching are both proficiency-oriented.

Our fundamental attitude, then, is this: We share the sentiments of language teachers who preach the gospel of competence. We prize students who say, "When I go there I want to understand them and I want them to understand me." We regret that all too many students recall their study of foreign languages by saying, "I had four years of it, and I

can't now and never could say anything." To put it another way: The fundamental premise of *Wie, bitte?* is that if we are going to preach language competence, then we must teach it; if we are going to teach it, then we must test it; and if we are going to preach and teach and test it, then we must grade for it. But we need not regard that prospect as depressing. Instead, it permits us to entertain the notion that we might actually do what we want to do, and that is to teach, in the truest sense of the word.

What are the general implications of the ILR/ACTFL/ETS work for *Wie, bitte?*

1. It has become evident that the traditional first-year text, which attempts to offer in one year "all" (whatever that means) of German grammar, envisions an inordinately high level of grammatical competence. Typically, such texts culminate well in the ACTFL/ETS Superior level (= ILR 4). Although it is possible to lead some students through carefully targeted exercises with such features as the special subjunctive or the past perfect passive, in a genuine proficiency test even an excellent first-year German student, taught under favorable circumstances, is unlikely to rate higher than Intermediate-High (= ILR 1+) in speaking or writing. The magnitude of the discrepancy is enormous, since the progression between proficiency levels is described by an ever-steepening curve. One notes that Advanced-Plus/ILR 2+ in speaking has been proposed as a target level for graduating language majors and prospective high school teachers.

Consequently, in *Wie, bitte?* we have lowered the target level considerably. For the speaking modality, the aim of the text is to produce from the best students a proficiency performance of Intermediate-High. Since that level in turn requires rich but not constant demonstration of Advanced performance, the grammatical material intended for occasional production – but *not* mastery – culminates low in the ACTFL/ETS Superior (= ILR 3) level, with heavy concentration at the Advanced (= ILR 2) level. The communicative functions and contexts of *Wie, bitte?* are consonant with its grammatical level. Indeed, we outlined the package in terms of function and context, and then wrote many of its nuclear dialogs, before they determined the details of its grammatical syllabus.

The *Proficiency Guidelines* also lead one to conclude that the traditional first-year package, whatever its ultimate target level, may well neglect the

student's development at the very lowest proficiency levels, levels that would seem to be vital way-stations in the quest for higher proficiency. It is our impression that there is too little active work with simple echoing, transcription, list-making, and note-taking; that survival vocabulary, phrases, and everyday cultural knowledge are neglected; and that emphasis on generation of complex grammatical patterns has suppressed instruction in practical discourse strategy and the use of intelligence, common sense, and real-world knowledge.

The lowering of target level and increased attention to the lowest levels of proficiency should not be regarded as implying a lowering of standards. The change represents, instead, a shift from discrete-point instruction of analytic knowledge to teaching and testing of genuine proficiency. We believe that proficiency-oriented instruction and testing can remove some of the major frustrations of our profession. The results of proficiency-oriented theory and research impel us toward a revision of target levels, but they also open to us the prospect of enforcing our standards more rigorously.

2. Very important in the idea of proficiency are the concepts of *function* and *context*: what communicative task the language user undertakes to do and under what circumstances. The third ingredient, *accuracy* – or grammar, in the expanded sense of "structural competence" – completes the description. According to the *Guidelines*, the Advanced or ILR 2 speaker of German, for example, is "able to satisfy routine social demands and limited school or work requirements. Can handle with confidence but not with facility most social and general conversations. Can narrate, describe and explain in past, present, and future time." Thus it is not sufficient merely to set standards in purely grammatical terms, to introduce and demand, say, "the past tense." One must specify, rather, what genuinely communicative act the student/user/speaker is to be taught and expected to perform with the past tense, and under which conditions, and with what degree of precision. Thus the Advanced or ILR 2 speaker of German can, among other things, reliably express facts (past, present, or future) about concrete topics in a manner understandable to native speakers not used to dealing with foreigners. Still more specifically, in an oral proficiency interview such a speaker will exhibit a rich stock of past participles, with choice of *haben* or *sein* correct most of the time, and also produce many regular and irreg-

ular verbs in the imperfect, and among the latter of course the modals especially.

The adoption of a proficiency-oriented curriculum has immense implications for testing. The traditional grammar-translation test cannot remain the mainstay of evaluation, though it may still have some value as a preparatory exercise, as a check of analytic and monitoring skills, and even as a nose-to-the-grindstone prod. Instead, at least some testing, and certainly the ultimate evaluation of proficiency, must be conducted in a way that indeed measures the ability to carry out useful communicative tasks in the several modalities. Here volumes could be written, and indeed have been (see the Bibliography). Sample tests are provided below, and the optional test bank and software contain a basic stock of tests for the entire course.

