

melta news

Munich English Language Teachers Association
Linking and developing teachers in the Munich area since 1989

Spring 2023 | no. 107



Technology

Chatbots, podcasts
and the BBC

Spring

Food, gardening
and events

Interview

Integrating Ukrainian
schoolchildren

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Message from the Chair

With spring in the air and a spring in our steps, we held our first in-person AGM in three years on March 25. Spirits were high, the venue was sunny, the coffee was hot, and the cakes and buns were delicious. I'd like to thank everyone – attendees and organizers alike – who helped make the event a success.

As usual, the AGM elected a new committee. With one exception, it looks a lot like the old one. Nik Granchev, Betsy Hollweck, Michael Hoffmann, Cathy Pilgram, Joan Walsh and I were reelected to our current positions. Mike Saunders, who's currently the Melta website administrator, was elected to succeed Breda Howe-Helmecke as a member at large. Thank you, Breda, for all your work over the last few years and for your willingness to continue helping organize Melta events and to keep contributing to the Melta News.

In keeping with the season, the AGM also proposed a number of fresh initiatives for the year ahead. For example:

- an electronic booklet of classroom activities collected from the pages of Melta News
- measures to expand and enhance Melta's online presence
- a new program of in-person and online events
- steps to attract new members from both inside and outside the Munich region.

Big plans, but – with your support – all perfectly realizable. I'd like to wish everyone a very enjoyable and productive summer. I hope to see you all again at another Melta event real soon.

All the best,
Randy



Randy Perry

We'd like to welcome our new regular members!

Olga Barlow, Oliver Jackson, Kira-Sophie Lewis, Paula Mior and Siyabonga Shelembe



Message from the Editor

I love the early spring in Munich. Growing up in Orlando, I didn't experience the four seasons, except when they played at Disney World's Magic Kingdom ages ago along with The Four Tops. An early Bavarian spring is just as magical, however, beware. Sometimes, you can get all four seasons in one day! Dress appropriately! There's also another spring upon us, the bloom of AI, chatbots, and technology. And it's also becoming increasingly clear that, for better or worse, these ubiquitous programs will not go softly into that goodnight. So, we must adapt.

This AI topic was at a workshop for Bavarian university lecturers I attended in March. The opinions in the room varied from "It'll be the death of us all," to "Hey, this is pretty cool." The jury's still out, but I tend to lean heavily towards the latter with, "I figured out Zoom, I can get this too." My naivety about these technical poppy seeds shines through.

But, luckily and thankfully, we've got a few contributors who have decided to tackle this 21st century version of Gutenberg's printing press head-on, and we're confident that they can give us chalk users a few ideas for moving ourselves along into the "now" in the upcoming issues.

All the best,
Michael

Melta News Editing Team

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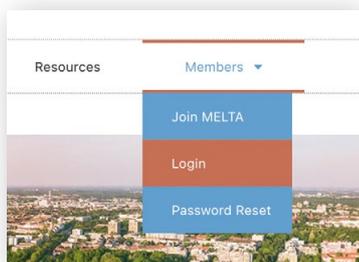
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Melta website: How to get on the Teacher Directory

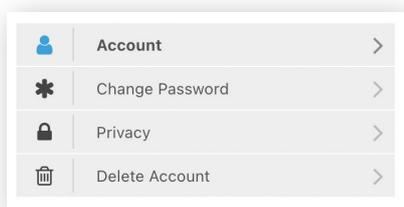
Michael Saunders explains how to activate and post your profile on the Melta website's Teacher Directory.

We've recently made some more improvements to the Melta website, including the Teacher Directory, where Melta members can post their profiles and potentially find new work. By default, profiles are private, so to appear on the Teacher Directory, you'll need to perform a few simple steps. Here's how...



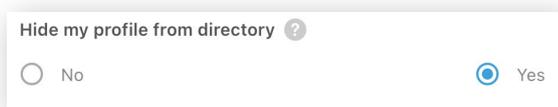
Step 1: Log in

At melta.de, go to the Members menu in the top-right, and Login. Then log in with your user name and password.



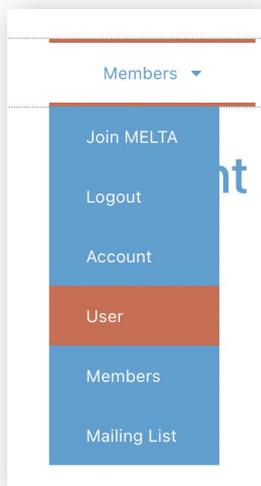
Step 2: Account

When you return to the Melta website, go back to the Members menu, and click Account. Then scroll down to the profile settings, and click Privacy on the left.



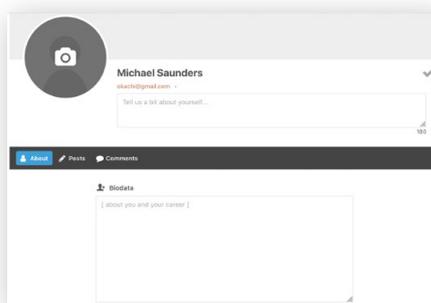
Step 3: Privacy

On the right, you'll see an option called "Hide my profile from directory". Click the "No" button, and then "Update Privacy" at the bottom.



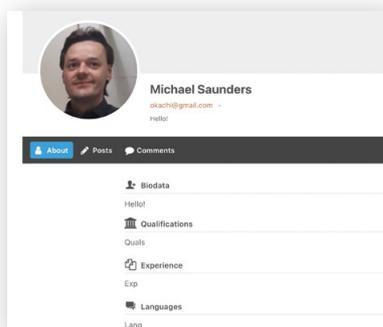
Step 4: User data

Next, go back to the Members menu, and click "User". Scroll down and you'll see "Your profile is looking a little empty. Why not add some information!" – Click the word "add" here.



Step 5: Teacher profile

Now you can add a picture (click the camera icon), and enter text for your qualifications, experience etc. in the boxes below. When you're finished, click "Update Profile" at the bottom.



Step 6: Check the results

Now you can go to the Teacher Directory using the menu at the top of the website, search for your name, and click on the profile to see it. And that's it!

In Memoriam

Melta members share fond memories of **Andy Hewitson**.

On these pages, we remember **Andy Hewitson**, who died suddenly on December 23, 2022.

Andy Hewitson was one of Melta's founding members. He is known to many of us from Melta Christmas parties, where he and his guitar would often appear for some gentle carolling. But for many members of Melta and other freelance teachers in and around Munich, he was our "boss" at Siemens, in the days when such large companies had well-funded in-house training departments. As you'll read on these pages, Andy gave many of us regular work on Siemens courses, whether weekly, on weekends for managers, or as part of a team on courses in hotels in Bavaria, Austria and England.

It is probably only with many years' distance that this can be seen as what it was: a golden age of business English training. Our intensive course participants enjoyed the hotel restaurant and the bar, the daily singing and the fabled evening entertainments as well as a regular flow of trainers putting them through their paces during the day.

As Meg says below, Andy put his faith in people to run these courses, both individually and as teams. He organised teacher training weekends as well as events with internationally known speakers but was also delighted if you simply joined him for lunch in the office canteen. Most tellingly, per-

haps, if Andy came to visit a course, it never felt like an inspection but was always a treat. I think this support and his investment in us provided a strong motivation to work together, get "good feedback" and repay this trust.

Once he left Siemens, Andy remained invested in his trainers' lives. At trainers' Stammtisch evenings, I will always remember how he would lean towards me with his wry smile, to share stories about choirs or young children. He was, as many say on these pages, and many others lined up to say at his funeral, a gregarious, genuine, generous, good man. **Jo Westcombe**

How do you write a few lines about someone who changed the direction of your life? Andy gave me a job at Siemens when I had seven children to feed, and my previous employer was about to throw me out. Andy introduced me to publishers who let me write books. Andy was a model to me of how to work with people and get them to give their best. Andy showed me that sometimes you have to speak truth to power, even if it costs you. Cleopatra allegedly once asked "*Is he a good man? Define 'good'!*" I think Andy was the answer to that question. I was lucky to have known him. **James Schofield**

When I lived in Schwindegg, I travelled on the same train line as Andy did. Our paths did not cross that often, but on one occasion when they did, he felt I had not lived until I was treated to an Illy coffee at the Ostbahnhof. That was an example of spontaneous, generous Andy. Then I was guaranteed a journey that passed in double quick time as I marvelled at what a full and eventful life he was leading, was reminded how much I appreciated his contributions to Melta and what a genuinely lovely person he was. Rest in peace, Andy. **Sue Morris**

We have known Andy and his wonderful wife Regina since their return

to Germany from the UAE, visiting them often in both of their homes in Gumattenkirchen. We experienced Andy not only as a friend but also as a dedicated, talented and innovative teacher, shared in the joy of the births of their four daughters, and admired his dedication and integration into their local community: as a beekeeper (a better alternative he thought than joining the local fire brigade!), choir director and VHS music and language teacher in Mühldorf. He finessed the transition from colleague to "boss" at the Siemens language division, treating us freelancers fairly, initiating many further-training workshops and enjoyable staff weekends at Kloster Zangberg, and maintaining his loyalty to us despite the pressures he faced from his Siemens superiors. His sudden, untimely death was a shock to us all. Perhaps there is some comfort in the words of his favorite poet, Robert Burns: "If there's another world, he lives in bliss; If there is none, he made the best of this."

Paul Kremmel and Anne Heritage

From the first moment I met Andy at Melta back in the 1990s, I was struck by his gentleness, generosity and humour. I was also impressed by his very down-to-earth and pragmatic approach to language teaching. I then came to learn that Andy was a man of many other talents and interests as well. He will be fondly remembered by countless English trainers and learners who benefited from his experience, expertise and kindness. **Ian McMaster**

Like many of us, I have so much to thank Andy for. In 1997 he believed in a young American teacher, fresh out of graduate school, who knew next to nothing about teaching business English. My CV landed on his desk, and I couldn't be more grateful that it did. The team of trainers under his wing at Siemens became my trusted colleagues and lifelong friends. There were jars of his prized honey for sale



From left to right: Melta founders Andy Hewitson, Frank Steele and Ernst Huber at the 20th-anniversary celebrations in 2009.

“He was, as many say on these pages,
and many others lined up to say at
his funeral, a gregarious, genuine,
generous, good man”

at Koppstrasse, fabulous speakers (Michael Lewis’s 1997 talk was the first I remember attending), and always a new opportunity for professional development on his calendar. Whether it was SQT weekends at Kloster Zangberg, Melta workshops or BESIG – Andy was ever present, ever smiling and ever learning.

Andy put his heart and soul into absolutely everything he did. His talent for languages, music, beekeeping and gardening meant there was always something going on that he wanted to share with everyone he met. Even after many of us went our separate ways when SQT restructured, Andy wanted to know where our professional and personal lives had taken us. Perhaps it was a phone call or an e-mail about an article he’d read or a radio interview he’d heard that he knew would interest us. A simple but meaningful gesture that was a perfect reflection of Andy’s true, genuine nature.

I’m forever grateful for his trust, guidance and friendship over the past 25 years – my only wish is that there could have been 25 more for him to cycle through the Bavarian countryside with Regina, beam about his daughters, and teach his grandchildren a Scottish dance or two with that famous sparkle in his eye and soft lilt in his voice.

Godspeed, Andy. *“May the road rise to meet you, and the wind be always at your back.”* **Meg Engelmann**

*“When Death’s dark stream
I ferry o’er,
A time that surely shall come;
In Heaven itself I’ll ask no more
Than just a Highland welcome.”*
Robert Burns

In the years I was privileged to spend with Andy, I appreciated his authenticity, his open heart and open mind, the twinkle in his eye, his love of life, music, teaching and people. He seemed centred and at peace, easily taking responsibility, bearing it naturally and

joyfully. If the eyes are the window to the soul, a look into his honest blue eyes showed his innate goodness, generosity, and caring. Andy, thank you for all you gave us, for lighting up our lives. The melody of your life will continue to accompany us through ours. **Patricia Biondo**

Unfortunately, I find myself in the, for me, unusual position of being at a total loss for words! What can I say? What can I write? The last time we spoke face-to-face with Andy and Regina was on Skype just a few short weeks before he died. We were all laughing, chatting, joking. The last WhatsApp I got from Andy was on the day he died. Referring to the sudden death of Vicki Hollett he wrote “A great loss to ELT”. Andy was a great teacher, a great friend. His passing is a great loss to so many of us. John and I still cannot believe he is no longer with us. **Fran Vince**

Those of us who had Andy as a “boss” at Siemens were blessed indeed. It’s rare to think of your boss as a friend, but that is what Andy was. No pulling rank, always friendly, approachable, understanding, helpful, supportive and humorous.

The weekend workshops which he organised and led at Zangberg were a highlight of the year. He kept up to date with developments in English teaching and fired our enthusiasm by imparting these in his inimitable easy-going manner. We learned and laughed, and in the evenings sang and danced to the accompaniment of his talented guitar-playing.

Wonderful man, wonderful memories! **Margaret McKee**

At Kloster Zangberg, we watched those two lovelies, Regina and Andy, whose wedding I had attended so many years before, dance their Scottish chassé, arm in arm, smiling, and in perfect harmony. This image has stayed in my memory ever



since for being so remarkably beautiful. **Claudia Whitney**

Andy usually ended his e-mails with the words *Carpe Diem*. This was particularly poignant when I told him of Vicki Hollett’s passing on December 22. Little did he or I realise that just one day later he would succumb to the same complaint.

