



# **GASping for Air: Teaching in a Post-Covid World**

## **27 September**

### **14:30-16:00**

- **Geoff Tranter (TU Dortmund)**
- **Basic Principles and Ideas for Course Design and Teaching at C2 Level**

This workshop will start with a brief discussion of basic questions such as: What does C2 proficiency actually mean in terms of language and communication skills? Has C2 anything to do with the concept of 'native speaker'? and Who actually needs C2? before going on to present a planning and teaching strategy that has evolved during the ten years that I have been running C2 courses at the TU Dortmund Languages Centre. Colleagues will be very welcome to contribute to the discussion with their own experience and ideas.

The focus of the session will then be on the specific features of C2 proficiency that need to be taken into consideration when deciding on the kind of topics, activities and assignments that are necessary to enable students to progress to this advanced level. The intended takeaway will be a blueprint for designing a fifteen-week semester course.

- **Charles Ledbetter (Universität Tübingen)**
- **Roundtable Discussion: Social Media, Sprachpraxis Pedagogy, and Grassroots Advocacy**

The ongoing pandemic has created challenges for Sprachpraxis pedagogy due to continuing concerns for safety both within the lecture hall, where there is an elevated risk for SARS-CoV-2 transmission, and beyond the classroom where post-COVID conditions are negatively impacting the health and intellectual capital of the higher education sector, and wider society generally. Increasingly, social media is providing opportunities for Sprachpraxis professionals who would like to improve the situation to find community, support, and opportunities to use their pedagogical skills for grassroots advocacy.

In this workshop, I would like to first discuss my experiences with Protect the Heart of the Arts, a grassroots COVID safety campaign blending critical analysis of theatre and screen media with public health communication. The campaign partners Sprachpraxis professionals, COVID safety advocates, artists, and fans to raise awareness of rising cases of Long COVID in the performing arts community. For example, in 'Operation West End' the campaign used close readings of *Macbeth* to connect the COVID-19 pandemic with plagues in Shakespeare's time, and for 'I'm with Nye!' used Tim Price's Aneurin Bevan play *Nye* to connect public health with the formation of the welfare state.

This workshop invites any Sprachpraxis professionals who engage in COVID safe social media spaces –or are interested in them – to discuss possibilities for how Sprachpraxis pedagogy could contribute to wider grassroots COVID safety advocacy.



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### **16:30-18:00**

- **Jolene Mathieson (Universität Leipzig)**
- **Roundtable Discussion: Prospects of Researching and Publishing in English Sprachpraxis**

The field of English Sprachpraxis, which emphasizes practical language use and proficiency, does not tend to be a field with a significant research output. This roundtable discussion aims to explore opportunities for scholarly research and publication in this discipline, with a view to publishing a volume of collected essays by a relevant academic publisher such as De Gruyter or Routledge. The primary objectives of this roundtable discussion are thus 1) to identify potential researchers interested in publishing, 2) to outline themes and topics which could or should be addressed in our research, 3) to draft a list of relevant publishers, and 4) to create a time frame for milestones and deadlines. Due to a substantial lacuna in the literature, a collected volume could address any number of topics, including 1) the history of the field in Germany, e.g., its origins and transformations over time, 2) current trends, challenges, and opportunities in English Sprachpraxis, e.g., the impact of digital media and AI on teaching and acquiring practical language skills; 3) best practices and teaching methodologies; 4) the design of specific lesson plans for the various branches of Sprachpraxis, e.g., pronunciation, translation, composition, etc.; and 5) how inclusion and diversity impact language acquisition in an era of global mobility and mass immigration. This volume could potentially employ a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data as well as a number of methodologies from the fields of history, TEFL, literary and cultural studies, etc. By exploring some of these topics, our research, and especially publishing this research, will advance scholarly understanding as well as offer practical applications, which in turn, would reinforce and make more visible the critical role English Sprachpraxis plays in German and Austrian universities.

- **Clare Maas (Universität Trier)**
- **Making Materials for EAP Vocabulary Teaching**

Research into vocabulary learning shows that “knowing” words comes from suitably selected, context-embedded vocabulary being deliberately engaged with multiple times. These factors help structure my talk.

I'll first summarise information about a vocabulary item that needs to be “known” in the categories form, meaning and use. I'll then briefly discuss important aspects and useful tools when selecting both suitable vocabulary to teach (e.g. students' level or specialisms, words' register, use of corpora) and appropriate contexts of exposure (e.g. authentic articles). This theoretical input is based on readings of research, illustrated with my own concrete EAP examples.