The principles that govern proficiency testing are clear. The test should gauge functional ability, not analytic or intellectual knowledge; thus one poses a task like "Tell me about that great weekend in Köln," rather than demanding, item by item, the conjugation of various verbs in the past tense, the replacement of nouns with pronouns, or the translation of English sentences into German sentences. A corollary is that it may often be advantageous to pose tasks in English, rather than German, to hinder translation attempts and to avoid revealing target structures and vocabulary. Second, the German that students encounter in tests should be quite realistic, though of course selected to fit the anticipated proficiency level. In oral tests the examiner should maintain normal intonation and pace, and reading and listening tests should incorporate *realia* as soon as possible. Third, error evaluation should consider the actual communicative effect of the error and should seek to ascertain the level of consistent performance, rather than fix on idiosyncratic highs or lows in production over a short period. Fourth, if the tests have been designed to mimic "real-world" conditions, one should have no qualms about "teaching to the test" or, of course, testing what has been taught, with regard to either the manner or the content of the test. Students who have several times energetically practiced negotiating for a hotel room or talking about their special interests deserve tests that give them the opportunity to demonstrate their proficiency in carrying out such practical tasks as negotiating for a hotel room or talking about their special interests. As concerns the actual format of tests and their relation to the *Wie, bitte?* exercise materials, we have

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sought to make the tests and the exercises very similar; thus the Class Text *Situationen* bear a close resemblance to the situation cards used in the standard oral proficiency interview.

3. Explicit reference to the "four skills" of speaking, listening, reading, and writing has been common for years. But often speaking became a matter of pattern-parroting, writing was exercised in the form of sentence transformation or else high-level essayistic composition, and the so-called "passive" modalities of listening and reading were neglected or trivialized into exercises with vapid synthetic language. The ILR/ACTFL/ETS proficiency concept, with its emphasis on context and its detailed guidelines for each modality, transforms listening and reading into active skills, with the further demand that the student be evaluated according to performance with genuine language materials. Writing skill is viewed as the ability to communicate effectively when performing realistic tasks, such as filling out a hotel registration form (Novice-High/ILR 0+), writing a simple postcard (Intermediate-Low/ILR 1), or composing a short personal letter (Advanced/ILR 2). The evaluation of speaking skill through the conversational oral proficiency interview is, of course, a widely familiar feature of proficiency evaluation and needs no further discussion at this point.

But a fifth ingredient or "modality" should indeed be mentioned - "culture," or the evidence of knowledge of the society as it appears in the use of the language. Here the most important effects of the proficiency concept are, first, the broadening of the notion of "culture" from the very restricted "high-brow" notion of *Kultur* still present in many German programs, and, second, the suggestion of a hierarchy of cultural-linguistic proficiency that is described in terms of function, context/content, and accuracy, and whose levels parallel those of the other modalities. Thus the Intermediate language user, for example, has among other similar skills a survival-level stock of greeting and leave-taking utterances, knows how to provide addresses in German form, knows where to buy basic consumer items, and understands the *Sie/du* distinction; the Advanced student demonstrates, for example, guest etiquette, ability to apologize, and basic use of telephone; near-native competence is typified by detailed use of geographical and historical knowledge, perception of allusions and paralinguistic clues, and flexibility of speech register.

4. A distinctive feature of the modern concept of proficiency is the perception that many linguistic phenomena treated as single topics in the traditional grammatical syllabus are in fact complex congeries of functional and contextual competences that are distributed over a considerable range in the proficiency scale. Thus the past tense, for example, is not a discrete entity that can or should be "done" (= analytically processed) in some neatly bounded section of a textbook. Instead, elements of a past tense may be learned lexically quite early, followed perhaps by a systematic and generally effective, if flawed, notion of morphology and usage, and then a more sophisticated analytical comprehension and practical management of the tense. The graphical analog of language acquisition, then, is not a neat curve but rather a spiral; the learner climbs higher, but at the same time always dips back down for refreshment, expansion, and refinement of skill in linguistic behaviors that the proficiency-oriented pedagogue understands to be disparate functional and contextual phenomena. Those same phenomena the analytic grammarians, and with them the conventional language textbooks, lumped together into a single decontextualized, function-blind intellectual mass, one that foreign language students have indeed found hard to swallow.

The overriding structural principle of *Wie, bitte?* is not sequential presentation of discrete, conceptually neat blocks of grammar-oriented material (e.g., "Chapter 4: dative case," or "Chapter 17: the present perfect"). Instead, the program employs the "spiral syllabus." Communicative *function* has priority over grammatical *form*. The student gets what is needed for the communicative task, and care is taken both to encourage review and to introduce, at first tacitly, features that will later be presented more analytically. Thus a given grammatical feature, such as the dative pronouns, may be addressed in several distinctly separated chapters, first as a gently insinuated "lexical" item or element of a stock phrase ("*Bitte, bringen Sie uns . . .*"), then in the overt presentation of high-frequency dative pronouns, then in the comprehensive presentation of the full system of dative pronouns. The treatment of dative pronouns will overlap as well with the use of other elements that involve dative case, for example articles and prepositions. Similarly, work with the reading or listening materials might expose the student quite early to structures that, like the preterite, are dealt with systematically only in the later chapters of the text.

