

TECHNOLOGY AS MEDIUM OF DELIVERY AND AS CONTENT OF LEARNING: GERMAN 320  
"BUSINESS SIMULATION" AND GERMAN 399 "SCIENCE FICTION"

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My application for a 2005 Scholarship of TLT Award is based on two courses which not only carry out "teaching and learning *with* technology," but also involve teaching and learning technology itself, as a subject area – while at the same time language instruction and learning are going on. Since both courses are, after all, language courses, their chief overt goal is the same: progress in language proficiency, that is, competence in using language for realistic communication.

Several reasons motivated making technology not just a medium of delivery but also the content of learning: 1) Many progressive language teachers believe that not only children, but also adults, learn languages better when they are using them to learn something else. 2) K-12 language teachers, because of class-scheduling constraints, have had to explore content-based instruction (CBI), where content from other subject areas is delivered in second languages; their experience can encourage the rest of us to choose CBI even when it is not an absolute necessity. 3) While a teacher might select some other content area for CBI instruction, for example music, technology is a very apt choice, since it is part of daily life and of most occupations and many personal interests. 4) Despite that, not a few students lack technological proficiency, a problem which is being addressed by PSU's innovative curriculum; there is a place in that curriculum for second languages as well as other subjects, and a place for that curriculum in second language instruction. 5) Language courses which include CBI, especially when the content is technology and business, fit PSU's mission of "knowledge serving the city," and they also further the Globalization Initiative of PSU's president.

Courses and learning objectives; technology employed

**German 320:** German 320 is something completely different from a conventional "business German" course: it is a business simulation, conducted wholly in German, and it is close to becoming an actual business. Its name is "SpeakEasy," and it produces resources for language users. Right now its lead product is the ever-popular "SpeakEasy Cards," pocket-sized and plastic-laminated specialized word-lists ("Skiing," "Emergency Room"). With as little overt direction from me as possible, the learners continue to develop the little "Existenzgründung" (start-up) that has been under construction for several years now. The are in charge of management, personnel issues, design, marketing, work out production, and, at the end of each version of the course, plans for the future. In June, "instead of" a final exam, SpeakEasy holds its company exhibition and new-product rollout, before invited guests (friends, family, language faculty and students). Presentations are made in German, with simultaneous translation. The company website presents the company and is being developed to distribute its products. For the purpose of this application, however, the important use of technology has to do with the production process: the students use German to learn word-processing, databasing, graphics processing, sound processing, and equipment setup and maintenance. It is not at all easy to do those activities when you are still learning the language you must use in order to carry them out. Those who do know those skills help teach them—in German.

**German 399:** A unique feature of German Science Fiction, as of modern German literature, is the importance of the *Hörspiel* or radio drama. While no longer a major form in

American culture, it has remained important in the German-speaking countries, in part because WWII left Germany and Austria with many blind military and civilian casualties, and also delayed the introduction of television. The hands-on use of technology to produce a German SF radio play, again while speaking German, is the core activity of the course. In method and goals it thus overlaps German 320, but it also adds much of its own. The play must be discussed as literature—and here the focus on actual production helps greatly. Acting skills must be developed—a way to encourage speaking practice and improve pronunciation without causing boredom. Facilities must be setup for acting and recording.

Both courses promote “teaching and learning with technology” by some of the usual means, including websites, email, etc. (My other work, including projects that have won the TLT award and a WebCT “exemplary site” award, also makes intense use of technology.) In fact, student use of email is particularly vigorous in German 320 and 399 because the learners are made responsible for getting their business or project team up and running. But the essential use of technology is the hands-on activity with hardware and software while speaking German.

In terms of language pedagogy, both courses aim to move learners from the upper end of the ACTFL “Intermediate” level of everyday proficiency to the “Advanced” level, whose goals include proficiency for limited occupational activities. Examples of Advanced-level activities include adding detail to the description of people, such as employees (“She leads well and makes great websites”) and things (“We’ll need pliers and a small screwdriver to fix the hard drive”); narrating multi-step but still concrete procedures (“First unplug the hard drive, and then...”). These are activities that an upper-level language student who undertakes a business internship might expect to encounter, whatever the language.

A second goal of both courses concerns the larger foreign-language curriculum. In order to serve the learner population better (and in the case of German and perhaps any language but Spanish merely to survive), language programs must develop beyond the traditional fare of literature and “highbrow” culture. Given the huge role of science and technology in German history and present-day Germany, and considering the importance of Germany among Oregon’s trading partners, technology is a natural candidate for the content of German language courses. (Even so, the idea merits expansion to other languages, and that is being considered for introduction soon.)

Each of the two courses has its own third goal. In German 399 it is acquisition of knowledge about German Science Fiction, an area of literature which is of course related to technology; and German authors made important contributions to international SF, especially Anglo-American SF. In German 320 the course-specific goal is to develop basic business skills with German as the language of development – not just technological skills, but also management, product design, marketing, etc.

In the German SF course we also use a spectacular audio technology: “binaural” or “synthetic head” stereo.

### Student learning and assessment

Progress in language proficiency is defined by the nationally-used Proficiency Guidelines of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages ([www.actfl.org](http://www.actfl.org)), which in turn serve as the basis of standards in Oregon and Portland. The ACTFL standards are applied to both speaking and writing skills. For speaking we use an unofficial rating obtained through an oral proficiency interview (OPI), or regular observation of student classroom speech. Writing activities are assessed as “snapshot” (synchronic) evaluations of current samples. When the groups present publicly their major projects (this year’s radio play or the annual

company report and exhibition), the audience is asked to fill out a score sheet and offer spoken comment, which they do eagerly.

Objective scoring guides with multiple rubrics are used for every major activity. The students also do self-evaluations with them.

Subjective but rewarding assessment of student progress shows up in personal responses: the colleague who attends the SpeakEasy annual exhibition and says he has never seen a more impressive presentation of a student group project; the German SF student who says that never before in a German course has he spoken so much; the enthusiasm of the project teams when—usually slightly before the mid-point of the course—they realize what the whole idea is about.

#### What learned about TLT

It's not so much that I learned something about TLT through these two courses, but rather that, from other courses where I do use advanced instructional technology, I knew at least some of what I had to expect in creating these two courses. But because of these courses I did learn *from* using technology in teaching and learning something of great value for introducing project-based and "team-based learning" (TBI): You can't short-cut the process of building the teams; it has to work itself out through each stage (though you can help it along if you know what you're doing). I also learned that building teams in a foreign language takes the learners probably five times the time and effort of doing it in the native language, and that doing technology in another language takes them five times as long too. But with language-learning, the quest is as important as the goal—at least until the SpeakEasy stockholders start demanding some sign of a return on their investment, or the people at KBOO's weekly radio-play program need the finished version of our radio play.