Andy was our boss and colleague at Siemens training centre for many years. He was always dynamic, positive, jolly (most of the time), supportive and encouraging. He organised extremely productive workshops on a regular basis. For a number of years, he set up annual weekend workshops for Siemens’ trainers in the old convent of Zangberg near Mühlendorf, which was run by seven nuns. At this event, we trainers could present and demonstrate our talents. With Andy’s encouragement, people sometimes did the most amazing and creative things. Each day at Zangberg ended in song, accompanied by Andy on the guitar, and we stepped out to the sound of the *Gay Gordons*, the *Highland Fling* and many other traditional Scottish dances. He was a great loss to the training centre and to all of us when he took early retirement in 2008. But Andy had big plans in mind – some of those were to teach children about beekeeping (there’s a nice interview with Andy on YouTube about beekeeping), take piano lessons and train the children’s choir in his local church. He was in the midst of Christmas preparations with the children when he was suddenly taken. He will always remain in our hearts as a very special person – and we will remember to seize the days as they come and go.

Joan Walsh and Randy Perry

Melta Five-a-Day – Speaking special!

Bethan Stokes shares more ideas from her treasure trove of practical classroom activities.

Here are five simple, low-prep activities to get students speaking. They encourage students to think on their feet and don't need too much "pre-teaching". The idea behind this is that when students are out in the 'real world' they don't often have time to prepare what they want to say in a conversation! Activities 3, 4 and 5 are easily adaptable to online classes with breakout rooms.

1. Students do the work

A very simple activity where students (Ss) write the discussion questions. Great for reviewing or previewing a topic.

Level: B2+

Materials: (Scrap) paper or flashcards.

Prep: Write topics to be discussed on flashcards/strips of paper e.g. health, sport, environment, politics, etc. Leave room for two discussion questions underneath the topic.

Procedure:

1. Put Ss into pairs or threes.
2. Give each group one topic card. Tell them to write two discussion questions based on this topic on the card. Monitor and correct writing as/when needed.
3. If you have more topics than groups, give groups a new topic once they have finished their first two questions.
4. Collect and redistribute the topic cards. Ss then discuss the questions written by others. Spend as little or as much time on this section. (I find it can often lead to quite fruitful discussions/debates.)
5. Keep swapping the topics around until each group has seen every topic card, even their own. You can stop partway through and do error corrections on the board or save them until the end.
6. To round up the activity ask Ss for their feedback e.g. which questions they liked the most/least? Which were most difficult to answer and why? Which questions would they never have thought of?

2. Speaking stations

A simple speaking activity to round off a course.

Level: A2+

Materials: Cards with discussion questions and/or information questions based on topics covered in your lessons.

Prep:

- Decide how many 'speaking stations' you want depending on class size.
- Create enough question cards per station.
- Put the discussion cards on tables around the room = speaking station.
- It's up to you how you set up the stations. I tend to write one word related to the station and stick this up on the wall but you could simply number them. You could use items e.g. a train ticket if the 'station' is talking about travel etc.



- Set the stations up before Ss arrive, if possible, so they're already intrigued when they walk in.

Procedure:

1. Split Ss into groups and tell each group to start at a specific station. Encourage students to stand, not sit, at the stations.
2. Groups spend 5-10 mins at each station and T monitors.
3. Do a whole class error correction session after each station. Remind Ss to focus on one correction or just accuracy in general before they move on to the next station.
4. Groups move to their next station and repeat. Do this until each group has been at each station.
5. For higher levels you could just give a controversial statement e.g. 'voting should be compulsory', and students have to discuss this, rather than giving them specific discussion questions.

3. Agree or disagree?

A fun debating activity that encourages students to explain their opinions.

Level: B2+

Materials: Worksheet with debate topics. These can be specific for your course or general e.g., public transport should be free. Alternatively, you could get students to come up with the debate topics themselves. Here is an example from a worksheet:

Topic	Agree	Disagree
Public transport should be free.		
The voting age should be lowered to 16.		

Prep: Print/upload worksheet.

Procedure:

1. Give Ss worksheet. Tell them they have a few minutes to read the statements and decide if they agree or disagree with them. They should mark their choice with an X in the agree/disagree column.

“This is a silly but fun speaking activity that often ends up in a lot of laughter”

- Put Ss into pairs. They compare their tables and explain their reasoning. If they both agree/disagree they should come up with at least two arguments from the other point of view. If one agrees and the other disagrees, they should explain their opinions and have a mini-debate.
- Monitor and provide individual/class error correction when necessary.
- Extension: choose one topic and set up a whole class debate. Split the class into ‘agree/disagree,’ give them time to prepare their arguments and then have the debate. Every student must say one thing. If you have an odd number of Ss, one person can be the moderator (introduce the topic, make sure everyone speaks, etc.)

You could provide/revise vocab for explaining your opinion before doing this activity.

4. Agree to disagree?

A quick debating activity that encourages students to think from a different perspective.

Level: B2+

Materials: None.

Prep: Think of debate topics (general or related to your course/Ss).

Procedure:

- Put Ss in pairs.
- Write a debate topic on the board.
- Tell Ss if they agree or disagree with this topic. They may not actually agree or disagree, but they have to argue the side they have been given. This gets them thinking outside of the box and considering other perspectives.
- Ss debate and T monitors.
- When the time is up, ask for feedback e.g., what was the best argument from your partner and why? Were any new points raised that you hadn’t thought of before?
- Repeat with a different debate topic.

You could provide/revise vocab for (partially) agreeing/disagreeing before doing this activity.

5. Small talk bingo

This is a silly but fun speaking activity that often ends up in a lot of laughter.

Level: B1+

Materials: A/B bingo cards. See the example below. You can change the words to fit your Ss/group.

Student A	Student B
<p>Student B is a client who has arrived early for a meeting. While you wait for the rest of your colleagues to arrive, have some small talk... with a twist. Try to make the other person say the following words:</p> <p>mountains/photo/water/train/lunch/Saturday</p> <p>Tick off the words when they say them. The first person to get their partner to say all the words shouts ‘bingo’.</p>	<p>You have arrived early for a meeting. Student A greets you and takes you to the meeting room. While you wait for everyone to arrive, have some small talk... with a twist. Try to make the other person say the following words:</p> <p>lakes/cinema/coffee/car/breakfast/Friday</p> <p>Tick off the words when they say them. The first person to get their partner to say all the words shouts ‘bingo’.</p>

Prep: Print/send ‘bingo’ cards.

Procedure:

- Put Ss in pairs. Set the scene: one of you has arrived early to a meeting and you now have some small talk before the others arrive.
- Give Ss their ‘bingo’ card and tell them not to show their partner. They read the task and words on their card.
- Ss start having basic small talk and try to make their partner say the words on their card e.g.

Student A: Have you been to Munich before? Student B: Yes, I come here quite often for work.

Student A: Oh nice, have you ever managed to get out of the city? Student B: Unfortunately not but I’m hoping to explore a bit at the weekend.

Student A: Oh nice, what would you like to do? Student B: Not really sure, maybe head to the *mountains* or something. What would you recommend?

Student A then ticks ‘mountains’ off their card. Obviously, students should avoid saying the words on their cards before their partner has said them.
- When Ss have ticked off all their words they shout ‘bingo’ and win!



Bethan Stokes is originally from the UK and has lived in Munich since September 2015. She started teaching EFL in Madrid in 2013, completed an MA TESOL at UCL Institute of Education in 2015 and currently works at the University of the German Armed Forces in Neubiberg. She enjoys developing teaching materials and trying out new activities in the classroom.



The ABC of Business

Dervilla Fastner shares three activities for the classroom with a business bent.

Let's talk business!

Activity

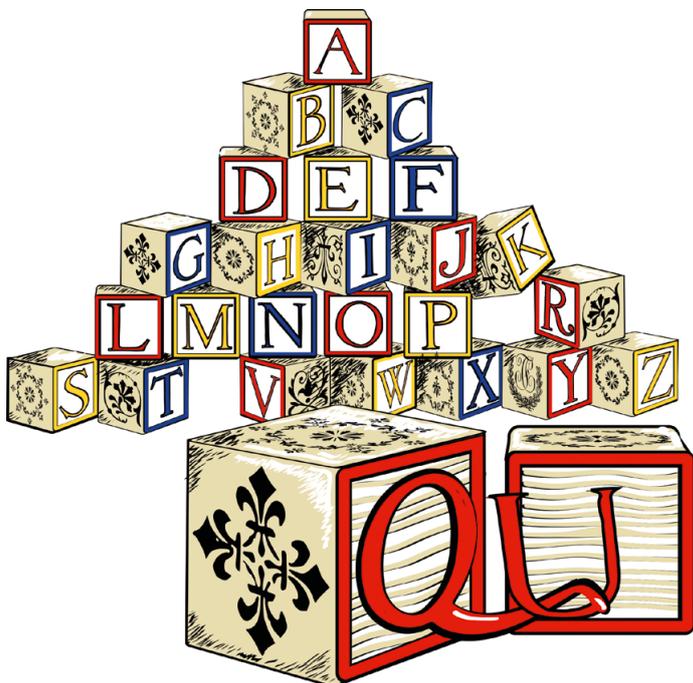
1. With your partner choose three to four questions and discuss them. Then, share your findings and opinions in your group.

Follow-up activity (pair work)

2. After discussing the question, create four questions about business or work topics, e.g., **engineering**, **recalls**, etc. Your questions should initiate a discussion.

A	How can manufacturers secure the availability of raw materials in the future?
B	What are the benefits of benchmarking ?
C	What are the biggest challenges facing your company in the near future?
D	Do tight deadlines cause stress? Why or why not?
E	What is effective communication?
F	What are fringe benefits ? Why do employers offer fringe benefits ?
G	What is green manufacturing ? What are its benefits?
H	What is meant by a hostile takeover ? Do you know of any hostile takeovers?
I	How can your department decrease inefficiency and increase productivity?
J	What are the pros and cons of joint ventures ?

K	What measures can companies and employees take in order to protect company know-how ?
L	What are important leadership skills ?
M	How can your company increase its market share ?
N	What makes a good negotiator ?
O	What is overproduction ? Why is it a waste?
P	What is your company's most profitable product or service?
Q	What is the difference between quality control and quality assurance ?
R	Why is research and development (R&D) important to economic growth?
S	Give examples of soft skills and state why they are important in the workplace.
T	What influences a target market ?
U	Do you think your country will see an upward trend in the economy this year? Why or why not?
V	What is your company's vision ? Do you think it is good? Why or why not.
W	Discuss ways of reducing waste in manufacturing.
X	What are the benefits of Xing for companies and individuals?
Y	What is meant by yield in business terms? Give an example.
Z	Is the concept of zero defects realistic? Why or why not?



Guess my business word!

3. In pairs or in groups of three, learners brainstorm business words or expressions for every letter of the alphabet.

- Group 1, letters A – H
- Group 2, letters I – Q
- Group 3, letters R – Z.

Subsequently, taking turns, learners describe their words and the other course participants try to guess the words. This is a fun and challenging exercise offering everyone the

“This is a fun and challenging exercise offering everyone the chance to get involved in guessing and describing various business words and expressions”



Image by Gerd Altmann on Pixabay

chance to get involved in guessing and describing various business words and expressions.

This is a list of words and expressions compiled by learners in one of my English courses at an automotive parts manufacturer. I had to help out with one or two letters, e.g., x and y.

A	appointment, assembly line, agile	N	newsletter, negotiation
B	brand, boss	O	out of stock, order, outsourcing
C	customer, clock in... clock out	P	production, planning, process
D	delay, delivery, defect	Q	qualifications, quality control
E	employee, employer, electric cars	R	raw materials, requirements
F	freight, factory, forklift	S	steel, safety, supply chain, solution
G	goal, growth strategy	T	target, transport
H	heat treatment, hybrid technology	U	update, user-friendly
I	investment, inventory, invoice	V	valve, vehicle safety
J	joint venture, just-in-time	W	welding, workflow, warranty claims
K	know-how, KPIs	X	x-axis
L	lean production, logistics	Y	year-end financial statement
M	management, maintenance	Z	zero-waste manufacturing



Dervilla Fastner is originally from Ireland and teaches English mainly in the corporate environment. She loves the challenges and adventure of teaching English online. She lives in Upper Bavaria where she spends most of her free time cycling in the woods and up and down hills.



Image by Simon on Pixabay

A happy end

Joan Walsh gives us a nice ending for a lesson that can be done almost any time you need to fill a few minutes and reinforce the lesson's vocabulary.

Levels: All

Procedure:

1. Cover the board and/or a flip chart with the various vocabulary items that have emerged during the lesson.
2. Near the end of the lesson, have the students study the items for a minute or two.
3. Have the students close their eyes while you wipe off one of the items.
4. Have the students open their eyes and try to recall the item that's missing.
5. Repeat as long as there's interest and enthusiasm.

Variations:

1. After the first few times, have the students take it in turns to continue.
2. Make it a competition by keeping scores and allotting points to the students who guess the items.



Joan Walsh is from Ireland and works as an English trainer in companies. She enjoys attending workshops and seminars to stay abreast of the most up-to-date trends in language teaching and technology. On holidays, she likes to travel and learn about everything connected with people, culture and language.

Teaching grammar through songs

Nataliia Semeniuk and **Paulina Piaskonka** collaborate to remind us how many songs are potential listening tools in the classroom.

“Music, when soft voices die, vibrates in the memory.” – Percy Bysshe Shelley

Everybody likes music. Just look around – some people do sports with music, others listen to music to relax or while traveling to work ... and even during class you can sometimes spot earphones hidden under students’ hair and tell from the look in their eyes that they’re far away in the world of music. So, let’s move students’ love of music onto the learning path.

Many learners can’t remember the structures of tenses or the situations in which we use them. A great way to learn grammar is to reinforce it through popular songs. There are various ways to do this, taking into account the students’ level, their interests and ages, the grammar to be studied and the song itself. As always, success depends on the creativity of the teacher.