It will be noted that the grammatical content or level for a given chapter is not neutral with regard to modality. That is, it is not assumed that the student will encounter and work with similar structures in all the modalities at the same time. Instead, we pose listening and reading tasks that are aimed at higher levels of proficiency than the speaking and writing tasks. Thus the grammatical content or target level of a given chapter should be understood to be the grammar that is presented for emulation in the "active" or "production" modalities of speaking, primarily, but also writing. It may be expected that the student will long since have encountered listening and reading realia that include those same structures. Correspondingly, the *Struktur* pages with their associated Reference Grammar sections are keyed largely to the target level for speaking and writing, though the exposition in the Reference Grammar will often expand the current topic with higher-level material. We consider that policy legitimate for two reasons: 1) The student is thereby exposed in a preliminary and as it were "passive" way to structures that will later be presented for "active" use. 2) Genuine comprehension of authentic reading or listening materials is not based on discrete-point management or translation of vocabulary or grammar, but rather on the parallel and recursive processing of interrelated linguistic materials that constitute the bits and pieces of a larger whole. Thus the reader may functionally "understand" a segment of language as having a past sense, not necessarily by recognizing its past tense(s), but rather by noting time phrases, or even numerical data, that seem to point toward past time. It should go without saying that, in constructing exercises with such material, nowhere do we demand performance that can be achieved only with knowledge of structures that have not yet been presented for use in the "active" modalities.

5. With regard to teaching technique, the orthodox formulation of the proficiency notion claims to be methodologically neutral. And indeed, as testing tools the *Guidelines* and the associated techniques used to elicit language samples for evaluation do not pass judgment on how the examinee has acquired any proficiency that is demonstrated, other than to suggest rather pointedly but also rather generally that, for example, a student who has not been accorded much opportunity to speak will likely do poorly on an oral proficiency test. But the *Guidelines*, and those persons who have been associated with

them, do not ordinarily state a positive preference for, say, the Total Physical Response method, as opposed to the Silent Way. Yet it is not too difficult to perceive that the notion of proficiency is hostile to certain individual techniques encountered frequently in our classrooms and exhibited rather prominently in the popular image of foreign-language teaching. Such techniques include, for example, presentation of detailed analytic grammar in the target language,

rote pattern drills, and stringent error correction regardless of the functional importance of the error. Consequently, later in the Introduction we present a detailed discussion of teaching techniques we consider appropriate to the *Wie, bitte?* package.

Such principles have determined the overall structure and content of the *Wie, bitte?* package. We turn now to its more specific features.



# The Materials and Their Use

We again remark that the *Wie, bitte?* package does *not* consist of a main text supported by more or less optional workbook, tapes, and so on. The Class Text, considerably shorter than most first-year books, has two main functions: 1) it is a handbook and resource center for the proficiency-oriented classroom, in which active use of language, particularly in speaking, is paramount; 2) the terse *Struktur* or grammar pages demonstrate, always with provision for immediate communicative practice, the chief grammatical targets of the chapter, with reference codes directing the student to study the expositions of grammar *outside* the classroom. Thus the Class Text does *not* focus on the elaboration or exercise of grammar in the traditional sense, though the Class Text and the *Wie, bitte?* package as a whole indeed do demand and further competence in grammar.

The Study Text has complementary functions, and in fact the student working outside the classroom will often find it convenient to have the two books open side by side. Where the Class Text will always be used intensively in the classroom, with the Study Text as an occasional resource, the Study Text is intended to be used intensively in study outside the classroom, with the Class Text as a secondary resource. Thus the Study Text has many functions: 1) It conducts the student through listening, reading, and writing exercises. 2) It prepares the student for speaking in the classroom. 3) Its Reference Grammar, accessed by codes on the Class Text *Struktur* pages, presents analytic grammar and could indeed serve as a concise survey of German grammar throughout the student's study of the language. 4) It offers contextualized analytic grammar exercises. 5) It provides extra realia and "props" for use both in and outside the classroom. 6) It includes renditions of the Class Text dialogs and chapter-by-chapter German-English vocabulary lists.

As for its thematic structure or "plot," *Wie, bitte?* is organized around a fairly typical trip to Ger-

many, with entrance from the northwest, a stopover in Aachen, a short stay in Köln, a trip down the Rhine to Freiburg, a lengthier or even indefinite stay in München, and then sidetrips elsewhere within countries where German is spoken. We chose that framework not because we wished to write a "German for Travelers" text (though for some users *Wie, bitte?* might well have such a *vade mecum* use, with our blessing), nor simply because that pattern, augmented with a rich assortment of materials from East Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, does indeed conduct the student-traveler on a grand tour of the realm in which German is spoken.

Instead, we considered the needs and likely behavior of one who enters, survives, and then begins to thrive in the foreign language and culture, on its own terms. Short-term survival needs are satisfied first, in brief interchanges intelligible to the native speaker used to dealing with foreigners; active communication is accomplished largely in memorized utterances or brief sentences (= Novice High). The text and the student then progress to longer-term but still everyday, concrete matters, with encouragement of some linguistic creativity in interchanges involving speakers relatively accustomed to dealing with foreigners (= Intermediate Low/Mid). The final part of the package encourages the learner to communicate relatively freely about somewhat larger but still typically concrete and immediate topics with conversants who are generally congenial but cannot be expected to understand or leniently tolerate foreigners struggling with the language (= Intermediate High). Within the final chapters are topics and structures that probe somewhat higher in the proficiency scale, mostly within the Advanced to Advanced-Plus range, so that the better student can indeed aim at the frequent exhibition of Advanced behavior that characterizes Intermediate-High performance in speaking.

