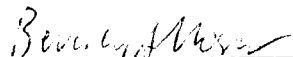


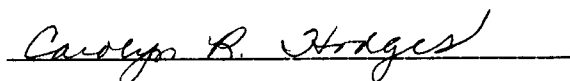
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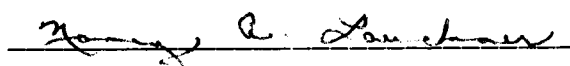
I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Terry Allen Osborn entitled "Teaching the Literary Characteristics of the *Kurzgeschichte* at the Intermediate Level of German Language Instruction." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in German.



Beverly Moser, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:





Accepted for the Council:



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Date 10/19/93

**TEACHING THE LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE
KURZGESCHICHTE AT THE INTERMEDIATE LEVEL OF
GERMAN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION**

**A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

**Terry Allen Osborn
December, 1993**

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents
Larry H. and Kathy C. Osborn
who have helped me more than I can express
and to
God
through whom all things are possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my major professor, Dr. Beverly Moser, for her tireless assistance and guidance, Dr. Nancy Lauckner for helping me expand and fine-tune my appreciation of German literature, and Dr. Carolyn Hodges for her assistance in gathering materials concerning short German prose and specifically the *Kurzgeschichte*. I want to thank Rosemarie Greenman and her students who allowed me to come to their class and observe and who were so willing to provide me with information needed to complete this study. Finally, I would like to thank the faculty of the Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages for giving me the opportunity to continue my education in German.

ABSTRACT

As methodological emphasis in the intermediate-level German course has shifted from translation-based learning, which utilized literary texts quite extensively, to communication-based learning, literature in the intermediate-level course has been either overlooked as a viable tool of instruction or used in the classroom as a springboard to communication. This thesis argues that these approaches do not develop the students' appreciation of literature. Additionally, these approaches fail to consider the role of the intermediate course as the beginning of a transition to the systematic study of literature for students who continue in German.

The use of the *Kurzgeschichte*, or German short story, at the intermediate level can provide students the opportunity to apply their knowledge of the German language in a way that does develop their appreciation of literature and builds the bridge of transition to upper-level German courses. The literary theory of the *Kurzgeschichte* is presented along with findings from a study of an intermediate-level university class. The classroom research was conducted using ethnographic methods, which relatively few studies to date have applied in the foreign language classroom for insights on how to develop activities for students. Genre theory and classroom-research findings are synthesized to arrive at strategies for teaching the literary characteristics of the *Kurzgeschichte* at the intermediate level. The teaching strategies presented provide both visual aid and structure, which the classroom-research findings indicate are vital to students' understanding of literature and enable students to examine literary characteristics that scholars identify as those characteristic of the genre.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF SECONDARY LITERATURE	1
II. <i>KURZGESCHICHTE</i> THEORY	9
III. METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN OF CLASSROOM RESEARCH	20
IV. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS	33
V. STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING THE <i>KURZGESCHICHTE</i>	48
BIBLIOGRAPHY	61
APPENDICES	64
APPENDIX A. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE	65
APPENDIX B. QUESTIONNAIRES	66
VITA	67

Chapter I

Introduction and Review of Secondary Literature

Teaching literature in intermediate German classes presents the instructor with seemingly insurmountable difficulties. Students are limited in their use of the German language and, as a result, the instructor must often address the vocabulary and grammatical structure of the work before the students can examine the work as a literary creation. Often the time required for the former rules out the feasibility of the latter.

As methodological emphasis has shifted from translation-based learning, which utilized literary texts quite extensively, to communication-based learning, literature in the intermediate-level course has been either overlooked or discredited as a viable tool of instruction. Stone, referring to secondary school instruction, notes that "many teachers were frightened away from treating literature with their senior classes when communicative competence became the yard stick with which to beat those who taught in accordance with the old line-by-line translation methodology" (18). The shift away from the line-by-line translation methodology has resulted in a corresponding decline in the use of literature in the intermediate-level course.

The decline in the study of literature extends beyond the scope of the high-school or college German classroom. Leopold asserts that, at all instructional levels, fewer students are interested in studying literature than in previous years (122). Cohen explains that advances in media technology may be partly to blame insofar as the people who might read literature can just as

easily view a television show, which requires less time than reading a work of literature (16). Weise quotes German teenagers who share a less than enthusiastic attitude towards German literature: "Im Augenblick sind die Novellen Kellers dran, die sonst keiner lesen würde, weil sie uns nicht interessieren" (in Cohen 17). Today's youth seem to have little interest in literature, either in their own language or a foreign language, as indicated by the attitudes they express about reading foreign-language literature: a "tiresome translation exercise" (Cohen 18), an experience "which turns students off [of] literature for good" (Stone 18), or an activity of simply "no use" (Leopold 119).

Despite the trend away from using literature in the classroom, it can still be a valuable tool. Stone asserts that "literature study can strike a very positive chord indeed in the hearts and minds of young students" (18). Although some researchers have struggled to find ways to use literature in the communicative or proficiency-based classroom, few scholars in the past twenty years have addressed instruction of literature (Davis et al. 320). Kramsch argues that there needs to be "a change of orientation and redefinition of teacher-learner roles in the discussion of literary texts," but presents few specific techniques for their use at the intermediate-level (357).

Other scholars have suggested approaches to literature that seek to use it as a springboard to communication, but often ignore the artistic qualities of the works. Gorell and Charlebois, for example, propose a "Reverse Reading Technique" in which the instructor deletes parts of a story before presenting the story to students. The students then guess at the content of the deleted

passages (3). Since the instructor, in effect, tampers with the work, one of the shortcomings of using literature in this way is that its value as an art form can be obscured or, in the worst cases, lost.

Riley and Wolf propose a different approach for treating a poem which was written in Spanish about Kentucky. They pose questions which ask students to describe the poem's tone and the imagery used in the poem (7). For example, they suggest that students analyze the poem for shifts in tense and evaluate whether the adjectives in the poem have positive or negative connotations (9). However, in the phase termed by Riley and Wolf as the "Follow-up phase" or the "Interpretation phase," students are asked to describe a favorite place from childhood, the sights and sounds of this place, and how it has changed (12). These questions seek to engage the students in literature, by having them relate the work to their own experiences. The approach, however, focuses primarily on examining the work for surface-level understanding. First, students are to understand the surface-level aspects of the work, then the students eventually delve into a deeper study of the work based on their own experiences, thus departing from the artistic qualities of the poem itself.

One rationale for not treating the artistic qualities of a work of literature in class seems to be the belief that if a work is treated on the surface level only, students will show more interest in studying literature. Leopold documents, however, that at the University of Queensland, Australia, in a literature course on the German novella, instructors abandoned the literary discussion of the works, concentrating entirely on ensuring that the students read the text and that students understood at least the surface meaning of the work (120).

Instructors designed this course for students who had had previous training in German. Four works were treated: Die schwarze Spinne, Das Fähnlein der sieben Aufrechten, Das Amulett, and Der letzte Sommer (120). None of the genre characteristics of the novella were studied. Students read the works and were tested only on the surface meaning of the stories. However, students did not respond favorably to the change of emphasis in the teaching of literature. In fact, this approach did not increase enrollment in literature courses (Leopold 122).

The use of literature at the intermediate level requires further research to develop a method which will increase students' interest and provide a way to effectively teach literature at this level. The methods proposed by Riley and Wolf, Gorell and Charlebois, and Leopold are certainly pragmatic, in that they provide opportunities to practice the language and involve students in literature, even if only at a minimal level. Granted, students at this level are limited in their ability to use the German language. However, most students in an intermediate-level course are studying theoretical issues in many other university classes. If these students enter the German class to examine only surface-level meanings of texts, the level of intellectual stimulation, and thus interest, must certainly decline. If given the appropriate kind of assistance, it stands to reason that students might also be able to examine the artistic qualities of literature and that the instructor could integrate the study of these qualities into the intermediate-level course.

Perhaps the most important reason for studying the artistic qualities of literature at the intermediate level is the nature of literature. Simply put,

literature is a work of art. Authors do not write literature to be primarily a tool for grammar review, just as a painter does not paint for the purpose of teaching the differences in colors. According to Dunning,

[a] work of literature is a living organism, conceived as a whole, created as a whole. . . . Appreciation of it, discussion of it, is meaningless unless launched from that perspective—from the thing seen and "heard" and felt complete, alive and functioning. The more individual items a student can grasp in this way, the more he may begin to realize the endless wondrous variety and the tremendous scope of the land of literature waiting for any willing explorer. (49)

To treat a literary work as simply an instructional tool is to ignore the "living organism" and is to rob the student of the enjoyment of this piece of art.

Dunning offers the following metaphor: literature is not "a mixture in motion of oxygen and nitrogen in about the proportions of one to four with traces of argon and neon and other rare gases. . . . It is the morning breeze" (46). Similarly, a literary work is not a collection of subjunctive forms, passive voice and modals. It is a work to be enjoyed, appreciated, and understood. This study seeks to demonstrate that the *Kurzgeschichte* is particularly well suited for intermediate-level students, and attempts to illustrate certain characteristics of the genre can be effectively treated with these students.