#### Dissemination

The assessment is precise enough that the results can be published as scholarship of

teaching. I have given several presentations about both courses to teachers' groups, and a discussion of the move toward student-centered learning was part of a chapter I contributed to the book *Teaching German in America* that the American Association of Teachers of German published in 2002. I have started an article about "SpeakEasy" and am confident I will be accepted by a major refereed journal; the working title is "Give 'em the Business: Turning the Business Language Course into a Simulation and Then into an Actual 'Startup.'"

The course websites, and particularly the SpeakEasy company website, show both the administrative aspect of the courses (goals, assignments, etc.) and the group projects as they are developed and presented.

Not to be overlooked as "dissemination" is the effect beyond the class of what the guests experience at the project presentations and then report to others.

#### Supporting materials

The "gateway" to supporting materials in digital form are the links to German 320, German 399, and "SpeakEasy" on my website: <http://web.pdx.edu/~fischerw>. Since the German SF radio play project for this year is not ready yet (but it will be in March), the link "Projects & Publication" on the left of the opening page leads to links to an earlier such project; look for "Papa Joe Project," which also has samples of the "binaural stereo" technique in action. The same list also links to the book chapter mentioned above; look for "Goethe, Schiller and Me."

The student initiated website for the current German SF course is:  
<http://argonaut.com/deu399/>

I have attached sample "SpeakEasy" cards in their older and newer versions. The T-shirts with the company logo that we hand out as door prizes at the annual June exhibition were too unwieldy to include, but anyone can attend and have a chance to win one, or perhaps another prize, such as a surplus thumb drive.

# SCHEDULE & ASSIGNMENTS

week #

Link open in new windows. Page last modified: 3/28/05

[PSU Academic Calendar](#) & [Final Exam Schedule](#)

Overview: GER 320 is a business simulation that aims to grow into an actual business, operated by students for students. The prime goals for the **business** this year are: 1) to have its flagship product, the SpeakEasy™ cards, ready to sell locally; 2) to ensure that next year's team gets a fast start

The prime goals for GER 320 as a **course** are: 1) to improve German skills, of course; 2) to further the goals of SpeakEasy, Inc.

Chief objectives of this year are: 1) presenting at the [PSU Tech Fair](#) on 3 May from 1-4 PM; 2) conducting the Fourth Annual SpeakEasy, S-GmbH June Exposition, on 6 June at 12:30 PM; 3) creating a detailed operating plan to pass on to next year's group; 4) designing the "spin-off" branches of SpeakEasy and GER 320 in other languages; 5) negotiating with the PSU Language Student Honor Society, Phi Sigma Iota, to establish a Board of Directors that will oversee the course and the company as it moves toward independence from its instructor/ founder.

Link to [SpeakEasy, Inc. commercial site](#)

Dates are in the standard international sequence: dd/mm. Text iterated with ~~strikeout~~ indicates material to ignore.) This schedule is tentative and certain to change along the way.

Activities and assignments and tests (during the quarter) are listed in the week they are likely to occur.

1	Mo	Di	Mi	Do	Fr
	28.03	29.03	30.03	01.04	02.04
<p>About GER 320 and SpeakEasy S-GmbH. The Speakeasy cards: topics and quality standards; Content-Based Instruction (CBI) and Team-Based Learning (TBL); simulations and actualizations; participants employment and language background</p> <p>Reading: articles about courses than involve simulations and team-based learning; language proficiency guidelines; tour of SpeakEasy™</p> <p>Writing assignment 1 (starts Wednesday 30/03, due Wednesday 6/04): First draft of your German résumé with language-skills self-evaluation (Europass Lebenslauf mit Sprachenpass)</p>					

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**German 320 Spring 2004 Course Scoring Guide**      **Name** \_\_\_\_\_      **Score** \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: This is the Scoring Guide for 2003. The 2004 version may be changed somewhat, after discussion in class.

Calculation for course grade: each category 20% (global category serves as a check); see website for conversion of scoring guide to letter grade.

Calculation in real world: The two idea/effort categories and the Ausstellung would count for 80% together, writing and speaking for 10% each (because those skills can be improved, or their products revised by others, more easily than can the underlying behaviors that produce performance when the going gets serious).

	<b>Global</b>	<b>Ideas and Effort outside the Classroom</b>	<b>Ideas and Effort inside the Classroom</b>	<b>Writing (ACTFL Proficiency)</b>	<b>Speaking (ACTFL Proficiency)</b>	<b>Ausstellung</b>
<b>6</b>	Boss offers juicy job and pleads it be accepted.	All of 4, plus: repeatedly volunteered unassigned thinking and work, both of high quality	Spoke often in class and led activities. Seldom absent.	Above Advanced-Low, whether on first draft or after revision (same for other levels)	Above Advanced-Low	Individual and group performance outstanding.
<b>5</b>	Boss offers juicy job.	All or almost all of 4, plus: contributed some unassigned thinking and work	Spoke readily in class and quickly joined activities. Occasionally absent.	Advanced-Low	Advanced-Low	One of the above outstanding, the other better than the average for the group.
<b>4</b>	Boss hires on application, considers assignment to creative tasks.	Did all assigned work, and it was of usable quality, with little need for revision.	Responded readily in class and participated in most activities. Occasionally absent.	Intermediate-High	Intermediate-High	Both ingredients typical of the group and of a satisfactory Ausstellung.
<b>3</b>	Boss hires on application, but with cautions and trial period.	Did almost all assigned work, and with a little revision it could be improved to usable quality.	Responded, though sometimes reluctantly, and could be persuaded to join activities. Notable absence.	Intermediate-Mid	Intermediate-Mid	One ingredient below typical quality for the group.
<b>2</b>	Needs thorough and remedial training to be hired, and only if no one else applies.	Neglected some major tasks. The work that was completed would need much revision to be of usable quality.	Responded, but only with considerable encouragement. Remained aloof from most activities.	Intermediate-Low	Intermediate-Low	Both ingredients below typical for the group.
<b>1</b>	Would not be hired or retained under even the most desperate of circumstances.	Neglected many major tasks; the work that was completed could be salvaged only with many major revisions.	Resolutely refused to respond individually or participate in a group.	Novice-High	Novice-High	Caused serious problems in the preparation or conduct of the Ausstellung.



Die internationale Studenten-Firma SpeakEasy® lädt Sie ein, an unserer

### 3. Jahresausstellung

teilzunehmen. Mitglieder der Firma, die zugleich Studenten und Studentinnen im Kurs German 320 –

- Deutsch für Beruf und Arbeitswelt sind,
- zeigen die jetzige Produktreihe der Firma – deren Herstellung, Anwendung und Vermarktung (kurze dramatische Aufführung der talentierten SpeakEasy™-Schauspielertruppe!)
- berichten über die Entstehung, Entwicklung und Zukunft der Firma
- zeigen zwei neue Produktideen.

