Teaching German Culture in the Language Classroom

Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures
University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Friday October 30th and Saturday October 31st, 2009

Call For Best Practices Presentations

North American German Studies follows the tradition of communicative and social approaches to the teaching of the German language and Culture. But how does one effectively teach Culture in the language classroom? In contrast to language instruction in the past, which focused more on grammar and rote learning, today language instruction should be culture based starting at the very beginning. The integrative conveyance of proficiency is already extensively theoretically established, and is also often taught. Typically German curricula are also complemented with such fields as history, literature, film, and other media studies.

German doctoral students, who are most often employed as German language instructors and teaching assistants, receive extensive education in different language acquisition methods and theories. However, the topic of the collection and dissemination of practical experience, and positive theories and activities in practice, is far less prevalent.

The “Teaching German Culture” workshop has been designed to include all levels of German language teachers, and offers an open and inviting atmosphere for Teaching Assistants and Lecturers. This is especially relevant to the aforementioned teaching groups as they often have the greatest and widest exposure to teaching the German language. The workshop will provide theoretical background and the latest pedagogical methods on specific areas of teaching German culture, and it will also serve as a platform to share Best teaching Culture Practices examples that have proved successful for the individual instructors in the classroom.

The breakout workshops focus on the dissemination of knowledge and experience in the following four parallel working groups.

4 Working Groups:
   a) Film und audiovisuelle Medien im DaF Unterricht (James Skidmore, University of Waterloo)
   b) Literatur und fiktionale Texte im DaF Unterricht (Rüdiger Müller, University of Guelph)
   c) Sprache, kommunikative Situationen im DaF Unterricht (Mike Hager, University of Toronto)
   d) Internet, Blogs und elektronische Medien im DaF Unterricht (Sylvia Rieger, McGill University)

Participants will apply to participate in one of the above working groups. The results and examples discussed in each group will be shared with all of the workshop participants at the conclusion of the second day of the workshop. The minimum number of participants in each
group will be 5, with a maximum of 10. Participants will be selected on the quality of their
Best Practices presentation proposal. The Best Practices presentations should be 5 – 10
minutes, and should include specific examples of previously tested methods, exercises, activities, etc., to aid in the teaching of German culture. The goal of the presentations is to
share experiences and methods, which have resulted in positive results in the DaF classroom.
Presentation topics may include specific examples of poetry, short stories, literature, music,
multi-media, etc.

Copies of any material to be printed for the group must be submitted to the organizers by
October 20, 2009.

Each working group will be engaged with the aforementioned topic both theoretically and in
practice, and will work towards creating a cohesive summary of their work achieved, to be
presented to all participants and working groups at the end of the workshop.

The group leader will provide a theoretical introduction to the topic, and will lead and
moderate the discussion and the group participants’ Best Practices presentations.

We hereby wish to invite you to participate in the Teaching German Culture workshop at the
University of Toronto. Please submit the following to the organizers at
germancultureworkshop@yahoo.ca: 1) First and Second choice for placement in a
working group and 2) Intended Best practices presentation (no more than 300 words, and it
should include specific examples to be presented). Ideally the proposals should present
methods which you have already successfully used to teach Culture in the German classroom,
but we will also strongly consider applications which present material or examples which you
would like to use in a classroom, or methods which you used as a student. Presentations may
be in English or German. In the email please include: the attendee’s name, university
affiliation, and Best practices presentation title/topic. Please attach the proposal in a Word
document. The proposal application should clearly state the first and second choices of
breakout working group, specific examples of teaching German culture in practice, and how
the examples will be presented. To facilitate ease of travel, this workshop is primarily geared
towards applicants in the Ontario and Quebec regions, however, applicants from other regions
are welcomed and encouraged.

A financial stipendium will be available for successful applicants to help cover travel costs.

**Deadline for Best Practices presentation proposals:**

**September 15, 2009**

Co-organized by:

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