Here are some of the techniques we’ve used with songs:

- Gap fills and cloze texts
- Focus questions
- True-false statements
- Putting song lines into the correct sequence
- Dictation
- Adding a final verse
- Circling the antonyms/synonyms of specific words
- Discussion

And here’s an example based on **“Somebody That I Used to Know”** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YzGO-q42zLk&t=62s>). It’s a popular song that can be used to introduce the grammatical structure “used to”.

“A great way to learn grammar is to reinforce it through popular songs”



=> As a **pre-listening task**, students talk about the relationship between people when they're in love. Here's a possible result:

1. The people love each other.
2. They spend time together.
3. They call each other.
4. They're happy together.
5. They aren't lonely.
6. They treat each other with respect.

=>As a **listening task**, students use the phrases in this box

change your number could not make
 sense felt so happy need your love never hap-
 pened still be friends that was love treat me
 used to know used to know used to know was
 over were right for me when we were
 together

to complete these lines from the song:

Now and then I think of _____
 Like when you said you _____ you could die
 Told myself that you _____
 But felt so lonely in your company
 But _____, and it's an ache I still remember
 You can get addicted to a certain kind of sadness
 Like resignation to the end, always the end
 So when we found that we _____
 Well, you said that we would _____
 But I'll admit that I was glad it _____
 But you didn't have to cut me off
 Make out like it _____ and that we were
 nothing
 And I don't even _____
 But you _____ like a stranger, and that feels
 so rough
 No, you didn't have to stoop so low
 Have your friends collect your records and
 then _____?
 I guess that I don't need that, though
 Now you're just somebody that I _____
 Now you're just somebody that I _____
 Now you're just somebody that I _____

=> **Post-listening task 1:**

To describe the situation of the people in the song, students produce sentences with "used to" like these:

1. They **used to** love each other, but not anymore.
2. They **used to** spend time together, but not anymore.
3. They **used to** call each other, but not anymore.
4. They **used to** be happy together, but not anymore.
5. They **didn't use to** be lonely, but now they are.

6. They **used to** treat each other with respect, but not anymore.

=> **Post-listening task 2:**

Students put these lines of the song in the correct order:

1. So when we found that we could not make sense.
2. But you treat me like a stranger, and that feels so rough.
3. Now you're just somebody that I used to know.
4. But that was love, and it's an ache I still remember.
5. Now and then I think of when we were together,
 Like when you said you felt so happy you could die.

=> **Post-listening task 3:**

Sing the song together.

Many popular songs can be used to reinforce grammar structures. We'll be looking at more examples in future issues of Melta News. In the meantime, you'll find lots of ideas for using songs in the classroom under this link: <https://www.eslsongs.com/practise/grammar-constructions/conditionals/>

Enjoy teaching and singing!



Nataliia Semeniuk is from Kyiv, Ukraine, who now lives and works in Wrocław in Poland – and teaches English in the hotel industry and gastronomy; previously she worked at the First Kyiv state courses of foreign languages, at IQ Planet language school, developed a project "English for Kyivans", English Bootcamp, "English for underground workers". Teaching English is her passion.



Paulina Płaskonka is an English teacher at a secondary school in Wrocław. She also teaches English in the hotel industry and gastronomy. Paulina completed her MA studies in English Philology at the University of Zielona Góra. She likes skiing, travelling and learning foreign languages in her free time..

Teaching English through food

Besty Hollweck explains how she likes to use food she grows in the garden as a prompt to teach English grammar, culture and, more importantly, how you can generate great discussions on a subject, food, that nearly everyone holds dear.

“In the spring a young man’s fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love,” wrote Alfred Lord Tennyson in “Locksley Hall”.

Well, my thoughts turn to ... plants.

The first flowers of the year appear – snowdrops and crocuses, daffodils and hyacinths. The cherry trees bloom, an eternal symbol of friendship. The first wild herbs reappear – chervil, wood garlic, tarragon (exemplary when young, as the bitterness has not yet developed), chives. Vegetables? Young spinach, new potatoes, early turnips, rhubarb (yes, botanically it’s a vegetable). And don’t forget white asparagus.

Plants are good for many things, including teaching English.

They can be used to teach the tenses:

This is a carrot. Carrots are usually orange, but can also be purple, yellow or striped.

Carrots are growing in my garden. There is also a rabbit in my garden, who eats my carrots. Now, a rabbit may be vegan, but I am not.

(You take it from there...)



The Three Sisters planting method is featured on the reverse of the 2009 US Sacagawea dollar.

Plants can be used to teach about other countries:

In the past, I have grown beans, squash and pumpkin. (These three plants are actually referred to as the “Three Sisters” by indigenous peoples of North America.) [You can also have quite a discussion about what are fruits and vegetables! – editor].

Many cuisines begin with something called a “holy trinity”: onion, celery and carrot in French cooking; in Cajun cooking, it’s onion, celery and green pepper. In Asian cooking it’s often ginger, scallion and garlic.

“Plants are good for many things, including teaching English”

And history:

Summer savory (Satureja hortensis) was used in wreaths worn on the heads of ancient Romans during the Saturnalia. It was considered a natural aphrodisiac, hence was banned by the early Christians.

Herbs have been used worldwide to fight against pests (insects, rodents) and odors. The “Four Thieves’ Vinegar” is a mixture whose recipe stems from the medieval Black Death plague period. Users believed it protected them from contagion and death. “Strewing herbs” (such as lavender, southernwood and meadowsweet) scattered on the floors and released their aromatic oils when trod upon. Such herbs have antiseptic and anti-microbial properties.

This spring, my younger students (grades 5-10) are learning about how plants grow. Each student receives a packet of seeds, a potting mix, and a small pot to start out with (there is

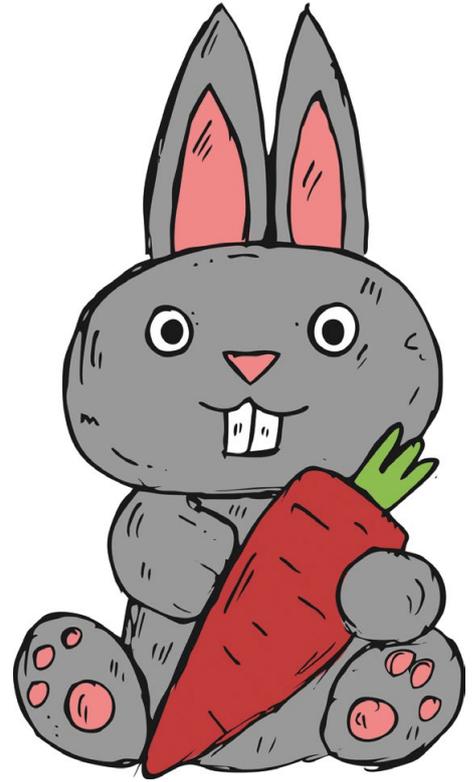


Image by Jozef Mikulcik on Pixabay

water access in the classroom). Students have to make a chart and plot the progress of the seedlings. The chart incorporates the question words: who (is planting), what (it is), when (they planted), where, why (the plant has been chosen) and how (the plant will be used). They can take pictures of the plants as they grow (or not), and before the end of school they’ll make a poster and write a story.

And they will hopefully have learned five English tenses.



Betsy Hollweck graduated from Fordham University (NYC) with a B.A. in Linguistics. She completed her CELTA certification in Munich in August 2017 and lives in Baldham, where she translates menus, recipes, and other things needing gastronomic edification. She also teaches privately and at the VHS in Vaterstetten.

A spring recipe

Betsy Hollweck shares a lovely fresh, light soup recipe that is sure to give you spring fever!

Chervil is one of the first spring herbs to appear. It tastes slightly of anise, and is added at the end of the dish, not cooked with it. It is one of the four ingredients in the French Fines Herbes (along with tarragon, parsley and chives), is the main component in the German *Kerbelsuppe* often eaten on Maundy Thursday (Gründonnerstag), and also appears in the Frankfurter Grüne Soße.

Chervil soup with radishes serves 4

180 g shallots, finely diced
 200 g parsnip, small dice (*Petersilienwurzeln*)
 300 g potatoes, cubed
 30 g butter
 100 ml white wine
 500 ml vegetable broth (*Gemüsefond*)
 salt, pepper
 100 g chervil (*Kerbel*)
 10 radishes

200 ml heavy cream
 nutmeg (preferably freshly grated)
 2 tsp. lemon juice

Melt the butter in a pot; add the shallots and sauté until glassy (medium heat). Add the parsnip and potatoes and cook for **2 minutes** more.

Add the white wine.

Add the vegetable broth and **300 ml water**, season with salt and pepper. Cover with a lid; cook on medium heat **15-20 minutes** until the vegetables are cooked through but not mushy.

Meanwhile, set aside a few stems of chervil (for the garnish). Coarsely chop the remaining chervil (stems included).

Wash, top and tail the radishes (cut off the greens and roots); cut into small cubes.



Warm some soup plates.

When the vegetables are cooked, add the cream. Carefully pour the mixture into a standing blender (be careful!) and add the chopped chervil (you can do this in two batches). Purée until the soup has a light green color.

Pour the soup back into the pot, rewarm, season to taste with the nutmeg, lemon juice, salt and pepper.

Pour the soup into the warmed plates, garnish with the reserved chervil, strew with the radishes.

Categories

Breda Howe-Helmecke kindly gives us a nice filler to use with our students if we find that we have a few minutes to fill in at the end of our lesson.

The task is called “Categories” and it’s similar to the German version of “Stadt, Land, Fluss”.

The four categories could be: profession
 colour
 adjective
 country

Teacher recites the alphabet silently, instructs the students to shout “stop” at some stage. Let’s say you are at the letter “L” when somebody shouts “stop”. You then write the letter on the board for everybody to see. With students now working individually they try to think of words associated with the four categories starting with the chosen letter. First student to say “finished” reads out his / her words for all the group to hear, teacher confirms that the categories with the appropriate letter are correct. You can of course vary the categories from time to time. This filler can lead to heated discussions sometimes especially the category “colour”. My students love it. Have fun!!!

“With students now working individually they try to think of words associated with the four categories starting with the chosen letter”



Breda Howe-Helmecke

I come from Ireland and have been living in Munich since 1989. My teaching career as a freelance teacher started in 2004. I teach in-company courses as well as at the MVHS.

When I’m not teaching I like to spend my time playing golf, singing in my newly formed singing group, cooking international food and in particular trying out new recipes.

Pronunciation ABC

Juliana Oosten looks at some words which are often mispronounced or confused. Can you say them and do you know what they all mean?

1.	ale	aisle
2.	ache	arch
3.	bottom	button
4.	branch	brunch
5.	chef	chief
6.	cherry	sherry
7.	college	colleague
8.	desert	dessert
9.	drought	draught
10.	death	depth
11.	employer	employee
12.	eligible	illegible
13.	food	foot
14.	hate	height
15.	iron	ion
16.	kettle	cattle
17.	launch	lounge
18.	lose	loose

19.	major	mayor
20.	nil	Nile
21.	plan	plane
22.	quiet	quite
23.	rare	aw
24.	row	rough
25.	sew	saw
26.	steer	stir
27.	through	thorough
28.	threat	treat
29.	unanimous	anonymous
30.	variety	various
31.	weight	width
32.	were	where
33.	wonder	wander



Juliana Oosten is originally from New Zealand and has been living in Munich since 1986. After doing a TEFL course in London, she began teaching English in a small language school and later focussed on in-company courses teaching general, business and technical English. She became a member of Melita at the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic, so Covid-19 has had some positive effects!





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Report from Chernihiv, Ukraine

Melta member **Oksana Matsnieva** reports on recent developments at her university in the north of Ukraine.

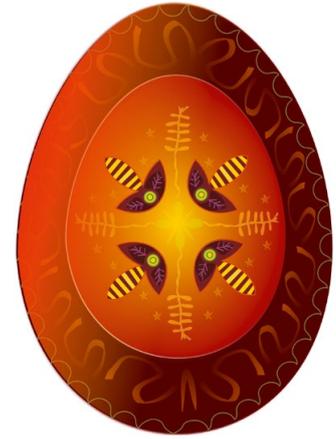
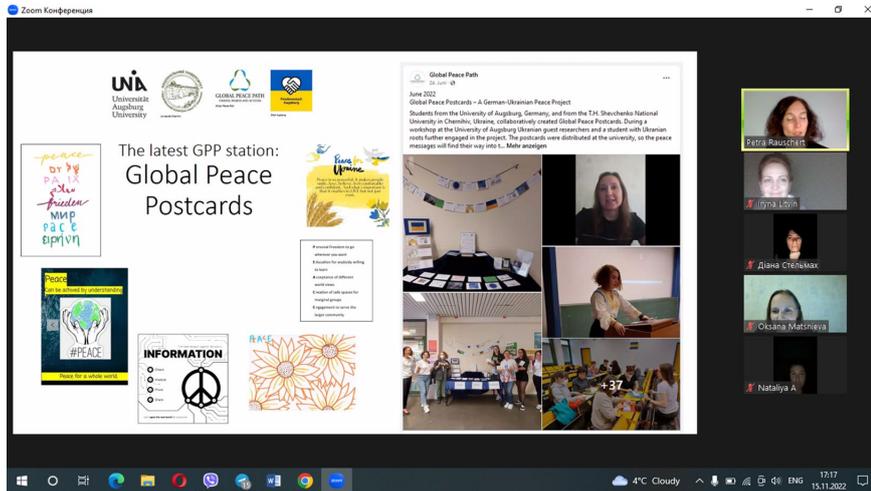


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In spite of the war in our country, the admissions campaign in the summer of 2022 turned out to be quite successful for Chernihiv National University in general and for the Philology Department in particular. Overall, eighty-three young people enrolled as first-year bachelor or master students in the university programme Secondary Education (English Language and Literature).

