American Association of Teachers of German

2026 ANNUAL AWARDS

November 8, 2026



Featured Partner Organizations

The Goethe-Institut is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany, with over 150 locations worldwide. In the U.S., we support German teachers and students and facilitate German language courses for all levels.

Die Zentralstelle für das Auslandsschulwesen betreut mit knapp 100 Mitarbeitenden in Deutschland und mehr als 50 Fachberatungen für Deutsch als Fremdsprache sowie 15 Prozessbegleitungen für das Qualitätsmanagement an Standorten weltweit die deutsche schulische Arbeit im Ausland.

Located in a critically acclaimed landmark building in the heart of Manhattan, the Austrian Cultural Forum New York is Austria's leading cultural representation in the United States. The ACFNY presents highlights of Austrian culture in the US by organizing exhibitions and events in the fields of visual art, music, film, theater and literature. We promote a vibrant exchange between Austrian and American artists and international audiences, including by networking with acade-mic and art institutions throughout the United States.

Die Deutsche Botschaft Washington, die diplomatische Vertretung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika, beschäftigt sich mit allen Bereichen des bilateralen Verhältnisses, u.a. der Wissenschaftskooperation.

The OeAD, Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation, works on behalf of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research. For more than sixty years we have been advising, supporting and connecting people and institutions in education, science, research and culture with our future-oriented programmes. As an agency of the Republic of Austria the OeAD contributes to inclusive, equal and high-quality education. We work in Austria, Europe and internationally in priority countries. The OeAD is the national agency for the implementation of Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps.

The German Studies Association is the multi- and interdisciplinary association of scholars in German, Austrian, and Swiss history, literature, culture studies, political science, and economics. GSA holds an annual conference and publishes a scholarly journal, the German Studies Review. Members are generally professors and advanced students at universities and colleges in North America, although there are several hundred members in Europe and Asia.

The Pädagogischer Austauschdienst ("PAD") is the sole public organization in Germany working on behalf of the Federal States to promote international exchange and co-operation in the school sector. The PAD is a department of the Secretariat of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Edu-cation and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (*Kultusministerkonferenz*).

Our mission is to ensure that Americans have the opportunity to learn English and at least one other language.

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We envision a world where the language enterprise facilitates the free movement of people, information, and ideas; builds mutual understanding and acceptance of cultural and linguistic diversity; and pro-motes the personal development of the individual.

Featured Partner Organizations

Wayside Publishing is dedicated to delivering innovative and engaging world language programs for your evolving classroom. Wayside creates German programming and continually expands their library of comprehension-based™ readers. Wayside Publishing delivers the highest quality textbooks and readers, as well as our comprehensive digital learning platform, Learning Site©. Wayside provides personalized service and professional development to help you inspire, empower, and challenge your students as they work towards communicative and cultural competence. Wayside Publishing offers teachers the tools to foster students' language, intercultural, and critical thinking skills to prepare them for the future. Our programs are research-based and are a combination of innovative resources, cultural exploration, current language learning pedagogy, and engaging and effective technology.

Xperitas is a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization that has been providing students with educational language and cultural immersion experiences since 1972. Xperitas was the brainchild of Jim Phelan and Bob and Edie Green, who at that time were World Language teachers in Minneapolis, MN. Because of these very special teachers and the decades of shared experience of two nonprofit organizations, Intercultural Student Experiences (ISE) and Global Citizens Network (GCN), we are here today.

Als Pionier entwickelt und vertreibt der Hueber Verlag hier bereits seit 1955 die weltweit erfolgreichsten Lehrwerke. Ob Deutsch als Fremdsprache oder Zweitsprache, ob mit 3 oder mit 90 Jahren: das einzigartig umfassende Angebot bietet für alle Ansprüche durchdachte Materialien, die einfach mehr Freude machen.

We are committed to building the future of World Languages by supporting educators and leading a transformative shift in language education throughout the United States. Our dedication drives us to provide the highest quality language mate-rials in German, Spanish, French, and Italian, enabling educators to motivate and empower their students. Our content is specifically designed to foster authentic communicative competence and cultivate global citizens.
At Klett World Languages, our commitment lies in revolutionizing world language education in the United States, driven by our passion for educators and the positive transformation they bring. Together, let us build a future where language education thrives and opens doors to endless possibilities.

The Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX) scholarship is for motivated high school students who want to experience a culture and learn a language through a full immersion experience.

Avant, The Language Proficiency Company. From learning to assessment to certification. That's the power of Avant's Language Proficiency Platform™. Whether you're a student, teacher, administrator, professional, or employer, Avant's industry-leading tools are transforming language proficiency every step of the way.
Avant assess offers adaptive, standards-driven assessments that measure language proficiency with precision. At the core is STAMP, the only computer-adaptive online language assessment available in over 140 languages and approved for college credit by the American Council on Education (ACE). These tools empower educators and employers with meaningful insights into real-world communication skills.