Another compelling reason for integrating the study of literature as art at the intermediate level is that this will assist students in the sometimes difficult transition to upper-level literature courses in German. Schulz notes of this stage: "Suddenly, instructors expect a transition from the stage of painful word-by-word decoding of contrived written dialogs . . . to comprehension of lengthy literary texts . . ." (in Davis et al. 321). By exposing students to literary works at the earliest possible stage of their German coursework, instructors can assist

students in building the bridge between the lower-level courses, which spend a great amount of time on basic comprehension of the texts, to upper-level courses, which concentrate on artistic or literary qualities and often take the surface-level comprehension for granted.

When literature is used at all, the German short story is most frequently the literary genre chosen to be used in the classroom at the intermediate level, probably due to its short length and limited vocabulary. Instructors can also use the *Kurzgeschichte* in integrating the study of artistic qualities of literature. The instructor can reasonably expect students to read either the entire work or a substantial portion of the work as one assignment. Students, likewise, have an assignment that has a sense of both continuity and completeness, as opposed to reading a few pages of a novel, for example, which might frustrate a student wanting to have a feeling of closure, based on having finished a work in the target language.

The value of the short story as a motivational tool is a second reason that this genre should be integrated into the intermediate-level course. Stone reports that when he used Wolfgang Borchert's story "Das Brot" with both secondary and college students, "interest was high--and meaningful language work resulted from the experiment" (18). The literary characteristics of the *Kurzgeschichte* indicate that students are often given a work that is paradoxically both complete and incomplete. The completeness of the work lies in its short length. It is the incompleteness of the German short story—for example the lack of an abundance of details about characters' motivations or backgrounds—that can increase students' involvement by leading them to ask,

"why?" As each student answers this question for himself or herself, he or she may discover the truth of Stone's assertion that "much of the joy of literature lies in the sharing of reactions . . ." (19). The sharing of reactions is, in fact, engagement.

Engagement in literature means that a student "sets about processing [literature] actively and responding to [it] actively in the light of experience, interest and imagination" (Stone 19). Bernd Kast describes engagement similarly:

Umgang mit Literatur heißt, daß der Schüler nicht mehr passives Objekt ist, der zur Literatur hingeführt wird, sondern als aktives Subjekt auftritt, das mit den Texten "umgeht," sie (kritisch) analysiert, vergleicht, ergänzt, kommentiert, umschreibt . . . und sie in seiner Phantasie durchspielt . . . (in Stone 19)

It is important to note that in order to meet Kast's definition of engagement, students need to analyze, compare, comment on, etc. the text. If instructors concentrate primarily on the grammatical or lexical structure or content of the work, it is doubtful that students will be engaged in the study of literature at this level.

Furthermore, Davis et al. point out that ". . . teaching that encourages students to express personal opinions about a text," increases students' motivation (325) and as a result leads students beyond surface-level understanding. "A pedagogy that also takes into account individual interpretations and responses is more likely to enable a broader range of students to see literary studies as relevant in their lives" (Davis et al. 325-26). If students can see the relevance of the study of literature, they may be able to overcome their initial aversion to literature.

This thesis will examine two aspects relevant to designing lessons that enable students to examine the artistic qualities of the German short story: the literary characteristics of the German short story and the efficacy of various approaches to literature in an intermediate-level classroom. The literary theory of the German short story has evolved to a point where several specific and identifiable qualities can be examined based on their suitability to the intermediate-level classroom. Chapter Two will outline and discuss these literary qualities and demonstrate that they are accessible to students at the intermediate level.

In order to determine how instructors can effectively present the characteristics outlined in Chapter Two, this thesis draws from findings of classroom-based research. By examining an actual intermediate-level class, in this case a second-year university German class, a researcher can provide up-to-date and practical information which makes effective use of theory. Chapter Three outlines the procedure for the classroom-based study, which used ethnographic research methods to provide insight into the social nature of the classroom. Chapter Four discusses several trends observed in the classroom, including the students' need for visual aid and structured activities. Chapter Five synthesizes the information from the genre theory and classroom-based research to arrive at activities which will enable students at the intermediate level to examine the literary characteristics of the *Kurzgeschichte*.

Chapter II

Kurzgeschichte Theory

The *Kurzgeschichte* has been described as the chameleon of literary genres (Bender, in Rohner 50). In fact, Klaus Doderer notes that in Germany there is no uniformity in the use of the term *Kurzgeschichte* (90). The term means "short story" and probably originates from the American and English literary vocabulary. Merrifield argues for the term "short shortstory" [sic] because the term "short story" normally denotes the Anglo-Saxon novella (156). Adding to the confusion, Neis points out that the American definition of short story is a story consisting of 1,000 to 20,000 words (119). The struggle for a uniform definition may continue indefinitely.

Doderer attempts to better define the *Kurzgeschichte* by comparison and contrast with the genres of the *Anekdote*, the short story, the *Novelle*, the *Skizze*, and the novel (49ff.). Doderer defines the *Kurzgeschichte* as an artistic literary creation describing a distinct period in the life of a person for whom the regular progression of life is disturbed by an unforeseen event (40). This disturbance (called a *Schicksalsbruch* or change in destiny) puts the protagonist in an exceptional situation to which he or she must react. It is not, however, in the purview of the short story to present the consequences that result from the protagonist's manner of reaction (Doderer 40). Not every work that is commonly referred to as a *Kurzgeschichte* would meet the definition offered by Doderer. For this reason, the term *Kurzgeschichte* will be used here somewhat more broadly to describe a short fictional work portraying a distinct period in the life of the protagonist.

Historically, the *Kurzgeschichte* has been a genre of the twentieth century (Doderer 78). The forerunners of the *Kurzgeschichte* included works by authors such as Poe, Chekhov, Kleist, Heine, and E. T. A. Hoffmann. The genre actually developed in and through naturalism and was a result of technological advances such as the telegraph, telephone, automobile, airplane, radio, and finally, film (Doderer 92). Technological advances such as these made society busier, and as a result, longer stories were not as desirable (Doderer 79), presumably since people had less leisure time and more sophisticated means of entertainment available.

Much that has been written on the theory of the *Kurzgeschichte* contains characteristics of the genre that do make it particularly accessible to students at the intermediate level. The *Kurzgeschichte* is, relative to other genres, short in length (Merrifield 156). It is ironic that the very reason Doderer cites for the development of the *Kurzgeschichte* is one of the reasons that make the genre so appealing to students now. In an age of "sound-bytes" and music videos, students at the university level today have undoubtedly developed a shorter attention span than students, for instance, in the nineteenth century. A *Kurzgeschichte* can normally be read as one or two assignments. Due to the limited time required to read a German short story, this genre becomes accessible for students, even those who have a limited comprehension of German.

Since the *Kurzgeschichte* does not attempt to be historical (Doderer 91), students with little knowledge of German or European history are not as easily confused by short stories as by other genres where historical references are more common. In comparison, poetry could have as a source an historical

event or even another work of literature, which would increase the level of difficulty for today's university student. The background of stories that do contain an historical reference, such as Wolfgang Borchert's "Das Brot," can usually be explained very quickly.

Because the *Kurzgeschichte* focuses on everyday situations (Neis 123), the genre prevents major misunderstandings due to cultural subtleties. By the time a student has reached the intermediate level, some aspects of everyday German life have been introduced to the students. These everyday scenes are the ones which are depicted in the genre of the *Kurzgeschichte*, allowing students to focus on the story without being inundated with cultural information that must be understood to insure that they adequately comprehend the work.

The *Kurzgeschichte* does not concentrate on descriptions of surroundings, but on the plot (Motekat, in Neis 122). This fact is particularly relevant because television is one of the most popular forms of entertainment today, and most descriptive functions of a story on television are visual. Television viewers see quickly the surroundings, clothing, and physical appearance of the character(s). It stands to reason that students, therefore, will prefer descriptions of action, thought, and/or feelings to descriptions of a character's appearance or environment. The *Kurzgeschichte* does not require the student to visualize various specifics of the surroundings, but allows these intricacies to go either ill-defined or undefined.

The fact that the *Kurzgeschichte* concentrates on one major figure (Merrifield 157) minimizes the chances that non-native students can be confused because of the shift in focus of a story. Students can misread a text when the focus of the action shifts between several central characters. The

distinct period of the main character's life—and obviously the main character himself or herself—become the center of attention for students.

Finally, for intermediate-level students, perhaps the most significant characteristic of the genre is the use of everyday speech. Students with annotated editions of the works usually find colloquial expressions explained, and most other terms should be found in an English-German dictionary. In comparison, a short novella, such as Novelle by Goethe, may contain words that are antiquated or otherwise difficult for students to understand. The combination of modernity of language and manageable length provides the German short story with its most appealing qualities for a student at the intermediate level.

The literary characteristics that have been outlined to this point are those that illustrate the suitability of the *Kurzgeschichte* for study by intermediate-level students. The remainder of this chapter describes the specific literary qualities that intermediate-level students can examine. Specific suggestions for the presentation of this material will be discussed in Chapter Five.

The rationale for choosing the following literary characteristics is two-fold. First, the concepts must be of a nature that a student who has little or no background interest in the study of German literature can grasp. Secondly, these characteristics are genre-specific. The examination of literary tools, such as a metaphor or simile, are often the topic of English literature courses at the secondary or college level. Although examining textual examples of these tools might be helpful to students, the attempt here is to provide students with experience in German literary study. The advantages of the approach

presented here lie not only in its uniqueness (few English classes will study the German short story), but also in the benefits to students who continue their study of German beyond the intermediate level. In coursework at the upper levels of German study, students will take courses that are genre-specific in their examination of literature and these students will have the advantage of experience in dealing with a work from the standpoint of genre and literary theory.