- Unsere Gäste werden auch gebeten, ihre Meinungen zur Entwicklung der Firma zu äußern und bei der Bewertung der einzelnen Vorträge zu helfen.
- Wenn es die Zeit erlaubt, gibt es auch einen Vortrag über Team-orientierte Pädagogik und Schüler- und Studentenfirmer in den USA und Deutschland.

Getränke und internationale Nachtische werden angeboten.

Preise werden verlost – SpeakEasy™ T-Shirts und eine 16MB USB-Schlüsselring-Speicherung!

**Tag: 09 Juni 2003 (Montag) • Zeit: 12.30-14.00 Uhr**  
**Ort: Neuberger Hall 446**

weitere Auskünfte: [www.cosmolingua.pdx.edu/speakeasy](http://www.cosmolingua.pdx.edu/speakeasy)

*2005 Monday  
6 June 1-2 pm*



The International Student-Run Company SpeakEasy™ invites you to participate in our

### 3rd Annual Company Exposition & New-Product Rollout

Members of the company, who are also students in the course German 320 – German for Business and Professional Life will

- show the company's current product line – its production, use and marketing (with a short performance by the very talented SpeakEasy™ Acting Troupe!)
- report about the conception, development and future of the company
- show two new product concepts

- Our guests will also be invited to express their views about the development of the company and help with the evaluation of the individual presentations.
- If time allows there will also be a short presentation about Team-Based Learning and school- and student-run companies in the US and Germany.

Beverages and international desserts will be served.

Drawing for door prizes – SpeakEasy@ T-Shirts and a 16MB keyring USB memory stick!

**Day: 9 June 2003 (Monday) • Time: 12:30-2:00pm**  
**Place: Neuberger Hall 446**

further info: [www.cosmolingua.pdx.edu/speakeasy](http://www.cosmolingua.pdx.edu/speakeasy)

*tentative location NH 446*

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2000

**Faculty Enhancement Program Proposal**  
**William B. Fischer**  
**Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures**  
**16 February 2000**

**Course Development and Pilot: A Multilingual  
Business Language Course in the Form of an  
Actual e-Commerce Business**

**Abstract**

We propose to design and pilot a content-based instruction course that will combine language training with acquisition of business and technological skills. Intended outcomes for learners are increased language proficiency at a key level of learning, acquisition of technical and commercial skills along with the language learning, and exploration of career opportunities related to language study and international or multilingual business. Once developed, the course could be offered regularly, and perhaps even every quarter for limited repeated credit, with less staffing than needed for the pilot. It could also be distributed to other programs, offered at least in part by distance education, and adapted to other levels of language learning, including K-12.

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*Note: The project proposed here was developed in part as a small group activity by students in the course "Technology for Language Teachers." If the project is funded, select members of that group will be invited to help develop the basic course modules and serve as language and technology facilitators in the pilot course. After that, they may become the core of new teachers who begin long-term delivery of the course in new jobs which they have themselves created.*

## Overview and Outcomes

Our team proposes to design and pilot a content-based instruction course that will combine language training, initially in Spanish, French or German, with acquisition of business and technological skills. The course will simulate—and if possible even actually establish—a startup company whose several groups of employees, speaking their various languages to conduct their activities, will produce multilingual language resources that could be sold locally or by e-commerce to produce the company’s income. Intended outcomes for learners are increased language proficiency at a key level of learning, acquisition of technical and commercial skills along with the language learning, and exploration of career opportunities related to language study and international or multilingual business. External outcomes include the increased efficiency of offering a single course that involves several languages but is supervised by a single main faculty member, the promise of decreasing attrition between lower and upper levels of the language programs, and—nice but not necessary—the rather rare prospect of generating an actual profit that could be plowed back into the course and related student-oriented activities. Once developed, the course could be offered regularly, and perhaps even every quarter for limited repeated credit, with less staffing than needed for the pilot. It could also be distributed to other programs, offered at least in part by distance education, and adapted to other levels of language learning, including K-12. The outline and budget have been prepared in such a way that, if additional funding is available either from the Faculty Enhancement Program or from small outside grants, supplementary strands could be added to develop the course for ESL and as a training program for K-12 language teachers.

## Background: Current Directions in Language Pedagogy

The area of foreign-language teaching in the U. S. during the past few decades has been characterized by sagging enrollment in traditional programs, internal re-examination of goals and practices, the influence of larger curricular developments outside the discipline, and increased demand for practical foreign-language instruction in our educational system and for foreign-language capabilities in business and government. Together these factors, amplified by research in language acquisition, have encouraged formulation and limited introduction of language programs that aim at practical proficiency or “communicative competence.” Developments in Oregon, particularly the inclusion of second languages as a core subject in K-12, the design of the Certificate of Initial Master (CIM) to include languages, and the institution of the Proficiency-Based Admissions Standards System (PASS) for admission to OUS institutions, are encouraging closer integration of all subjects and disciplines, the inclusion of language in other subject areas (“Language Across the Curriculum” [LAC]), and—conversely—the use of other subject areas as a vehicle for language instruction (“Content-Based Instruction” [CBI]). Members of the PSU Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures have been prominently active in K-16 language-program discussion, have produced related textbooks and research, and have moved their lower-level language programs in the the direction of a proficiency orientation and better articulation with exiting K-12 language learners who are now entering our programs and seeking accurate placement and appropriate continuing instruction. Our faculty have been similarly active in another area that is given special notice in progressive curricular development, including the process proficiencies mandated for K-12: technological competence, including creation of technology-based language instruction materials.

An important aspect to note here is the desirability of content-based instruction not just for the efficiency it offers in trying to kill two curricular birds with one logistically-motivated stone, but because such instruction may well in itself produce better language learning than conventional programs that emphasize acquiring the language as a content in



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itself rather than explicitly and systematically using it to do something. In a classic work on teaching language to children, Curtin and Pesola remark that children learn language best when they are using it to learn something else. We think their observation can be valid also for learners who are no longer children, although most post-secondary and even middle/high-school programs have not yet accommodated that idea. Yet a sensible outside observer might well think that at least by the third year of college language instruction—if not earlier!—the learners should have a chance actually to *do* something real with the language, beyond some survival tourist functions offered as a change of pace to the purgatory of grammar concepts and vocabulary flashcards. Language instruction at PSU is not at all that bleak in approach, but a course that offered students a chance to practice how to make a living, or even produce a modest actual profit to re-invest in their program, would constitute a big innovation, one which would showcase PSU as an innovator in language instruction and general curricular innovation.

It is necessary to delve a little further into the particulars of language pedagogy to see why the proposed project fits so well both the larger needs of the educational system and the more specific desiderata of language learners who are approaching a genuinely useful command of skills. The dominant standards for describing foreign-language proficiency in the U. S. are those established by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Below the level of the highly-trained, specialized language professional, ACTFL describes three levels of language competence: Novice (very limited function even in predictable everyday circumstances); Intermediate (able to communicate everyday-life content in brief sentence-type utterances); and Advanced (can produce, in present, past, and future time frames, modest clusters of sentences that describe and narrate in fair breadth everyday experience and limited vocational content).