In accord with our own and others' investigations

of language proficiency, we have de-emphasized or even eliminated certain grammatical features that are commonly presented – though seldom really learned – in traditional first-year German courses. The future tense, distinctly beyond the Intermediate level and commonly replaced by the present tense in native speech anyway, is not presented for use in the spoken language, nor are – for similar reasons – the genitive prepositions, Konjunktiv I, the adverbial superlative, or daunting verb combinations like the past passive modal subjunctive. Certain of those features, however, are addressed in the Study Text Reference Grammar, which does present the “complete” grammar contained in traditional classroom texts.

But we do not regard the grammar offered in the Class Text as incomplete. It provides all the structures even an excellent student can be expected to learn to handle proficiently when faced with speaking tasks characteristic of the Intermediate-High level. Field-testing has confirmed the appropriateness of the grammar level and has reinforced our confidence in the principle of letting function lead form. Frequently when our students confidently undertake an oral task, they discover that, though they may be able to perform the function passably with available resources, they need some more sophisticated grammatical feature to do the task well. They will indeed ask for it – often enough just a few classroom hours before it is scheduled for presentation.

### **The Class Text**

The Class Text is intended to be the main everyday resource in a proficiency-oriented classroom, one in which there is much communicative use of language but little analytic discussion of it. We have excluded from the Class Text those elements that, while they may have a purpose in language study, do not have a place in a classroom where demonstration, simulation, and emulation of genuine communication are emphasized.

The Class Text material divides into two parts: the chapters and the resources. The chapters – two preliminary units and 26 regular units – are of course intended for sequential study. Since they are organized on the principle of the spiral syllabus, however, individual functions, contexts, and grammatical topics are covered not once but several times, and there is also careful provision for review. A special chapter, *Feste und Feiertage*, is intended for use as appropriate to the season and contains material keyed to many different levels.

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The main section of the Class Text consists of the two preliminary chapters and the 26 regular units. The preliminary units consist largely of brief dialogs intended for memorization and intensive contextual exercise. Their chief purpose is to boost the student as quickly as possible to the ACTFL/ETS Novice-Mid level in speaking. There is no presentation of grammatical features, because at such a level the speaker has effectively no grammar – or rather, what appears to be structural competence is actually lexical achievement. Nor are there any formally posed situation exercises of the kind offered in the main chapters; the student cannot yet be expected to create at any length with the language.

Far more complex are the 26 regular units. In a proficiency-oriented course the classroom text must serve as a departure point for exercise in communication rather than as an object for contemplative examination and cautious precision drill. Thus the *Wie, bitte?* Class Text chapters are always of the same length, and, for each location, their chief features always appear from chapter to chapter not merely in the same sequence, but in precisely the same place and on the same page within the chapter. Care was taken to lay out the pages so that there was no overflow from page to page in the presentation of dialogs, grammar, and exercises. The guiding principle was that the student and teacher involved in energetic use of the book should not have to struggle to find needed materials. The same principle determined the typographical policy – we wanted a text whose vital sections could be read at a glance while the ears, eyes, mouth – and even the rest of the body as well – were engaged in communicative exercise. Typographical emphasis is used frequently, and explanation is kept to a minimum. Photos and realia are included, not as pretty pictures or supposedly intriguing documentary tidbits, but rather as integral parts of the language-learning process.

The *first* page (page # = chapter # + 0) always presents visual material that suggests the themes of the chapter's two basic contexts, and then itemizes in everyday language the aims of the chapter in terms of the “functional trisection” of function, context/content, and accuracy. The facing page (page # = chapter # + 1) presents dialogs (*Gespräche 1*) that explore the chapter's first theme; there follow a page of relevant structural paradigms and exposition (*Struktur 1*) and a page of oral exercises (*Situationen 1*). The second theme of each chapter is presented in a similar way. Between the two thematic sections

is a two-page spread, *Strategie – Kultur und Sprache*, which fits the chapter's main linguistic and cultural features into a wider context, shows how to exploit communicative resources, and offers enrichment vocabulary.

The second half or theme of each chapter definitely presupposes knowledge of the first. But the pages of each chapter need not be presented and studied in precisely their given order. Although we recommend that the dialogs, or *Gespräche*, be undertaken before the corresponding *Struktur* sections are presented, some teachers may prefer the reverse order. The *Strategie – Kultur und Sprache* page can be introduced anywhere (or left largely for home study), and certainly the *Situationen* can and should be undertaken over the course of the chapter or sub-section, rather than just at the end.

