

LET'S EXPLORE MODERN GERMANY

Instructional Strategies for Elementary Educators

AUTHORS:

Kim D. O'Neil

Gerrit C. Book

Steven A. Goldberg

Featuring contributions from social studies educators within the TOP Fellow network

A PUBLIC/PRIVATE Partnership for North American Social Studies Educators



Robert Bosch Stiftung



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Design and layout:

in puncto druck + medien GmbH, Baunscheidtstraße 11, 53113 Bonn
www.inpuncto-bonn.de

Transatlantic Outreach Program

Goethe-Institut Washington

812 7th Street NW

Washington, DC 20001

USA

www.goethe.de/top

top@washington.goethe.org

Tel: (202) 289-1200

AUTHOR INTRODUCTION

A parliamentary federal republic of sixteen states with Berlin as its capital and seat of government, the Federal Republic of Germany is situated in the heart of Europe. After reunification on October 3, 1990, it became a founding member of the European Union with the largest population (82 million inhabitants) and the world's fourth largest economy. Throughout its history, Germany has been a "land of ideas" and creativity.

Let's Explore Modern Germany: Instructional Strategies for Elementary Educators is designed to provide elementary and middle school social studies teachers with comprehensive lessons on Germany — historical and contemporary — that can be easily integrated into pre-existing curricula.

The book is organized in four sections: Geography, Contemporary Life, History, and the Grimm Brothers and Other Tales. The lesson organization begins with a focus question(s) to guide the instruction. The careful use of the material included in the lesson and the use of the suggested instructional strategies will engage students to talk intelligently about the focus questions. Each lesson is correlated to the revised 2010 NCSS Standards and includes a lesson overview that summarizes the objective of the lesson, pertinent teacher background, a suggested time frame, instructional resources (most of which are easily accessed from the accompanying Instructional Resource Disc), and a detailed lesson procedure. In addition, there is a whole group reflection, which reconnects the student with the focus question(s), lesson modifications and extensions. The lesson design allows the teacher to integrate social studies with literacy, mathematics, and science. The final lesson of the book, "Family Vacation along the German Fairy Tale Road" (4.4) is a culminating lesson designed to integrate the many themes, concepts, and skills introduced in the previous lessons.

The Common Core State Standards in Literacy, adopted by 45 states to be fully implemented in 2014, require students to read more nonfiction and increasingly complex informational texts; to improve their speaking and listening skills; to cite evidence from texts to support arguments in written work; and to expand their academic vocabulary. Students will be expected to work individually and collaboratively to develop and interpret questions and analyze societal issues, trends, and events by applying concepts, knowledge and skills from civics, economics, geography, and history.

The Common Core lays out a vision of what it means to be a literate person in the twenty-first century. The lessons in this book are intended to provide content and understandings as students are actively engaged to read high-quality age-appropriate literary and informational texts that build knowledge, enlarge experience, and broaden worldviews. Through the challenging activities, students will be able to demonstrate the cogent reasoning and use of evidence that is essential to decision-making and responsible global citizenship.

Students in American and Canadian schools need to know far more about Germany and the European Union than can be learned from a chapter in a history textbook. Since the social studies curriculum is crowded with "essential content," teachers need to determine where and when to stop and have students think about and apply the content they are learning. With the increased pressures to meet the high standards of the Common Core, we believe that *Let's Explore Modern Germany: Instructional Strategies for Elementary Educators* provides teachers with a rich selection of lessons to challenge their students and better prepare them for college, career and civic life.

Kim D. O'Neil
Gerrit C. Book
Steven A. Goldberg

In addition to the authors, the Transatlantic Outreach Program would like to acknowledge the partners and dedicated individuals whose contributions made this text possible.

THE PARTNERS OF THE TRANSATLANTIC OUTREACH PROGRAM:

- The Federal Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany
- The German Embassy Washington, Cultural Affairs Department
- Former German Ambassador to the United States, Dr. Klaus Scharioth
- German Ambassador to the United States, Dr. Peter Ammon
- Mr. Dieter Berg, Chairman, Robert Bosch Stiftung
- Ms. Edith Pürschel, Director, Deutsche Bank, Group Brand Communications & Corporate Citizenship
- Mr. Klaus P. Stegemann, Chief Financial Officer, Siemens Corporation
- Ms. Alison Taylor, Vice President, Sustainability-Americas, Siemens Corporation
- Colleagues of the Goethe-Institut Washington

CONTENT REVIEW PANELISTS:

- Linda Cotter, Elementary Educator – Columbus, Ohio
- Paul Dickler, University Professor – Dodgeville, Wisconsin
- William Linser, High School Educator – Seattle, Washington
- Connie Manter, Curriculum Specialist – East Boothbay, Maine
- Scott Noet, Middle School Educator – Faribault, Minnesota
- Henry Rehn, High School Educator – Sterling Heights, Michigan
- Pam Su'a, Curriculum Specialist – West Jordan, Utah

TOOLKIT AUTHORSHIP TEAM:

- Jacqueline Littlefield, Curriculum Specialist - Saco, Maine
- Connie Manter, Curriculum Specialist - East Boothbay, Maine

GRAPHIC DESIGN & LAYOUT:

- Annika Simon, in puncto druck + medien GmbH – Bonn, Germany

EDITORS:

- Paul Dickler – Dodgeville, Wisconsin
- Jacqueline Littlefield – Saco, Maine
- Wood Powell – Washington, DC
- Sarah Yabroff – Washington, DC

PROJECT MANAGERS:

- Klaus Brodersen, TOP Director – Washington, DC
- Stefan Brunner, TOP Director (2006-2009) – Washington, DC
- Wood Powell, TOP Coordinator – Washington, DC
- Kelsey Smith, TOP Assistant Coordinator (2005-2009) – Washington, DC
- Sarah Yabroff, TOP Assistant Coordinator – Washington, DC

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Angelika Barthel, Elementary Teacher – Bremen, Germany

Andreas Dahlke, Consultant – Berlin, Germany

Frauke Gutberlet-König, Consultant – Berlin, Germany

Silvia Lilienfein, Elementary Teacher – Berlin, Germany

Erin O’Neil, Research Consultant – Liverpool, New York

Kathleen O’Neil, Research Consultant – Liverpool, New York