Der Cornelsen Verlag ist einer der führenden Anbieter von Bildungsmedien im deutschsprachigen Raum. Mit hoher didak-tischer Kompetenz entwickeln wir Produkte für den Unterricht und das persönliche Lernen – gedruckt, digital und crossmedial. Unser Unternehmen steht für Lernerfolg und anerkannt hohe Qualität – und das seit über 75 Jahren: Im Jahr 1946 hat Franz Cornelsen den Verlag gegründet, der seit-dem die deutsche Bildungslandschaft maß-geblich prägt.

For more than 40 years, the Trust for Insuring Educators (TIE) has been helping teachers, administrators and support staff at all levels, from preschool to post-graduate, get the insurance protection their families need. AATG members are eligible for valuable group pricing, specialized coverages, and association discounts on insurance protection from leading carriers. Learn more at aatg.org

American Association of Teachers of German Awards Presentation

Presented By: Dr. Jennifer Redmann, President of AATG

Max Kade Prize for Best Article in *The German Quarterly*
Presented by Jen William & Muriel Cormican , Co-Editors of The German Quarterly



Graduate Student Paper Award in *The German Quarterly*
Presented by Jen William & Muriel Cormican , Co-Editors of The German Quarterly

Best Article in *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German*
Presented by Karin Baumgartner, Co-Editor of *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German*

Honorable Mention: Best Article in *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German*
Presented by Karin Baumgartner, Co-Editor of Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German

Friend of German - Community Award
Presented by Stephanie Zachar, Vice President of the AATG Board of Directors

FL-A-CH Award
Presented by Kristie Foell, Central Regional Representative to the AATG Board of Directors



Goethe-Institut/AATG Outstanding GAPP Coordinator Award
Presented by Ajkuna Hoppe, Executive Director of GAPP

Goethe-Institut/AATG Certificates of Merit
Presented by Stanislav Katanneck, Language Education Consultant at Goethe-Institut USA

German Embassy Teacher of Excellence Award
Presented by Jennifer Redmann, President of AATG



Center of Excellence - K-12
Presented by Christopher Francis, Southwest Regional Representative to the AATG Board of Directors

Center of Excellence - Post-Secondary
Presented by Bridget Levine-West, Northeast Regional Representative to AATG Board of Directors

Outstanding German Educator Award: Secondary
Presented by Beth Lillskau, AATG Awards Committee Member

Outstanding German Educator Award Post-Secondary Award
Presented by Bridget Levine-West, Northeast Regional Representative to AATG Board of Directors

Max Kade Prize for Best Article in *The German Quarterly*



Time(-space) Out of Joint: Franz Kafka's Disrupted Chronotopes

Dr. Asif Rahamim

Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin, Germany

This article introduces a new approach to spatial anomalies in Franz Kafka's work by examining them through Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the literary chronotope, situating it within the broader framework of Bakhtin's earlier ideas on answerability, responsibility, and the ethics of the act. Conceived as a triangular existential structure of possibility comprising time, space, and action, the expanded notion of the Bakhtinian chronotope serves as a key for remapping Kafka's oeuvre based on the distinct types of chronotopic disruptions it displays. These systematic disruptions erode the agency of Kafka's protagonists, leaving them unable to act properly, i.e., with genuine answerability at decisive moments. This, in turn, discloses a fundamental principle of Kafka's work: the irrevocable rupture between the spatiotemporal structures of possibility and the domain of human action.

Asif Rahamim's illuminating essay "Time(-space) Out of Joint: Franz Kafka's Disrupted Chronotopes" adduces an expanded notion of the Russian philosopher and literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope to take a fresh look at Franz Kafka's literary oeuvre. Through the lens of the expanded chronotope, conceived as a triangulated structure of possibility consisting of time, space, and action, he meticulously examines the well-known slipperiness of space and time in Kafka's narratives. Rather than attributing this nightmarish world to psychological projection, as critics have often done, Rahamim sees these evocations as a pessimistic take on being in modernity. As he demonstrates with cogent and convincing examples from Kafka's major and minor works, the various types of disruptions in the chronotope, which normally would constitute the realm of human possibility, foreclose human action in Kafka's stories. Given the distortions and disruptions in the time(-space) of the narrative chronotope, "self-reliant, ethical existence expressed through conscious action in a state of answerability" proves impossible. By invoking this second Bakhtinian concept of being in ongoing time —answerability—Rahamim is able to explain more particularly what turns out to be at risk in the disruptions of time, space, and action that characterize Kafka's worlds. Here "answerability," the taking of responsibility for one's actions in an existence characterized by chronological cause and effect, is not possible given ruptures between the spatiotemporal structures of possibility and the domain of human action.

Rahamim's powerful essay evidences command of two major twentieth-century thinkers and artists. To say something new and insightful about Kafka or for that matter the well-known Bakhtinian chronotope (and to work through the copious secondary material on both) presents a challenge in and of itself. Putting the critic-philosopher Bakhtin and the celebrated literary artist Kafka insightfully and productively into conversation, as Rahamim has done here, clarifies Kafka's experience of modernity.