“Power cuts usually meant the loss of central heating, hot running water, mobile connections and the Internet”

The first term started on 1 October. Because the situation in Chernihiv was tense and many students were still abroad, classes were held online. An exception was made for the first-year bachelor students, who were mainly in the city and had offline classes at the university during the first three weeks of October. On the one hand, it was important for the freshmen to get acquainted with the university, the department and its administration and teaching staff. On the other hand,

offline classes were best suited to the students’ first major course of practical English phonetics, aimed at intensive improvement of their articulation and intonation skills. In spite of several Russian missile attacks on Ukraine in October, when we had to conduct our classes in the university shelter, at the end of the month the course was successfully completed and the first-year students moved on to their second major course of English as the First Foreign Language, which was held via Zoom.

By November, Russian attacks on the Ukrainian infrastructure had increased. Like many other Ukrainian cities, Chernihiv experienced power shortages. The local authorities introduced planned and emergency outages. Some of the city’s residential areas had electricity for just two or three hours a day. Power cuts usually meant the loss of central heating, hot running water, mobile connections and the Internet. In emergencies, residents could turn to autonomous “invincibility points” to charge their devices, access the Internet and get something hot to eat or drink.

Our university had electricity all the time, so students and teachers could study and work on the premises. It also had two “invincibility points” in operation. Although it was quite hard, our first-year students did their best, completed the course and in January passed their exams quite

successfully. They, like most students in our department, are doing their second term courses now.

On 15 November, in spite of a massive Russian attack on Ukraine, our students and colleagues managed to attend a guest lecture on “Intercultural and Democratic Education in the English Language Classroom: Recent Innovations” by Dr Petra Rauschert, Senior Lecturer at Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich. In her lecture, Petra spoke about Intercultural Service Learning, shared her experiences with it, and illustrated it with examples. These included the Global Peace Path Project. Some of our students and teachers were familiar with the project, as they had taken part in it in June 2022. Together with students from the University of Augsburg, they created Global Peace Path Postcards.

The postcards were available in front of the cafeteria at the University of Augsburg from 21 June to 7 July 2022, when people were invited to pause for a moment, write down their own thoughts on peace and send the postcards to other people. In this way, the project’s organisers hoped that the messages would find their way through Augsburg and possibly across the whole world. More information about the peace project is available at <http://bit.ly/3yQcEIG>.



Oksana Matsnieva is Head of the Department of Pedagogy and Foreign Language Teaching Methodology at T.H. Shevchenko National University in Chernihiv, Ukraine.

A country or a prison?

Have you ever heard of a country where women aren't allowed to go to school or university or to work in the 21st century? To most people in the world, this would be a nightmare, but it's the reality for women in Afghanistan. **Asiya Formuli** shares her thoughts on the situation in Afghanistan.

I previously taught English at Kabul University, the largest university in Afghanistan. Before the Taliban returned to power, our university had over 1,000 teachers and nearly 22,000 students. As at universities throughout the country, coeducation was standard, and nearly half of the students were female. Initially, the Taliban divided the university students by gender. But after a year, they banned women from third-level education altogether, deprived them of their human rights and freedoms and severely restricted their social activities.

The situation for women teachers in Afghanistan is far worse than that for men. Women don't have the right to live as they wish. They have to wear black Burqas and veils. If any wears a different color, they're sent back home to change. Unfortunately, the Taliban aren't satisfied with these restrictions on female teachers and recently banned them from even entering university campuses.

Last but not least, female teachers cannot go out of the country to further their studies without the assistance of a legal partner. "This situation is disastrous, and I feel like I'm being



I now live in Starnberg, but I'm still in touch with many of my former colleagues in Kabul. Their situation is typical of all female teachers in the country. They've been shattered by events. None has any plans to stay in the country, but it's virtually impossible for them to leave. In fact, they simply want to disappear. They feel that all their work has been multiplied by zero, and they have no vision for the future. They believe that many years of their lives and all their hard work have been wasted. But it is not just about work, they have also lost their freedom of speech. They cannot say anything against the government or authorities; they aren't allowed to express their opinions.

imprisoned because the government hasn't given me a choice except to stay at home," says one of my female colleagues. Overall, no one is interested in working enthusiastically, and none has any future goals.

Please support Afghan girls and women by being an advocate for refugees in your community. Please oppose colleagues, friends and family members who have anti-refugee points of view. And please make people aware of the condition of Afghan girls and women by simply sharing news about their situation on your social media platforms.



Image by Nina Garman on Pixabay

"The situation for women teachers in Afghanistan is far worse than that for men. Women don't have the right to live as they wish"



Asiya Formuli is an English teacher who taught English at Kabul University in Afghanistan and was the youngest member of the university faculty. She holds a bachelor's degree in English language and literature and a master's degree in TESOL. She currently attends an advanced German course and volunteers in social projects to help refugees.

Using the BBC as a resource – Part two

Nicki Denise continues sharing ideas for lessons using authentic BBC material.



Image by Venita Oberholster on Pixabay

One of the most famous BBC radio shows is Radio 4's Desert Island Discs. It has been around for over 80 years, first broadcast to the armed forces in January 1942. Voted the best radio programme of all time, it remains popular to this day. Each week a celebrity guest is asked to choose eight pieces of music (these were originally gramophone records, of course) that they would take with them if they were cast away on a desert island. They dis-

“Perfect for practising presenting and dealing with questions!”

cuss their choices with the interviewer, and this facilitates an insight into the life of the guest. Extracts of the music are played and at the end the person is also asked to choose one book and one luxury item to take with them.

If you browse through the podcasts of former broadcasts, you should find a celebrity guest that inspires you – or more importantly your students! – who can then listen to all or some of the episode, for which you have

devised some comprehension and discussion questions. You could then follow up with a reading activity, as you can find articles related to some episodes, such as “Seven things we learned from Cate Blanchett’s Desert Island Discs”.

Homework would then be students devising their own list of favourite songs, choice of book and luxury item, so that in the next lesson they can interview each other about their choices, and report back. This is naturally the occasion to practise the second conditional form: If you were cast away on a desert island, what would you want to have with you?

Another classic BBC resource is the Sixty Second Idea to Improve the World. Guests on Radio 4's Forum programme have one minute to present and explain an original idea for making our lives better, after which they are questioned about it by the other guests. Unfortunately, only six podcasts are available these days, such as “Give up shoes and walk barefoot” or “Sleep vertically!”. Choose one podcast to play in class, accompanied by a list of comprehension questions – What is the speaker's main idea? Are any examples, facts or statistics mentioned? Why does the speaker say their idea is so good? Describe possible outcomes. What are the other guests'

responses to the idea? How does the speaker deal with this? – Afterwards students can discuss their opinions of the idea, and for homework they choose one of the other five ideas to listen to, which they have to summarise and discuss with their classmates in the next lesson. Additionally, or alternatively, they can also try to think up their own sixty second idea to present to the others, recreating the discussion format of the radio show. Perfect for practising presenting and dealing with questions!

BBC World Service - Forum - Sixty Second Idea to Improve the World
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02nrzv8>

BBC Radio 4 - Desert Island Discs - Desert Island Discs Podcasts
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/5qhJd1byxbTBYbSCFm-w580y/desert-island-discs-podcasts>



Nicki Denise has been teaching English in Munich since 1997, and in all sorts of domains, from teaching children to teaching seniors, as well as in companies and in universities. Beforehand, she taught in the UK and worked as a director of studies in France. Now she sits in front of a computer screen most days. Could be anywhere!

Podcasts for teachers and students – Part one

In this new, regular column, **Mike Clarkson** looks at how teachers can incorporate more prescient and contemporaneous listening in the classroom through an excellent online tool, podcasts.

One of *the* great modern resources available to teachers and learners of languages today is podcasts. There must be thousands recorded every day on a plethora of subjects both mainstream and niche. And, as with internet resources, a huge proportion of these are, of course, in English. The beauty of podcasts is that they can be listened to sitting down, on the move, in the car, on the train, you name it. Plus, they're largely free and, if chosen wisely, can be both hugely informative and entertaining. I want to point you in the direction of a few of my favourites; ones which will – I make no apologies – revolve around some personal interests of my own, but which could all be used (in one way or another) as part of our classroom activities or, at the very least, teach us as educators about subjects and areas of life we would care to know more about. In a future article, I'll be taking a look at exactly how podcasts can be successfully incorporated into our teaching. Anyway, enough preamble, onto the pods themselves.

Though UK-based, *The Bunker* deals with both British and international political topics, all of which have some bearing on life today. It features regular interviews with writers, journalists, historians, activists, etc. on a wide range of topics. Recent highlights include *Better the Kremlin you know* – a look at Germany's often complex relationship with Russia and how it has affected its handling of the Ukraine war; *Does the UK face extinction?* – after 13 years of Tory government, Brexit, et al, is the UK about to split apart?; and *The Iraq war*

changed everything – how the world has become a much more dangerous place since the infamous Iraq invasion of 20 years ago.

The Rest is History is described by the two historians hosting the podcast as “interrogating the past and attempting to de-tangle the present”. Always

“One of *the* best modern resources available to teachers and learners of languages today is podcasts”

highly entertaining and extremely educational, the two presenters delve into a myriad of subjects, historical eras, events, leaders and movements. To be recommended are: A four-part investigation into holidays, from their beginnings in the 18th century with the Grand Tour of continental Europe, right through to the sun, sea and sex package holidays of modern times. Plus, a look back to the Romans 2,000 years ago to see if there are any echoes there of current western vacation habits. Another I loved was *God and the American Empire* – how religion has played a massive role in the US from its origins right through to the present day with evangelical Christians and the Republican Party.

On a lighter note, *Patented* is a history of invention and innovation. A fascinating look back at ground-breaking findings and discov-

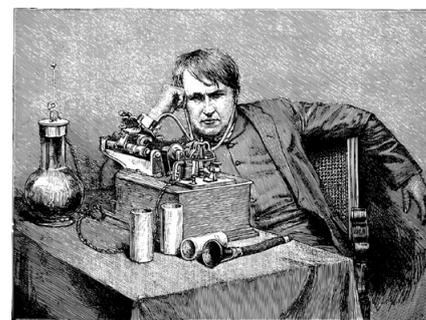


Image by Gordon Johnson on Pixabay

eries with interviews with key players and experts. In its own words: “Did Thomas Edison take credit for things he didn't actually invent? Would man have got to the moon without... the bra?” Outstanding episodes for me are the ones on toilets, the open-plan office, contactless payment, and sex toys. Something for everyone.

ZOE Science & Nutrition is a health and fitness podcast where top scientists explain the latest health and nutrition findings and provide useful advice. Some quite eye-opening stuff is to be heard, and all science-based – interval fasting, anyone? Great episodes are “Eggs: are they good for me?”, “Everything you've heard about lactose is wrong”, “The ultimate guide to constipation”, and “The secrets of good sleep”.

Finally, this time: *Business English Pod*. I couldn't do an article on podcasts without mentioning a really good one aimed specifically at learners of English and in particular business English. It makes for great listening for teachers too. Conversation, listening skills, vocabulary, idioms. Standout episodes I've listened to were about Chat GPT, adapting your communication style, idioms about spending money, and expressing doubt in English.

Happy listening and more again next time.



Mike Clarkson is from England and is a freelance English teacher based in Munich. He has lived and worked in England, Spain and Germany. He refused to say how long he has been teaching for, but did reveal that he didn't plan to ever fully retire. Even if he could afford to.



Image by Polina on Pixabay

Instructions, inclinations, intentions and inspiration

Patricia Biondo reflects on some of the methods she uses in the classroom to keep the students and teacher relaxed which in turn creates a comfortable environment for deeper learning.

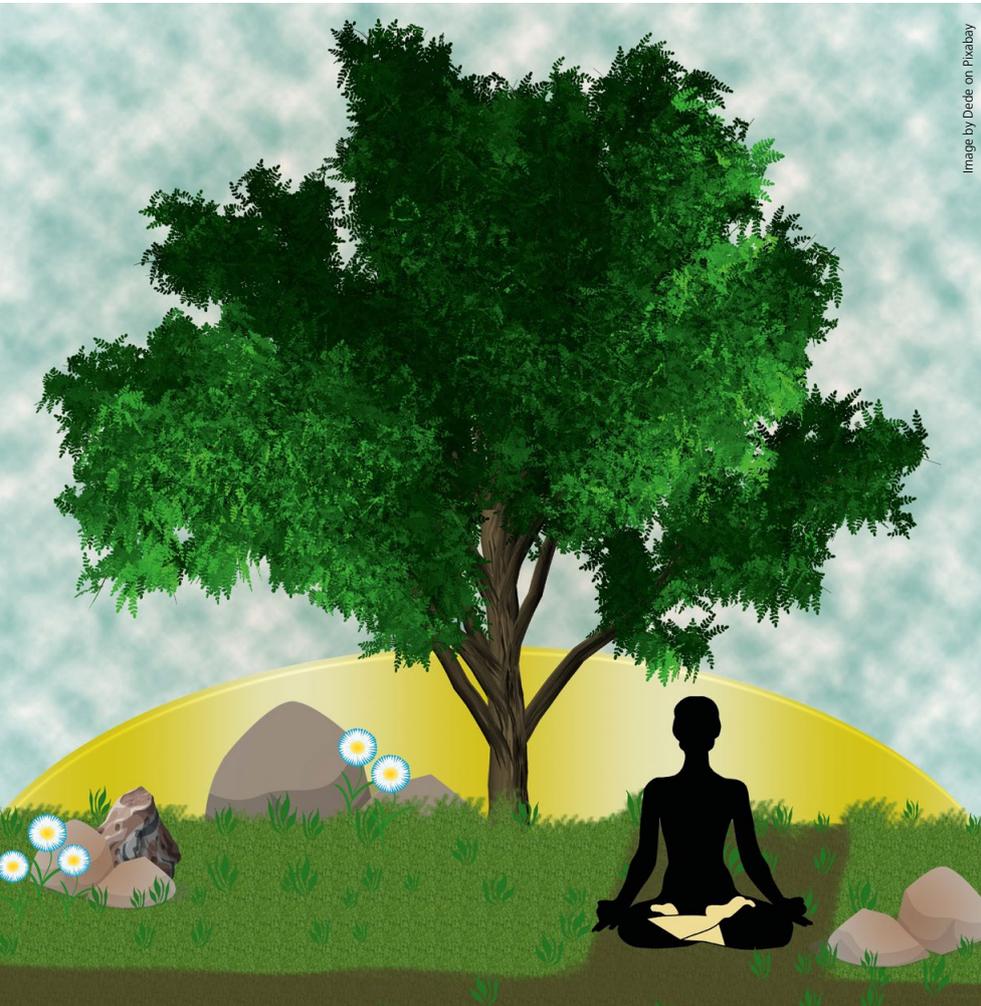


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We teachers are used to giving instructions with the best intentions, but do we align our goals and methods with the inclinations of our learners so as to inspire them?