PSU language programs have shown that reasonably capable and motivated students can reach the Intermediate level at the end of the first year or at least during second year—an achievement which has been documented recently by OUS outside assessment and which places PSU at the forefront of language teaching in OUS and, probably, other systems. But the Advanced level does not happen so quickly; a classic study from several decades ago found that not even many exiting language *majors* had reached the Advanced level. And yet it is the Advanced level, or a close approximation to it, that characterizes learners whose language skills would be most useful both to themselves as individuals and to a nation which hopes to maintain its strength and excellence in a global economy.

In short, Advanced users of foreign languages, while they are not the brilliant but rare Henry Kissingers or Hedy Lamarrs who can rise to celebrity status by using a non-native tongue to great effect (Lamarr held several technological patents), are the people who can achieve much by using their well-developed language skills as a major adjunct to their other talents and tools. Our proposal aims to beef up language proficiency at the key point where the Intermediate learner can see and strive toward the Promised Land of the Advanced second-language user. The project would not be possible without the groundwork laid in lower-level language programs at PSU (or, when extended, by appropriate language teaching elsewhere). But the project could do much to motivate the next developments in proficiency-oriented language instruction at what is now the appropriate level in which to institute change, both in higher ed and K-12.

To establish the feasibility of the project with regard to the competencies of the core team, it can be observed that very modest versions or limited ingredients of the basic idea of the experimental course have been tried out for several years in German 320, German for Business and Professional Purposes. Students there have experimented with producing resumes and job applications, doing vocational-interest presentations, maintaining office equipment while speaking/learning German, exploring careers, etc. But heretofore it has been impossible to make the big step to an intensive immersion in a second-language-based work situation, let alone to extend the experience across several languages.

## Specific Goals & Outcomes of the Project

For the learners: broad-spectrum improvement in language skills, with focus on ACTFL Intermediate-High as the “watershed” level of competence for an everyday working atmosphere; acquisition of generic vocational vocabulary (“resumé,” “apply for a job”); good comprehension and some reproduction of office- and technology-specific language (“Is the stapler empty again?”, “Put the ZIP disk in the drive,” “Did you try to print it?”); acquisition of some technological and business skills without regard to language development (database, audio software, task assignment)—although inevitably some of the activity here will spill over into acquisition of language skills (how to say in French, “Learn this software or someone else will take your job!”).

For the FLL department, PSU, OUS, PPS, and the general educational system: a new course which can show the way to more courses, can strengthen articulation between K-12 and post-secondary, and can show how two or more areas of learning can be combined efficiently; a collection of learning modules that can be re-used with less investment in staff and effort and replicated beyond the immediate project.

## The “Business”—Simulated or Actual

The core of the course will be the creation and continuation of a multi-language business—simulated or eventually, we hope, real—which will engage in the production, distribution, and sale of vocabulary “helper” lists of interest to the wide range of people who travel internationally. Thus, for example, the “company” would offer for several language combinations conveniently-packaged practical word- and phrase-lists for such popular activities as skiing vacations, wine-tasting, or car rental. The end-product would be offered in, perhaps, two forms: full-page lists to be kept in a notebook for study in advance of use (“ski pole,” “binding,” “lift”), and small-scale versions of the same lists that could be kept conveniently in the pocket of, say, a ski jacket for quick reference (“Where did you buy your equipment / goggles / lift ticket / sunblock?”). The possibilities, and thus the prospects for continuing the course, are endless; there are always more lists that can be made, reorganized, and marketed. More language combinations can be added. Distribution can be just local (laminated sheets and cards offered at the PSU bookstore), but it can also be far-reaching (.pdf files sold over the Internet—maybe at just a dollar a list, but to hundreds of buyers).

But from a pedagogical standpoint, the journey is more important than the destination. A key term in language pedagogy is “negotiation of meaning.” Language learning is facilitated by using a second language to carry out the business of living (the ACTFL Intermediate level) and to carry out basic occupational activities (the ACTFL Advanced level). The real point is not to make money—a little or a lot—by selling multilingual word lists (although that would be nice, and we have some good ideas about what to do if it actually happens). Rather, the real goal is to engage language learners by giving them something to do—something worthwhile but not too very easy—and then standing a little to the side, benevolently but not *too* helpfully, while they try to do their job and struggle to acquire language.

So running the “business” will require a lot of Dilbert-like activity, which will seem beside the point but which is actually the (a?) real focus of the learning. There will have to be an “intake” stage for the participants: skills evaluation (including language proficiency!); formation of teams; training (in the foreign language) in specialized job skills); managing personal conflicts; learning how to offer on-the-job small talk; negotiating raises, promotions, buy-outs, etc.

## Course Design and Management

The proposed activity is actually TWO activities. We must design a simulated/actual business that will be an overt environment for learning, but must also design a course that will host that learning "behind the scenes." We aim to pilot the course in Spring Quarter of 2001. So the design team will gather during Summer 2000, with continuation through the next academic year, to produce the specific syllabus and core materials. Depending on the funding, the team may be paid modestly, or else asked to contribute its work for personal professional development, a credit line on the resumé, feelings of glory, and the prospect of future employment PSU. Whatever the structure and schedule, the team will create the collection of generic modules that will lead the eventual course participants, whatever their target language, through the experiences that will constitute the realistic simulation or actual realization of doing business and living a real life while doing business in a foreign language.

## Draft Informal Syllabus and Sample of Activities

First third of course: assess participants' language, business, technical, and personal skills; develop group procedures while using the second language; develop/expand relevant technical skills (example: talk German while using Microsoft Word to save a file in plain text form for importation by a database).

Second third of course: get the business underway by setting goals, forming teams, and describing products; add specialized tech skills

Last third of course: add generally to tech and language skills, but emphasize use of both skills areas to demonstrate genuine ACTFL advanced competence: "This is our product, and we hope you will like it."

Sample module (several class hours)—Students learn to use and maintain two pieces of equipment that will be used to prepare their product for the local and conventional distribution by mail: photocopier and laminator. Earliest stage: 1) acquisition of generic equipment vocabulary ("to press," "to push," "switch," "lever," etc.), and negotiation of simple mechanical tasks. 2) compilation of specialized vocabulary ("toner cartridge," "heat source," "to squeeze," "plastic pouch"), probably from multilingual product manuals. 3) Exploration of structures useful in negotiating the specialized task (polite requests, passive voice, infinitive phrase). 4) Performance of the task for purposes of carrying out the work of the business ("These English-Spanish lists of sports and entertainment terms have to be printed and laminated sometime this week." "Can you show me how to replace the toner cartridge?") 5) Related writing task: Make the sign to put on the laminator warning users how not to pinch or burn their fingers when they use it. 6) Expansion of same functions to handle a new piece of equipment, in order both to do what people must do when they work, and to solidify the language currently being acquired.