Handlungstyp and Haltungstyp

Although Brustmeier identifies thirteen types of *Kurzgeschichten* (in Rohner 54-55), these variations may be too complex for intermediate-level students. More appropriate for students at this level are Doderer's two different types of *Kurzgeschichten*, each based on the behavior of the protagonist: the *Handlungstyp* and the *Haltungstyp* (91).

The *Handlungstyp* portrays the protagonist as passive. This description seems contradictory since *Handlung* implies action. Doderer asserts, however, that in this case the circumstances of the story are acting (91). The protagonist is more or less delivered over to the circumstances and the main action is that of fate or circumstances, and not that of the protagonist. For example, in "Der Milchmann" (Peter Bichsel), a milkman is portrayed in a limited number of situations. The story centers on the exchanges between the milkman and his customer, Frau Blum, and portrays these two characters' perceptions of each

other based on the limited interactions. The nature of their relationship (or the circumstances) "drives" the story, thus making it a *Handlungstyp*.

In contrast, the *Haltungstyp* portrays the main character as active. He or she is the "driving force" of the story insofar as he or she makes decisions based on the circumstances presented. For example, when the protagonist in "Wer ist man?" (Kurt Kusenberg), Herr Boras, finds that the woman he believes to be his wife does not know him, the story focuses on describing his thoughts and the actions he takes to determine what is happening to him.

Before additional literary characteristics are examined, it should be noted that each classification (for example, *Handlungstyp* or *Haltungstyp*) does not rule out the possibility of another classification based on a different set of criteria. Just as a car is both a vehicle and an automobile, a single *Kurzgeschichte* can be a *Handlungstyp* and, for example, a Scheme A or Scheme B story.

Scheme A and Scheme B Plot Structures

Doderer asserts that, through the first sentence of a *Kurzgeschichte*, the work is lifted to a narrative plane and either (A) "unfolds" or (B) "expands" (37). The distinction between an unfolding plot and an expanding one helps the reader to see which scheme, A or B, the work employs.

In Scheme A, the situation is virtually set from the beginning and the focus of the story is on unfolding the details of this situation. In "Das Kartenspiel" (Peter Bichsel), for example, several people have gathered regularly to play cards. The story focuses on the fact that Herr Kurt, the

protagonist, has watched these games as long as anyone can remember. Phrases akin to "sometimes he" and "but he never" illustrate that the work is adding specifics to a description of the status quo. No change in the present situation is described (although characters speculate about the future), thus the work is "unfolding" details rather than narrating an ongoing plot.

Scheme B, however, has an expanding or "mounting" plot (Doderer 37). The action in the work continues to develop to a climactic point. In Bichsel's "Wer ist man?" Herr Boras leaves his home, goes to visit friends, and, after they too fail to recognize him, walks dazed through the streets of his city. The plot expands and there is a progression of action in the work.

First-person and Third-person Narrator

Another characteristic of the *Kurzgeschichte* that intermediate-level students can examine is the narrative situation. The two types of narration are the first-person and the third-person narrative. The first-person narrative is seen as a character in the story tells the story. First-person narrations seem to pull the reader into the story by giving the biases and feelings of a character in the work.

As a note of caution, while in most cases a third-person narrator is omniscient, a peculiar characteristic of the *Kurzgeschichte* is that a third-person narrator is not necessarily an omniscient one (Merrifield 157). It is probably not within the ability of an intermediate-level student to examine the text for evidence of the narrator's limited knowledge. However, it is important that in examining this genre with intermediate-level students, an instructor does not

falsely assume and communicate to students that a third-person narrator is omniscient.

The Beginning of the Work

Students can also examine the characteristics of the beginning of the *Kurzgeschichte*. The work often starts with no introduction (Nayhauss 66). The characters are presented without detailed information as to who they are, as though the reader were already acquainted with them (Merrifield 157). The effect of this form of beginning can be to draw the reader into the story by arousing curiosity and does not confuse the intermediate students with background material. Instead, the *Kurzgeschichte* presents an early, sharp focus on the issues of the plot.

Open-closed, Closed-open, and Open-open Plot Structures

Finally, students should examine the closing of the work. Doderer argues that it is not intended that the work be brought to a close. Rather he asserts that a *Kurzgeschichte* reaches an *Abbruch* or breaking off. According to Doderer, the *Kurzgeschichte* would destroy itself if it buried the disillusioning close through further narration because the disturbing end is an important characteristic of the genre (38).

Rohner has developed three classifications based on the close of the work as it relates to the work itself (248-49). Rohner's classifications, though similar to previously discussed terms, divide a *Kurzgeschichte* into two parts: the period described within the work itself and the implied future. When applied to the period described within the work, the terms "closed" and "open" are

virtually identical to Scheme A (unfolding plot structure) and Scheme B (expanding plot structure), respectively. A "closed" plot does not expand nor is there a progression in the action. Rather, the text unfolds to describe the details of the status quo. An "open" plot does expand and the action progresses to a climactic point.

The future can be implied in numerous ways such as a single word or sentence. If a *Kurzgeschichte* ends with the sentence, "But all of that was about to change," the reader assumes that the implied future will include more significant events relating to this story. Such an ending is called an "open" ending. In contrast, a *Kurzgeschichte* ending with "They lived happily ever after" implies a future that is similar to the concluding status quo of the work. The current situation or state of the protagonist is likely to continue.

Once one has classified 1) the distinct period of time described in the work and 2) the implied future, one can then classify the entire work according to Rohner's terms: open-closed, closed-open, or open-open (248-249). To further illustrate these three types, I begin with Rohner's definition of open: "Der Leser springt sozusagen auf den fahrenden Zug" (249). I will use the metaphor of the running train to describe these three types.

In an open *Kurzgeschichte* with a closed ending, the reader is pulled into the action right away. The ending, however brings the situation to a quick, albeit unexpected close (Rohner 248). Speaking metaphorically, one can say that the train that the reader has been riding comes to the station. The reader is almost certainly left with the question "why," but the events have reached a climactic point and a conclusion. "Wer ist man?" by Kurt Kusenberg is an example of such a story.

The reverse configuration is also possible. In a closed *Kurzgeschichte* with an open ending, the reader is pulled into the situation, but no action is prevailing at the present time. The work ends, metaphorically, as the train is leaving the station, with the reader not knowing exactly what is going to happen in the future. Rather, the reader stands at the station watching the train leave. "Mittagspause" by Wolf Wondratscheck is an example of such a story.

The open *Kurzgeschichte* with an open ending has the reader on the train from the outset, but throws the reader off without stopping the train. Any events which happen prior to the point at which the reader begins reading are brought out in the text. According to Rohner, the excitement lasts far beyond the last sentence (249). "Kurz vor Feierabend" (Günter de Bruyn) is an example of such a work.

In conclusion, reasons for using the *Kurzgeschichte* at the intermediate level go beyond that fact that it is short, and therefore manageable in length. This unique genre of modern German literature has many characteristics that make it well suited for study by non-natives, since it is accessible to students with a limited knowledge of German culture and history.

The *Kurzgeschichte* can also be a powerful motivational factor in the intermediate-level classroom, not only at the beginning of the story which arouses the curiosity of the reader, but also through its ending which Ischreyt claims leaves a "prick in the heart" of the reader (in Neis 120). Yet if students are going to study a shorter text such as this genre, they should understand the text in its different literary aspects (Koepke 154).

To this end, there are also literary characteristics of the *Kurzgeschichte*

that students at the intermediate level can examine. By looking at artistic qualities of the literature, students are not restricted to conducting an exhaustive analysis of the works for passive forms, subjunctive verbs, genitive constructions, etc., but can use their developing language skills to enjoy the art form of literature in its abundant beauty.

Chapter III

Methodology and Design of Classroom Research

Classroom research provides the vital link between theory and practice of foreign language instruction. Surprisingly, however, Davis et al. note that few studies have focused on literature instruction (320). Scholars are hesitant to conduct research in the classroom because such research is difficult and scholars view it as a "messy" sort of data (Van Lier 26). Yet this type of research seems essential to the field of education, since it is in the classroom that real learning takes place.

Seliger and Long note that language teachers " 'express impatience, bordering on hostility, with researchers and their work' " (in Van Lier 26). Van Lier asserts that this rift between practitioners and researchers of foreign language education can only be minimized by making research relevant to practice (26). Thus, researchers in the field of foreign language instruction must seek to provide the instructor with information that is practical, i.e., clearly expressed in terms of how the information can be applied in the classroom. Obviously, to attain this goal, classroom research is not simply germane, but essential.

Research approaches in the classroom can be divided into two methodological types: quantitative and qualitative (Chaudron 15). Quantitative research seeks to express findings in the classroom in terms of statistical significance. Qualitative research, in contrast, centers on describing classroom

events as processes and making inferences about these processes. These descriptions and inferences lead to generalizations about similar classroom environments (Chaudron 15). Research theorists rarely advocate a methodology that is purely quantitative or qualitative, thus eliminating the other approach, but see the two approaches as complementary or mutually dependent (Reichhardt and Cook, in Chaudron 15).