Rapport, Relaxation and Reward

When we greet a new class, we are their host inviting them into our world, guiding them through strange territory. As foreigners in Germany, we know how important it is to feel accepted, welcomed, cared for. Rapport makes our learners feel at home. Many clients have come to me with an apprehensive or reluctant attitude to English. School papers full of red correction marks or criticism in class served to connect English in their minds with failure and

public humiliation, with our greatest fears as humans.

The carrot or the stick?

When I was first learning German, waiting for the tram with my handsome boyfriend, I proudly said, “Wir warten fuer die Strassenbahn”. He sternly corrected my grammar. I never again forgot that “wait” goes with “auf” in German, not “fuer”. However, it was a painful way to learn. I had felt chastized for venturing to speak. This is one of the experiences in German that later helped me to sympathize with my own clients. We all know how it feels to be embarrassed or encouraged. Praise is motivating, even if it is only acknowledgement of the intention to communicate.

Whereas stress chemicals released by the amygdala (our fight/ flight/ freeze survival response to perceived threat) shut off parts of the brain, a relaxed learner is open to new information, with a fully functioning brain. We lay the foundation for our participants to be receptive by valuing and honoring them. (Stress triggers that block learning can stay with us a life long, even if they are from childhood. To resolve such limitations is one reason I became a kinesiologist.)

Alignment, Attitudes, and Aspirations

We may enter the classroom with a set curriculum if we are teaching for a test. The criteria and the goals are clear. Yet many clients are in the midst of professional life, with exams no longer required. Their time spent in class is difficult to find and must yield direct, practical results. From all the skills we have to impart, only a subset may be relevant. Some groups do not need presentations or writing skills, others may not need intercultural competence in international virtual meetings, while still others may simply need to function in describing technical details and understanding various



Image by Pfüderl on Pixabay



accents. If what we teach is not aligned with what they need, our class will be a luxury for them.

That guy

I will never forget one client many years ago, a successful salesman who had sold equipment all over the world. He came up to me after a few days in class and said, “I never learned English before, and I see now that my grammar is all wrong, but it has been working fine for me.” He was a good communicator with a degree of fluency that was adequate for his needs. Ideally, we want to be sure our clients speak correctly. In reality, some of them only need to speak fluently with the accuracy in the content, not in the grammar. Some of us teach for the test, others teach for real life.

Perhaps “just for fun” is the third category – learners who like travel, who have no specific necessity to use English, who are interested in English and who want to enjoy themselves. These courses can go on for many happy years, and play a positive role in the quality of life of the participant(s). We teachers are sometimes akin to psychologists or “Dear Abby” sympathetic listeners, even advisors.

Safe harbor

Life is complex and challenging. A safe environment in which to express thoughts and feelings may be an important need our course fulfills. Anytime communication takes place, grammar, vocabulary, style, tone, sentence structure, intercultural appro-

priateness and other skills are in use and can be examined and enhanced.

So here we are, there is no “one size fits all”. Each learner is an individual with their own goals, needs and priorities. It is our job to be completely open to aligning our methods and our course content to what best suits our participants.

Motivation, Methods and Mindfulness

It is well known that learning styles vary, thus our materials offer exercises for the more visual, auditory, left-brain logical and/or right-brain associative types of learners. Clients can be encouraged to observe which styles are most effective for the way their brain works. Awareness is also required on the issue of motivation. In the old paradigm, men are traditionally motivated by competition, whereas women strive for group cohesion and cooperation. Do you prefer “You all did a great job” or “And the winner is....”? Whenever I jokingly award a “gold star” or a “brownie point” to one participant, I make sure to award them to others later on as well.

Remain flexible

We set the tone in our classroom, but let us always remember we want to make **our** world be **their** world. We need to provide whatever works best for the ones who entrust their learning to us. If we set up a competition, there are winners and losers. This is fine sometimes if done light-heartedly, but our goal is to get and keep every single

one on board. Be sure everybody wins. The other vital topic on motivation is relevance. Some are bored by articles about sport or politics, while others thrive on such topics.

Here again, we are called to be mindful and perceptive about the reactions of our clients. If we are in the middle of a carefully planned exercise, yet we notice interest is waning, we need to correct our course. And we do have a big toolbox to choose from, don’t we? Offering alternatives at such a point can be helpful. “Shall we continue with this exercise or would you prefer to...?”

If we keep our learners motivated by positive experiences on topics relevant to them, not only will we all have a more enjoyable time together, but their learning will be more effective.



Patricia Biondo is a kinesiologist and has taught English for many years across multiple levels, formats and themes.

How to motivate and be motivated

“The elevator to success is out of order. You’ll have to use the stairs, one step at a time.”

Joe Girard, American salesman, motivational speaker and author

Life often has unexpected twists and it happened to me. I started my teaching career as a schoolteacher of English. I learned how to teach a foreign language by visiting a lot of lessons at the nursery school - to watch how small children learn their native language - and by using the techniques I saw in my classes. The preparations for the lessons took a lot of time, but it was worth doing because my students were engaged in different activities and got good results; I myself was so much into the process that more and more ideas came into my mind. I had no idea about motivation and, I am sure, my students really didn’t need to think about it, they simply liked my lessons and inspired me to develop something new and interesting for them.

Now I understand that I myself motivated my students by organizing games and competitions, colouring, drawing, and cutting out pictures to practise new vocabulary, create stories, and role-play different fairy tales.

Later I started working at the First Kyiv State Courses of Foreign Languages. My students were adults and most of them were motivated – they paid money for the course, as they had goals – to learn the language for their careers, to get a higher salary, to travel and to make new friends, etc. It is a great pleasure to teach motivated students.

“Students like working in groups.
They feel more confident”

My life made an unexpected twist and I am again at school: now I am at the Polish school Ho-Ga (Hotel – Gastronomy).

The matter of motivation is in the air again. How to motivate modern children? How to surprise them and involve them in the English learning process? They are into their modern gadgets: smartphones, tablets and laptops. They enjoy music, TickTocks, films, and many more entertaining activities. How to make them remember new words, role-play situations, read a story or talk on the given topic? How to get good results in the tests?

Motivation is different for everyone. What motivates one person might fall flat with the next, and what specifically motivates the individual changes and evolves over

time. How do I try to cope with this? How do I try to motivate my students?

I **speak to them** as much as possible (not only in the lessons) – I ask them about Polish traditions, Polish cuisine, about the weather and the transport, about interesting places to visit...

For the lessons, as a warm-up, I use “Talk for a minute” cards on different topics. They do it in groups and check the time by themselves using timers on their mobiles. They make short reports about the most interesting, unexpected, or funny answers in class.



To know the participants better we can use the game “Find someone who...”

	Names of students
... was born in the same month	
... has the same food for breakfast	
... likes the same type of music	
... has as many brothers/sisters as you	

I **study with them** – I teach them English, and they teach me Polish. I ask them to correct my mistakes and pronunciation, so they feel ok if I correct them and ask to repeat something after me. One of their favourite activities is my set of English-Polish domino cards.

uczyć się języka	take a photo	robić zdjęcia	go out for a walk
iść na spacer	make a pastry	zrobić ciasto	go running
idź pobięgać	go cycling	jeździć na rowerze	read a book
czytać książkę	listen to music	posłuchać muzyki	learn the language

I could use pictures instead of Polish translation, but they like “my Polish” 😊.

Students like to find hidden words in the word puzzle.

GRILLING WORD SEARCH															WORDS		
E	T	S	O	B	C	Q	S	L	B	R	V	T	M	F	A	Barbecue	Lighter
D	R	O	F	K	I	G	P	G	O	L	A	D	H	E	I	Baste	Lunch
C	M	R	G	N	U	L	Q	L	D	E	K	A	T	O	A	Black	Marinade
N	A	A	Q	I	L	H	S	Q	L	L	R	D	M	N	I	Buns	Matches
O	R	W	N	Q	I	R	E	N	L	I	R	D	G	B	N	Clean	Meat
P	C	T	E	H	T	A	S	R	P	L	C	A	N	C	H	Cover	Mesquite
R	U	E	B	C	V	O	U	D	E	N	V	E	C	A	N	Crust	Outside
N	L	B	I	F	F	A	R	H	U	B	I	L	A	P	R	Dinner	Party
D	M	G	I	E	T	S	H	Y	C	F	S	T	B	O	S	Drips	Poultry
O	G	H	I	T	C	K	R	B	L	E	U	O	R	I	D	Fire	Propane
W	A	E	C	L	U	S	V	Y	P	A	B	Q	E	V	C	Fish	Pungent
A	T	R	L	Q	S	M	S	V	P	B	B	E	A	Q	L	Food	Rack
D	E	V	Q	E	P	M	S	O	R	K	E	U	K	S	T	Fuel	Sauce
B	T	P	Q	E	P	M	O	R	K	E	U	K	S	T	O	Grate	Sear
P	I	A	T	M	E	R	I	F	M	O	R	K	E	U	K	Grill	Smoke
																Hamburger	Spatula
																Hot	Steak
																Hot dog	Tongs
																Ignite	Wings
																Light	Wood
																	Yard

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally & diagonally throughout the puzzle.

They also like playing board games in groups. Students like working in groups. They feel more confident. I use these games to practise grammar. Here are two of them.

The image shows two educational board game cards. The first is titled 'PRESENT PERFECT - PAST SIMPLE Board game' and features a grid of 16 squares. Each square contains a question in either the Present Perfect or Past Simple tense, such as 'Have you ever been to a concert?' or 'Did you finish your homework?'. The second card is titled 'Have you ever...?' and contains a vertical list of questions like 'Have you ever broken a bone?' and 'Have you ever been on TV?'. It includes a 'Start' section with a die roll and a 'Finish' section with a 'Tell the truth!' prompt.

I sometimes make such puzzles by myself to practise the lesson's vocabulary or give the students empty cards to hide the words for their classmates to find. They like this activity very much and are always fully engaged in the process.

To entertain a little bit, I take along pictures with the words hidden inside and ask them to find them. For example, there are six hidden words here. Can you find them?



Natalia Semeniuk worked for many years as an English teacher in Kyiv, Ukraine. She now lives in Wroclaw, Poland, where she teaches at the Hotel-Gastronomy School, a training center for future hotel managers and restaurant waiters and chefs. She simply loves what she does. In the present crisis, she also helps volunteers in Ukraine by making money transfers on a permanent basis.

It is fun to make dialogues based on the pictures. Students can practise vocabulary by roleplaying the situations.

The image shows a sequence of illustrations for a roleplay dialogue. It starts with a man and a woman, then shows a hotel room, a bed, a desk, a calendar, a clock, a TV, a nightstand, a lamp, a suitcase, a key, and a room number '9'. The word 'TWO' is also visible, suggesting a two-person dialogue.

As they like games on their mobile phones, I suggest playing a game of Kahoot. It's a free game-based learning platform that makes it fun to learn.

Studying vocabulary with Quizlet is another fun way to remember a lot of new words by playing. You can also practise grammar with free interactive flashcards on Quizlet.

To teach modern kids English "you'll have to use the stairs... The elevator to success is out of order."

Early spring gardening that will bloom for years to come

Low-budget gardening? Interested? Then read on.



Planning your garden

At this time of year, the bane of all gardeners is roaming, mostly after dusk, and decimating the future brilliance, future colour and enjoyment of the garden. What's his name? SLUG, of course! Short of roaming the garden in your pyjamas with a torch light and tweezers, slugs are difficult to beat. So, plan your garden to provide brilliance, colour and enjoyment and avoid slugs by varying their menu choices. Here are some suggestions.

Campanulas come in various shapes and sizes and produce bell-shaped, mainly blue flowers. Mine grow to about 60 cm, and after flowering they produce little cup seed heads rather like those of the poppy. Like the poppy, they contain a wealth of seeds, which you can choose to sprinkle wherever you will. They will provide beautiful flowers the following year.

Gardening is like teaching in that you have to think ahead and plan forward while keeping the effort to an efficient minimum. You can use a lesson plan many times and you can use this year's seeds to save the pennies next year giving you again...brilliance, colour and enjoyment!