## External Funding

I am a two-time Eisenhower Grant co-director and expect to apply by 7 April 2000 for Eisenhower funding to support a similar but much larger project with Portland Public Schools. Students working for CIM and PASS in language courses at selected high schools would acquire technology skills and improve their language facility by carrying out projects that involve production of language classroom materials that are rich in authentic cultural content and language. Example: Teams of Spanish learners are taught, in Spanish, how to use digital cameras. They then collect pictures of building and product signs from local Spanish-language businesses, process them in simple graphics programs, and record them onto CD-ROMs for use in language classes where lower-level learners are acquiring the simpler skills of negotiating purchases of everyday household and personal items.

CHAPTER 3

## Creating Effective Assignments A Key Component of Team-Based Learning

Larry K. Michaelsen and Arletta Bauman Knight

*The single biggest challenge for teachers wanting to use team-based learning is that of creating effective group assignments. The challenge is to find an important question or problem and then learn how to create an assignment around that problem that will simultaneously foster group cohesiveness and promote higher-order learning. In this chapter Michaelsen and Knight analyze the processes that detract from group cohesiveness (in the form of social loafing) and then identify the variables and procedures that must be managed to create an effective assignment. They conclude by providing a checklist of key characteristics that will allow teachers to assess the effectiveness of their group assignments.*

As more and more teachers use small groups in their courses, some find that the results are as exhilarating as they had hoped. Others, however, are seriously disappointed. It has been our experience that instructors are almost always unhappy the related to problems that are a natural consequence of using poorly designed group assignments.

Probably the most common problem affecting the use of small groups involves individuals who dominate the discussions to the point that quieter members' ideas are either unexpressed or largely ignored. A second common problem arises when individuals within the group believe they are forced to do the work for their less able or less willing counterparts. And the third problem occurs when groups are reporting the results of their work to the total class. Even when there has been a high level of engagement in the small groups, subsequent whole-class discussions sometimes

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from Michaelsen,  
Team-Based Learning  
available at  
PSU CAE library

# Global Simulation: A Student-Centered, Task-Based Format for Intermediate Foreign Language Courses

Glenn S. Levine  
University of California, Irvine

**Abstract:** This paper describes a student-centered, task-based alternative to published, mainstream curricula for intermediate university-level (second-year) foreign language courses: global simulation. The course format requires students to collaboratively complete a long-term task organized around a single premise or scenario. In the process, they learn about particular aspects of the target culture and language, similarly to a traditional content course. Yet the objective is to make use of the content knowledge in functioning within and completing the simulation. Three example German courses are presented, followed by specific guidelines for designing a global simulation course.

## Introduction

In recent years, many instructors of second-year, university-level foreign language courses have sought to provide students with a language-learning experience more deeply rooted in the humanistic endeavor, one that moves beyond survival skills, beyond a simple review of first-year grammar, and most importantly, beyond "culture" based on a series of preselected, edited, glossed readings (see Maxim, 2000; Weber, 2000).<sup>1</sup> This trend has been fueled in part by the shift in focus away from language learning as the acquisition of a set of skills toward the acquisition of cultural literacy and communicative competence in the foreign language (Byrnes, 2001; Eigler, 2002; Kern, 2000; Kramsch, 1997; Lange, 1994; Maxim, 2000; Swaffar, 1993; Weber, 2000); these ideas have been codified as well in the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (1999; henceforth *Standards*).

Amidst these exciting trends, the challenge for many foreign language instructors has been to find effective means of facilitating cultural literacy and communicative competence with a dearth of mainstream curricular materials to support the endeavor. Many published second-year university materials, despite the ubiquitous claim of a communicative and well-balanced approach to the target culture, appear to be built upon the persistent assumption that the acquisition of a foreign language and its culture means studying discrete grammatical structures, vocabulary lists, and pieces of information. Additionally, these materials tend to offer one author's or group of authors' interpretations of particular aspects of the target culture. This sort of learning may fail to spark students' imagination and enthusiasm if only because culture learned in this way can appear as a sort of *fait accompli*, and some students may feel that they are just "going through the motions."

To meet the challenge of facilitating not only cultural literacy but also the acquisition of communicative competence in ways that accommodate dynamic and varied student interests and

# Full-Scale Theater Production and Foreign Language Learning

Colleen Ryan-Scheutz  
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**Abstract:** This article reports a case study designed to explore the effectiveness of full-scale, authentic-text theater production for second language learning. Based on the results of preproduction and postproduction tests completed by cast and crew members, as well as the observations of all involved, the authors maintain that the diverse communication tasks necessary for the project, and the motivation generated by a common and public goal, make foreign language theater production particularly conducive to learning. The findings in this study indicated general tendencies toward improved proficiency in speaking and reading and very positive student perceptions with respect to the gains they made individually in various skill areas. Finally, the study revealed increased levels of comfort in using the foreign language.

## Introduction

Many aspects of foreign language theater production make it an effective means of teaching a foreign language and encouraging the continued study of the language and its culture(s). It involves students in a variety of communicative tasks on a daily basis throughout the numerous phases of production: auditions, rehearsals, textual analysis and discussion, set and costume preparation, performances, and postperformance reflections.

The Italian Theater Workshop (ITW) was a pilot study aiming to explore the various types of interaction and modes of communication that could take place between members of a foreign language theatrical troupe—actors, stage managers, designers, and directors. In this first, pilot year, it was designed as an immersion experience with a limited number of participants in order to gauge its qualitative potential within a postsecondary curriculum, and its quantitative potential for measuring students' proficiency. The ITW proved to be a positive and multifaceted experience that contributed to students' linguistic progress and cultural understanding. First, the long-term focus on a single text provided the opportunity for an in-depth and intricate study of authentic literature. Second, if only in very general terms, the immersion experience helped improve students' proficiency in different skill areas. Third, the physical representation of characters' ideas and values as well as the regular use of gestures and idioms allowed participants to gain an insider's view of certain cultural norms. Fourth, since students took great pride in the project and in its final, public goal, they were highly motivated to devote themselves to competent and accurate communication. Finally, the ITW inspired a true team spirit for learning about language and culture, leading to great satisfaction for individual participants, the theatrical troupe, and the university department as a whole.

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# Teaching German in America:

Past Progress  
and Future Promise

A Handbook for Teaching  
and Research

George F. Peters  
Editor

American Association of Teachers of German

# Re-Shaping the "College-Level" Curriculum: Problems and Possibilities

Dorothy James  
*Hunter College and the Graduate School,  
City University of New York*

## Introduction

In writing this chapter, I am very much aware that not many of my colleagues in the senior professoriat of foreign language departments are likely to read it. Nor indeed are many of those who aspire to the senior professoriat. They do not go to conferences like the Northeast Conference, and they do not read volumes like the *Northeast Conference Reports*. Why should they? They are no more professionally interested in the teaching of foreign languages than are nuclear physicists. It is not their field.