Ethnography is one methodological approach to research that seeks to provide descriptive information about the classroom. As Chaudron notes, "[t]he research goal is to produce descriptions and interpretations of classroom events, and the relationships between them, that will be identified by others as real and meaningful for teachers, learners, and learning" (23). Anthropologists have used ethnographic approaches to study foreign cultures, and scholars apply the principles of this methodology, noting that the classroom, like a culture, is a contextually defined setting (Van Lier 1). The context of this setting is primarily based upon the activities that regularly take place in it (similar to a concert hall or courtroom) and the researcher must assume that the interactions in the classroom are mostly purposeful, not random. Thus, ethnographic researchers in educational studies focus primarily on the interactions in the classroom.

In order for the researcher's observations to provide conclusions that are beneficial to the classroom instructor, the researcher must be able to see classroom interactions as they actually occur. Classroom activities which are structured so that variables can be manipulated for the purpose of experimental research can provide relevant information; however, the interactions are

unlikely to be natural and the lesson is certainly disturbed by the interference of research. Therefore, the classroom researcher who applies ethnographic methods purposely avoids manipulating the natural environment of the classroom and expressly seeks to examine classroom interactions as they regularly occur.

Ethnography is based on the principles of holistic and emic inquiry, requiring constant attention not only to interactions, but also to the context of those interactions and the opinions, perceptions, biases, and viewpoints of the participants both individually and collectively (Van Lier 16). Ulichny compares these two types of inquiry to a telescope (holistic) and a microscope (emic) that must be used concurrently to view the activities in the classroom (3). The complexity of classroom events mandates that the researcher take into account the numerous factors affecting these events. Thus, in order to provide research that is relevant to practitioners, ethnographers study classroom success on the basis of observable interaction (Van Lier 15-16).

In the second language classroom, ethnography and other forms of naturalistic inquiry, are well suited for research (Bailey et al. 95). The need for classroom research is an acknowledged fact within the second language profession (Van Lier 12), and much of the focus of classroom research is on the development of second language acquisition theories (Van Lier 21). However, relatively few studies to date have applied ethnographic methods in the foreign language classroom for insights on how to develop activities for students. This study will apply information from classroom research to develop activities for teaching the literary characteristics of the *Kurzgeschichte* at the intermediate level.

Loughrin-Sacco et al. conducted ethnographic research in an elementary French class at Michigan Technological University and published the specifics of their design without presenting conclusions drawn from the study. Their purpose was to "offer a detailed description of team ethnography to scholars . . . interested in research and design within the field of naturalistic inquiry" (4). Typically, however, researchers do not attempt to provide a complete, exhaustive ethnography of the classroom they observed (Chaudron 46), since time and personnel demands of a complete ethnography are quite extensive. This leads researchers at some point to "draw a line and say: this is as far as we shall look" (Van Lier 10).

Researchers do not always conduct "pure" or complete ethnographies, but still adhere to several tenets of ethnographic research while using ethnographic methods. For example, ethnographers approach a research project without a preconceived hypothesis. Although empirical studies focus on hypothesis testing, observational, ethnographic research prescribes the opposite. Hypotheses are avoided to prevent the observer from describing the classroom culture based on a predetermined set of classifications. Instead, from the data, the observer determines trends in the interactions and develops descriptions of what happens in the classroom. Conclusions thereby evolve from the data and are not presented in terms of evaluating ideas of what might be found in the classroom (as with a hypothesis). Instead, the conclusions describe patterns that were actually found in the classroom. This reduces the possibility that the research findings include bias resulting from a predetermined set of criteria.

One of the most important considerations of ethnographic classroom research is the development of trust between the researcher and the instructor. The focus on the classroom that research inherently brings can be intimidating to the instructor, who may resent the interference of the observer in the classroom or feel as if his or her work is being criticized (Van Lier 34). The instructor may change aspects of the instruction so as to present what he or she wants the researcher to see. The students, in turn, may react to the instructor differently than they normally do, thus showing the researcher classroom events that do not occur naturally--Labov has referred to this phenomenon as the "observer's paradox" (in Van Lier 39). The instructor's concerns about the researcher's presence can drastically affect classroom interactions, thereby providing data of at least questionable validity. The researcher must minimize the possibility that his or her presence in the classroom may disturb the natural interactions; therefore, it is of primary importance in conducting valid research that the researcher present a non-threatening image (Van Lier 39).

A limited data base is a typical characteristic of ethnographic classroom research. As Van Lier asserts:

Essentially, when classroom research is conducted *in* the classroom rather than *about* the classroom, the set of data must be kept small. One lesson may yield as much useful information as ten lessons, and probably a good deal more than fifty lessons, except if we have unlimited time at our disposal. Small amounts of data can provide powerful analyses (4)

Each single interaction in the classroom is a piece of data that the researcher can potentially analyze, and as a result, the limited data base is necessary if the

researcher wishes to determine conclusions of the study within a reasonable period of time.

In ethnographic studies researchers frequently observe and record class sessions simultaneously. The recording is valuable as an "estrangement device" which helps the researcher separate himself or herself from the events in the classroom as they happen and conduct analysis at a later time (Van Lier 37). The information gathered from the recorded data, therefore, can be fine-tuned to include the different aspects of a set of interactions that may be relevant to a conclusion.

One tool central to all ethnographic research is the "triangulation" of data, i.e., obtaining data from multiple sources in order to provide descriptions of the class that are more reliable. Rather than relying only on recordings or observations, the ethnographer gathers information from several independent sources such as questionnaires, interviews of students, course material, etc., from which the researcher can find additional patterns and corroborate the existence of patterns seen in observations. The resulting "microscopic" view takes into account the viewpoints of the participants in the classroom and, when combined with observations of a non-participant observer, provides a measure of reliability to the study.

Researcher

I was the principal investigator and am a candidate for the Master of Arts degree in German. I hold a Bachelor's degree in German and Psychology and

have four years of teaching experience at the secondary level. Additionally, I have one year of experience as a graduate teaching associate at the university level.

Subjects

The subjects were the students of an intermediate-level German course at the University of Tennessee and their teacher, an experienced Instructor of German. The students of this 8:00 a.m. section ranged in age from 18 to 34 with a mean age of 21.07 and a mode of 18. Most of the students were first-year and sophomore students. Students' majors varied and eighty percent of the students stated that they had never lived in a German-speaking country. All students chose a pseudonym to use in all aspects of the study to maintain confidentiality.

Preliminary Research Concerns

Before the beginning of the semester, the instructor indicated that she was concerned about several issues related to this study. She requested that I wait until the seventh day of class before beginning the observations because she wanted time to acclimate the students to the classroom procedures and content, which were considerably different from those followed in the preceding course. Her reservations seemed to be related to the fact that all sections of the course had shifted from a teacher-centered approach to one which incorporated cooperative learning. Since she was not completely familiar with cooperative learning, she felt that the class might not function smoothly at times.

Additionally, the instructor expressed her concerns as to whether I would

have enough data, since the class not only treated German short stories, but also *Hörspiele*. The class occasionally dealt with grammar topics for the purpose of review.

Based on the instructor's initial reservations about my observing, it became clear that she feared I would take an evaluative stance on how she conducted classroom activities. This would have been clearly disadvantageous to the study, since it was likely she would structure activities based on what she thought I wanted or needed to see, preventing me from seeing natural, undisturbed lessons. The concern that the instructor might tailor her approach to the observations was confirmed after the first observation, when she asked me what she could do differently and suggested that she would be willing to try any suggestions that I might give her.

Classroom Observations

Of the 18 class sessions that dealt specifically with short stories, I observed eight. Additionally, I observed one class session that dealt with a *Hörspiel*. During the observations, I sat in the back of the classroom as a non-participant and recorded the session on audiotape (with the exception of the final observation). I recorded the activities of the class in field notes referenced to the audiotape by recording the corresponding counter number. These notes contained primarily the non-verbal behaviors that would not be reflected in the audiotape recording. A system of abbreviations served to increase the amount of notes that could be taken in each session.

Student Interviews

Since the class session I observed met at 8:00 a.m., virtually every student had a class directly following the German course. Three students were willing to collaborate and each was interviewed at a different point during the course of the semester for approximately twenty minutes. I asked questions of each student pertaining to his or her likes, dislikes, preferences, etc. concerning studying the German short story. I noted the students' responses during the interview, at the same time attempting to maintain continuity by having an ongoing conversation, unbroken by my note-taking.

Questionnaires

I administered three questionnaires to all students at various points throughout the study. The first questionnaire contained questions relating to their attitudes and habits regarding literature in general (see Appendix B). Based on data gathered from observations and interviews, Questionnaire Two contained questions designed to fine-tune or explain patterns seen in the previous data. Questionnaire Three listed conclusions I had developed over the course of the semester and requested that the students note their agreement or disagreement with the conclusions along with any reason or additional comment that they wished to make. The purpose of this third questionnaire—as well as the purpose of my teaching parallel sections—is explained in the section entitled "Further Confirmation." The cycle of fine-tuning and confirming conclusions from the classroom data is a common element of research that uses ethnographic methods. A schedule of German short stories

studied in class and corresponding data collection activity is presented in Table I.

Analysis of Data

I analyzed the data collected in two ways: first, by noting on the observation record any aspects of the classroom interactions indicating patterns that seemed to increase students' motivation or interest; and second, by specifically recording any patterns that, after systematic analysis of several observations, occurred in more than one class session. The recurring patterns then provided me with topics of discussion for student interviews and in questionnaires, each of which were collected from all students in class on the same day. Students' responses were converted to statistical form and the results of this process allowed conclusions to evolve as 1) I, as researcher, identified successful interaction patterns and 2) students, as members of the "classroom culture," provided their perceptions of why these activities or patterns were successful. The results furnished information not only about activities that help students successfully examine German short stories, but also about the students' attitudes and viewpoints specific to the study of the *Kurzgeschichte*. Furthermore, the process of using interviews, observations, and questionnaires allowed for the triangulation of data, which is central to ensuring validity in ethnographic research.