Diversifying your garden

A garden with only campanulas would not be all that enticing. We need a bit of variation and colour at different times of year too. Let's stay with the spring colours for a while. Did you plant daffodils in September? If you didn't, why not? They will flower year after year after year. I have well over a hundred bulbs planted under the grass. They provide a splash of brilliant yellow running up to Easter. The German name, *Osterglocken*, is helpful.

"Gardening is like teaching in that you have to think ahead and plan forward while keeping the effort to an efficient minimum"

What about Primulas? They provide early colour too, and after flowering they can be split and replanted to spread joy for the following year. Go



for a walk around the cemeteries after Easter. When the primulas have flowered, they are often tossed onto the compost heaps. There is life in them still! They can be rescued and put to work for your enjoyment the following year. Just spirit them off to their new garden and next year, hey presto, you have colour which costs you nothing. *Scilla sibirica*, in German, *Blaustern*, are small bulbs that you can plant in the grass in the autumn, preferably not where you walk. My mother had green fingers and a blue carpet over the lawn in the spring.

Note: this is important. You must leave bulbs under the grass to seed before you cut the grass. If you cut the grass too soon, you will lose the multiplier effect that seeds give! Similarly, the daffodil bulbs need to reabsorb the energy they used to produce the flowers. After flowering, snap off the spent heads. Leave the leaves standing until they are quite brown and only then gently pull the dried leaves off. That's usually after about 6 weeks. The bulbs stay underground until they perform their magic the next year. If you think the brown daffodil leaves are unsightly, you can lift the bulbs and put them somewhere dry and dark until the leaves are completely dry. Clean them in say July, just rubbing off the old dry bulb skin and leaves and compost them. The bulbs you store, cold and dark and dry until late September, when they can be planted again.

Detouring through your garden

Where was I? We got lost with the campanulas and made a detour via the daffodils and primulas. Aquilegias, in German, *Akelei*, compliment the campanulas with a spectrum of colours. They are not very demanding and have the wonderful virtue that they also produce dozens of seeds which you can spread on the garden for the following year. I almost forgot. The slugs leave them alone too!



So now for a third flower, one of my favourites, and slug-proof and much longer flowering than either of the first two. The perennial wall flower, or Erysimum,ⁱ will provide colour from March to December, if you keep cutting back the spent flower sprays. They produce a fairly hard wood stem

with florets of dark green lanceolateⁱⁱ leaves.

To take cuttings, cut 10 cm down the stem from the floret of leaves and using a blunt knife or secateurs lightly scrape off the outer layer of the stem to reveal the light green under-stem for two cm at the bottom of the cutting. Trimⁱⁱⁱ the leaves with the secateurs to half their length to reduce evaporation until they have produced roots. Plant the cuttings around the edge of a pot, put it out in the rain in a shady place and be patient!

In a couple of weeks, you will have your verdict. Green is good news; brown leaves mean tough! Make some more cuttings. I have a success rate of greater than 80%. Not all students are a success either. If you have

mixed-level groups, some students come to every lesson, others fall by the wayside.

I recommend *Erysimum*, Bowles's Mauve (see the link below).

If you have a balcony, you can put these 3 plants, Campanula, Aquilegia and Erysimum together into a 30 cm pot and they will provide a lot of joy for a long time. Don't forget to water them if they're in pots. You wouldn't like to go without a *Weißbier* for a week either!

I recommend the websites of the RHS in the UK. There is a wealth of help and tips and colour pictures to make you want to visit Wisley in Surrey or Kew Gardens in London or any number of places where you can get lost in wonderful gardens.

PS. Here are some useful web links if you want to delve deeper into the magical mysteries of gardening.

i <https://www.crocus.co.uk/rhs-of-fers-march-2015-erysimum/>

ii https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Examples-of-leaf-shapes_fig1_295685020

iii <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YzlrLLKrK94>



Arthur Barton is a retired accountant, with CELTA and a passion for teaching. He has been teaching for 10 years with the VHS and he teaches one-to-one Business English to people who value my business background. He loves gardening, swimming, reading and Italy, among other things.

AI for English teaching: An introduction

How can AI help English teachers improve their performance? To help find out, Melta reporters **Fabiola Uebelmesser**, **Olga Barlow** and **Steve Barlow** asked ChatGPT three questions. Here are the summarized results.

Melta: What are the most common problems in teaching English? Summarise in no more than three points.

ChatBot:

1. Common problems in teaching English include grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, cultural differences, motivation, and classroom management.
2. English teachers must find ways to engage students and make the learning experience fun and rewarding.
3. Effective teaching methodology and dedication are necessary for helping students achieve success in learning English.

Melta: What are the top three qualities of a good English teacher?

ChatBot:

1. Passion for the subject: Without passion, it's difficult to teach effectively and inspire students to learn.
2. Strong communication skills: Communication is key in teaching, and without strong communication skills, it's challenging to convey ideas and instructions effectively.
3. Patience and understanding: Patience and understanding are crucial for building relationships with students and helping them learn at their own pace.

Melta: How can I make my English teaching more interesting? Summarise by suggesting just three tips.

ChatBot:

1. Use multimedia: Incorporate videos, songs, and other multimedia materials into your lessons to make them more engaging and interactive.
2. Encourage discussion: Encourage students to share their thoughts and opinions and engage them in discussions to promote critical thinking and communication skills.
3. Vary your teaching methods: Use a variety of teaching methods, such as lectures, group work, and individual assignments, to keep the lessons fresh and engaging.

“Teaching is an area where chatbots will have a big impact. Watch this space!”

Whereas the answers may seem obvious and predictable, they present a useful opportunity for reflecting on our teaching practice. Based on globally available data, they provide convincingly reasoned solutions that are sensible to follow.

Chatbots and AI in general are going to affect every aspect of human activity over the next decade. At their heart, language models have a simple operating principle. They are trained using vast amounts of data from the Internet to predict the most likely next word in a sentence. Using this simple mechanism, they can take a user question and generate one word at a time the most likely continuation into an answer. The results are amazing, showing nuance, world knowledge and reasoning.



Fabiola hails from 3 Southwestern states: California, Texas and Colorado. She has been teaching English and Business English in Munich for more than 25 years and has been a Melta member since 2006. She enjoys going to international conferences, World Expos and FC Bayern soccer games.



Olga Barlow is an EFL teacher and Russian-English interpreter and translator from Cambridge, UK. She teaches English at MVHS and Klenze-Gymnasium.



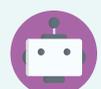
Steve Barlow is an engineer and entrepreneur and leads the team developing large language models at Graphcore <https://www.graphcore.ai/>, the UK AI company.

Teaching is an area where chatbots will have a big impact. With appropriate development, they can support a teacher by chatting one-to-one with learners, identifying their weaknesses, driving forward a curriculum and providing personal answers when the learner doesn't understand. Watch this space!



Thank you

You are welcome



Christmas party 2022 – Great new venue with Christmas card backdrops

On Saturday, 10 December, Melta had its first face-to-face Christmas Party since 2019. Our intrepid reporter, **Tim Howe**, was there to enjoy the food, festivities and fun, and he was kind enough to share some of his experiences with *Melta News*.

The odds seemed stacked against a large turnout for the first “in-the-flesh” Christmas Party since Covid. First, it was at an unfamiliar new venue. Second, some regulars were feeling poorly, while others cancelled last minute because of heavy snowfall. Last not least, we were up against the prime-time World Cup, as England braced themselves for battle with France.

In the end, 19 members joined the 2022 edition which was quite different from any you may remember at Gasteig. For one thing, our first Christmas party at VHS Bogenhausen couldn't have had a more fitting backdrop – a snow-bedecked winter wonderland you'll more likely see these days just on Christmas cards and Hugh Grant yuletide romcoms.

Some things never change though, such as the veritable smorgasbord of a buffet. Fastest to fly off the table were, as always, homemade goodies such as quiches, assorted hummus spreads

“It did us loads of good to get back together after a two-year Covid-enforced hiatus”

and pasta pesto salads. And let's not forget Mrs Brown's sumptuously chewy “blond” brownies. Thanks for the recipe, Kerstin!

Non-edible highlights of this year's party included a bumper book sale (all

proceeds to Ukraine teachers' fund), a nice biblical quiz by Elie, a line-up of traditionally highly competitive team games, such as Miles' A-Z of Christmas words, and a revamped version of 12 Days of Christmas. Oh, and great fun despite the lack of the usual piano, the traditional carol sing-along (thank you, Phylis). This concluded with “O Little Town of Bethlehem”, so beautifully duetted by Jo and Cathy, our very own membership secretary.

It did us loads of good to get back together after a two-year Covid-enforced hiatus. Special thanks to Randy and Joan for making both this evening and the move from Gasteig to Bogenhausen such a success.



Five-a-Day in action

Miles Parker reports on a workshop given by Melta's Bethan Stokes before the AGM.

All good shows need a lively opening act and that's what Bethan Stokes provided at her workshop before Melta's AGM. Bethan is a regular contributor to Melta News with her student-centered, teacher-helpful ideas for classroom activities. Her 90-minute workshop was an opportunity for all of us to see her in action up close and personal.

We weren't disappointed.

The workshop opened with Bethan stressing three key points for all teachers to keep in mind:

Plan. Stay focused on what you want to achieve. "What do I want to accomplish in class?"

Adapt. Be ready to readjust activities to the ever-changing classroom situation. "This group is not what I expected. How can I change things?"

Reflect. At the end of the exercise, assess how everything went and how it might be improved in the future. "How did that go? Should I do it differently next time?"



Bethan had put together four classroom activities to showcase for Melta.

Activity 1: Speaking Stations 🗣️👥 Participants divided up into four groups and went to different corners of the room, where suggested topics + questions were posted for them to discuss.

The Speaking Stations' topics were:

[Munich](#)

[You](#)

[Your Job](#)

[ChatGPT](#)

Short, five-minute discussions ensued before groups rotated to the next station. Getting students up and moving helps activate and motivate conversation.

Activity 2: Short Dictation 🗣️👉

We were asked to record all the conjugated verbs that we heard from a short, prepared text.

When we finished, Bethan instructed us to group the verbs together in whatever way we wanted. Grouping the verbs according to tenses, their structure and why a tense was appropriate was effective in raising language awareness. Criteria to consider in this grouping were whether the verbs were used for current, unfinished, finished or future actions. (I tried this out two nights later in my B2 class, and it went well.)

"Games are an effective way to maintain student motivation, reduce anxiety and get them to keep coming back to class"

Activity 3: Five Second Rule 🕒👉

In this activity, somewhat similar to 'Scategories', students are given a category and five seconds to name three exponents/examples of that category. This is a fun way to get students to think on their feet.

Example: FRUIT... Apple, peaches and pears.

(This low-prep activity was language productive and fun for my A1/2 seniors.)

Before we did this activity, Bethan demonstrated by showing a short YouTube video of the game being played on TV 📺

Activity 4: Small Talk Bingo 🎮

Students in pairs or small groups are given playing cards A and B.

Each card has a list of five words that players have to elicit/coax their oppo-



Miles Parker is from Maine but loves living in Munich. He enjoys riding his bike 🚲 out to his veggie garden 🌱 and watching vintage films 🎬

nent to say, crossing out the words as they are said. This game reminded me of the old Groucho Marx show, "You Bet Your Life", where contestants won cash prizes if they said a "magic word".

Games are an effective way to maintain student motivation, reduce anxiety and get them to keep coming back to class.

All our tasks were completed cheerfully and enthusiastically in small groups at individually, pre-arranged tables. Bethan also suggested playing background music available on YouTube to create a comfortable working atmosphere. Music soothes the soul.

In the moments of reflection after tasks were completed, we considered issues like teaching seniors, smaller groups and the various language abilities of our students.

It was time well spent, and my only regret is that it ended all too soon. Regrets were quickly allayed by the delicious refreshments that were served at the end of Bethan's presentation. Resplendent in the Ukrainian colors, Sasha Owens' cake was yet another of her outstanding culinary creations.



Five-a-Day in action – Takeaways

It's always interesting and often useful to see what others take away from workshops – they might have focused on something different or they might remind you of something you've forgotten. At the end of the “Five-a-Day in action” workshop, all participants were asked to answer the question: “What's your takeaway from today?” Here's the result:

- Less is more! You don't need a cupboard full of books and worksheets – just a few really generative activities.
- Good ideas for adapting and extending activities.
- Adapt, extend, manage is good.
- Lots of food for thought: How am I going to use these ideas with my students? I'm definitely planning to use them!
- I liked the way students grouped tenses but am not sure whether my students would be analytical enough to do this.
- Fun, new interactive classroom activities. Great for keeping out monotony.
- Remember to think like the students. Put yourself in their place – try to see the activity through their eyes. (Why I thought this? The 'tenses' activity.)
- The tasks inspire me to try out more 'fun' ways of dealing with 'mundane' topics and tasks e.g. vocab/grammar.
- Activities to get students moving around the classroom.
- Four very practical activities! Small talk bingo: could lead to unnatural conversation. Like student A only wants the key words and not the full sentence.
- Sometimes, some games we may consider boring or ineffective, may actually be the best activities that help students.
- Do something different like speaking stations and get people up and moving!
- Great '5-second' activity.
- Definitely need to incorporate more games/activities into classes!
- The importance of staying focused when planning and conversely reflecting after the lesson.

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Melta mission statement

Melta is a regional professional association for all teachers of English working in the Munich area: freelance teachers at companies, private schools and the *Volkshochschule* as well as state school teachers. Established In 1989, Melta is part of a wider network of English teachers' organisations throughout Europe and has especially close ties to other English Language Teachers Associations (ELTAs) in Germany. Melta is also affiliated to the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL).

