

JÖRG ROCHE and MARK JOEL WEBBER. Für- und Wider-Sprüche. Ein integriertes Text-Buch für Colleges und Universitäten. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995. 408 pp. ISBN 0-300- 05769-5. ca. \$45.00.

The introduction to this text states, "das vorliegende Buch ist in vieler Hinsicht ungewöhnlich," and indeed it is! Aimed at upper level courses, this book is a refreshing and provocative combination of recent and often controversial texts with good solid language practice and grammar exercises. This book has something for everyone. The authors have

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divided the textbook into five major *Themenbereiche*: "*Stereophon-Stereotyp*," "*Identitätsfindung und Interkulturalität*," "*Mit Sprache spielen*," "*Gewalt und Widerstand*" and "*Zur Aktualität der Vergangenheit*." Each topic area encompasses a cornucopia of materials in the form of articles, letters, songs, cartoons, tourist brochures and government forms, to name just a few examples. I found the selection to be excellent and intellectually stimulating. Often, when I assigned a text, I found that the majority of the students had already read it. This happened frequently in the chapter on terrorism, for example, where students all read ahead out of genuine interest, rather than because they had been told to do so.

The interesting choice of topics (although the first two topic areas - "*Stereophon-Stereotyp*" and "*Identitätsfindung und Interkulturalität*" could perhaps be combined into one area and a new topic introduced)

led to lively classroom discussions in which both the weaker and stronger students were able to participate. Many of the discussion topics in the book lend themselves easily to work in small groups in which the students can help each other, which is ideal in today's overcrowded language classroom. Again, due to the contemporary nature of the subject matter, students invariably had opinions which they were anxious to share while the structure of the book enabled them to express themselves with increasing accuracy and impact. This is perhaps the main appeal of this book - its ability to combine a variety of texts, which range from modern-day graffiti to Goebbel's *Sportpalastrede*, with exercises which improve both the linguistic and analytical skills of the students, that makes it an excellent choice for any third-

Training in learning and communication strategies

or fourth-year course. The book introduces four strategies which are essential for students trying to bridge that gaping chasm between learning the rules of a language and communicating effectively. They are, in the order in which they are presented, *Lesestrategien*, *Argumentationsstrategien*, *Schreibstrategien*, and *Hörstrategien*.

These sections are invaluable as they help smooth out the "push-me-pull-you" nature of so many German classes - namely the split between students with native background and yet no critical linguistic tools, and students who have worked their way up from the 100 level but still have no real "feel" for register and tone. One section, for example, provides the linguistic tools required to state and then reformulate arguments, express opposition to other opinions, and then ultimately reach a compromise. These sections were always extremely popular with students and greatly improved their ability to communicate in an effective and lively manner.

The margins of the book are filled with tips on ways to approach certain exercises or texts, as

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well as recommendations for additional sources such as videos, news broadcasts, etc. and suggestions for homework assignments and group activities. There is also a cassette to accompany the text which includes songs, speeches, and radio plays.

I feel that the attraction of this book lies in its ability to combine a wide variety of stimulating texts which catch the students' interest with detailed sections which greatly improve the communicative abilities of the upper-level student. It is both effective and interesting to use and creates a wonderfully stimulating learning environment. In short - this book is a pleasurable learning experience for both the student and the instructor.

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[[Zurück](#) zur [Leitseite](#) dieser Nummer im Archiv]