

Ann Ackerman participates in Goethe Institut's Transatlantic Outreach Program

Dr. Ann Ackerman, Associate Professor of Education, was one of 80 social studies educators selected from several hundred applicants to travel to Germany between June 9 and August 5, 2006. As part of the Transatlantic Outreach Program (TOP), Dr. Ackerman visited Erfurt, Stralsund Island, Berlin, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Heidelberg and more, exploring Germany through sight, sound, touch, and taste. Activities included Q&A sessions with German curriculum developers, authors, and social studies teachers, a visit to a German high school, and excursions to an array of museums and examples of modern German industry and culture. Ackerman and the 17 other members of her group also met with German government officials as well as officers of the Deutsche Bank Foundation and the Robert A. Bosch Foundation.

Ackerman's group of study/travel tour participants had the opportunity to greet U.S. President George W. Bush and German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Stralsund, Germany on July 13. This year's TOP participants were also among the millions who enjoyed the World Cup soccer enthusiasm from within the host country, watching final matches on municipal screens with thousands of German residents.

Ackerman said that one of the trip's highlights for her was the opportunity to "meet with educators in both 'old' East and West Germany and learn how their different approaches to education are being reconciled and how they are meeting the demands of an education in the new global society of the 21st Century."

The Transatlantic Outreach Program was established in 2002 to provide American and Canadian Social Studies educators with information about modern Germany. TOP produces four textbooks, sponsors workshops throughout both countries at the district, state, regional, and national levels, and sends Social Studies educators to Germany every summer on two-week-long, all-expenses-paid study/travel tours. The goal is to create "multipliers" who broaden and internationalize their curriculum using modern Germany as a contemporary case study.

The Transatlantic Outreach Program is a public/private partnership; partners include the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Goethe-Institut, Deutsche Bank AG, and the Robert Bosch Stiftung. For more information on the TOP program, visit www.goethe.de/top.