Further Confirmation

Although the triangulation of data is more than adequate to confirm the validity of the conclusions derived from this study, I used two additional

Table 1: Schedule of literary works covered and data collection activity.

Date	Short story or topic	Data collection activity
Feb. 1	"Der Milchmann"	Observed and recorded class session, collected Questionnaire. Conducted one, post-class interview with instructor.
Feb. 5	"Das Brot"	Observed and recorded class session, interviewed 1 student.
Feb. 8	"Das Brot"	
Feb. 19	"Der Stift"	Observed and recorded class session.
Feb. 22	"Der Stift"	
Feb. 26	"Der hellgraue Frühjahrmantel"	
Mar. 1	"Der hellgraue Frühjahrmantel"	Observed and recorded class session, interviewed 1 student.
Mar. 2	<i>Horspiel</i> (no short story)	Observed and recorded class session.
Mar. 10	"Vor dem Gesetz"	Observed and recorded class session, approximate date of administration of Questionnaire Two.
Mar. 12	"Vor dem Gesetz"	Observed and recorded class session.
Mar. 29	"Wer ist man?"	Taught two parallel sections of the course on April 12 which had this story as a focus.

Table I: (continued)

Date	Short story or topic	Data collection activity
Mar. 31	"Wer ist man?"	Observed and recorded class session.
Apr. 2	"Wer ist man?"	Approximate date of interview with 1 student.
Apr. 5	"Wer ist man?"	
Apr. 14	"Die unwürdige Greisin"	Observed and recorded class session.
Apr. 16	"Die unwürdige Greisin"	Taught two parallel sections of the course on April 7 which had this story as a focus.
Apr. 19	"Die unwürdige Greisin"	Taught parallel section of this course that had a focus not related to the German short story.
Apr. 30		Conducted follow-up interview with the instructor.

methods, one informal and one formal, to further validate the conclusions. Toward the end of the semester I was able to teach five sessions of parallel sections of this intermediate German course, four of which focused on a German short story (as noted in Table I). I attempted to apply some of the findings from my research informally in these parallel sections, asking students in these other classes to share their attitudes and viewpoints about studying the genre, and found no contradictions to the conclusions evolving from the study of the 8:00 section.

Once I had the conclusions drawn from the classroom research summarized in eight general, descriptive statements, I submitted these conclusions to students in Questionnaire Three for their feedback (see Appendix B). Their comments allowed me to further validate the conclusions and add any additional insights that the students offered.

Finally, I interviewed the instructor of the course to elicit her response to my conclusions. She speculated on possible reasons for strengths and weaknesses of students, but agreed that the descriptions were true of her class.

Conclusion

By observing an actual intermediate-level German course using ethnographic methods, I elicited information about students who are studying the German short story. This information will be useful when combined with genre theory in developing activities for teaching the literary characteristics of the *Kurzgeschichte* at the intermediate level.

Chapter IV

Findings and Conclusions

The eight hours of tape-recorded class sessions yielded approximately 3,000 interactions, the field notes added sixteen pages (about 400 notes), and the three interviews with individual students provided an additional 75 comments. The first two questionnaires added more than 400 individual responses to this body of data. Thus, in excess of 4,500 pieces of data were collected for analysis.

The class maintained a routine for studying a short story which centered mainly on a printed form for *Textanalyse* provided to all parallel sections of this course (see Table II). The study of each work seemed to be roughly divided into two phases: comprehension and analysis. In the comprehension phase, students were usually asked to answer specific questions about the content of the text, either orally or in written form. Additionally, students addressed questions to the instructor about grammatical constructions or vocabulary in the text with which they were not familiar. The instructor regularly called the students' attention to specific sentences or words in the text and asked them to identify what was being said or what events were described in the sentence or passage. The duration of the first phase varied from one story to the next (one to three days), depending on the complexity of the work, but generally the first phase lasted longer than the second phase.

The second phase of the work with the short story included group activities designed to go beyond the basics of comprehension, but this second

Table II: *Textanalyse* handout questions and description of information requested.

Section No.	Question on handout	Description
1	Was? Titel: Autor/Autorin:	Students identify the title and author of the work.
2	Wer? die Figuren: Direkt in der Geschichte Indirekt, aber wichtig.	Students identify the characters in the work: both those which could be considered main characters and those who otherwise qualify as important.
3	die Handlung: (Wie? Was ist passiert?) ich-Erzähler? dritte Person?	Students summarize the plot of the work. Students also identify the narrator as either a first-person or third-person narrator.
4	Ort: Wo?	Students identify the setting of the work.
5	Zeit: Wann?	Students note the time that the work takes place, e.g., the year or time of day, if known.
6	Warum? Was meint der Autor/ die Autorin? Motivation für die Handlung? das Thema/ die Themen?	Students discuss the possible intents of the author, the motivation for the plot, and any themes that occur in the work.
7	Weitere Bemerkungen:	Students make further comments on the work.

phase rarely addressed literary aspects of the *Kurzgeschichte* per se. The instructor directed students in this phase, for example, to retell the story from a different perspective as a grandchild of one of the main characters, to invent dialogues between characters in the text, or to draw a picture of the content of a selected paragraph in the text.

The study of each work also entailed completing the *Textanalyse* for homework, which often involved the students in a follow-up assignment of rewriting their answers at home for clarity or to correct grammar. Additional homework included writing essays, the topics of which were drawn from group discussions in the classroom cooperative learning activities.

Commonly, during both phases the instructor posed many questions regarding content, character motivation, page numbers of specific aspects of the text, etc. This often began with an open-ended question which was progressively rephrased with a narrowing scope until a student answered in a sentence or less. Very rarely did a student answer a question with more than one sentence in German, and often the answer consisted of only one or two words.

General Findings

Student in this course indicated that they enjoy reading. Sixty percent of the students stated on the first questionnaire that they usually read for pleasure, with some adding that reading is relaxing and informative. Two students indicated, however, that reading was "boring" or "hard to follow." During an interview, Bart stated enthusiastically about the German short story, "[the *Kurzgeschichte* is] really neat easier than I thought it would be." His

reaction typifies the students' attitudes expressed to me in interviews.

In Questionnaire Two, I asked the students to list their favorite *Kurzgeschichte* treated in class, which resulted in an overall list of five works. Most students responded and added reasons why they like their particular favorite:

- 65% cited the entertainment value (including 26% citing humor).
- 12% cited the plot.
- 12% stated that the work was easy to comprehend.
- 6% cited the short length of the story.
- 3% stated that the stories improve language skills.

When asked on the first questionnaire how many books and other publications a student read per month, most students did not differentiate between newspapers, books, and magazines. However, 33 percent did mention magazines specifically, such as National Geographic and news magazines. In general, students reported that they did not read frequently; a full 60% read only 0-2 publications per month while only 7% read ten or more publications per month.

Visualization

Forty percent of the respondents linked their like or dislike of reading in English to their visualization of the text: either they claimed that they enjoyed imagining the people and places in the work, or they reported having difficulty visualizing the content. When students listed the kinds of material they liked to read, almost half stated fictional works (45%), one quarter preferred information-based works (26%), thirteen percent liked non-fiction or biographies, ten

percent preferred comics or "picture books," while one student each liked texts in a foreign language or read profession-related material.

Interestingly, students made further comments about visualizing material they read. Jim, who reads material in German, stated that "pictures help." Additionally, Scott, who likes comic books, stated that he "can see what is happening."

During one observation, students appeared disinterested during a lecture and question-and-answer session; they were looking at the instructor only irregularly. In fact, during this activity less than half of the class was looking at the instructor during this interaction. However, when the instructor drew a picture on the chalkboard of one of the characters in "Der Milchmann," immediately 100% of the students looked at the instructor.

During another class session, the instructor asked the students to draw a picture of a door described in the story "Der Stift." Again, students' interest increased, as noted by paralinguistic behaviors such as leaning in (a behavior associated with active listening that demonstrates interest based on the body posture of leaning toward the speaker with the upper torso while seated) and increased eye contact. Additionally, more students responded to the questions the instructor asked than did before the introduction of the visual aid. During the same session, the instructor acted out a part of the story, and again, students responded with a higher interest level, as evidenced by the same paralinguistic behaviors noted above. Paula commented that when the instructor brought in coats for the study of "Der hellgraue Frühjahrmantel," the activity helped her visualize what was happening in the work.

The instructor addressed the issue of visualization in the discussion of Kafka's "Vor dem Gesetz" by asking, "If this were a movie, would it be filmed in black and white?" By allowing students to visualize the story in terms of a medium with which they were familiar, the instructor prepared the students for an assignment given later during this class hour. Students were to draw, using stick figures, a scene from the story. Each cooperative learning group was assigned a different scene from the story. The students spoke with each other enthusiastically and were animated in their group discussion.

While treating Kurt Kusenberg's "Wer ist man?" the instructor presented a toy dog and asked a student to perform the encounter between the story's protagonist and his pet. All students watched the performance and after William, who is reserved and shy, demonstrated the encounter with remarkable enthusiasm, the students applauded spontaneously. Ralph added in the interview that he would like to prepare and perform skits when discussing each story.

