melta

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Diaphragms and uvulas

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ABBA on Melta Day

Blackout Poetry

Learn the secret to unlocking
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NEU

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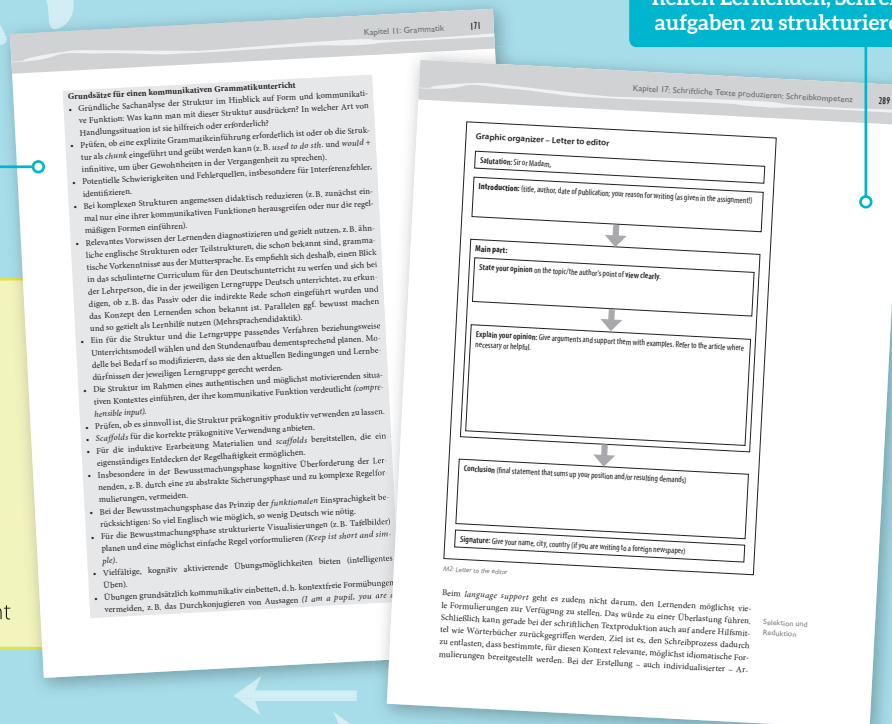*Graphic organizers* helfen Lernenden, Schreibaufgaben zu strukturieren

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- Progression: Vom Einfachen zum Komplexen
- Fehlerkorrektur
- Lernerfolgskontrollen als Diagnoseinstrument

Message from the Chair

Now that the leaves are falling, the geese have flown and the days are growing cold, perhaps it's a good time to take a look back at some of this autumn's Melta highlights. First on the list must be **Melta Day**, which took place on 21 September. The event featured four workshops by Melta members on topics ranging from student-centered activities to voice training to ideas for teaching business English to technology tips for the classroom. I'd like to thank all the presenters – Birgitta Berger, Dana Jelinkova, Nik Granchev, Mike Saunders and Frances Lucey — as well as the organizers, the cooks, the bakers and everyone else who helped make the day a great success. Detailed reports on each of the workshops are included in this issue of *Melta News*.

Always innovative, the German tax office has initiated a new reregistration process for public-service associations. No longer is it sufficient to submit the necessary — and extensive — documentation in paper form; online registration in a somewhat complicated electronic format is now mandatory as well. However, we figured it all out on time and received a *Freistellungsbescheid* **reconfirming our tax-exempt status** in October. Melta is now good to go until the fall of 2022, when the tax office is sure to have yet another reregistration process in place for us to master.

The job of upgrading the **Melta website** discussed at the last AGM is proceeding apace. The aim is to make the website much more informative, interactive and mobile-device-friendly. It's been a somewhat bigger job than we suspected at the outset, taxing the ingenuity of designers and programmers alike. But we're almost there, and with any luck, the new site will be up and running by Christmas.

Which reminds me. There's still another highlight to come: the annual **Melta Christmas party** at Gasteig on December 7. As usual, there'll be carols, a book bazar, presentations of Christmas-related activities you can try out in your classes, a chance to network with other Melta members and plenty to eat and drink. I hope to see you there.

In the meantime, I'd like to thank all of you for your support of Melta in 2019 and wish you and yours a very happy holiday season and all the best for the New Year.