This is a problem. It is at the root of a whole complex of problems facing those who would like to reshape in a major, comprehensive, and lasting way the curriculum of foreign-language departments in the universities and colleges of the United States. I am not suggesting that such change is impossible. On the contrary, I am writing this report precisely because at this time some very bright possibilities are dawning on the horizon. At some levels of the educational system and in some kinds of educational institutions, these have every chance to see the full light of day. But in the halls of academe, unless we openly face the real problems, and begin to solve them, the brightest of our possibilities will surely "fade away" like morning dew."

Reprinted from Helen S. Lepke, ed. *Shaping the Future: Challenges and Opportunities*. Middlebury, VT: Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 1989. 79-110. Northeast Conference Reports.

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# Teaching German in America:

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and Future Promise

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and Research

George F. Peters  
Editor

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# Goethe and Schiller and Me: Reflections on Figuring out Literature While Teaching Others about It and Life Too in a Language They Don't Talk Very Good Yet

William B. Fischer  
Portland State University

**M**y name is Bill. I am a recovering Germanist. I have followed a winding path, from a personally fulfilling but rather ordinary undergraduate study of German literature, into graduate study of German, through a dissertation about German science fiction, on to new-hiree language-teaching duties, and thence to a career in second-language pedagogy and educational software. My fiftieth birthday (1998), the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Goethe's birth (1999), the new millennium, and an invitation from a journal to contribute an article about the Goethe-Schiller friendship gave me occasion to sum up the results of a process of personal and professional *Bildung*. I aim to formulate what the Greats of Weimar mean to me now and what they meant to me half my life ago and more; to limn what that personal comparison tells us about our culture; to suggest what we might do when we engage in teaching languages and literature; and to offer some thoughts about the shape of American *Germanistik*.

## Kleist Did Not Die for Our Sheepskins

Sometimes he spent hours together in the great libraries of Paris, those catacombs of departed authors, rummaging among their hoards of dusty and obsolete works in quest of food for his unhealthy appetite. He was, in a manner, a literary ghoul, feeding in the charnel-house of decayed literature.

—Washington Irving, "The Adventure of the German Student," 1824



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Portland State University • German 320  
 German for the Business and Professional World  
 Provisional Course Description

Since German 320, "German for the Business and Professional World," is a new course, I want to describe it to you as I conceive it, and I'd like your comments. You can e-mail me (william@nhl.nh.pdx.edu), phone me (725-5285 at PSU, 232-7881 at home), or just write some ideas on paper and put it in my mailbox (393 NH). I'm available during spring vacation, so don't hesitate to get in touch.

**Principles**

I see this course as the chance for you to assemble the information, skills, and documents that would make you ready to set foot in German-speaking environments where you function as a person who has an individual set of long-term interests and needs beyond the level of just getting through daily living and learning about the country. Perhaps a better title would be "German for the Rest of Your Life."

"Business" language courses often focus on a narrow area of language at a higher level. I don't think most of you want that, and many of you aren't ready for it yet linguistically. I also don't intend to teach German 320 in the manner of a "language class," where a professor, behaving like a professor, gives instruction to students, who behave like students and always have their focus on the next linguistic feature or operation.

Instead, I want to simulate environments in which German might be used as a medium or tool for conducting other activities than learning about language. I also want to treat the concept of "business and professional world" quite broadly, to include the range of pursuits where people need or want to use language for a purpose that fits their special circumstances, whether vocational (job) or avocational (pastime).

Next-to-lastly, I want to emphasize that language learning involves a social activity, as does the use of the language after one has learned it. After all, we learn languages not just to have some bits of knowledge stored in our heads, but also to use that knowledge to communicate with other human beings.

Lastly, we should recognize that such learning involves processes and products. You adopt a method of making progress, attempt to make it, and then show what you have done. Traditional assignments and tests don't seem to contribute much to such learning, but there still have to be ways to motivate learning and evaluate progress.

**The Concept of Language Proficiency**

Let me put it in the terms of language proficiency, which I hope you have become accustomed to — all that "Intermediate" and "Advanced" stuff I talked about during fall and winter quarters. I want to emphasize the "work" part of the contexts which are the environment for the language levels of Advanced ("Able to satisfy... limited work requirements") and Advanced-Plus ("Able to satisfy most work requirements and show some ability to communicate on concrete topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence").

I believe this focus fits the long-term interests of most of you. If you travel to German-speaking countries, other than for casual tourism, your reasons will likely be some or more or all of the following: 1) you want to work there; 2) you want to pursue some special personal interests there, such as skiing or music, which are particularly characteristic of those countries; 3) as part of living a full life while abroad, you want to continue whatever special personal activities that, like weaving or juggling, make you what you are, as a person rather than just a student, whether or not those activities are particularly "German."

To achieve those goals you will need several kinds of resource and support: 1) language tools — though what and how much you need depends on your current level of proficiency; 2) "real-world" information, such as a list of specialized language reference tools and professional organizations, knowledge of residence and job application procedures, and an understanding of how German can relate to your career and serious personal pursuits; 3) an understanding of what our activities will be and how they should be conducted, because there may be times when you wonder why what we're doing doesn't resemble some other language class you've encountered or pictured to yourself.

## Performance and Assessment

If we try to describe the outcomes of the course, we may find it useful to deal with several categories. A grade based on a final exam and some sort of paper sounds pretty ridiculous here, and yet the real world has its standards and evaluations (including some actual "classroom-style" tests, like those for CPA or driver licenses). A grade based on how you carry out certain activities that lead to the intended goals does make sense, but for our course that grade would depend only partly on linguistic progress. It would also depend on the activities you completed and the resources you created for yourself. Example: Your German may be very good, but if the goal is to produce a resumé that can hope to help you get a job, failure to submit a resumé means you don't even get an interview, and a poorly organized and poorly presented resumé likely means someone else gets the job, even if not as well qualified as you. A similar grading policy will help "level the field" with regard to differing levels of language proficiency; there will be no "automatic" A grades for those who happen already to be at Advanced level.

I see 3 categories of activity as being essential to our course:

- 1) This is a course where we aim specifically to improve language skills, so there should be a conscious knowledge of things that need to be learned and the activities that will help.
- 2) This is a course where we will engage in the social interactions that have to do with work and serious personal interests, so we should set goals here too, and determine their implications.
- 3) This is a course where we prepare the resources that will help us achieve something in work or serious personal interests, so we should describe what those resources will be and what they will look like when they are assembled into their finished form.

Here are my ideas about those 3 categories as they relate to our course:

### Language development

The range of language skills commonly encountered in third-year German can range all the way from wobbly Intermediate-Mid to nearly Advanced-Plus. As we move toward a standards-based educational system, it is difficult to deny a good grade and credit to someone with a high-

level skill, however it has been achieved. And yet it troubles us when effort is not rewarded and lack of effort is not penalized. Secondly, third-year language students do not make the dramatic progress up the proficiency scale that we observe earlier on. If you come into third year as a wobbly Intermediate-High, you may spend all of third year, and maybe longer, at Intermediate High. An Advanced is not likely to become an Advanced-Plus in third year alone. That doesn't mean you're not learning. You can learn to play chess in a few hours. In a few months you can get pretty good at it. But who knows how many years you might take to move from that to a serious competition level?