The GERMAN QUARTERLY

The German Quarterly Best Graduate Student Paper Award



kör göze parmak. Embodiment, Sensation, and Phenomenology in Gegen die Wand (2004)

Dominick Philip
UC-Berkeley

The GERMAN QUARTERLY

The German Quarterly's 2026 award for the best paper written by a graduate student goes to Dominick Philip for the paper "*kör göze parmak*. Embodiment, Sensation, and Phenomenology in *Gegen die Wand* (2004)."
In his winning submission, Dominick engages critically and productively with important scholarship on Fatih Akin's acclaimed film *Gegen die Wand*, drawing astutely on theoretical perspectives of embodiment and phenomenology to support a close reading of the film within the broader context of the concept of "extreme cinema." His well-written and well-researched essay also draws intriguing connections between Akin's film and the poetry of Turkish German writer and activist Semra Ertan.
Many congratulations, Dominick, on your impressive paper, and we look forward to seeing the expanded version in a future issue of *The German Quarterly*!

Best Article Award for *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German*

"A Comparative Analysis of Gender-Just Language in First-Year German Textbooks"



Lindsay Preseau
Iowa State University

The article *"A Comparative Analysis of Gender-Just Language in First-Year German Textbooks"* by Lindsay Preseau offers a timely and carefully researched examination of gender-just language in eight widely used first-year German textbooks in the United States. The study analyzes both binary-inclusive forms, such as the co-naming of masculine and feminine forms, and language that explicitly represents non-binary identities, including the gender star and neopronouns. Praised for its strong theoretical grounding and thoughtful integration of language, culture, identity, and pedagogy, the article demonstrates that while most textbooks now incorporate some forms of gender-inclusive language, this inclusivity often remains binary or tokenistic. Reviewers particularly commended Preseau's ability to approach questions of identity and inclusion in ways that move beyond token representation, and recognized the article's relevance for both novice and experienced teachers. By connecting a systematic analysis of teaching materials with the concept of pedagogies of care, Preseau encourages instructors to consider not simply whether gender-just language appears in their textbooks, but how consistently and meaningfully it is integrated into language instruction. The article makes a significant contribution to current discussions of inclusive German-language pedagogy and provides educators with a valuable framework for critically evaluating the materials they bring into their classrooms. Its combination of rigorous analysis, theoretical grounding, and practical relevance made it the clear winner of this year's Best Article Award.

Runner-Up for the Best Article Award for *Die Unterrichtspraxis/ Teaching German*

"From Society to the Screen: Navigating Non-Binary Inclusion in the German-Language Classroom"



Zach Ramon Fitzpatrick, Charlie Johnson, and Susanne Rott
University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Illinois - Chicago

The article "From Society to the Screen: Navigating Non-Binary Inclusion in the German-Language Classroom" by Zach Ramon Fitzpatrick, Charlie Johnson, and Susanne Rott offers a timely and compelling examination of how German language instructors can meaningfully integrate gender-inclusive language (GIL) and non-binary identities into the curriculum. Drawing on usage-based language acquisition theory, the authors develop a socio-pragmatic framework that addresses the particular challenges posed by a language in which non-binary nouns and pronouns have not yet achieved broad acceptance or standardization. Reviewers praised the article as an excellent introduction to gender-inclusive language from multiple perspectives and particularly valued its argument that teaching GIL can foster students' broader sociolinguistic awareness. The article combines accessible background information on non-binary pronouns and other inclusive forms with concrete suggestions for classroom practice. Especially noteworthy is its use of recent programming from German public broadcasters to provide authentic examples of non-binary identities and contemporary language use, offering instructors timely materials for intermediate and advanced courses. Reviewers also commended the article's clear writing, extensive references, and usefulness to instructors seeking to address gender-inclusive language in thoughtful and informed ways. With its combination of theoretical grounding, practical application, and engagement with contemporary German-language media, the article makes an important contribution to inclusive language pedagogy and was an exceptionally strong runner-up for this year's Best Article Award.

Friend of German - Community Award



Dr. Monika Moyrer
US Program Director of Action Reconciliation Service for Peace (ARSP)

Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Dr. Monika Moyrer has been involved with German speakers and learners for a number of years, working with both the Germany Society of Pennsylvania (GSP) and local chapters of the AATG. She has been a champion of German language learning through not only her university positions, but more recently through her role as the Chairperson of the Language Committee of the German Society of Pennsylvania since 2021. With this committee she has worked to bring together educators of German at all levels, and enthusiastically contributed to the establishment of the GSP as a Goethe Institut testing center. She supports both learners and teachers, and has worked to integrate existing GSP programs like book club, conversation nights and film evenings with language classes to enrich the learning experience for students.
In addition to her full-time job working with Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste e.v. ('Action Reconciliation Service for Peace'), for which she mentors and accompanies young people from abroad as they deepen their commitment to social justice, Monika continues to work as an educator, teaching weekend adult German courses at the Immanuel German School in Philadelphia.
Those who nominated Monika all spoke about her continuing commitment to and enthusiasm for supporting German students and teachers of all ages, her servant leadership in her various roles over the years, and her tremendous patience in working towards improvement of programs and offerings.