Use of the Target Language

The students seemed uncomfortable speaking German in class, but provided differing reasons for their discomfort. Ralph asserted that vocabulary has not been stressed enough at earlier levels of German and, therefore, he feels that his range of vocabulary is too limited. Paula, however, asserted that she was not confident about her pronunciation. Interestingly, the instructor of the course reported that many students did not realize that the glossed words listed opposite the text in Der Weg zum Lesen were even related to the text to which they referred. When asked what was difficult about speaking German in

class, students gave a total of 33 reasons for their difficulty: 46% cited grammar-related concerns, including sentence word order; 24% cited embarrassment or anxiety; 18% cited vocabulary limitations; and only 9% cited pronunciation concerns.

In classroom observations it was evident that students were hesitant to speak in German. Students seemed to want to respond to questions in German, and shuffled through the text looking for an answer. When students responded to questions asked in German, they generally produced an answer of only a few words. At no time during the observations did a student elaborate on the answer beyond the minimal number of words required to answer the question. In fact, many open-ended questions that were asked in German went unanswered. In these cases, the instructor rephrased the question in German using a less complex construction. At some point in the cycle of rephrasing, the instructor limited the amount of information required for a student to respond, which seemed to set up a framework for the answer. The result was that several students answered at the same time, a phenomenon that I noted in field notes as the "choral response."

Consider the following rephrasing cycle during the discussion of "Der Milchmann":

Instructor: Wie schreibt sie [Frau Blum]?

Student: Schön.

Instructor: Schön. Gut! Eine gut lesbare Schrift, ja? und was bestellt sie?

Students: *[no response]*

Instructor: Was bestellt sie?

Students: *[no response]*

Instructor: Normalerweise?

[One student reads list from text.]

Instructor: Was wissen wir über den Milchmann? We know one fact. Er kommt . . .

Students [*approximately 10*]: um vier.

The interaction above illustrates the typical choral response. Some individual students can provide a one or two-word answer. However, when given the opportunity and adequate prompting, a relatively larger number of students responded. This phenomenon was observed repeatedly.

The choral response occurred during another class session, after students had unsuccessfully answered several questions or not responded at all. The instructor then asked for the translation of "bedroom" to which the students responded chorally, "Schlafzimmer."

Paula stated in her interview that, when discussing a story, she would like to be required to memorize certain sentences in the story. She related that this practice was used in her high-school classroom. Her comment shed more light on the nature of students' responses in the target language, specifically, that students will respond when they feel comfortable with the structure required for a correct response.

Consider how the instructor prompts students in the following classroom interactions in the discussion of "Das Brot" as she tries to get students to summarize the main points of the first paragraph in three sentences:

Instructor: Wir wollen den ersten Abschnitt in drei Sätzen zusammenfassen, drei Sätze. Jemand beginnt, wir wollen drei Sätze mit den Hauptideen. Ah . . . Wie würden Sie die Zusammenfassung beginnen?

Students: [*no response*]

Instructor: [*begins the summary*] Sie wachte auf, weil . . .

Students: [*no response*]

Instructor: Sie wachte auf, weil . . .

Students: [*no response*]

Instructor: Warum wachte sie auf?

Students: [*no response*]

Instructor: Wie würden Sie sagen, she heard something? . . . Sie

Instructor: [continued] wachte auf, weil sie etwas hörte. Was tat sie dann? Sie . . .

Students: [no response]

Instructor: Sie stand auf und . . . was tat sie dann?

Student: Die Küche?

Instructor: Ja, sie geht in die Küche und in der Küche war . . .

Student: Er.

This interaction typifies the structure of a question-and-answer session where the teacher asked questions of the class as a whole. In most cases, students did not respond until an appropriate structure had been set up for them, which they completed with only a few words as evidenced by this example for the discussion of "Der Stift":

Instructor: . . . und die Klasse denkt ja, jetzt haben wir kein . . .
was? Englisch, Deutsch, Mathematik?

Student: Englisch.

Instructor: Englisch. Sie wollten kein Englisch machen. Ah . . .
übrigens, wie alt waren diese Schüler?

[unclear comment by instructor]

Student: Fünfzehn?

Instructor: Fünfzehn, ja.

Again, the students responded with a single chunk of information and as was typically the case, the single chunk of information consisted of one or two words.

Structured Activities

Many activities involved group work when the class treated a *Kurzgeschichte*. Some groups contained members who were working together, while others seemed to let the work fall to one or two members, while the remaining members socialized. Eighty-four percent of the students wrote that they enjoy group work either "generally" or "sometimes." Twenty-one of the

29 elaborations cited possible reasons:

38% enjoyed the peer interaction.

29% liked helping others or being helped.

19% found group work "fun" or "a change."

14% stated they enjoyed using German in group activities.

During one group activity, the participants were required to draw a scene from a paragraph of "Vor dem Gesetz." The next class hour the students affixed their pictures to the wall and the class commented on each one. Paula stated about these activities that she especially liked small group work when the group had to present something to the class. When members of a small group had to discuss correct answers among themselves for one activity, students completed the task enthusiastically. Each group then had to present its answers on the board. Again, the students' behaviors indicated that they were more interested in this activity than in a lecture-oriented approach.

Perhaps the most striking activity involving students working in small groups occurred during a class session in which students were discussing a text they had heard on a cassette tape. Students were working jointly to complete a fill-in-the-blanks worksheet and continued in their small groups until two to three minutes after the bell ending class had rung. The students were so involved in an animated discussion about the work, e.g., arguing about specific word choices, laughing, etc., that they hardly recognized that the class had ended.

One further pattern emerged from the comments of students who do not like group work (16% of the class). Of the eight reasons listed: five related their dislike of group work to their peers, who were described as "shy," "stupid," "no

fun," etc; one found group work boring; one thought that group work needed more drill; one admitted that that he/she cannot think creatively.

Discussion and Conclusions

I formalized the patterns that emerged from the data into conclusions which I submitted to students for one final round of feedback. The patterns provided specific information about students' orientation to reading in general and specifically to reading the genre of the *Kurzgeschichte*. Bart's comment that the genre is "really neat," the fact that all but one student listed a favorite short story (most citing entertainment as their reason), and the enthusiasm I observed in the classroom for generally every work pointed to the first conclusion:

Students like the genre of the *Kurzgeschichte*.

In the final questionnaire, all students who responded agreed with this conclusion.

The fact that students like this genre is especially relevant in light of their reported reading habits. Since 80 percent of the students read less than four publications per month for pleasure, it stands to reason that students will be more motivated in the intermediate-level class if they enjoy the object of their study, i.e., the *Kurzgeschichte*.

The students were surprisingly specific about their difficulty with reading literature in general. Based on my observations of the increase in students' involvement when visual aids were used and the responses from students who linked their attitudes about reading with visualization, two conclusions echo

Jim's comment that "pictures help":

Students who prefer not to read literature do so primarily because of the lack of visual stimuli.

When a visual aid is presented in conjunction with the discussion of a *Kurzgeschichte*, students' interest and involvement in the task increase.

Eighty-three percent of the students agreed with each conclusion. Their comments indicated that the visual stimuli make the story clearer and more meaningful. Only two of the students disagreed. The instructor agreed in a follow-up interview that most students are visually oriented and commented, "[The students must] develop their ability to go from reading to developing an image in their mind[s]. . . . We have to work more on translating what they are reading into images in their mind[s]."

The students' ability to use German in class is a concern that they expressed in several interviews and questionnaires. They attributed their difficulty to a variety of reasons, and although most students agreed that they cannot speak more German in class because of their grammar limitations, I revised this part of the conclusion to better reflect the opinion of the entire class:

Students have differing perceptions of their own greatest difficulty in speaking German in class. The students do want to speak more German in class, however, and activities that enable them to do so effectively increase their level of involvement in the task.

Only one student disagreed with the latter part of this statement, but provided no reason why. Shaun agreed with the conclusion, adding that "each person needs a chance to respond."

As I analyzed several question-and-answer interactions in the three

transcripts presented earlier, further clarification emerged. The questions that successfully elicited a response from students were so highly structured that a one-word (or one-unit) answer was adequate. The transcripts presented earlier in this chapter illustrate this point with the answers *schön*, *um vier*, *er*, *die Küche*, and *fünfzehn*. Additionally, in response to the question about Frau Blum's dairy order, the student found a list in the text that was complete, and grammatically and structurally correct.

If the instructor prompted students with clues to the structure of the answer, students were more likely to respond in German. However, the prompting was not always successful:

Instructor: Sie wachte auf, weil . . .

Students: [no response]

Instructor: Sie wachte auf, weil . . .

Students: [no response]

After this fruitless prompting, the instructor answered her own question. The structural prompt here required students to create the latter part of a subordinate clause. The answer ". . . sie etwas hörte" would undoubtedly be difficult for an intermediate-level student to construct in conversation. Therefore, to enable intermediate students to answer questions in German, an instructor can provide prompts from which students can easily deduce the correct structure of a response.

Group work was probably one of the most effective, though controversial, activities I observed in the class. On the final questionnaire, Matthew was blunt: "I detest [small groups] categorically." The reasons that students who did not like group work gave (peers stupid, work boring, more drill needed) provide

further insight. Students seemed to be frustrated in small groups when the responsibility was not shared. Ralph's comment that group activities need more drill echoes the call for structure. Two conclusions have emerged:

Students like working in small groups, particularly when they are asked to produce something as a result of their work.