Melta provides a forum for information and experience exchange, training and teacher development and social contact and support. Melta's activities include presentations by leading EFL/ESL guest speakers and practical workshops and demonstrations.

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Be a teacher, not a tester!

A seminar on learner-friendly assessment methods for the classroom – Part one

Maria Davou conducted an online seminar on constructive and creative ways of testing students. **Mareike Sedlmeier** was there to share her insights with you.

When we met on Saturday, 11 February, for a seminar on classroom-based assessment, the war in Ukraine made itself felt even online. Unfortunately, it was not possible for Ukrainian guest members to attend the lecture, probably due to power outages. After a few minutes of delay waiting for the Ukrainians, we started the seminar without them.

“According to Maria, the key is to put the learner not only at the centre of the learning process but also the assessment process”



Seminar presenter Maria Davou

Maria started by collecting criteria of student enjoyment (SE), which most of us related to fun, a relaxed and communicative atmosphere, meaningful and attractive materials, building confidence and giving a voice and choice to the learners. That student enjoyment is closely connected to motivation and achievement may be obvious. But how can assessment add to SE? Is that possible at all?

According to Maria, the key is to put the learner not only at the centre

of the learning process but also the assessment process. This means that our lesson objective (“What do I want them to achieve”) must be complemented by the students’ objective (“What do they want to achieve?”). Maria’s philosophy is always to stay a teacher in the first place, i.e., not to become a fierce “tester” when assessing our students. How can that be done? Maria presented a broad variety of methods and ideas that help us obtain information and provide feedback in a learner-friendly way. Here is part one of the Dos and Don’ts of classroom-based assessment.

Pick your battles

Do not correct all types of errors at the same time. Focus on one specific aspect instead and tell your students what it is. Are you testing for fluency? Or for punctuation? Or for correct tenses? Do you assess language or content? It will give them a sense of security to know what they are being tested for. The difficulty of the test should follow the i+1 rule: add only one new aspect to your test. Every few weeks, you can have a bigger test that covers all the aspects you dealt with in class.

Create a photo album, not a snapshot

Have your students take many small tests rather than just one big exam at the end of the course or year. Focus on the tiny improvements the learners make instead of their mistakes. Two simple ideas are “the happy note home” and “two stars and a wish”. In the first case, you give each student a note with only positive feedback. Even a weak learner probably does his best, so acknowledge every effort they make. For “two stars and a wish”, note two positive things and one that leaves room for improvement. With this regular form of feedback, you can track your students’ development and obtain a good overall picture instead of just a snapshot.

Demand feedback

Take the time to get feedback every once in a while. To that end, you can ask them to fill in a “two stars and a wish”-card for yourself. Or you make a small pause and have the students hold up “yes” or “no” cards to see if they understood the point you were trying to make. With younger learners, you can label the four corners of the room with “stop”, “slow down”, “keep moving” and “I can help”. The pupils can then choose a corner for themselves, thus providing you with valuable information about how to proceed.

In the second part of the seminar, more elaborate testing techniques and strategies were presented. To learn more about them, read part two of this article which will be published in the next issue of the *Melta News*. Until then, I will definitely try the above methods in my classroom and see what happens ...



Mareike Sedlmeier was born in Munich in 1988. After studying English and French, she worked as a translator for the Military History Museum (MHM) in Dresden and the CBRN Defence, Safety and Environmental Protection School in Sonthofen. But she soon felt that she was making more of a difference when helping her colleagues improve their own writing instead of translating their texts for them, and she decided it was time for a change. In 2020 she took the CELTA course in Munich and has been teaching for VHS since then.

Munich's 25th St Patrick's Day celebrations – Melta makes its mark

Impressions from **Tim Howe**

There was hardly any mistaking us – garnished in green mortarboard caps, we clearly hail from academia. However, wedged up against six or so stiff upper-bodied Irish dancers, and with a scary-looking bunch of Nordic warlords closing in from behind, I fancy we'd blend in better at somewhere like the Eurovision Song Contest. Whether all that qualifies us for divine blessing is debatable, but an Irish priest suddenly pops up out of nowhere and wants us all together in a photo.

Suddenly, Munich's English language teachers are off. Sleet, snow-showers, hailstones – as we march down Ludwigstrasse, meteorologically just about anything could fall from the heavens. Still, no less unpredictable and as variable as your typical Irish weather mix. And, despite a lower-than-usual turnout (we peak at ten strong just before Odeonsplatz), spirits are flying as high as the Melta banner we're proudly parading.

The reward is a free Guinness, with which we merrily 'prost' each other to the sound of Irish bands playing at the foot of the Feldherrnhalle. Oh, and just as we're least expecting, what happens? Divine approval once again - the sun starts shining.



“Spirits are flying as high as the Melta banner we're proudly parading”



Integrating Ukrainian schoolchildren – A status report

Melta News interviews Ukrainian English teacher and *Melta* member, **Larysa Andreiko**.

Larysa Andreiko moved to Munich following the Russian invasion of Ukraine last year. Since May 2022, she's been at the cutting edge of efforts to integrate Ukrainian refugee children into the Bavarian school system. We asked her how the integration is going, what she's learned in the process, what implications her work has for English teaching in general, and what the future holds. Here are her answers:

Melta: Where and what were you teaching in Ukraine?

I was teaching English to undergraduate and postgraduate students at Sumy State University. The modules I taught included General English, Business English, English for Professional Communication in the International Context, English for Exams, English for Job-hunting, English for Meetings and English for Presentations.

Melta: Where are you teaching now and what does your work entail?

I'm now teaching German and have recently begun teaching English to Ukrainian students in the bridge class in Freiham Gymnasium. Apart from teaching, I act as a contact person for teachers, children and parents. My responsibilities include "onboarding" and welcoming new Ukrainian children, liaising with the other teachers, solving any issues that arise in the process of learning, completing assessment forms and summarizing feedback from the other teachers about the progress Ukrainian students are making in German, Math and English.

Melta: Have you noticed any major differences between the Bavarian and Ukrainian school systems?

The Bavarian and Ukrainian school systems differ in many ways, including the structure of their education systems, types of schools and length of schooling. However, what impressed me most in the Bavarian school system was the manner and the philosophy

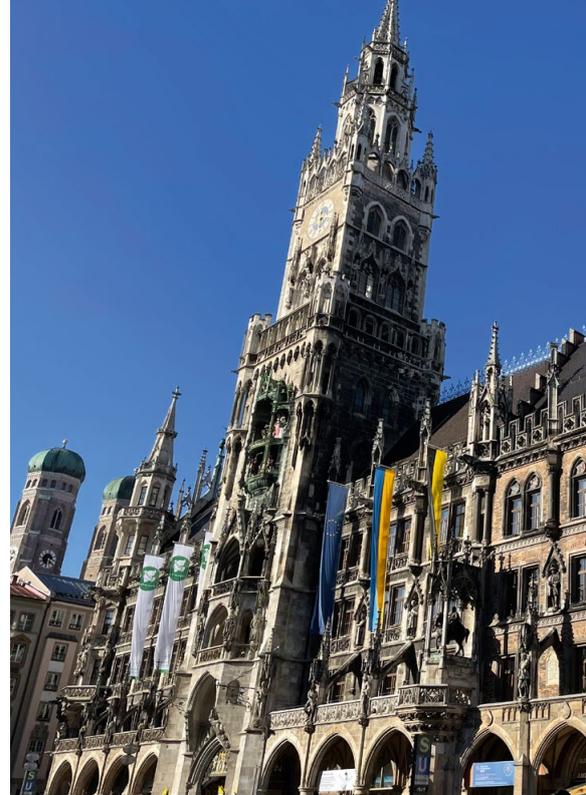
of learning. It's worth noting though that Freiham Gymnasium has a unique learning environment and a learning concept. To start with, the school building with all its facilities is cutting edge, classroom walls are made from glass, and there are spacious halls with comfortable movable furniture, screens and podiums. During lessons, the students often work in pairs or groups in the hallways, moving the furniture the way they like to suit their learning needs. The idea is to make them responsible for their own learning by developing trust, teamwork and autonomy. In Ukraine, children are used to a more teacher-centered approach where control is of primary importance.

"During lessons, the students often work in pairs or groups in the hallways, moving the furniture the way they like to suit their learning needs"

Melta: Who are your students? How old are they? What are their backgrounds and aims?

There are 14 students in my class now: 12 boys and two girls. Their ages range from 12 to 16. They come from different parts of Ukraine and from different types of schools. Some of them speak pretty good English, which makes it a bit easier for them to get by. The school administration has once again acted very proactively and provided English lessons twice a week for those students who need extra help with the language in order to improve their further educational prospects in Germany.

In the subjects that are taught in German, the Ukrainian students are really struggling to follow the curriculum because of the language barrier. For example, in Math, they can easily do the calculations, but if the task has a lot of text in German, they usually have a hard time understanding it.



"In the subjects that are taught in German, the Ukrainian students are really struggling to follow the curriculum because of the language barrier"

Their aims vary as well. There are some students whose homes in Ukraine were destroyed by the war, and they have nowhere to return to. There are some students who are determined to stay in Germany even after the war finishes. Others are dreaming of going back to their hometowns to reunite with their families and friends. Hence their motivation to learn German is different.



Larysa Andreiko was previously Associate Professor in the Foreign Languages Department of Sumy State University in eastern Ukraine. She's taught for the British Council in Kyiv and worked as an online educational consultant in the U.S. education system. She's currently working as an educational coordinator and language teacher for Ukrainian refugee students at Freiham Gymnasium in Munich.



Melta: How is your program structured/designed? What are its aims? How does it work?

In the bridge class, the students have 10 hours of German with me and 4 extra hours of English (only those who need support with it). For the rest of their lessons, the Ukrainian students are with their regular German classes.

In German, we are at A2.2. level, now moving towards B1 by the end of the school year. We're using *Das DaZ-Buch 2*, which is specially designed to help children from different countries integrate into the German school system. The more I work with this textbook the more I am convinced of how logically and thoughtfully the material is presented. Especially valuable is that it gradually introduces important terminology and formats of typical German school assignments. In this way, the students are not only learning German, but also preparing themselves for full-fledged study in a German class. Apart from that, there is a large selection of teaching materials and tips available both in the teacher resource book and online.

Melta: What teaching methods are you using? Are they successful? Why or why not?

Having taught English to adult learners my entire life, when I first started teaching here I used the same methods and techniques. But I soon realized that with teenagers this does not work. As I said before, they are used to the more teacher-centered mode, where

the teacher must control everything. When asked to work in pairs, my students only start working when I approach them. Otherwise, they just chat. The same happens when they are working in groups.

“Teaching teenagers is really demanding. What always works well though is a competition”

Teaching teenagers is really demanding. I may spend hours preparing an activity, but it may end up being a total disaster. What always works well though is a competition. I usually have a few ideas up my sleeve that I can use if things do not go as planned.

Melta: What problems are you having? How are they being addressed?

The major problem is maintaining discipline. When the students come to my German lesson in the bridge class from their regular German classes, they find themselves in a familiar environment among peers speaking the same language, an opportunity for sharing their news and experiences they feel they cannot miss. On the one hand, I'm glad that they've developed friendships and feel my classroom is a safe place. But on the other hand, they don't keep focused on the lesson.

After having experimented with some classroom management techniques, I discovered Classcraft. Classcraft has turned out to be a very effective tool that has helped me deal with my classroom situation. In fairness, my students have not magically become disciplined and committed at once, but Classcraft has significantly increased their motivation and engagement.

It's an interactive classroom management platform that's designed along the lines of a computer game: each student chooses a character and an avatar; they can gain “experience points” and “powers” for positive behaviors (for example, for doing their

homework, being hardworking, completing a task) or lose points and pay “pledges” for negative behaviors (for example, for being disruptive in class or not having done their homework). If they earn enough “powers” they can use them, for example, to eat in class or to skip answering a question. The whole class is divided into teams, and they compete against each other.

“Classcraft has turned out to be a very effective tool that has helped me deal with my classroom situation. I highly recommend that teachers working with teenagers try it out”

Honestly, I was quite surprised that even older students get so involved in the game. There are a couple of students who do not seem to care about getting points, but the rest are very interested. I highly recommend that teachers working with teenagers try it out.

Melta: Have you developed any approaches, methods and/or materials that could be transferred to other teaching situations?

I would like to share some online resources that I cannot now imagine teaching without and that can be used in various teaching contexts. My four absolute favorites are Quizlet, Wordwall, Jamboard and, more recently, ChatGTP.

I regularly prepare Quizlet sets with the new vocabulary for my students. They practise them in class, we play Quizlet-live, and then they write translation dictations (this is something that I never did with my adult learners, but my teenagers need a bit of control).

Wordwall is a lifesaver. It takes me literally minutes to create activities, which I use mainly for recycling vocabulary.

I use Jamboard as a lead-in, for introducing new vocabulary and working with pictures. My students like it as well. They use it for individual and team projects.

“ChatGPT has made a real difference in my teaching. This tool can create and adapt teaching materials according to the level”

ChatGPT has made a real difference in my teaching. I’ve been inspired by Russel Stannard and Jo Gakonga’s YouTube videos about how to use it in teaching a language. What I especially like is that this tool can create and adapt teaching materials according

to the level. For example, I ask the chat to create 5 discussion questions in German for language learners A1-A2 on the topic “Essen”, including the target vocabulary that we’re studying, and within minutes I have a list of questions I can immediately use in my classroom.

“By the end of this school year, the students are expected to have a B1 level in German”

Melta: What’s next for you and your students?