FL-A-CH Award



Ursula Schöneich
German School

Newport Beach, California

As founder and principal of the German School in Newport Beach, California, Ursula Schöneich has opened doors to Austria and the other German-speaking countries for generations of learners. The school is WASC-accredited (Western Association for Schools and Colleges), aligned with the standards of Austrian and Swiss authorities, and integrated with US charter school funds, allowing maximum access for learners. She has established her school as the exclusive West Coast partner for the ÖSD (Österreichische Sprachdiplomprüfung), creating a direct, reliable bridge between Southern California and the educational ministries of central Europe, which allows her students, from high school through adult, to apply directly to Austrian universities and other opportunities in Europe. She has built online learning portals dedicated to Austria, and she remains active in the classroom, enabling her students, for example, to explore the Swiss system of direct democracy, Swiss dialects, Austrian cooking, the economic and geographic networks along the Danube, and the unique engineering and industrial contributions of Liechtenstein. This award is based on her remarkable record of promoting the FL-A-CH cultures at home and abroad and for her successful efforts to establish lasting structural access to the ÖSD testing system, embedding its evaluation structures into her school's curriculum.

Goethe-Institut/AATG Outstanding GAPP Coordinator Award



April Krempasky
Northampton Area High School

Northampton, Pennsylvania

April Krempasky began and has sustained a GAPP partnership with Freiherr-vom-Stein Europaschule in Gladenbach, Germany since 1996, demonstrating an extraordinary 30-year commitment to international exchange. Her dedication has provided hundreds of American and German students and their families with transformative experiences that build language skills, lifelong friendships, and intercultural understanding, while her commitment to affordability has helped ensure that financial circumstances do not prevent deserving students from participating. The excitement generated by GAPP, along with the longevity of the partnership, reflects April's passion for German language education and her belief in the power of exchange. Combined with her ever-evolving teaching style and fun German Club events, this enthusiasm resulted in Northampton Area School District's German program growing to the point that two additional German teachers were hired to meet student demand. April's influence extends well beyond her school: she advises local schools with their GAPP programs, regularly contributes her expertise to the Facebook GAPP teacher group, and has presented about her experiences at an Goethe Institut online workshop on ,,Schwierige Situationen". Colleagues, administration, students and families as well as countless newspaper articles all share the same impressions and appreciation of April's work with GAPP over the last 30 years: her deep conviction that the world is worth investing in, and how fostering a GAPP Exchange makes the good in the world visible.

Goethe-Institut / AATG Certificate of Merit



Dr. Sandra Alfers
Western Washington University

Bellingham, WA

For more than 30 years, Dr. Sandra Alfers has contributed to German education through innovative teaching, interdisciplinary scholarship, and dedicated professional leadership. At Western Washington University, she has developed learner-centered courses and creative instructional materials that connect German language study with contemporary media, authentic communication, and Holocaust Studies. Her curricular innovations include an online German literature textbook and a German-learning app, as well as courses that invite students to explore literature, memory, and history through collaborative and hands-on projects. Beyond the classroom, Sandra founded and directed the Ray Wolpow Institute for the Study of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Crimes Against Humanity, helping establish interdisciplinary minors and organize more than 30 conferences, workshops, and educational events. Her scholarship on Holocaust literature has resulted in two monographs on Else Dormitzer, along with numerous articles and international presentations. Through teaching, research, mentorship, and advocacy, Sandra has made significant contributions to German education in Washington State and beyond.

Goethe-Institut / AATG Certificate of Merit



Dr. Albrecht Classen
University of Arizona

Tucson, AZ

Dr. Albrecht Classen has devoted decades to teaching and promoting German language, literature, and culture at the University of Arizona and far beyond. Since beginning his career in 1986, he has taught students from the undergraduate level through doctoral study while continually exploring new teaching tools, methods, and approaches. His commitment to German education extends well beyond the university through nearly three decades of leadership in the Arizona AATG chapter, extensive collaboration with the Goethe-Institut, and professional development for educators. Albrecht has also made German accessible to students and communities across Arizona through school visits, workshops, lectures, and outreach programs, including voluntary after-school German classes at two Tucson elementary schools. Since 2004, he has led annual medieval study tours in Europe that connect students with the German-speaking world through immersive experiences. A prolific scholar and dedicated mentor, he brings teaching, research, service, and outreach together in ways that have strengthened German education across Arizona and internationally.

Goethe-Institut / AATG Certificate of Merit



Brooke Gardner
Glacier High School

Kalispell, MT

Building German education from the ground up, Brooke Gardner has created a thriving program at Glacier High School while expanding access to language learning throughout Montana. After launching the school's German program in 2024, she grew enrollment to more than 85 students across German 1-3 for the 2026–2027 school year. Brooke brings German language and culture to life through student travel, German Club, the Montana Seal of Biliteracy, cultural projects, and support for a German National Honor Society chapter. Her commitment to access extends statewide through her work as a German 2 lead teacher for the Montana Digital Academy, providing instruction to students who might otherwise have no opportunity to study German. She has also adapted the Somos Curriculum for German through The Comprehensible Classroom and serves on the writing team for Montana's 2026 State World Language Standards. Selected as a German Teacher Leader for the 2026–2027 Montana Teacher Residency Program, Brooke will mentor an aspiring educator while continuing her leadership in German education across the state.