Several controversial points must be addressed here. In terms of verisimilitude and *Stilfibel* correctness, the *Gespräche* present a spoken German which aims above all at being comprehensible to and functionally reproducible by the first-year student. Though we sought to give the language real flavor, we did not overload it with notorious flavor words (stressed/unstressed *doch*), ephemeral slang, studiously cultivated casual contractions (*'nen* for *einen*), or other warts and wrinkles that would impede the acquisition of functional competence. On the other hand, we did not offer speech that demanded that the student metamorphose into a model *Abiturient*; thus *bekommen* is allowed to do the duty of *erhalten*, as it often does in real conversation, and "*Wann ist der nächste Zug?*" is promoted in early chapters instead of the above level "*Wann fährt der nächste Zug (ab)?*" In general the authors, both non-native speakers of German, can attest that the German of *Wie, bitte?* was conceived in fond recollection of many an actual conversation, that it was passed cautiously through an effective affective filter, and that it was then judged carefully by two and sometimes three or more well-educated native speakers of German – who often differed on what constitutes correct or even natural German.

present

The presentation of grammar through model language, paradigm, and very brief exposition on the two *Struktur* pages in the Class Text chapters, and the location of the Reference Grammar in the Study Text, are intended to discourage any tendency to turn the class into a lecture on linguistics, when it should be instead a vigorous exercise in communicative skills, with the teacher as model and coach. The an-

alytic Reference Grammar is intended for study outside of class; the *Struktur* pages should be used in class to demonstrate the functional nature of grammar. The instructor should show how acquisition of new structures can make communication more efficient. Thus proficiency in handling attributive adjectives enables one to express in one sentence ("*Ich habe einen braunen Regenschirm gekauft.*") what otherwise would require two sentences with attendant labor of conjugation, tense selection, and attention to word order ("*Ich habe einen Regenschirm gekauft.*" "*Er ist braun.*"). In general, it is also beneficial to point out the compensatory relationship between grammar and vocabulary: strength in one can offset weakness in the other.

polish

The two *Situationen* pages in each chapter, and the corresponding preparatory exercises in the Study Text, exemplify the target activity of *Wie, bitte?*, the use of language for communication – and particularly, in the classroom, oral communication. That is indeed the purpose of the *Gespräche* and the *Struktur* pages. The *Situationen* are posed largely in English, which may initially disconcert some teachers who prize the notion of a "German only"-classroom. Colleagues familiar with the standard oral proficiency interview (OPI) will perceive our inspiration and anticipate our argument. For several reasons, proficiency interview situations are usually offered in English, at least at the levels with which we are concerned here. If the situation is posed in German, and the interviewee does not perform well, one cannot be sure that one is measuring oral proficiency, since the deficiency may lie in listening comprehension. In fact, posing in German a situation of sufficient complexity to yield good interview data may be quite difficult; in any case, one risks giving away target structures and vocabulary.

The *Situationen* are phrased in relatively low-level, idiomatic English that should be readily comprehensible to most students. It is more important that the idiomatic formulation seeks pointedly to thwart attempts at translation, and that quite often the situations solicit the expression of emotions and the performance of gestures. The student must learn that it is futile or at least extremely dangerous to attempt word-for-word or structure-for-structure transformations, and that language does not exist in an emotional and physical vacuum. Instead, one should establish and reinforce the ability to convert concepts into language, and constantly demand emulation of emotion, gesture, and other paralinguistic

phenomena. There are collateral benefits to that effort and to the periphrastic formulation of situations: the students can be led to the confidence that they can find a common means to handle tasks expressed in a variety of formulations, and that what appear to be complex ideas can be divided into several more easily managed concepts. Our goal is that the student who seeks to express a notion like "agree" will resist the urge to consult the dictionary, only to become lost in a web of words – "übereinstimmen? sich einigen? zustimmen? übereinkommen zu (inf)? (affect one's health) bekommen (dat)?" – and will instead realize that direct agreement can be expressed simply by saying *Ja* and that it can be discussed – indeed fluently! – by combining *ja* and *sagen* or *glauben* and *auch*.

Our own classroom experience with printed situations posed in English argues strongly that students in a proficiency-oriented classroom will not revert more than occasionally to English discussion of the situations rather than German performance of them. Of course, we cannot prevent them from thinking in English – nor can one in a "German only" classroom; and even there, unless the text is in German only, the student will in any case be reading some English. The chief goal, of course, is that the student encounter and produce a lot of German. In a proficiency-oriented classroom that will be the case whether or not one adopts the "German only" policy.

Similar considerations apply to the *Strategie – Kultur und Sprache* sections, which are almost entirely in English, except for the associated realia. They are not intended as *Lesestücke*. We wanted the students to absorb the content of the *Strategie* pages, not struggle with artificial German texts. When reading was the explicit target skill, we wanted everything the student read to be an authentic text. Quite likely the *Wie, bitte?* package, with its extensive realia scattered throughout the Class Text, and its large *Drucksachen* collections in both Class Text and Study Text, exposes the student to considerably more German than other first-year books. That exposure is intensified by the Study Text reading exercises and the test-bank reading tests, which lead the student through a vast range of realia and vigorously promote the active processing of large amounts of language. The same can be said of aural realia in the package.

