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Innovative Methods and Technologies of Learning in German Universities

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Annotation:

In Germany, educational curricula are set at the state-level, similar to the US and Canada. The German Schools Abroad in North America follow the German curriculum from the state of Thuringa, known for its high educational standards

Keywords: Flip the Classroom, personalized Learning, Project-Based Learning (PBL), Inquiry-Based Learning, Active Learning, Feedback, Blended Learning, Peer Teaching, Ask Open-Ended Questions, Jigsaws

The German educational model places emphasis on developing independence in children, encourages critical thinking, supports children taking ownership for their learning process, and stresses the development of creative problem-solving skills. Another unique feature of German Schools is that students tend to stay in the same groups as they move through grades. A group of students in a class will likely be together in the following years. This creates a community much like one experiences as an adult - and requires learning how to support and encourage each other, how to deal with differences between individuals, and establishes a strong bond that carries through the years at school and beyond. This creates a global network of well-connected alumni. Classes are balanced with regards to language, social behavior, achievement, and gender. As we often have a more transient community than a typical US or Canadian school, we aim to balance the classrooms as students come and go.

Innovative teaching strategies don't always mean introducing the latest and greatest technology into the classroom. Instead, innovative teaching is the process of proactively introducing new teaching strategies and methods into the classroom. The purpose of introducing these new teaching strategies and methods is to improve academic outcomes and address real problems to promote equitable learning. In many ways, applying innovative teaching strategies to the classroom is a tacit understanding that our teaching methods can be improved. It accepts the need to grow and develop, which is exactly what we ask of our students. What better way to lead than by example?

So, innovative teaching strategies start with a growth mindset. We identify room for improvement. We invest our time in researching and thinking of better strategies to teach our students. We create something new or adapt existing methods. We take risks. We may fail. We try again. We iterate and by doing so establish a culture of innovation and creativity in the classroom that inspires our students to do the same.

10 Innovative Teaching Strategies for Better Student Engagement Flip the Classroom

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In a flipped classroom students review lecture material at home and work on projects and assignments in the classroom.

Personalized Learning

Personalized learning adapts what, when, and how we are teaching each student. Instead of selecting a singular method or strategy to teach the whole class, teachers adapt to the strengths of each student to help them succeed.

Project-Based Learning (PBL)

Project-based learning is an effective method that helps students drive their own learning journey. In a PBL exercise, students identify a real-world problem then develop a solution. Project-based learning relies on developing key skill sets such as research, critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration.

Inquiry-Based Learning

Inquiry-based learning develops thinking and problem-solving skills. Students then research these topics individually or in groups to formulate their answers.

Jigsaws

Jigsaws are another active learning method. Most importantly, jigsaws introduce the opportunity for students to teach other students. And, as Seneca said, "While we teach, we learn." Explaining something to someone is often considered the best way to truly understand it (the protégé effect).

Ask Open-Ended Questions

Students, especially successful students, may rely too heavily on textbook answers. They may develop over time the tendency to think there are only right and wrong answers.

Peer Teaching

As we mentioned when discussing jigsaws, students exhibit mastery when they explain or teach others. Have students choose an area of interest within the scope of the subject being taught. With peer teaching, students learn skills such as independent study, presentation skills, and confidence.

Blended Learning

Blended learning combines physical and online learning experiences that give students more control over the time, place, path, and pace of instruction.

Feedback is incredibly important. Students need to learn how to offer constructive feedback as well as accept feedback.

Active Learning

Many of the innovative learning strategies we discussed are active learning strategies. Active learning methods encourage students to discuss, contribute, participate, investigate, and create. Active learning challenges students by questioning them, requiring problem-solving and critical thinking. Most importantly, active learning engages students and requires them to be active in the classroom. Students that participate in their learning are more likely to succeed in your class.

The quality of German education is world-renowned for a reason. It's wellorganized and designed to be highly accessible to all students allowing them to continue studying up to the university level regardless of a family's finances. All German states offer the same school systems and education system.

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