Small-group and class discussions with prescribed format increase students' level of engagement in the task. The prescribed format gives students a routine for working with a story and effective strategies for communicating what they have learned.

When students completed the final questionnaire, only 71% agreed with the statement that they liked working in small groups and one student commented that the work in small groups is not divided fairly. The instructor added that each group must somehow be held accountable for the work of each of the other groups. Otherwise each group would ignore the others.

All of the respondents agreed with the need for a prescribed format for activities and discussions. I would suggest that the "unfair" division as well as the complaints about peer personalities (shyness, alleged stupidity, etc.) could also be mitigated by a well-structured activity. Based also on the need for structural prompts in question-and-answer interactions, students seem to appreciate the limited scope of activities and questions, perhaps because they then can concentrate on helping each other with the difficult task of forming correct sentences in German, rather than being distracted by peers who do not participate in a group activity.

Summary

The classroom research has provided valuable insights into the nature of the intermediate-level German class engaged in the study of the

Kurzgeschichte. Students seem to be genuinely interested in applying their knowledge, albeit limited, of the German language to understanding these artistic creations. Although few activities in the class I observed dealt with genre-specific characteristics of the *Kurzgeschichte*, eighty-eight percent of the students confirmed on the final questionnaire that they wanted to discuss the "deeper" aspects of the works.

The guiding principles, then, that these intermediate students want instructors to keep in mind are, "Help us visualize the work and give us a lot of structure in activities and discussions." When an instructor designs activities for students to examine the literary aspects of a *Kurzgeschichte*, the activities that are structured on the basis of both genre theory and the students' own concerns can assist in the difficult first steps of examining authentic German literature. At the same time these activities can help build the bridge of transition between language and literary study.

Chapter V

Strategies for Teaching the *Kurzgeschichte*

Students in an intermediate-level German course find themselves in the unique and frustrating position of having a considerable amount of knowledge of the German language, but lacking the experience of extensive use of the language. These students gain experience at the intermediate level often through the study of literature. By teaching the *Kurzgeschichte*, the instructor can provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge of German, and at the same time introduce them to the systematic study of German literature.

For students who will continue German beyond the intermediate level, activities can be designed to assist in the transition between language and literary studies. In any case, the instructor can use literature to strike a "positive chord" (Stone 18), even in students who are in their final German course. Both goals can be achieved through the study of the *Kurzgeschichte*.

The instructor who attempts to achieve these dual goals by approaching the *Kurzgeschichte* as a work of art and not a conglomeration of sentences gives students the opportunity to appreciate the *Kurzgeschichte* as an art form. Approaching the genre as a work of art, in turn, means that the instructor assists students in enjoying the richness of this literature by leading them to examine the literary characteristics of it.

In this chapter I will suggest classroom activities derived from the specifics of genre theory and the insights gained through classroom-research presented earlier in this thesis. Most of the literary concepts will be taught inductively; for example, rather than expecting students to discuss a

Kurzgeschichte using the terms "Scheme A" (unfolding plot) or "Scheme B" (expanding plot), the exercises are designed to help the students recognize these plot structures in a *Kurzgeschichte*.

Prereading Phase

As the outline is to a chapter in a textbook, or an abstract is to an academic paper, so is the prereading phase to reading the *Kurzgeschichte*. Since a prereading phase is often needed to help students read texts in their native language, how much more helpful and critical it would be for students reading a foreign language text.

Depending upon the individual work, prereading exercises may involve vocabulary or grammatical concepts. If there are words in the work that the instructor judges will be unfamiliar to students (which is probable, since 18% of students in the intermediate class I observed listed vocabulary as their greatest difficulty with speaking German), the instructor designs strategies to introduce students to the vocabulary. Lists of vocabulary will probably not be helpful or meaningful to students since the students will not encounter these words on a list, but in the text of a *Kurzgeschichte* instead. Therefore, introducing the unfamiliar vocabulary in meaningful sentences will assist students in transferring their knowledge of these words to the forthcoming text. However, the instructor should avoid using actual sentences from the story beforehand to prevent students from focusing on these familiar sentences when reading, instead of on integrating information from the entire story. Again, a *Kurzgeschichte* is not a work written for the purpose of introducing vocabulary to students, and treating it as such could obscure the story's artistic value.

If a *Kurzgeschichte* contains difficult grammatical forms (46% of students noted that grammatical concerns were their greatest difficulty in speaking German), the instructor can present these concepts the same way as vocabulary. If a difficult grammatical form is confined to only one sentence, then it may be most efficient to teach the sentence as a chunk. This technique uses time more economically and allows the instructor to shift the focus sooner to the literary aspects of the work.

Presenting the Story

Once all prereading exercises are complete, the instructor presents the *Kurzgeschichte* to the students. The first goal of the presentation stage is to ensure that students have a surface-level understanding of the story. Since students can effectively use visual cues to increase their understanding of a *Kurzgeschichte*, visual stimuli are particularly important. The instructor may help students act out the plot, use puppets or models to illustrate what is happening in the story, draw several pictures on the chalkboard to demonstrate the plot, or even direct students to make an in-class video or movie of the work.

For example, with "Kurz vor Feierabend" by Günter de Bruyn, three students can stand up and perform the roles of "him," "her," and her colleague at the counter. Since the physical movement of the characters is minimal, the instructor does not find himself or herself trying to block out complicated character movements and change scenery. Instead, the instructor can concentrate on helping students understand the surface-level content of the text through seeing it performed.

The importance of guiding students in translating the printed word into

visual images should not be underestimated. The visualization process is a relatively quick method of ensuring comprehension (insofar as possible for any given student), thus enabling the instructor to shift the focus of instruction to the literary characteristics of the *Kurzgeschichte*. At the beginning of the course, students will probably need considerable help in transferring what they read to their imaginations. However, it should not be a goal at the intermediate level to make the students dependent on the instructor to develop their ability to "see" a story. Rather, the instructor should help the students at first, but gradually allow them to visualize a story independently. In upper-level literature courses, professors will not be able to act out novels or plays. Therefore, as the intermediate-level course progresses, the instructor can expect the student to begin to gain a surface-level understanding of the story independently so as to continue to bridge the gap to upper-level literature courses. Each individual instructor must decide for his or her own specific class how to move the students toward independence in this crucial reading skill.

If students are to see the *Kurzgeschichte* as a work of art eventually, it seems counterproductive for them to base their first impressions on just part of the work. One pitfall that the instructor can avoid is dividing the story for the purposes of having each member of the class or each group responsible for a different section, which might seem advisable in a class which uses cooperative-learning. By way of illustration, it is doubtful that an art instructor would present the portrait of the Mona Lisa by giving each cooperative-learning group a section of the painting. If necessary because of time constraints, the instructor might present the story over multiple class sessions, but doing so in

one class session is desirable because it allows the whole story to be seen as a unified artistic creation, instead of selected paragraphs.

After the instructor has helped students to understand the text at the surface level, the second and most important goal of the presentation stage is to help students to view the story as a complete artistic creation. Instructors may do so by encouraging students to give initial reactions to the story. The format of the reactions can be most effective when prescribed for the students, as indicated by the students' perceptions in the classroom-research portion of this study. Additionally, students can be allowed to use the same format to give their reactions to each successive *Kurzgeschichte* dealt with in the course. Specifically, they may simply write a short paragraph beginning with phrases such as *Meiner Meinung nach . . .*, or *Ich finde, daß . . .*. The use of this strategy serves three important purposes. First, the classroom observations indicate that the established framework for reactions will result in more students responding. Secondly, this process can lead students to differentiate between their own personal reaction to a literary work and the literary analysis of the work by separating the two activities at this early stage of instruction in literature. Finally, this strategy lends itself well to the concept of building a bridge between language and literary studies, since expressing a personal reaction can be part of the first phase of literary interpretation (as suggested by Merrifield 9). These "reaction" paragraphs may be turned in, discussed in class, debated, or combined as a group effort into a longer summary of reactions.

Considerations for Teaching the Literary Characteristics

As students move from surface-level understanding and personal reaction to the examination of literary characteristics, classroom research indicates that although they are interested in studying the "deeper" aspects of the work, they also want and need structure in classroom activities. Students complained that they did not like group work when the roles were ill-defined. Additionally, the instructor whom I observed stressed that interdependence between groups was a necessary part of using the cooperative learning method in class, because it keeps all the groups on task. Although it is not within the scope of this thesis to address the theory of cooperative learning, an instructor who chooses to use cooperative learning for studying the *Kurzgeschichte* can adapt the activities presented in this chapter to include group interdependence, as long as the work itself is viewed in its entirety.

The characteristics of the *Kurzgeschichte* described below were explained in full in Chapter Two. When teaching these qualities, an instructor can progress from the easiest to the most difficult. However, one way an instructor can develop structure in the study is to allow, even require, students to examine characteristics presented below in subsequent stories. By requiring this, the instructor develops a routine for studying the *Kurzgeschichte* and implements the prescribed format that students asserted they need in class activities. Additionally, students are required to transfer ways of looking at literature from one work to another, which should eventually help them to become autonomous readers.