Goethe-Institut / AATG Certificate of Merit



Dr. Margaret Gonglewski
George Washington University

Washington, DC

Through innovative teaching, interdisciplinary collaboration, and professional leadership, Dr. Margaret Gonglewski has expanded the possibilities of German language education at George Washington University and beyond. As Director of the German Language Program, she has developed courses and materials that connect German with international business, sustainability, and students' broader academic and professional interests. Her work includes courses such as "Germany in the Global Business Context" and "Green Germany: Sustainability Meister or Myth?", along with extensive curriculum development and experiential learning opportunities. Margaret's contributions extend well beyond her university through her work as lead editor of Global Business Languages, her contributions to the Treffpunkt Deutsch textbook, and her presentations and workshops at conferences nationwide and internationally. She has also served for more than a decade as Faculty Director of GW-CIBER's Business Languages Program and held leadership roles with AATG, ACTFL, and NECTFL. Through teaching, scholarship, mentorship, and professional service, Margaret has demonstrated the continuing relevance and reach of German education across disciplines and professions.

Goethe-Institut / AATG Certificate of Merit

Charlene Heinzman
Westfield Washington Schools

Westfield, IN

Charlene Heinzman has made a lasting impact on German language education through her innovative teaching, leadership, and commitment to expanding opportunities for students. Throughout her career, she has developed engaging, culture-centered curriculum that incorporates technology, communication, and 21st-century skills. Charlene significantly increased German enrollment, established an AP German course, chartered a chapter of the German National Honor Society, and initiated a GAPP exchange, giving students meaningful opportunities to connect with the German-speaking world. She has also organized and led student homestay exchanges to Germany and developed a middle school program that allows students to begin language study earlier. A dedicated leader beyond her classroom, Charlene has served as President and Immediate Past President of the Indiana AATG chapter, advocating for German teachers and programs across the state while providing professional development opportunities. Her numerous conference presentations and 2023 Teacher of the Year recognition further reflect her dedication to students, colleagues, and the continued growth of German education.

Goethe-Institut / AATG Certificate of Merit



Dr. Rebecca Linam
University of North Alabama

Florence, AL

Dr. Rebecca Linam has built a vibrant German program at the University of North Alabama by connecting language learning with community engagement, international opportunities, and students' professional goals. Her immersive, experiential approach encourages students not only to develop German proficiency but also to participate in language tables, study abroad, competitions, and scholarship opportunities. Her mentorship has helped students earn Fulbright Fellowships, Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange placements, and recognition in Goethe-Institut competitions. Rebecca has also expanded access to German beyond the university through SPARK for German, training her students to teach children and adults in libraries and community programs throughout the region. On campus, her annual Germany on Campus event brings together students, local schools, German businesses, and diplomatic representatives, highlighting the cultural and professional value of German. Her innovative Open Educational Resource textbooks have further increased access to German instruction, with her materials reaching thousands of learners worldwide. Through teaching, mentorship, outreach, and program building, Rebecca has strengthened German education throughout North Alabama and beyond.

Goethe-Institut / AATG Certificate of Merit

Katie Rombauer
Hazen High School

Renton, WA

Through creativity, enthusiasm, and a deep commitment to her students, Katie Rombauer has strengthened German language education across Washington State. Since beginning her teaching career in 2008, Katie has continually found new ways to bring German language and culture to life, from authentic cooking and baking projects to field trips, immersion experiences, and GAPP exchanges with schools in Germany. At Hazen High School, she has expanded opportunities for students through German Club, AP German, College in the High School coursework, and her leadership in hosting the 2025 Washington State German Student Convention for more than 250 students. Katie's influence extends well beyond her own classroom. As a leader in the Washington AATG chapter, she has served as webmaster, clock hour chair, membership chair, and secretary, while mentoring colleagues and helping organize statewide events. Her generosity in sharing ideas, resources, and encouragement has made her a valued colleague and a tireless advocate for German education.

Goethe-Institut / AATG Certificate of Merit



Dr. Marc Rathmann
Purdue University

West Lafayette, IN

Dr. Marc Rathmann has connected German language learning with students' academic and professional aspirations, particularly in the fields of business, science, and engineering for more than two decades. At Purdue University, he has played a key role in developing Languages for Specific Purposes, teaching courses ranging from Business German and German for International Trade to German for Science and Engineering. His innovative approach bridges language and STEM disciplines, helping students apply German to real-world contexts through current events, professional materials, and experiential learning opportunities such as visits to the Subaru manufacturing plant. Marc also trains students for the annual WiDaF Business German Exam and has presented extensively on German for the professions at conferences in the United States and abroad. Beyond Purdue, he serves as faculty advisor to the German Culture Club, supports German language education through professional service, and volunteers as a teacher and Vice President of the Indianapolis German Language School. His dedication to students, colleagues, and the broader German community exemplifies the reach of an outstanding educator.