My suggestion here is that each student, in consultation with me, undertake a distinct jump in performance level in a linguistic feature the student selects, with performance demonstrated in both speaking and writing. Our agreement should consider the linguistic function, the skill area (speaking, writing, etc.), the context, and the level of accuracy. An Intermediate-High might declare: "I want to do past-time narration better, especially in speaking, so I can tell German tourists about Oregon history when I get hired as a group-tour companion." We might then agree that every two weeks you will take a landmark event in Oregon history, work up its vocabulary (especially verb tenses), maybe find an interesting picture that relates to it, and then record a two-minute narration, with follow-up correction and re-recording. An outstanding performance might be a videotape of you at the historical site doing the tourist-guide bit for the camera. This would exceed expectations, could go into a job application, and would simulate the actual work environment.

### Social interaction

An article about science I read recently declared that "knowledge always goes with people," meaning that knowledge is not conveyed or acquired without some sort of personal communication. Very few jobs or personal-interest activities are conducted truly independently of other people. In our hobbies, at least, if not so much in our work, we feel that we can "get ahead" better by helping each other rather than working behind barriers or actively undermining other people. This course will work better if partner and group activities are essential to it. Those activities should resemble the activities of our real world: team planning sessions, job interviews, tutorials, show-and-tell sessions, performance evaluations. People who

do not participate in those activities are not regarded as capable co-workers or co-hobbyists, however articulate they may be in the abstract. Moreover, we like to think, despite Dilbert, that in the real world those who claim more prestige and rewards should do different things, do more things, and do it all better than the others; they should be leaders, not just somewhat better at the same tasks.

**Resources and documentation of performance**

In this category, too, we can derive the nature and amount of what is needed by asking some "real-world" questions. To be ready to seek decent employment or rewarding personal-interest experiences in a German-speaking environment, what aids should one have assembled and what else must one be able to present to certify that one is qualified? The business world says that job applicants need such things as resumés, letters of inquiry, and even professional portfolios. Most would agree that we could not establish contact with people who share our serious personal interests without being able to communicate with them at some length about the shared topic. In both work and serious play we also need to know the tools of our trade: reference sources, contact lists, etc. And for our purposes there is the language element: we need to be able to document our language ability and improvement in a way that others can tell whether to hire us or invite us to join their serious avocational group.

**the final product**

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. What you create for category 3 is where you show how well you have done; but what you do for category 3 must show what you have accomplished in categories 1 and 2. I envision such a collection or "portfolio" to include:

- contracts with me about what you will do
- a log of activities and a reflective journal in English
- evaluations by me
- documentation of writing and speaking skills
- "tools of the trade" — list of resources (organizations/people; language reference works), etc.

What would be sufficient documentation of language skills in terms of being qualified for serious employment or personal-interest activity? Probably something like the following:

- a paragraph-style resumé
- a letter of inquiry about a job or activity
- a well-developed specialized vocabulary and phrase list
- a speech recording with written evaluations by you and an authority
- proof of special knowledge (project — text or tape/video)
- a statement about why it is you that should get the opportunity to do X

It should not be surprising that you already have a head start on some of those portfolio activities. That's one of the things we've been building toward the course during fall and winter.

**Stages of the course**

In German 301 and 302 we worked chapter by chapter, with each week or "chunk" of coursework being pretty much like the others. In German 320 we leave "the book" mostly behind and undertake activities that are supposed to have some actual counterpart in reality. That requires a course with distinct stages, according to where we are in its various processes: planning, working at the main tasks, wrapping up. Below are outlines of the stages as I see them; bear in mind that many activities will overlap stages.

**task-formulation stage (2 weeks)**

- "intake" interview for personal background, skills, interests, life plan — conducted by you, not me, with each other
- select job options: au pair, language teacher, waiter, lifeguard, tour guide
- select hobby scenarios: accompany visiting honored expert; acquire advanced on-site skill in mundane environment; shoot the wad on the hobby trip of a lifetime; create a product
- propose language-progress steps
- propose special-interest project
- contracts with me
- set up portfolio
- form groups to hold everyone to task
- learn office and work group terminology
- decorate office (cartoon boards, etc.) and establish party fund
- create early-quarter speech samples
- "Lebenslauf" (personal-professional autobiography and goals statement)

project stage (6 weeks)

- assemble specialized vocabulary
- assemble "tools of the trade" (specialized dictionaries, etc.)
- "routine" writing (letters of inquiry, etc.)
- produce special-interest project

documentation stage (2 weeks + finals week)

- assemble language sample documentation (speaking)
- polish special-interest project
- revise written language samples
- have exit language evaluation to show progress over the quarter
- put portfolio in final form

Our environment

It will be important to establish a "classroom" atmosphere that is not that of the usual classroom, though underneath it we will still know that it's a language classroom with instructor and students. The environment will depend on the people, the place, and the activities. During fall and winter I encouraged changes in classroom identity and behavior, with *some* success. One day, for example, we drew maps and genealogies for the Midwestern farm family whose German letter we were reading. Your task was not directly to learn language, and I functioned as a sort of facilitator and resource person.

We can improve that by attention to the physical surroundings, the ways we group ourselves, and the tasks we set ourselves. Particularly important will be: 1) moving from a teacher-centered to a group- and student-centered environment; 2) changing the way our classroom looks; 3) making less definite the boundaries between learning in class and learning outside, and also between what is learned and what is not learned, by whom it is learned and who determines that. People will be doing different things at different times and in different ways, and instead of learning or not learning specific things assigned by a teacher and evaluated in some mysterious way, you will be determining much of what you should do and learn, and will be involved in assessing your performance. It will be a good idea to plan ahead for some feelings of uncertainty.

our identities

I hope you can switch your identity from "student" to the "real" you — someone who has career and personal interests and wants to further them. To make that work you will have to become confident that to do so will improve your German, more than a straight "academic" approach. As I have done occasionally during fall and winter quarters, I will change my identity from "professor" to a combination of office boss, career office advisor, and personal skills counselor. Instead of saying, "Learn this, and learn it because it's for a grade," I will try to say (in German, though), "Don't you think it would help to...?" (look at Powell's or the library for a specialized vocabulary book, read up on this career or that German city, find a German company's site on the Web, listen to this tape of job interviews, rewrite your resumé with more about your job experience).

our "work space"

I've made clear how much I dislike the conventional classroom, with its lousy acoustics, bare walls, inconvenient seating, and lack of technology. Even the "Dilbert" office is not such an obstacle to a human(e) work atmosphere. I'd like to have seating that encourages group activity and consciousness and de-emphasizes the space and role of the instructor (something other than front of room, near board, facing neat rows of people who see themselves as students). We'll need work materials and flat surfaces so we can write and talk in groups rather than by ourselves. I suppose it's too much to hope for that we can decorate our space with some pictures and other "props" of the human workspace. Telephones, file cabinets, and a water cooler (for office gossiping) are out of the question. I am toying with the idea of a portable office bulletin board where we could post our funny work-related cartoons ("Hägar der Schreckliche"), jokes ("Wieviele Deutschprofessoren müssen daran arbeiten, eine Glühbirne auszuwechseln?"), and personal notices ("Kann jemand meine Schicht am Wochenende übernehmen, mit Kinderpflege als Gegenleistung?").