The Class Text resources, like the spiral-syllabus grammatical features in the chapters, are intended for repeated use or recycling throughout the pro-

gram. They include materials of a kind found in many texts and of course assumed to be recyclable, such as a glossary. Other resources are not so traditional.

The *Afterword* of the Class Text contains a detailed yet plain language discussion of linguistic proficiency. Though students may not be able to appreciate the intricacies of either our profession's methodology or of proficiency-oriented instruction, most of them are curious about how they are progressing. At strategic points in the course you may wish to discuss pedagogical matters briefly. The rest of the *Afterword* provides information about further study and travel. Such material can be integrated into the course at many points, especially if at least a few students intend to travel or study abroad, or have already done so.

The *Glossary* serves two overall purposes. It enables the teacher to ascertain when and where which words have been "officially" introduced, and it provides the student with a core dictionary of words we consider important. Both points deserve explanation, and once again we emphasize that *Wie, bitte?* aims to promote *functional* skill rather than memorization of word lists or intellectual mastery of rules. The glossary is proficiency-oriented, in several senses. It is *not* intended as a translation help for the student who wants to look up every word. Most important of all, it does not and could not contain each of the many thousands of German words that the student might encounter – but not necessarily have to understand overtly! – in the various *Wie, bitte?* materials. Instead, it is built around the chapter *Gespräche*, in which the basic structures and vocabulary of each unit are presented. A few incidental words in the *Gespräche* are glossed in page margins, and thus may not appear in the glossary; many obvious cognates are simply ignored. Similarly, compound nouns that are not quite transparent but whose parts should already be familiar are glossed in the text with indications of division; they may not be listed in the glossary.

The *Glossary* is intended to promote the skills of skimming, scanning, and risk-taking. And, in conjunction with the *Bildwörterbuch* and the recommended conventional paperback dictionary, it takes into account differences in language modalities. The glossary is not a single alphabetical list. Rather, it is divided functionally, and in a manner consonant with the development of proficiency at the Novice-High to Intermediate-High levels. We would hope that the student earnestly working with the *Gespräche*

would use the dictionary as a secondary resource, and instead would rely primarily on contextual guessing, recursion, and other practical strategies to comprehend not only the basic meaning of a word but also its subsidiary characteristics (e.g., gender, tense).

Students who wish to look up words in the *Glossary* will have to commit themselves linguistically; that is, they will have to take some risks that are consonant with progress at the Novice-High to Intermediate-High level. Their first decision will be a gross classification: Is the word a noun or "something else?" Then, if the word is a noun, the student must venture a guess about its gender, for the nouns are listed alphabetically *by gender*, with prominent reminders about their articles. The process is not as laborious in practice as it is in description, since the pages of the glossary have been designed to reduce page-thumbing to a minimum.

There is no English-German lexicon. Our intent is to discourage dependence on translation and to encourage students to make do with whatever they have readily available, especially when the linguistic task involves realistic conditions in which use of a dictionary would be inappropriate or impossible. In speaking situations that are truly impromptu or permit only short preparation, the ordinary listener – even the well-disposed native speaker used to dealing with foreigners – will not often wait long enough for the struggling speaker to look up a word. Second, wrong-headed ventures at one-for-one translation can be disastrous or inadvertently comical, in the manner of the "What watch, treasure?" exchange in the film *Casablanca*, or of Thomas Mann's British tourists who render "Look at that!" as "*Besichtigen Sie jenes!*"

Therefore in rapidly paced speaking situations the student should be encouraged to use fluently a smaller but handier stock of words (and grammatical structures). Where time allows for reference to an actual lexicon, in whatever form it is presented, we would hope the student would learn to manage vocabulary thematically; that is, would come to perceive and conceive of words in contexts. One tactic might be recourse to the *Gespräche* themselves, since the dialogs are indeed conceived thematically and ordered according to the functions appropriate to the various proficiency levels. Even more important is the *Bildwörterbuch* with its extensive stock of words arranged contextually. Lastly, you may well recommend that your students acquire a paperback

German-English/English-German dictionary. You should remind them, however, that dependence on a dictionary can be dangerous, and that, even in the listening and reading exercises, where they will encounter many unfamiliar words, they will not be asked to undertake anything that cannot be accomplished without the resources they have been given.

The overall principles of vocabulary management in a proficiency-oriented environment might be summed up thus: When it comes to acquiring and applying vocabulary, virtually anything is fair; students should learn to obtain words wherever they can. Second, such complaints as "But this word isn't in the glossary," or "We haven't had this word yet," are not valid objections to linguistic tasks posed in exercises or tests – as long, of course, as completion of the tasks does not hinge directly on comprehension or production of such words in total isolation.