Goethe-Institut / AATG Certificate of Merit



David Rosenbaum
Crown Point High School

Crown Point, IN

With a distinguished career spanning decades, David Rosenbaum has made a lasting impact on German language education through his dedication to teaching, professional leadership, and international exchange. At Crown Point High School, where he has taught since 1981, David has taught German through the AP and dual credit levels and has sponsored an annual German Partner School Exchange. At Marian High School, he built the AP German program, helping students demonstrate their proficiency while earning college credit, and has fostered a unique exchange partnership with Carlo-Schmid-Gymnasium in Tübingen, leading students to Germany. A longtime leader in world language education, David has served as a Foreign Language Department Chair and has presented workshops on art and classical music in German language instruction. His extensive international experience in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and the former East Germany continues to enrich his teaching, inspire his students, and strengthen the German language community.

Center of Excellence - K-12

German School Campus
Newport Beach, California

The German School Campus, based in Newport Beach, CA, is an exemplary language program in which remarkable growth has been tempered by an unwavering commitment to low student-faculty ratios to ensure the highest quality of instruction. Founded just a decade ago by Ursula Schöneich, the GSC has evolved from a local institution offering two introductory courses into a thriving regional language hub with courses ranging from kindergarten to adulthood.

The GSC's highly qualified faculty is committed to fostering an authentic, immersive language-learning environment that enables students to develop the ability to think directly in German rather than rely on mental translation. All classes are conducted entirely in German, providing consistent exposure to the language and encouraging students to communicate with increasing proficiency and confidence. Many of the instructors have strong personal connections to the DACHL cultural area and are able to bring relevant cultural content into the classroom, allowing students to develop meaningful connections to the region.

These methodologies have resulted in the GSCs students demonstrating exceptional performance on standardized assessments, achieving a 100% pass rate on the AAT National German Exam for Levels 3 and 4 and a 96.8% pass rate on Advanced Placement German examinations compared with the national average of 65%. Similarly, students achieved a 94.1% pass rate on ÖSD B1 and B2 examinations compared with the reported international average of around 71%.

The demonstrated success of GS's students in achieving real-world proficiency, backed by exceptional testing data, shows that the GSC has crafted a finely-tuned language program deserving recognition as an AATG Center of Excellence.

GERMAN SCHOOL campus

Center of Excellence - K-12

West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District
West Windsor Township, New Jersey

The West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District's German program exemplifies excellence in world language instruction. Guided by the ACTL proficiency guidelines and New Jersey Student Learning Standards, the program's student-centered teaching methodologies focus on meaningful communication through a high-intensity goal of 90% target-language use. Differentiated learning experiences, authentic resources, and proficiency-based assessments ensure that students receive engaging instruction and actionable feedback.

Student achievement and language proficiency provide clear evidence of the program's effectiveness and sustained academic strength. In 2026, 83% of the 69 students participating in Levels 2, 3, and 4 earned awards on the AATG National German Exam, including 20% who received Gold certificates, 29% Silver, and 20% Bronze. Across grade levels, the curriculum establishes ambitious proficiency targets and prepares students to pursue college credit, the New Jersey Seal of Biliteracy, and cultural opportunities such as studying in Germany.

The district's commitment to regional partnerships and community engagement makes German learning relevant, authentic, and connected to the wider world. Cultural celebrations and collaborative projects give students meaningful opportunities to explore German-speaking traditions and apply their language skills beyond the classroom. Partnerships and visits involving organizations such as Siemens further connect language learning with real-world topics including artificial intelligence and cybersecurity.

The program demonstrates sustainable growth through intentional curriculum development, ongoing professional collaboration, and a commitment to expanding opportunities for learners. For these many reasons, the West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District's German program deserves recognition as an AATG Center of Excellence.

Center of Excellence - Post-Secondary

Elon University
Elon, North Carolina

Elon University's German and German Studies program exemplifies what can emerge when innovative pedagogy, interdisciplinary collaboration, and a deeply student-centered approach to language education work in concert. Under the leadership of Professors Kristin Lange and Scott Windham, the program combines rigorous, research-informed teaching with a sustained commitment to students' intellectual and personal growth. Authentic German-language materials and critical cultural inquiry anchor a curriculum that invites students to engage meaningfully with language and culture at every stage of their learning. Within this framework, innovative combined-level courses encourage students to learn with and from one another, while flexible, feedback-rich assessments make room for individual progress within a shared learning community. This collaborative ethos extends across the university through an interdisciplinary German Studies advisory board that opens new pathways for research, study abroad, and academic and professional exploration. Just as importantly, the sense of community fostered in the classroom carries well beyond it. An award-winning German Club and lively cultural programming bring students together, while close faculty mentorship and enduring alumni relationships sustain those connections over time. As one alumnus recalls, "it was always in the German Studies department that I felt most at home." At Elon, this sense of belonging is not separate from the program's academic ambition and pedagogical excellence, but integral to both, making Elon University a richly deserving AATG German Center of Excellence.