I'll do what I can to create that spirit in our room — by which I mean our regular classroom, the one we are assigned in the course catalog. But I'm also taking steps to get us another work space, and here I am repeating something I have already done in my first-year German course. If all goes well, I will reserve for us, one day a week, one of the computer labs (most likely

CH322), which will become our "office" — a place where we do, in an intensive way, what it is we do when we are truly behaving as though we were not in a "German class." There, for instance, you will put your German resumé in final printed form, and speak German while you learn (or teach!) word-processing.

That may sound exciting, but you may find too that it strains you — specifically the part about maintaining the use of German while you try to carry out some real-world task. This may be the time when the "penalty for English" kitty gets a lot of nickels, dimes, and quarters.

I remember when I was 19 (summer of 1967!) and was working in the "Auslandsabteilung" of a German bank. Sure, the employees there had had their many years of English classes, as had my roommates in the German equivalent of the YMCA where I stayed in Köln. I had had two years of high-school German and two more years in college (though not a real third-year course). But, you know, even though our department at the Deutsche Bank handled a lot of English business communication, they never spoke English with me. Not only was our office a place where German was spoken because we were in Germany; I am convinced that my spoken German, such as it was, was better than their spoken English.

So I had to make it in German there, in a place where, yes, everyone thought it was nice that this young Amerikaner could speak German, but also where they had to take care of business as usual, which meant that I had to fit in or else. I hope we can create in our course an atmosphere where German is truly the "working language." In everyday terms that means that you can't just turn to me or someone else and say, "Wie sagt man auf deutsch 'delete'?" Instead, you will have to say, auf deutsch, what it is you want to do, and then hope someone has a word for you. I bet the "no English!" party fund will get a lot of nickels and dimes early on! Perhaps the container can also serve as a "cuss box."

### our learning materials

There is no existing textbook for such a course, and maybe it would be impossible anyway. By this time the learning must be tailored to the individual, the learner must take over more responsibility for finding learning resources, and a "real-world" course should use real materials. But while much would be determined individually, some materials will be more or less identical. Everyone will certainly need a good dictionary, and probably a reference

grammar. I will show some examples, but part of the course includes finding and evaluating your own resources. I will also distribute some text and tape materials, since I doubtless have a better collection than you do. But you will be expected to come up with some materials too, especially when we get to your personal-interest activities. Some resources you may get from the Internet, and some you will hunt up in print. Much more judgment will be left up to you than is customary in language courses, but life will be like that too if you end up using languages in your career or avocation.

Our learning materials will be determined individually in another sense. Each of you has different language strengths and needs. A single vocabulary list or grammar exercise distributed to everyone would actually suit very few. Often we may well all work with the same materials (such as a rental contract, residence permit application, or fringe-benefits pamphlet), but what you create with those materials will differ individually, as will the language you learn using them.

I expect that one of our standard patterns will be a worksheet that begins with a task description and then has — because I provide it or because our groups create it by discussion — a list of stages to carry out and check off. As part of your learning you would decide what resources you needed and would take the steps necessary to obtain them. Of course I would not be nasty about providing things if you asked me about them, but you should learn how to find what you need too.

### our group behavior

It's not easy to change from a "classroom" attitude to a "real-world" behavior pattern. You've already seen that in fall and winter. Part of the difficulty is linguistic, and part of it is psychological: the relationships among people are different, and so is the way you look at what you are and do.

Two major changes will occur in how we act. You will be expected to cooperate even more with each other, and in different ways. You will be helping each other learn more, and thus will need to be reliable. We may need to move people around so that the different ability levels can mix more, so that other abilities can cooperate, such as strengths in art, people management, or technology, and so that people who are having difficulty do not stick together and reinforce each other's weakness. "Loners" will need to get more gregarious, and those whose German is already pretty good and think that mixing with

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others of lesser proficiency will slow them down will need to realize that helping out others will probably challenge and thus improve their good German.

In class you will be using more skills at the same time, and you will not be doing so much of the usual "study" activities. For example, you will be asked to read and talk at the same time, as you would in real life when you have to figure out an obscure government form or a complicated news story. You will be writing more in class, and by this I mean such things as "real-world" note-taking: jotting down notes for the purpose of communication rather than recording linguistic information about German itself.

More learning will take place outside class, and it will be of a more varied kind. You will be doing some field work, be using the computer labs, and be putting together your language portfolio. You will have to be confident that such activities will also improve your German.

One of the toughest and yet perhaps most rewarding parts will be maintaining German as the only language of communication during class. It is time to quit looking to English for a refuge. You are now at the point where I should be able to tell you everything I need to say in German, where you can find out all the "real-world" information you need to know by asking in German, where you can say all you need to say (eventually) by speaking German, and where you can learn what you need to know about the language by question, description and example. Plenty of immigrants to America who are no more proficient in English than you are in German manage to live their lives and learn more English that way. I was serious when I suggested a "party kitty" to be collected from voluntary fines for using English except when citing individual words, and even then we should be strict. It would be OK to say, "Im Deutschen sagt man nur 'ich gehe,' auch wenn man im Englischen 'I am going' sagt." But we should levy a fine for cop-outs like "Wie sagt man auf deutsch 'I was going?'" I'll bring along quarters to pay my fines, but I'll bet I won't spend many.

### some serious questions

This course could be very rewarding, but there are some tough questions to ask, of you and of me:

- Can you work independently on individual development so that I don't have to spell out everything for everyone separately?
- Can you cease being "students" of "German" and instead, though in a class, behave

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like real people who are doing something other than sitting in a language classroom?

- Can you be convinced that you are learning German even if the activity you are engaged in seems to be more "about" something else?
- Can you put up with the frustration that comes when you have to use German no matter what?
- Can your co-workers depend on you to be there, in class or wherever you are needed, and ready with your share of the task?
- Can I manage to turn around your work promptly so that you can get to the next stages? Perhaps I should make that part of my "party fund" fine policy.

But enough of the doubts and questions. I think we can turn German 320 into an outstanding class. One reason I think so is that our group this year has been a friendly and enthusiastic one. I hope you'll let me know what you think, and I will sincerely try to accommodate your wishes.