At the moment, the Bavarian Department of Education is collecting information about the performance of Ukrainian students. My colleagues

(teachers of Math and English) and I are going to carry out the second round of assessment based on certain criteria. After that, the students will receive recommendations about what type of school is most suitable for them. By the end of this school year, they’re expected to have a B1 level in German so that they can join a regular German class. Most likely there will be no bridge classes in Freie Ham Gymnasium, but perhaps there will be some in other schools.

Melta: Thank you very much, Larysa. Keep up the good work!



Patti Smith’s *A Book of Days*

Melta member **Angelika Dehoust** reports on her latest reading, a picture book from the Rock icon, Patti Smith.

Patti Smith’s *A Book of Days* is a book I would like to recommend.

Not only is Patti Smith an icon of punk with her seminal album *Horses*, which has been hailed as one of the top 100 albums of all time, but also the writer of several books and numerous collections of poetry and essays, inspired by French symbolists, and above all, Rimbaud.

She is modest and a lady of great beauty with long grey hair, who turned 76 in December of last year.

I heard her in concert at the Tollwood Festival last summer, with her son on lead guitar. It was marvelous listening to her conveying a political message and addressing the audience between

her songs – one of the best concerts I have ever attended.

Now back to her latest book: composed over the course of a calendar year, *A Book of Days* presents 366 miniature windows and dispatches into the world of the visionary writer, poet and performer. With her Polaroid Land Camera 250, Patti Smith chronicles her journeys since 1996 in haunting instant photographs: a writer’s chair, a husband’s saxophone, the beds of poets, snapshots from her daily life, etc.

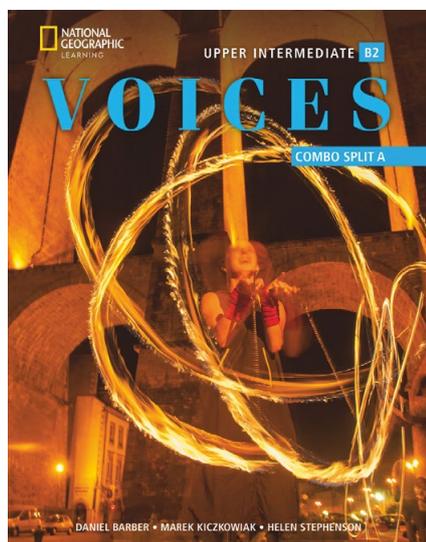
A book you should read!

[Pictures are always an excellent tool to use in the classroom! – editor]

“It was marvelous listening to her conveying a political message and addressing the audience between her songs”

National Geographic's *Voices* – Bringing the world to all classrooms

Tim Howe gives *Melta News* his perspective on National Geographic's *Voices B2*, his second review of the series. The first review for *Voices* appeared in *Melta News* in autumn of 2022.



National Geographic's *Voices Upper Intermediate (B2)*

by Daniel Barber &
Marek Kiczowskiak

The bumph on National Geographic's website undertakes to "help learners use English as a tool for global communication, encouraging them to celebrate connections among people from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds". Having reviewed *Voices Elementary* in *Melta News* last summer, I was curious how well NG deliver this pledge at a more advanced level.

Totalling ten units, *Voices B2* covers topics from 'Unfamiliar places' and 'Healthy mind, healthy body' to 'Incredible technology'. All units comprise four lessons, each beginning with an overview of the session's goals. There is a good mixture of pair work, mostly related to – as you'd probably expect from NG – tons of stunning photography from around the world. This moves on to reading and debating topical articles specially written for the book. As well as plentiful fun-to-do grammar exercises, you'll find further exercises for each unit at the back of the book, all alongside easily digestible explanations of the most common rules. Fast finishers and high-flyers should appreciate the 'Explore More!' activity at the end of each unit, which

typically encourages them to go online and research the topic further.

Sadly, as with *Voices Elementary*; this book doesn't automatically come with audio-visual material. Trying the link on the inside cover, I hit on an error message. Given that so many activities in *Voices* are based on audio-visual resources, this doesn't appear to tally with the promise of a 'global tool for communication'. Earlier this year, I contacted the marketing manager at Cornelsen, who promised to look into the matter, and that was the last I heard from them.

Summing up, if you're willing to forgo audio-visual content, *Voices B2* is a highly practical book that you'll enjoy dipping in and out of whenever you and your students fancy a bit of arm-chair travelling. It certainly lives up to its promise of celebrating connections among people from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds – these range from Poland to Polynesia and ethnic minorities are most definitely not a minority in this series. And, just like *Voices Elementary*, you could easily cover each of the four-part units within an hour.

Image by Gerdt Altmann on Pixabay



Tim Howe provides training, translating and interpreting services to businesses and higher education. He blogs about the brighter side of expat life at <https://knowhoweforenglish.blogspot.com>



Image by Gerd Altmann on Pixabay

Melta events: Spring and Summer 2023

April 29: 2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Rob Howard: Skill building through activities for business English

Today, business English teaching requires a distinct set of skills, best practices and strategies to help students reach their full potential. This workshop will address the challenges and present activities in negotiating, versatility and readiness through upskilling your own intuition and improvisation abilities.

Rob Howard is, among other things, a teacher, coach and writer on business English, the vice president of IATEFL Poland and a joint coordinator of IATEFL BESIG.

July 1: 9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Alex Warren: Maximizing the power of real-world content in the language classroom

Using real-world content, scenarios and activities in the language classroom is a must for learning to happen. With examples from NGL's *Voices* series, this workshop will explore how National Geographic content can enable teachers to truly bring the classroom to life.

In the pipeline:

An online workshop with Ian McMaster: Tips on journalistic writing

An in-person show-and-tell workshop at which Melta members can showcase their favourite teaching ideas

The annual Melta beer garden social at the end of July

More information about these and other events will be posted on the Melta website as soon as scheduling is complete.

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- design their own activities to suit the learner
- create a positive learning environment

To successfully complete a CELTA course, participants are required to attend 100% of the course, complete 6 hours of assessed teaching practice (including detailed lesson planning), write four assignments and complete 6 hours of observation of experienced teachers.

To find out more and to apply please visit www.mvhs.de/celta



Aunt Agony

Your Aunt Agony advises you on those tricky teaching situations. Should you have a question or feedback for Aunt Agony, please send it to melta.news@melta.de.

Dear Aunt Agony

Recently, a course participant in an online group asked me to write the mistakes the group made on the white-board or in the shared Word document and go through them at the end of the lesson.

I actually prefer to write the corrected version of what they say and go through these sentences. My question now is: which method is more effective? What are the pros and cons of each scenario?

Any advice would be appreciated.

Doubtful in Deisenhofen

Dear Doubtful

Giving feedback can sometimes be tricky. It is, however, one of the most important roles a trainer has. It is true that writing down sentences containing mistakes for the students to see could be reinforcing the mistakes in the students' minds. At the same time, students need to know what their mistakes are, and many appreciate having them recorded in black and white so they can go through them later. I think it is safe to do so if it is visually clear that the incorrect sentence IS wrong, by typing it with a line through it, before writing out the correct version next to it. It is always important to review new language, so use the Word document in the following lesson and go through it again, just with the mistakes showing, so that students can try to correct them again.

Dear Aunt Agony

I have taught a class of factory workers for four years. They have not had any urgent need for English, until now. The situation has changed and some of them have to teach factory methods to colleagues in other countries where the common language is English. The trouble is, they only have lessons once a week and do not otherwise use English in their free time. They are not using it, they are losing it... we cover similar material almost every week because they have forgotten it, despite the lesson notes I carefully craft for them after each lesson. I have tried everything, trying to make the lessons as relevant and enjoyable for them as possible.

Are my expectations too high? Should I be content with getting them to laugh a few times?

Thanks.

Frustrated Fiona in Freieham

Dear Frustrated Fiona

I can empathize with you completely. I have taught lower-level technicians, welders, mechanics in the past, too. They also needed to train other employees in English in subsidiaries overseas.

However, they were given an intensive course by their company over a 6-week period, and two trainers were involved. One focussed more on general English and the other on the technical processes directly relevant to their work.

These were face-to-face lessons with a lot of hands-on stuff in the production plant and in the classroom (with tools, objects, etc.).

Perhaps you could suggest a more intensive program to the training manager in the company.

Laughing is essential, but progress with a purpose, too.

Good luck!



Rhyming Corner

Nothing new, but still so true

English is a frightful tongue
 'Tis best to learn it when you're young
 So many words are stolen goods
 Can't see the tree for all the woods
 Pardon me, wood for the trees
 Do accept my apologies
 The pronunciation and spelling, too
 No logic here to get you threw
Through is what I meant to write
 Perhaps it's time to say goodnight
 Not yet, there's work to do, I fear
 To shed some light and make things clear
So here we go
 Somewhat strange but no witchcraft
 When the door's ajar there may be a draught
 Not good for cows, not good for trout
 If the summer's dry, we experience drought
 Six foot tall when I stand upright
 Yes, that's me and that's my height
 After binging on sweets, it's the diet we hate
 Yet so many of us wish to lose weight
 Baking cookies and cakes I do like so
 What do we need to make the dough
 We've got some time, we have an hour
 Here's butter, sugar, eggs and flour
 To a recipe we may refer
 And the mixture we will have to stir
 We make the cake with so much lovin'
 Ready now to pop in the oven
 I could go on for evermore
 But will desist from being a bore
 Don't give up on English, pretty please
 With all its quirks and idiosyncrasies



Juliana Oosten is originally from New Zealand and has been living in Munich since 1986. After doing a TEFL course in London, she began teaching English in a small language school and later focussed on in-company courses teaching general, business and technical English. She became a member of MELTA in 2020.



Image by Mohamed Hassan on Pixabay



Image by Dean Mairston on Pixabay

melta

Munich English Language Teachers Association e.V.
c/o Randy Perry, Montgelastr. 6, 81679 München

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<http://www.melta.de/join-us>

The Munich English Language Teachers Association (Melta) is a regional professional association for all teachers of English working in the Munich area: teachers at companies, private schools and the Volkshochschule (VHS), as well as state school teachers. Established in 1989, Melta is part of a wider network of English teachers' organisations throughout Europe and has especially close ties to the other English Language Teachers Associations (ELTAs) in Germany. Melta is also affiliated with the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL).

Guest speakers and practical workshops

By attending and taking part in Melta events you can pick up new ideas and re-evaluate your own teaching. There are regular presentations and lectures in which you can meet leading people from the EFL/ESL field. The workshops also give you a chance to meet other teachers as well as to contribute your own ideas about English language teaching and discuss them. You can question your own and others' ideas about language training topics, helping you to become a better-informed and more effective trainer in the process. You will also receive a copy of our newsletter, *Melta News*, written by members for members, three times a year. *Melta News* includes topical articles on a range of ELT topics, interviews, and reviews of seminars, books and videos. There is also a calendar of local and international events in every issue.

Social events

The Melta calendar also lists social events, including our summer and Christmas get-togethers.

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- Training and teaching development
- Social contact and support

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- Practical workshops and demonstrations
- Our newsletter, *Melta News*, three times a year
- Social events

Melta online – www.melta.de

On the Melta website you'll find:

- A programme of upcoming Melta events
- Job offers
- Links to interesting topics
- A list of teachers. All Melta members are invited to add their name.
- Teaching resources

Whether you've just arrived in Munich or have been here some time,

Have you moved?

If so, please let the membership secretary have your new address.

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No direct debit? Allow Melta to set up a direct debit (*Einzugsermächtigung*) for you and you won't have to remember to transfer the fee yourself at the beginning of each year. Just contact treasurer@melta.de and the form will be emailed to you.

Do you have a direct debit and have changed banks? If so, please let the treasurer know! Melta incurs a penalty of €8 for each refused direct debit. Please help us to avoid the hassle of claiming this penalty fee back from you!

Melta provides a local opportunity for you to keep your teaching ideas and skills up to date and finely tuned and to contribute and exchange your own ideas if you wish. In addition, you have the chance to meet other people on both a professional and a social level. Come along to our next meeting and find out more. Our events are listed on www.melta.de.

The annual subscription is only €35 (€15 for full-time students, €100 for institutional membership) which includes our newsletter and free entrance to most Melta events. You can read Melta's articles of association at www.melta.de/Articles-of-Association.

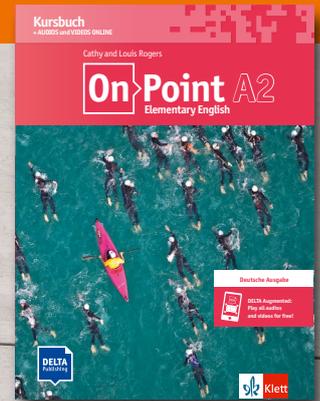
For more information, visit our website at www.melta.de or contact: Randy Perry, Chair
chair@melta.de

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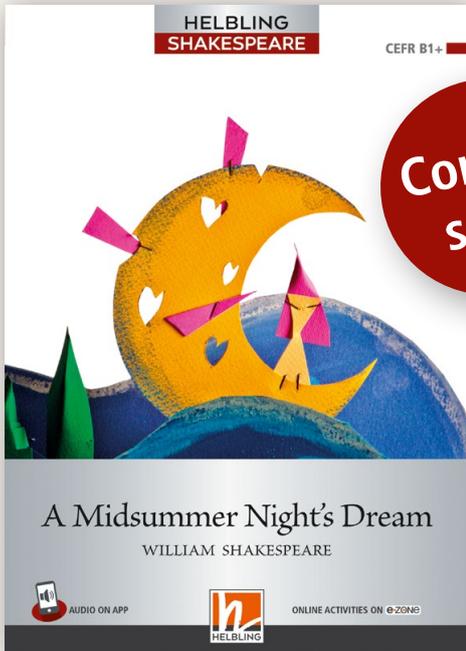


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