Randy Perry

Message from the Editor

What an issue we have for you! Many experts from our Melta community have contributed their ideas, reflections and general wisdom for this winter edition of *Melta News*. Their voices come from all corners of Munich's ELT world: language school owners, business English trainers, retirees, university teachers, school teachers and more. Thanks to all of you who have devoted time and energy to sharing your thoughts with us. I hope you all have happy holidays.

Tenley van den Berg

We'd like to welcome our new members!

Individual members:
Donald McDonald
Angelika Lutz
Sarah Best

Guest members:
Maithreyi Mohan
Susan Lai
Sabine Lichtl
Sarah Herrmann-Hopwood
Réka Máté
Irina Murg
Sophie Ruthven
Kelly Burton
Hema Jayakumar
Maria Eliza Geiger
Tanja Steiert
Rita Tung Mui Yau
Alessia Vella

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Article submissions can be short (~250 words), long (~650 words) or any-where in between. You are also welcome to submit book reviews, info-graphics, tips, brief reports on interesting articles or events, philosophical musings, quotes—whatever you think might interest at least some of a diverse group of English teachers. Be creative! If you would like to con-tribute to *Melta News* but are unsure what to write about, just contact us, and we'll find something for you.

We also have a regular section called "Teacher Clinic" in which our "agony aunt" answers your anonymous questions. Please submit your questions to the email below.

• Please submit your article in Microsoft Word or compatible format.
• Please do send pictures! Please submit pictures, illustrations, and tables as separate files and with a resolution of 300 dpi or above.
• Don't forget to add your biographical data (a picture and 30–50 words about you).

Call for Contributions

Melta News is published three times a year: spring, summer and winter. Submissions are due on 28 February, 30 June and 31 October.

And finally, have you found some mistakes in this newsletter? Put your eagle eye to use and join our editing team!

Please send your contribution and enquiries to melta.news@melta.de.

We'd love to hear from you!

Melta Five-a-Day: ice lolly sticks

Bethan Stokes shares fun activities you can do with ice lolly sticks* Why reinvent the wheel? Many of these activities are classics for a reason. Presenting them in a different way, however, brings something new for both students and teachers. Enjoy!

1. MIXED BAG

- Write different tenses on sticks (see pic 1). You could also include some sticks with symbols telling students to make positive (+) or negative (-) statements or questions (?).
- Students take it in turns to take a "tense" stick plus a "symbol" stick and either write or say a sentence or ask a question in that tense.
- Repeat until everyone has had at least one go. This can be done as a class or pair/group activity. If done in pairs/groups, students could write their sentences down and then swap them for peer correction.

2. PHRASAL VERBS / COLLOCATION MATCH UP

- Write parts of phrasal verbs or collocations on separate sticks (e.g. "put" on one stick, "off" on another).
- You could "colour" code this (e.g. verbs on green sticks, prepositions on yellow sticks).
- Students walk round the class and have to find the stick with the rest of their phrasal verb/collocation.
- Once students have found their partners, they have to write a definition or synonym for their phrasal verb/collocation and two example sentences using it. Each pair then presents their phrasal verb/collocation to the class.

3. SENTENCE BUILDER

- Write different parts of speech on lolly sticks (e.g. pronouns, verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, etc.).
- Put each category into a different container at the front of the classroom (depending on level, you could put all or just a few categories out.)
- Students take a stick from each category and have to write or say a grammatically correct sentence.
- This could be done individually (5 sentences each) or as a class competition (e.g. split the class in half, one person from each team takes, for example, a pronoun, a verb, and a noun stick). They have to write a grammatically correct sentence with their team. If the teams are even, repeat until everyone has had a turn taking the stick. If the teams are odd, repeat up to five sentences. The team to reach the required number of sentences first shouts stop. The "winning" team reads out their sentences and the other team have to tell them if their sentences are right or wrong. If they are correct, they win the game. If they are wrong, the game restarts.

4. ANTONYMS / FALSE FRIENDS MINGLE

- Write words and their antonyms on different sticks. Alternatively, you could do this with German and English false friends.
- Students mingle to find the person with the antonym or the false friend to their word.
- Once they have found their partner, they have to write a mini roleplay using their antonyms or false

friends and explain how confusion could occur if you got those words mixed up. Pairs then take it in turns to perform their role-plays to the class.

5. WHOSE TURN IS IT?

• Write instructions for whose turn it is to answer a discussion question in groups (e.g. you, the person on your left, the person on your right, the person opposite you, the youngest/oldest/tallest/shortest, someone who was born in spring/summer/autumn/winter, etc. on the lolly sticks).