More important than the glossary are two other sections, the *Bildwörterbuch* and the reading materials, or *Drucksachen*. The former, already mentioned, consists of a set of pictorial vocabulary presentations organized by context (e.g., transportation, family) and rough order of proficiency level (e.g., first vital subjects like food and basic environment, then such complexities as landscape and personal interests). Our guiding principles in designing and offering the *Bildwörterbuch* are: 1) we should encourage our students to learn vocabulary in context, and without the easy access to English equivalents that encourages the dangerous assumption of a one-to-one correlation between languages; and 2) although many other textbooks carefully restrict vocabulary but then present grammatical content that is inordinately high in level, a proficiency orientation, at least at the ACTFL/ETS Intermediate level, may favor the opposite – namely, solid command of a modest range of structures, with confident recourse to available lexicons. The student should feel free to consult the *Bildwörterbuch* displays, and the Class Text and Study Text direct attention to them. The teacher should also make systematic use of them in class – not by preaching the vocabulary, but rather by setting appropriate communicative tasks.

The Class Text reading materials – they are actually much more than that – consist of a rich collection of realia that is intended to be useful rather than ornamental. It should be noted first that neither the main chapters of the Class Text nor the corresponding sections of the Study Text include any *Lesestücke* in the customary sense. That is, there are

no set pieces which, whether they are drawn from genuine sources or, as is more often the case, are composed especially for the text and are intended, whatever their actual effect, to be a cultural enrichment and a carefully targeted linguistic exercise.

Instead, the reading materials for *Wie, bitte?* were chosen and organized according to other principles. First, every text that the student approaches as material for work in reading, whether as a primary or secondary skill, is a genuine piece of German, something created by speakers of German for the ordinary use of other speakers of German. All texts are presented in essentially their original typographical format, so that the student will immediately feel their genuineness and will also not be deprived of the visual clues and cues so important to proficiency-oriented reading. We have exercised our function as editors or language "input filters" not in the creation of the materials, but rather in their selection and pedagogical transformation. All of the print realia in *Wie, bitte?*, and indeed even many of the incidental photos that contain samples of language, were carefully collected and selected by the authors. Nothing is there simply because a space had to be filled by something visually cute or vaguely apropos in theme.

Second, we intended, as much as possible, to integrate the act of reading into other communicative acts. Thus the *Drucksachen* are eminently suited to use in communicative tasks involving speaking, listening, or writing, and indeed the *Wie, bitte?* program offers many such exercises. But lastly, we wished to follow and reinforce the notion of the spiral syllabus in yet another way. Much of the recyclable realia is archetypal, in several senses. The topics it addresses – food, transactions, transportation, serious personal interests, social issues – are those of lasting import, not just to the native of a culture but also to someone who is visiting it, and particularly to someone who is seeking eventually to function on the levels of proficiency at which *Wie, bitte?* aims. The items themselves have been carefully selected to be accessible to some significant degree at even the lowest levels, and yet to continue to offer challenges when the student returns to them later in the course. The result will be a sort of extended, even months-long version of the kind of exercise that seems so valuable in even a single session: repeat skimming, scanning, and inference-making, with emphasis on recursion, comprehension of context, guessing strategy, and risk-taking, and with care to present language that is constantly challenging but does not

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unduly raise the student's "affective filter." Indeed, the students' confidence should be enhanced by repeated exposure to such mature realia, even in early chapters.

Many textbooks offer realia, but quite often such materials are offered simply as visual accents, without serious followup, in the sense of including them in communicative tasks. Class testing of *Wie, bitte?* indicates that students very much like to work with realia, even such supposedly dreary things as maps and timetables, provided the realia are introduced in a functional way – that is, as integral parts of communicative tasks. Moreover, sometimes even the most mundane of cultural artifacts – the guidebook to the BMW Museum or a tourist brochure summarizing the history of Freiburg – can open wide vistas into the culture and history of the German-speaking countries, even for the student who is struggling with the language already and who – like most of our students these days – cannot be expected to survive long enough to enroll in our third-year language, culture, or survey of literature courses.

### Study Text

The Study Text is *not* an optional part of the *Wie, bitte?* package. Instead, it assumes many of the functions of conventional "main" textbooks and provides certain of the materials ordinarily found in them. The chief principle of separation and inclusion was that the Class Text should provide the materials needed in the communication-oriented classroom, while the Study Text would contain those suitable for study outside of class, whether such study were the rather contemplative examination of analytic grammar, the exercise of listening, reading, and writing skills, or the preparation of spoken material for the classroom. The overall assignments that direct the student's study are also given not in the Class Text, but rather in the Study Text, though the teacher should of course be sure to clarify assignments in other ways.

It should be noted, however, that certain Study Text materials, like the realia and other "props," may well be of use in class, and that the *Gespräche* and *Struktur* pages in the Class Text must be consulted outside the classroom as the student studies them more reflectively. The purpose is twofold. The Study Text contains rich realia resources that would have made the Class Text unwieldy. Some of them are eminently suitable as "props" that might be torn out of the Study Text for more effective situational work, and some are printed forms that might be filled out

and handed in. Second, the arrangement obviates annoying book-thumbing; in many activities students will have their books open side-by-side, with one book directing them to study part of another.

The Study Text contains the following major sections:

- a) study guide, with advice about language-learning in general, and cultivation of the several modalities in particular;
- b) chapter-by-chapter listening, speaking, reading and writing exercises, and worksheets with contextualized exercises of analytical grammar;
- c) translations, or rather, somewhat liberal renditions of the Class Text dialogs;
- d) chapter-by-chapter German-English vocabulary lists;
- e) the Reference Grammar, accessed from the Class Text *Struktur* pages but suitable for study section by section; and
- f) a set of *Drucksachen*, or recyclable realia, parallel to that in the Class Text.