Furman University
Greenville, South Carolina

Furman University's German Studies program offers a compelling vision of how the intellectual richness of the liberal arts can open meaningful opportunities for students long after they leave the classroom. Professors Ilka Rasch, Matthew Anderson, Emily Quattrone, and Anne Culberson have given this vision distinctive shape through "The German Advantage," an approach that connects rigorous language and cultural study with students' wider academic interests and professional aspirations. This philosophy informs a redesigned curricular trajectory that combines immersive, communication-centered instruction with explorations of German literature, film, history, and contemporary society. By integrating NACE career-readiness competencies into teaching and advising, faculty help students recognize and articulate the broader value of their education. This connection between intellectual inquiry and preparation for life beyond college takes concrete shape through faculty-led study abroad programs in Berlin and along the Rhine, as well as the program's leadership in organizing the Upstate Forum for European and American Business, where students engage directly with international industry leaders. Sustained, individualized mentorship brings these experiences together, helping students pursue internships, research opportunities, and fellowships that reflect their evolving interests and ambitions. As one graduate reflects, "The faculty invested in me not only as a student, but as a person and professional." For its dedication to students and its success in opening new paths through German Studies, we are delighted to recognize Furman University as an AATG German Center of Excellence.

Center of Excellence - Post-Secondary

University of Rhode Island
South Kingston, Rhode Island

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

The University of Rhode Island's German program has spent nearly four decades bringing language and cultural study into close partnership with other disciplines. Building on the International Engineering Program established in 1987, Professors Sigrid Berka, Shawna Iula, Damon Rarick, Claire Ross, and Niko Tracksdorf have advanced dual-degree pathways combining German with engineering, business, computer science, and international studies. Students pursue rigorous study of German language, literature, and culture alongside opportunities for immersive learning through a dedicated living-learning community, reciprocal exchanges with German universities, and extended internships abroad. The faculty's proficiency-oriented curriculum also reaches beyond URI through the widely adopted Impuls Deutsch textbook series, while its interdisciplinary degree model has inspired similar programs at other institutions. As one alumnus working in international engineering leadership reflects, "The impact of this training is both immediate and long-lasting." In naming the University of Rhode Island an AATG German Center of Excellence, we recognize a program whose influence extends well beyond its own campus, helping shape the future of German language education nationwide.

German Embassy Teacher of Excellence

Brian Jacob
Lindbergh High School

Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany Washington

St. Louis, Missouri

Brian Jacob has distinguished himself as an innovative educator, dedicated advocate, and enthusiastic leader in German language education. During his nine years at Lindbergh High School in St. Louis, Missouri, Brian has helped modernize the German curriculum while guiding students to exceptional academic achievements, including AP German pass rates of at least 88 percent over the past three years, numerous National German Exam medals, and prestigious AATG study abroad scholarships. His commitment to creating meaningful language learning experiences extends far beyond the classroom. As coordinator of Lindbergh's longstanding exchange program with the Geschwister Scholl Gymnasium in Stuttgart, Brian helps sustain a remarkable 35-year partnership that has fostered lasting friendships, cultural understanding, and international connections between generations of students and families.

Brian's leadership is equally evident in his efforts to strengthen and sustain German education for the future. He recently helped establish a chapter of Delta Epsilon Phi, the National German Honor Society, and has developed innovative partnerships with universities to demonstrate the value of continuing German studies beyond high school. His commitment to professional collaboration extends throughout Missouri, where he serves as conference chair for the Foreign Language Association of Missouri and actively works to strengthen connections among language educators. At a time when German programs face significant challenges, Brian's dedication to student opportunity, community engagement, and professional leadership offers an inspiring example of what committed educators can accomplish. AATG is pleased to recognize Brian Jacob for his exceptional contributions to German language education and his tireless efforts to build a stronger future for the profession.

German Embassy Teacher of Excellence

Will Funk-Heiser
Centennial High School

Embassy
of the Federal Republic of Germany
Washington

Ellicott City, Maryland

Will Funk-Heiser exemplifies the passion, creativity, and determination that sustain and strengthen German language education. As a proud alumnus of Centennial High School, Will returned to his alma mater to carry on the legacy of his own German teacher. Since taking over the program in 2022, he has transformed it from just two sections of German into a thriving program with five sections and student demand that continues to exceed available space. As the only German teacher in Howard County, Will has demonstrated extraordinary dedication to ensuring that students continue to have access to meaningful German language learning opportunities. His students consistently earn medals on the National German Exam, have received multiple nominations for AATG study abroad scholarships, and have benefited from enriching educational travel experiences throughout German-speaking Europe.