• During group discussions, give each group a pot with instructions sticks. Students take it in turns to pick a stick and tell the group who should answer the next discussion question.

* Buy at Søstrene Grene (Karlsplatz) or, better, eat lots of ice lollies, then save and wash the sticks!

Word of warning: write on the sticks with a permanent marker, so the words don't smudge off onto your hands or clothes (I learnt the hard way…)
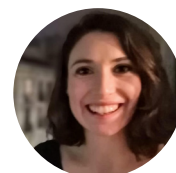
Bethan Stokes is originally from the UK and has lived in Munich since September 2015. She started teaching EFL in Madrid in 2013, completed an MA TESOL at UCL Institute of Education in 2015 and currently works at the University of the German Armed Forces in Neubiberg. She enjoys developing teaching materials and trying out new activities in the classroom.

Tech Talk

Michael Saunders gives you some technical tips, tricks and suggestions for the classroom.

Send us your tips and questions!

We'd like to make this a regular section in *Melta News*, but for that to happen, we have to hear from you! Whether you need some advice on using technology in the classroom, or you've got some tips to share (such as online resources for lesson plans), drop us a line: **tech@melta.de**. We'll do our best to answer as many questions as possible in the next newsletter, or a future in-person workshop.

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1. Turn a blackboard into a whiteboard

Has your school posted you to a classroom with only an old-fashioned blackboard? Tired of chalk breaking, dust getting everywhere, and horrible squeaky noises when you write? Fortunately, there's a way to turn a blackboard into a much more pleasant whiteboard-like surface. Search on Amazon for "whiteboard film" (or "Whiteboard-Folie selbstklebend"), and you'll find some products for a decent price (e.g. *https://tinyurl.com/y2pg2q86* for German Amazon, €9.99). The result isn't quite as good as a dedicated whiteboard, but it's still an improvement.

Post-It and other companies sell sticky sheets to make a whiteboard out of any flat surface
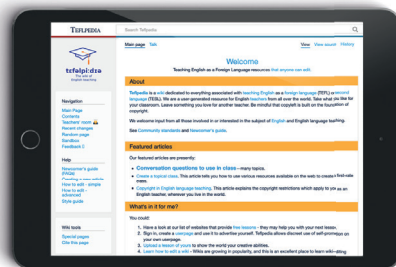
2. Teflpedia: like Wikipedia, but for teaching

You probably know about Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia anyone can edit. Well, there's a similar site at *https://teflpedia.com* — "a user-generated resource for English teachers from all over the world". There are many pages covering all aspects of language teaching, from methodology and board work to feedback and teacher talking time, although some of the pages are quite short. But the best part of the site is the list of conversation questions at *https://teflpedia.com/Category:Conversation_questions*. These cover over 170 topics, and I've used many questions in my C1 "current affairs" conversation classes. (Of course, you can adapt them to over levels, too.)
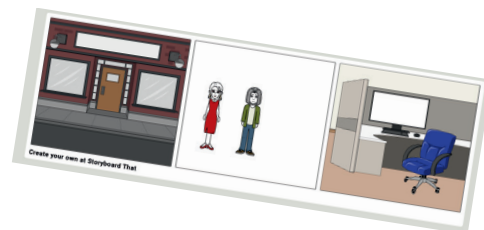
3. Create storyboards and comics

If you want students to discuss a particular scenario or sequence of events, but you can't find suitable material, you can make it yourself with just a few clicks. There are three cells on *https://www.storyboardthat.com/storyboard-creator* into which you can drag-and-drop scenes, characters, text bubbles and more. Use the tabs at the top to switch between different items, and then the submenus underneath to narrow them down. For intermediate and advanced students who have access to computers in the classroom, you can even get them to create storyboards — you just need to demonstrate how it works first. There's also a video showing the basics at *https://tinyurl.com/y8c43zhd*.

Michael Saunders teaches various courses at the MVHS and VHS SüdOst — from A1 beginners to C1 conversation. He earned a CELTA in 2016 and is gradually shaking off his northern English accent.

Teacher Feature

In the last issue, **Zoe Kostarev** was interviewed by Rachel McIntyre. In this issue, Zoe, in turn, talks to **Chris Lines** of The London School of Business English.

You're from the UK, originally. What brought you to Munich in the first place? And do you have any plans to go back?