### Tapes

The tapes consist of:

- a) A set of cassettes containing renditions of the Class Text dialogs and performances of the conversations for the Study Text listening exercises. Most likely students will use these materials linearly; that is, they will study them as they work on the successive chapters, and then not need them again. The speech on the tapes is natural or virtually natural in intonation and pace, though free of gratuitous sloppiness or background noise, even though such interference is encountered under real circumstances. The recorded conversations serve two purposes: 1) the Class Text *Gespräche* provide models for student speech production, though we do not recommend slavish memorization; 2) the *Gespräche* and the expanded dialogs used with the Study Text reinforce listening comprehension, so that the student does not become dependent on a single voice – the teacher’s – and thereby fail to learn how to understand other speakers, as may happen to an alarming extent in some cases.
- b) Two cassettes with aural realia, intended primarily for listening comprehension exercises of a more flexible nature, but also for cultural enrichment. Use of these materials will *not* be linear, but rather anticipatory and recursive. Thus early in the book a

student might be asked to audit a news segment or weather report, listening only for city names and numbers. Later on the same items might be audited again, perhaps even several times, but each time for content higher on the proficiency scale.

- c) For the instructor only, a separate cassette with materials suitable for testing.

The exercises and tests conducted with the *Wie, bitte?* tapes are always proficiency-oriented. They consist not of pronunciation and grammar-transformation exercises, but rather of an initial encouragement to reproduce or respond orally to speech models, followed by listening exercises which involve information searches, checks for structural competence, drawing of inferences, and risk-taking. An important stage in the student’s use of the tapes is the transition from auditing (without printed script) the rather tame elaborations on the Class Text *Gespräche*, to confronting the aural realia, whose speech segments are genuine and, internally, unedited, though by no means haphazardly selected.

If your program is in a position to take advantage of the publisher’s permission to duplicate the tapes, you might suggest that your students purchase three cassettes. Two, used unchanged throughout the course, would store the aural realia (“b” above). The third would provide revolving storage of the current chapter materials (“a” above). Some students, of course, will want to include one or more previous or upcoming cassettes.

The chapter tapes are recorded at fairly natural pace and intonation, as is – of course – the speech on the aural realia tapes. Some students will require careful tutoring in listening techniques and acclimatization to the notion that word-by-word comprehension or imitation is not being demanded of them.

A tape manual contains scripts for the Study Text listening exercises dialogs, selected transcripts of aural realia, and keys for some of the listening exercises that are not open-ended. It appears in the Test Bank.

### Test Bank

- a) Materials for speaking, listening, reading, and writing tests at intervals of approximately 2 chapters;
- b) Test keys and, for speaking and writing tests, descriptive standards and samples of student performances; and
- c) Transcripts of selected taped materials.

### Software

The larger part of the supplementary computer software for *Wie, bitte?* runs on Macintosh, Apple IIe/gs, and IBM-PC compatibles in common configurations. It consists of:

- a) Sets of multiple-choice contextualized reading exercises and tests, many of them using the *Wie, bitte?* realia;
- b) Similar listening exercises and tests using the *Wie, bitte?* aural realia;
- c) contextualized writing tutorials;
- d) listening comprehension exercises using on-disk digitized speech (for Macintosh only);
- e) for the teacher, a test curver intended to make bookkeeping simpler and thus help meet the likely need for more time devoted to oral testing.

The courseware aims to be as proficiency-oriented as the rest of the *Wie, bitte?* package. That is, there are neither mechanical drills nor childish games. The student is asked to carry out communicative tasks, such as reading a museum guide, listening to a weather report, or rewriting a social note. Instruction and error correction emphasize the functional learning of language, though analytic grammar is not shirked. Although the courseware can serve as a useful adjunct to the Study Text exercises, and provide a bridge to actual tests, the computer and software are not intended to replace either formally administered tests or classroom instruction. But they may help the teacher and student to use the classroom more efficiently, as a place where human beings rehearse and refine communicative skills.



# 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?*)

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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] in ____ .</i>	<i>In ____ ?</i> <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 recom-  
bined (e.g., column 1 – people; column 2 – activities;  
column 3 – companions; column 4 – buildings; col-  
umn 5 – reasons). More students can be involved in  
the same conversation by assigning them roving  
functions appropriate throughout many kinds of con-  
versation (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] Nur wenn . . .	[same as above] + <i>Wann?</i> [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 ver-  
sion 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 con-  
fusion 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 ap-  
parently acquired the analytical grammar informa-  
tion. 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 estab-  
lish vocabulary and overall structure, as in the chap-  
ter 13 example above (*Ich habe Kopfschmerzen, aber nur  
wenn ich lese.*). The past tense version would be some-  
thing like:

STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2
[has recovered; lists symptoms] [Wonder what #2 did to get better]	[had it too] [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 es-  
tablishing 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 writ-  
ten 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 separa-  
ting 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-

notes 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?