German Fairy Tales and Immediate Feedback Assessment Technique (IF-AT)
CETL Capstone Project
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Two concerns in teaching German literature are whether students have completed the reading assignment and their comprehension of the foreign language text. The Immediate Feedback Assessment Technique (IF-AT) is a tool that I find encourages reading and aids comprehension. I used this tool during the Spring 2007 German literature course's four-week phase on German fairy tales. I applied this assessment technique to the Brothers Grimm versions of Cinderella, Rumpelstilzchen, Hansel and Gretel, and the Frog Prince. Students answered content questions, made sentence completions, and matched quotes with story characters.

At the beginning of the lesson, I gave each student a handout with 12-15 multiple choice questions about the fairy tale content. They marked their choice (A, B, C or D) on the paper. Then the students formed groups of 3-4 students and each group received an IF-AT form with gold scratch-off rectangles. One of the group read the multiple-choice question aloud to the group. The students then discussed their answer choices and agreed on one. One student scratched off the covering of the answer (A, B, C or D). If the answer was correct, a star or symbol appeared. The group received full credit (3 points). If the group selected an incorrect answer (empty triangle), the group discussed the remaining options and tried again. If the second choice was correct, a star appeared and the group earned partial credit (2 points). If incorrect, the group tried again and if the third choice was correct, earned partial credit (1 point). If unsuccessful, the group earned no credit (0 points) for that question. The group then continued to the next multiple choice question. When finished, they totaled their score.

Because of the group effort, the groups earned full credit for most questions. A healthy competitive spirit arose between the groups, e.g. bragging about their final scores to each other. This motivated students to complete the IFAT correctly. I believe it also motivated students to come prepared for class, having completed the assigned reading. In their discussion, students learned from each other and were guided to the correct answer. This aided their comprehension of the foreign language text. Another feature of the IF-AT is that the students have fun!

While I have noted specific benefits for the foreign language classroom, the IF-AT can benefit students in many settings. To see a list of these as outlined by The University of Delaware Center for Teaching Effectiveness, go to:
http://cte.udel.edu/docs/ifatinstruct.doc

IFAT forms and answer keys are available in MSU's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning office.