Beyond the classroom, Will has made German an integral part of the broader school community through imaginative programming and student engagement. From organizing German cultural celebrations and interviewing prominent German-speaking figures to introducing elementary school students to the language and teaching more than 120 students to make slime in German, his initiatives demonstrate that language learning can be both accessible and exciting. His commitment to fostering curiosity, building community, and advocating for the future of German education is truly inspiring. AATG is proud to recognize Will Funk-Heiser for his outstanding contributions to his students, his school, and the German teaching profession.

German Embassy Teacher of Excellence

Embassy
of the Federal Republic of Germany
Washington

Julia Danzeiser
Belton High School and Lake Belton High School

Belton, Texas

Julia Danzeiser brings remarkable creativity, cultural authenticity, and a deep commitment to inclusive education to her German classrooms at Belton High School and Lake Belton High School in Texas. Through thoughtful differentiation and engaging instructional practices, Julia ensures that students of all proficiency levels feel supported, challenged, and empowered to succeed. She draws upon her own German background to introduce students to the richness and diversity of German-speaking cultures, moving beyond familiar stereotypes to encourage deeper cultural understanding. Whether incorporating music, exploring contemporary German society, or connecting language learning to students' personal interests, Julia creates meaningful opportunities for her students to develop both linguistic confidence and intercultural awareness.

Julia's innovative approach extends well beyond traditional classroom instruction. She has revitalized the German Club, welcoming students regardless of their prior language experience, and introduced creative projects ranging from traditional Sankt Martin lanterns and Sütterlin calligraphy to student-designed activities and interactive storytelling. By inviting students to help shape their own learning experiences, she fosters a sense of ownership, belonging, and enthusiasm for the German language. Her dedication to connecting families, students, and the broader community reflects her belief that language education opens doors to meaningful cultural exchange. AATG is delighted to honor Julia Danzeiser for her creativity, dedication, and outstanding commitment to making German language education engaging and accessible to all.



AATG Outstanding German Educator Secondary

Katrina S. Bauerlein

Mahopac Middle School and High School, Mahopac, New York

Katrina S. Bauerlein has spent more than two decades inspiring students and transforming German language education at Mahopac Middle School and High School in Mahopac, New York. Since 2001, she has built a thriving German program grounded not only in academic excellence, but in connection, curiosity, and a deep belief in every student's potential.

Katrina's greatest gift is her ability to make students feel seen, valued, and capable. Through her warmth, encouragement, and individualized mentorship, she has helped countless young people find their confidence and discover opportunities they never imagined possible. She has created meaningful cultural experiences through student exchanges and hosting programs and has guided students toward opportunities such as CBYX and the Goethe-Institut's Study Bridge program, among others. Through her thriving German Club and National Honor Society, Katrina has also fostered leadership, service, and community.

Her influence extends far beyond Mahopac. A respected leader in German education, Katrina has contributed to AP and National German Exam development, mentored fellow educators, supported professional development, and advocated for the future of German programs. Through her work with the AATG and in New York State, she has strengthened both the profession and the community of educators who share her passion.

Above all, Katrina's legacy is found in her students. She has taught them a language, but she has given them so much more: confidence, courage, cultural understanding, and the belief that they can make a difference in the world. Her extraordinary dedication to her students and her profession has touched generations of lives and will continue to inspire educators and students for years to come.



AATG Outstanding German Educator
Post- Secondary

Bettina Brandt

The Pennsylvania State University, State College, Pennsylvania

The AATG is delighted to honor Bettina Brandt, Teaching Professor of German and Jewish Studies at Pennsylvania State University, with the 2026 Outstanding German Educator Award, Postsecondary. Across more than four decades of collegiate-level teaching, Bettina has combined wide-ranging scholarly expertise with a deep commitment to students' intellectual and personal growth. Her teaching encompasses German language and business communication, literary history, Jewish Studies, migration, and multilingualism. Connecting these varied courses is her attentiveness to individual learners and her conviction that students thrive when encouraged to think independently, engage critically, and develop confidence in their own intellectual abilities.

Bettina's approach to teaching reflects a thoughtful balance of scholarly depth, pedagogical creativity, and responsiveness to students' needs. Whether introducing intermediate learners to complex political and economic questions in Business German or guiding graduate students through challenging literary and theoretical texts, she creates opportunities for meaningful participation and inquiry. Classroom observations and student testimonials describe an instructor who combines carefully structured activities with lively discussion, humor, and genuine intellectual openness. Her students engage with German-language news, explore literary works through performance, and undertake creative projects ranging from photographic inquiries to collaborative podcasts. Throughout, Bettina encourages students to approach unfamiliar ideas with curiosity and to take their own developing interpretations seriously.

Particularly noteworthy is the care Bettina devotes to students' development as writers, scholars, and emerging professionals. Her detailed feedback challenges students to clarify their arguments, refine their prose, and find their own academic voices. As former doctoral student and now fellow German educator Juliane Schicker observes, this attention to student writing represents "a rare form of academic respect," recognizing students as developing intellectuals capable of meeting rigorous standards. Such expectations are accompanied by an equally strong commitment to creating a welcoming and supportive learning environment. Her mentorship frequently extends well beyond graduation, encompassing research collaborations, publication projects, and professional guidance.

Danke!

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