



Philosophy of Education and Class Management Plan

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German Teacher

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Mission

My mission as a German teacher is to be a guide and a facilitator for my students, and to provide the foundation for knowledge and wisdom within my students, to turn them into global citizens open to new ideas and sensitive to other cultures while using 21st century technology.

Communication

Contact with parents will occur through website postings, newsletter every three weeks (3 letters per 9-week period), individual e-mails and phone calls in addition to parent-teacher conferences.

I will network with other foreign language teachers, as well as with history, geography, English, music, art and drama teachers to coordinate and expand curricular activities. This will ensure the students' intellectual connection between learning German and other disciplines that students are already familiar with.

The students will establish a connection to the rest of the school by displaying and performing work they have done at school, language and cultural fairs; work such as posters, PowerPoint presentations, videos, songs and theatrical performances.

Role of Teacher

My right as a teacher is to teach in a classroom without interruptions.

My role as the teacher is to set high expectations for students and to act as a guide, resource and content specialist. I will ensure a vision worthy of their future hopes and needs, and attainable through goals set in the present. My responsibility is to help students develop independent critical thinking skills and become efficient problem solvers. At the same time, it is my duty to ensure that students turn into intelligent, contributing members of a global society.

Role of Students

Students have a right to learn in a calm, orderly classroom.

Students will be actively engaged in their learning. They will have a variety of activities to choose from. They have the opportunity of mixing and matching activities that correspond with their areas of interest, so they can relate what is learned in the classroom to the world in which they live.

Students will be responsible for showing up for class prepared with all their materials, such as books, note books, pens, pencils, colored pencils etc. They are responsible for their individual work, both at home and in class. They will be severally and jointly responsible for partner and group work, as applicable.

This information will be conveyed to students at the beginning of the school year as part of their syllabus, will then be discussed in class, amended as necessary by democratic decision, then posted on the classroom wall and reread and discussed as necessary.

Students will learn thinking skills by exploring foreign ways of thought, grammar, history, culture and science while comparing them with and contrasting them to their own culture. During that effort, they will express themselves in drama, song, poetry, essay writing etc. and explore technology by creating websites, videos and presenting PPT's and brochures.

Curriculum/Assessments

The curriculum should teach students basic to more elaborate communicative skills in German, with core knowledge focusing on vocabulary, grammar and syntax. However, it should not stop there, but teach critical thinking as to why and how German, Austrian or Swiss culture (or European in general) is different from the American way of thinking. Focus on specific subject under general subject (say, Austria) will vary according to student interest. Students will have to perform different tasks in order to accumulate a preset number of points. They will be given a list of tasks on the subject (of Austria) to choose from; tasks will command a given number of points. Students are free to select various tasks according to their interests to accumulate the required number of points to reach their goal. Curriculum will include geopolitical maps, music and literature throughout the centuries including fairy tales, history, movies, art, science and basic math functions. In technology, they will learn how to make PPT presentations, brochures (in Publisher) and learn how to make and edit videos. Students will also become familiar with etiquette, holidays and cuisine of German speaking countries. European customs will let students relate to their own traditions and values while exposing them to values of other cultures. Cultural contributions such as music, literature, science, the arts etc. will let students discover that other cultures contribute to World Heritage and help set world-wide values deeper than national ones. Basic math functions will help students realize that adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing are daily activities performed daily world-wide that are pertinent to a person's routine, no matter where they live. Etiquette on the other hand is the big divider that tells us where a person is from, both geographically and socially. It is important for students to learn about the validity of truly foreign concepts, although this is a realm in which students actually have to leave their comfort zone of the familiar. They are challenged to use their critical thinking to explore why in a different setting an entire people or social group would choose or refrain from specific actions without judging and rejecting this choice. Yet it constitutes the very essence of foreign language learning.

Instruction

At the beginning of the school year, students fill out a learner profile listing their areas of interest, their long-term goals (your hopes and dreams for the future), their short term goals (what you hope to accomplish this school year), their preferred learning styles (how and when do you learn best?) and additional comments (i.e. What are you interested in learning in this class?). Students sign the profile which is kept in their portfolio.

Students also fill out a self-evaluation and goal setting form. The form differentiates between eight language and eleven behavioral skills (strength vs. weakness) and asks students to set specific goals with deadlines for themselves. The forms are kept in the students' portfolios.

After reviewing the forms, I adjust my material to address specific learning styles.

I vary styles to introduce units, depending on level of instruction, previous knowledge of the subject and types of students. Vocabulary is introduced by PowerPoint. Students need to focus on the SMART board; pictures, video clips and other materials are easily included. Students then copy vocabulary and illustrate it, give examples or translate. Students who have trouble copying can be given a pre-printed copy to illustrate.

On most days, there will be a warm-up followed by three activities, one of which might be transitional. Other than that, no lesson looks the same. This is done to do justice to the task of exposing students to another continent and culture, as well as language. It also serves the purpose on motivating students to remain interested in the subject. Maybe prepositional objects are too abstract a subject, but now we are staging a fairy tale and next week we will discuss life under a dictatorship. Then we will find out what happens next in the German soap opera before we learn why Bach never wrote a piano concerto or how come the Spanish Riding School is in Austria or: why Austria has a navy while being landlocked.

I like to alternate ways of introducing subjects to keep students interested. There will be lectures (listening comprehension), Socratic style conversations, individual (reading comprehension), partner (dialogues) and group (stations) activities, hands-on activities (matching, games, SMART board, internet), problem solving (internet, research) and critical thinking activities (historical, geographical and cultural reasoning), movies (watching and making), field trips (if the budget allows), virtual trips, visits to the computer lab, and projects (individual, partner or group). Students also create individual portfolios.

Motivation

Motivation is created through a variety of instructional material and methods as well as through direct connection to students' lives by giving them options to choose from a large variety of subjects and activities while learning specific language and cultural skills while exploring 21st century technology in various classroom and lab settings.