In the second half of my talk, I'll give practical ideas and tips for promoting repeated, deliberate engagement with vocabulary, particularly in university settings. These demonstrate what makes for effective learning activities and input/practice materials for lessons or self-study, and will be grouped into helpful categories using Bloom's taxonomy (e.g. activities for understanding, applying/analysing, production). I'll share adaptable examples of self-created materials and activities found to be effective in my EAP teaching, such as multiple-choice, information gaps or paraphrasing – with twists to extend the 'standard' activities typically found in (EAP) coursebooks.

My talk will last around 40 minutes, and include discussion prompts for participants to encourage more sharing of ideas and input for the rest of the session.

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- **Linda Wright (Universität Osnabrück) and Kenda Fiddler (Universität Bonn)**
- **Securing our own Masks First: Creative Expression in Turbulent Times**

Feedback is a primary source of motivation. As university instructors, we give much of ourselves providing it. Due to our thus sometimes overwhelming workloads coupled with day-to-day pressures and compounded by the hurdles of foreign status, our own creative projects often fall to the wayside.

To keep our own projects moving, we too need community that provides the structure, inspiration, and resonance. One example of such community is 24 Hours on The Artist's Way (<http://24hoursontaw.de/>), a series of twelve monthly, inter-university meetings where college-level English instructors gather online for generative writing and feedback sessions.

Another initiative is Area 41: The Anglosphere (<https://www.area41theanglosphere.de/>), an intra-department literary magazine for publishing and celebrating the creative work of both students and faculty.

In this round table, we will share our experiences with these initiatives. After a brief presentation we invite a discussion of (1) further ideas for community building across the GASP network and (2) how fostering our creative selves enhances our teaching. All participants will then take a deep breath and use the time left to tell each other about our individual creative projects.



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### **09:00–10:30**

- **Dimitros Kapnas, Silvia Hansen-Schirra, and Athanasios Breskas (Universität Mainz)**
- **AI in School: The Influence of Automatic Text Generation and Machine Translation on Language Comprehension and Translation Performance**

This study adapts Translation Process Research (TPR) to explore how pupils use conventional translation tools and AI, like ChatGPT, in foreign language classes. Conducted at Rudi-Stephan-Gymnasium Worms with 13 pupils, the study utilized Inputlog to analyze the impact of these tools on text comprehension and translation. Participants completed C2-level English comprehension and German-to-English translation tasks under two conditions: using conventional tools (dictionaries, search engines, machine translation etc.) and ChatGPT only.

Results showed that using ChatGPT led to more correct answers in comprehension tasks but included more extraneous information. In translation tasks, ChatGPT users made fewer mistakes, though terminology issues persisted. Tasks were completed faster with ChatGPT, with increased typing indicating higher interactivity. Effective interaction with ChatGPT, particularly in prompting strategies, significantly influenced output quality. The study emphasizes the necessity of strong language and computer skills for evaluating AI outputs and achieving high-quality translations. It highlights that while AI tools like ChatGPT can enhance efficiency and interactivity, they do not replace the need for foundational language skills.

- **Summer West (Universität Kassel)**
- **Neurodivergent Learning Differences: Including Language Learners with ADHD, Autism, and Dyslexia**

Teaching and accommodating neurodivergent learners with ADHD, autism and dyslexia is a challenge that leaves many teachers unsupported in their attempts to include these learners into a comprehensive pedagogical or andragogical framework. A significant barrier to improved inclusion is that neurodivergence, also referenced as neurodiversity, does not manifest in ways which would allow teachers to recognize specific challenges. In high performance situations, learners can employ certain verbal and nonverbal behaviors to successfully mask the learning and interactional difficulties they experience, helping them to offset shame associated with negative feedback from teachers and/or peers. Another significant barrier is the stigma associated with learning differences, particularly with respect to reading, which can perpetuate a deep sense of shame for language learners. As a diversity and inclusion teacher trainer, I aim to address numerous misunderstandings of neurodivergence that persist among educators and propose practical solutions for barrier-free access to language learning that benefits all learners, regardless of their neurotype. Program adaptability is vital to barrier-free learning, and language teachers have as much right to better-informed didactic knowledge as their students have to an inclusive learning experience.



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### **10:45-12:15**

- **James McCallum (Universität Innsbruck)**
- **Radio Bla-Bla**

No tertiary-level language course provides the required amount of study and practice time for students to achieve their linguistic goals, and most universities stress the importance of autonomous study outside the classroom. Radio podcasting in the target language allows a challenging, yet relaxed and fun environment in which students can improve not just their hard skills but also their soft skills, such as teamwork, empathy, time management, public speaking, and organisational techniques, amongst others. In addition, research skills, voice usage, how to deal with spoken errors, and production and broadcasting skills are strengthened when students are tasked with creating a radio show from first concept through to live broadcast. With the aid of testimonials from my current C1/C2-level students who are involved in my radio project, a project now in its second year and up to 15 episodes, my aim is to highlight the advantages for language learners of working together in the media environment in their target language, with an emphasis on both the obvious and perceived benefits to their hard skills, soft skills, and language proficiency.