Teaching Narrative Perspective

Students commonly have a problem understanding the role of the narrator when studying short stories (Lazar 76). To examine the narrative perspective of a *Kurzgeschichte*, intermediate students can write their own versions written from the standpoint of different characters in the work and then contrast the author's version with their own. If the work being presented has more than one character, students can rewrite the story from the perspective of a character who is not the narrator of the story. Obviously, with a third-person narrator, students may rewrite the story from the perspective of any character, even if the work contains only one character. These revisions may be shared with the class by individual students, combined in a group effort for presentation, or turned in as a written assignment. Cooperative-learning groups, for example, could be assigned different characters and the results of each group's work shared, leading to a discussion of the difference in narrative perspective.

One significant advantage of this strategy is that the text of the *Kurzgeschichte* itself provides a structure for the student. For example, when treating Peter Bichsel's "Das Kartenspiel," students can use the descriptions of the card game provided by the narrator to retell the story from the standpoint of Herr Kurt. Additionally, the instructor may choose to allow students to act out a story, portraying characters that do not appear in the story. For example, one student may play a parent or child of one of the protagonists. The goal here is not to present the story as it actually is. Instead students should be examining the role of the narrator in the work, by contrasting it with other conceivable perspectives of narration.

The result of teaching narrative perspective in this manner is that the student learns to see the influence a narrator has on the work, rather than simply being able to identify a first or third-person narrator. Again, by observing the narrator's influence, students are making the transition from the study of language to the study of literature. These activities enable them to do so with the language ability that they possess in the second year of instruction.

Beginning without Introduction

At first it seems odd to examine the *Kurzgeschichte* in terms of something it lacks, but beginning without an introduction of characters is one of the traits of this genre that distinguish it from other literary genres (Nayhauss 66). Novels and other works of fiction, in contrast, often tell the reader about the characters' background(s). The importance to the genre of the beginning without introduction need only be examined once by students. All German short stories share this characteristic; therefore, after the students have examined this aspect, they do not have to review it for every work.

Students could be asked to imagine and write an introduction to the story, which can be read to the class (for oral practice), turned in for homework (for written evaluation), or combined as a group effort (for students to discuss in German). The information will probably be derived from passages in the text that describe the character, a method which again gives the students assistance with structuring a "correct answer." If, however, the information is based purely on the student's imagination, this too is relevant. The genre of the *Kurzgeschichte* necessarily requires the reader to make assumptions about the characters.

Unfolding Versus Expanding Plot Structures

Students can easily identify each of the plot structures when the concepts are taught by contrasting two stories. The terms Scheme A and Scheme B will have little significance for most intermediate-level students (and probably the instructor or professor as well). Therefore, for intermediate students the terms "snapshot" and "movie" can be assigned to Scheme A (unfolding) and Scheme B (expanding) respectively, since the former are more easily understood. Students, working either independently or in groups, can draw a picture of the story being presented. By choosing the works carefully, the instructor can present two works in succession that illustrate these differences. Students can, for example, sketch the plot of "Der Milchmann" (Peter Bichsel) in one frame, as is the case for all unfolding *Kurzgeschichten*. A sketch of "Das verliehene Buch" (Hermann Harry Schmitz), however, requires more than one frame, since the plot expands. Thus, the distinct difference between these two structure types will become visually evident. At the same time, students have the advantage of a visual representation of the text, which has been shown to elevate their level of interest in the work. Furthermore, the students themselves provide the drawings, aiding their transition to upper-level courses where the ability to visualize (though not sketch) a literary work can be advantageous for the critical study of literature.

Handlungstyp and *Haltungstyp*

In a *Kurzgeschichte* classified as a *Handlungstyp*, the protagonist is being guided or affected by his or her surroundings (since the environment is

"acting"). A *Haltungstyp*, in contrast, contains a protagonist who is actively affecting his or her surroundings.

For a *Kurzgeschichte* with a passive protagonist, the students can design a visual representation of the various factors influencing or affecting the protagonist. This activity allows the student to visualize the character's passivity, especially when compared to a similar diagram of a work with an active protagonist.

If the protagonist is active, the instructor directs the students to draw a flow chart showing the different turns the character takes in the work. Another possibility is to have students simply list the choices that the protagonist makes. Both of these activities give the student a visual representation of the actions described in the text.

"Mittagspause" (Wolf Wondratschek) is an example of a *Handlungstyp*, and since this story is set in a sidewalk café, it lends itself well to having students draw the various factors affecting the protagonist. Nearby tables have other patrons, each leading the character to reflect on her own feelings and attitudes. "Der Augsburger Kreidekreis" (Bertolt Brecht) can be classified as a *Haltungstyp*. When the troops invade, the protagonist makes several decisions which could be diagramed on a flow chart.

When students examine these two stories in succession, they have a visual representation of the texts as they themselves have interpreted them. The result is that students are examining characteristics of the *Kurzgeschichte*, further developing their skills of visualizing a work, and continuing the transition from language to literary studies.

Open-closed and Closed-open Plot Structures

In Chapter Two I discussed three *Kurzgeschichte* types classified according to the beginning and the ending: open-closed, closed-open, and open-open. Since a relatively few open-open *Kurzgeschichten* seem to be printed in intermediate-level textbooks, it is unlikely that intermediate students will read many such works. Therefore, the following activities assume students will contrast only the remaining two types.

If the work has an open-closed structure, the instructor directs students to speculate on what happens after the end of the story. After reading "Wer ist man?" by Kurt Kusenbergr, for example, students can write or discuss what Herr Boras does during the week following the end of the story. The open-closed structure of a *Kurzgeschichte* has a conclusion that implies that the status quo will continue indefinitely.

If the work has a closed-open structure, students can also speculate on what happens after the events in the work. In "Das Kartenspiel," Herr Kurt will certainly die one day, but will the card players miss him? One might think so, but the final sentence casts doubt on this speculation. In a metaphorical sense, the closed-open structure often leaves a large question mark at the end of the work.

Certainly students can speculate as to the events before or after any *Kurzgeschichte*. The purpose of these exercises, however, is to allow students to examine the nature of these two plot schemes. This strategy has the advantage of examining genre characteristics (an aid in the transition to literary

study), but also allows students to use the structure and content of the story as a springboard for their own creative writing.

Conclusion

The use of the *Kurzgeschichte* at the intermediate level provides students the opportunity to apply their knowledge of the German language in a meaningful way. Commonly, the aesthetic qualities of the works are either de-emphasized or ignored, as a review of recent secondary literature suggests. Furthermore, some texts such as Der Weg zum Lesen provide questions at the end of each chapter, which only deal with plot content.

The practice of using the *Kurzgeschichte* while excluding a consideration of the genre's literary qualities is unnecessary and does not develop the students' appreciation of the artistic work. Such an approach also does not consider the role of the intermediate course as the beginning of a transition to the systematic study of literature for students who continue in German.

However, by combining genre theory with classroom-based research, this thesis has arrived at some specific techniques for approaching the *Kurzgeschichte* which allow the intermediate student to examine the artistic quality of works in the genre. The strategies provide both visual aid and structure, which the classroom research findings indicate are important to intermediate-level students, and enable students to examine literary characteristics that scholars identify as those of the genre.

Students are more likely to experience the *Kurzgeschichte* as a work of art if they are not compelled to treat it as a mere conglomeration of sentences, a

practice which obscures the proverbial forest by the trees. The approach to literature at the intermediate level can shift, then, away from the confines of vocabulary lists and isolated grammatical structures to transcend surface-level examinations of texts. With help, students can appreciate the aesthetic dimensions of literature much in the way Walt Whitman experiences the night skies:

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide,
and measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much
applause in the lecture room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars. (271)

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Statement of Compliance

The classroom research portion of this thesis was conducted in compliance with the policies established by The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Committee on Research Participation, the principles stated in "The Belmont Report," and standards of professional ethics in all research, development, and related activities involving human subjects under the auspices of The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

APPENDIX B

Questionnaires

Questionnaire One

Please complete the following questions. Please do not write your name on this survey. Pseudonym: Age: Year in school: Major:

Have you ever lived in a German speaking country? If so, for how long?

Do you usually read for pleasure? Why or why not?

If so, what kind of things do you like to read (fiction, non-fiction, mysteries, etc.)?

How many books and other publications do you read a month that are not for school?

Questionnaire Two

1. Do you enjoy the group work in class?
2. Why or why not?
3. What is difficult about speaking German in class?
4. So far, what has been your favorite short story in this class?
5. Why?

Questionnaire Three

As a result of the research I have done in this class, I have developed eight conclusions as to your preferences. These conclusions are drawn from an analysis of classroom observations, questionnaires, and individual interviews. Please comment on each one of the conclusions. Do you agree? Do you disagree? Why? Thank you.

1. Students who prefer not to read literature do so primarily because of the lack of visual stimulation.
2. Students like the genre of the *Kurzgeschichte*.
3. When a visual stimulus is presented in conjunction with the discussion of the *Kurzgeschichte*, students' interest and involvement in the task increase.
4. Students want to be able to speak more German in class. Activities that enable them to do so effectively increase student involvement in the task.
5. Students like working in small groups, particularly when they are asked to produce something as a result.
6. Students want to discuss the "deeper" aspects of the work and are frustrated by their lack of ability to do so in the target language.
7. Most students perceive their own grammar limitations as the reason that they cannot speak more German in class.
8. Small-group and class discussions with prescribed format increase students' level of engagement in the task. The prescribed format means that students know a routine about how to work with a story and have effective strategies for how to communicate what they have learned.

VITA

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