- **Heidi Altmann (Universität Stuttgart)**
- **Teaching and Assessing Pronunciation**

In the recent past, there has been a vivid debate concerning the ultimate goal of foreign language learning: target-likeness to some reference variety (e.g., 'Standard' British or American English) or rather intelligibility and comprehensibility. As for pronunciation, the focus has shifted towards a higher acceptance of learners' accented speech as long as it does not negatively affect oral communication. While this surely makes sense in the context of EAP or ESP, the question arises whether this also suffices for pre-service teachers (Lehramt students).

This workshop provides the opportunity for an exchange of instructors' experiences and practices related to (challenges of) teaching and assessing students' oral skills. We all know that the conditions in our courses are often not ideal (large class size, diverse L2 level of students, time limitations, instructors' workload, etc.) and the following aspects remain a challenge: How can each student be actively involved? How can they receive individual feedback? How can oral skills be tested in an objective and reliable way? How can a student's level of success be measured and graded?

The Sprachpraxis course "Phonetic Practice/Oral Competence" devised for Lehramt Gymnasium students at the University of Stuttgart will illustrate how we address these aspects. Any type of input, feedback, or discussion is highly welcome.





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### **10:45-12:15**

- **Zoe Vercelli (Universität Paderborn)**
- AI Cratered My Writing Class

Few phenomena have impacted our existing praxis of academic writing at university level more than both the Covid-19 pandemic and the explosion of Artificial Intelligence (AI/KI) tools. On one hand, there were the losses: loss of oversight over, insight into, and support systems for our students' writing processes. On the other hand, there were the tools that increasingly filled these and other gaps, namely, an explosion of Large Language Model-based systems that, in many ways, have become increasingly savvy at manufacturing academic writing.

Meanwhile, we as academics have struggled to respond – whether due to a lack or a delay of institutional policy-making; gaps in professional knowledge regarding AI tools; or the budget cuts and loss of student enrollment that have reduced support services (such as Writing, Key Competence, or Graduate Centers) which could otherwise lead cross-disciplinary responses to AI use.

In this workshop, we'll share key aspects of our experience with student writing and AI; consider our "wish lists" for policies or support; discuss AI- versus human-written text examples; and briefly look at the results of a small-scale anonymous survey (3-5 Essay Writing courses) on student AI usage.

## **28 September**

### **13:00-14:30**

- **David Moroney (Universität Bonn)**
- Round-table discussion: Creative Writing

This discussion aims at sharing ideas of how we introduce creative writing into our Language Practice classrooms. Especially in a post-Covid world, and with such a heavy focus on academic/essay writing in universities, it is important to acknowledge that the modern language student needs more creative tasks to explore different ways of thinking and understanding the material. To be a more adaptive expert.

Not only that, but, we as educators, also welcome new ideas in the classroom as a way to activate our own teaching and to experiment with our "tried and tested materials". Although our semesters are very short, once we have the basics covered, we can see a drop in student engagement. Being creative also provides us with new avenues to learn. Allowing our students some creativity in class can benefit everyone, student and lecturer alike, in an ever-changing society.



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### **13:00-14:30**

- **Karen Passmore (Technische Hochschule Georg Agricola)**
- **Post Covid: Is Anyone Coming to My Party?**

Since 2019 and the deregulation of mandatory attendance for language courses at Universities in NRW, non-attendance to classes has become an accepted norm, most likely bolstered due to the 2-year period of online study during Covid. I personally find preparing for pot luck classes very difficult and I am also challenged to determine the criteria for fair assessment.

HELP! In this workshop we will exchange ideas on:

1. What (positive and negative) experiences have you had with non-mandatory attendance classes?
2. What assumptions are made about non-mandatory attendance by students?
3. Which strategies can we implement in a non-mandatory attendance language class to support learning for students who do not attend?
4. How do we present, practice and perform the four language skills to accommodate non-mandatory attendance classes?
5. Is it ethical to teach and assess material in class which is not accessible to students who did not attend?
6. Which tools (software and hardware) are suitable for supporting a non-mandatory attendance class?
7. Is hybrid teaching in language classes doable?
8. Is a script or stand-alone Moodle course the answer?

The goal of the workshop is for participants to develop concrete ideas to implement in their own syllabus.