Good question. I arrived here pretty much by accident. Prior to coming to Munich, I had taught English in different parts of the world, including Dubai and Brussels, where I worked for the European Parliament. At some point, I fancied a change in scenery. My wife is a German lawyer and managed to get a job here fairly easily, and so it seemed a good fit. As for returning home to the UK at some point? Well, we're extremely happy in "Minga" at the moment, as it's a beautiful city with some truly great and friendly people. And we have put down some strong roots, but who knows what the future will hold.

You've been teaching English for over ten years, I believe. Has this always been with corporate clients?

My first experience teaching English was as part of a volunteer program in Ecuador and involved classes with orphaned kids during the day and classes with adults in the evening. I really enjoyed it, and from then on, it was a natural progression for me to combine my interest and experience in business with my love for the English language.

I think it's safe to say
I don't have much "free time"
these days!

What made you decide to open your own language school?

A multitude of reasons, really. I started off working for other language schools in Munich and wasn't very happy with the general training

Chris Lines has been living and working in Munich for X years. He runs a language school, The London School of Business English, working with a range of corporate clients across the city. He met Zoe when she applied to work for him after she'd finished her CELTA course — and he was brave enough to give her a chance (for which she is very grateful!).

concepts nor the quality involved in their teaching methods — for example sticking slavishly to one book and not being able to use materials I had designed myself. In short, I craved more freedom and autonomy. My philosophy is to choose good people I trust and to not interfere with their teaching styles and "winning formula". I provide support when they need it but don't micromanage. A second reason was I felt some of the schools had a lack of respect for their trainers. I wanted to create a school where my trainers identified with my goals and felt treated as equals. Creating an environment where everybody wins — our clients, my trainers and I— is central to my philosophy.

What are the most challenging aspects of running your own language business?

One often hears the German idiom: "Wer selbständig ist arbeitet selbst. Und das ständig." This is absolutely true. To keep overheads down and stay competitive in the market, I do the job of several people. First and foremost, I train my clients in business and legal English, but I also design and maintain our company's website, do the bookkeeping, liaise with and win new clients as well as other numerous, time-consuming tasks. As a father of a two-year-old daughter and a second one on the way, I think it's safe to say I don't have much "free time" these days!

And when it comes to teaching, what tips can you offer a "beginner" like me?

Listen to the client, as they will usually tell you what they want and need. Be patient with beginners, and make sure every training session is a productive use of your client's time. It's a cliché, but in the language school business, it tends to ring true — if you love what you do, often it won't feel like work at all.

> "BE CURIOUS, NOT JUDGMENTAL."
> WALT WHITMAN

Zoe Kostarev was born in the UK and lived in Paris before moving to Munich in 2009. She worked for over ten years in sales, recruitment and management, completing an MBA whilst on maternity leave. She began teaching English just a few months ago, having finished her CELTA course at MVHS in February.

Grantly Marshall interviewed by Joan Walsh

Grantly Marshall is something of a phenomenon. He's been organizing foreign-language theatre in Munich for decades now. One of the highlights of every December is his production of a musical version of *A Christmas Carol*. This year, true to form, the show will also take place in Gasteig from 13–20 December. It's an exciting event for students and teachers alike. So, I decided to find out a bit more about Grantly, the man behind the scenes.

To start things off, Grantly, could you tell us a bit about yourself ?

I was born several odd years ago in Salem, Ohio, USA. I attended Leetonia High School and then Kent State University. In 1971, I came to Europe for a visit, had a part-time job working in Munich on the construction of the Olympic village. I returned to Munch in 1972, thinking I had a job with the Olympics. But because the letters I was supposed to sign and return never got delivered to me, the job never happened. I then stayed in Munich and got admitted to the University.

When did you start the American Drama Group?

In 1978.

What gave you the idea to start it?

In 1976, I joined The English Drama Group of the University of Munich, and, not being satisfied with its organization, formed the American Drama Group in connection with the American Studies Department of the University.

How many plays have you produced up to now?

Something around 317 or 319?

What has changed since you started?

The number of grey hairs on my head.

Can you tell me a bit about your role in the organization? Do you choose all the plays and directors yourself?

I am the founder and head of American Drama Group Europe and choose all the plays we produce.

Who are your main collaborators?

We perform for State Theaters, Stadthallen, convention centers, high school auditoriums, etc.

Are there other organizations like the American Drama Group in Europe?

That´s a hard question and can't be answered objectively. There are many organizations performing English, but I am aware of none that perform in as many countries as we do (about 50 countries).

What would you say was your greatest success?

Surviving through 40-odd years of turbulence.

What would you say was your worst failure?

Ever getting involved in theatre at all!!

What are your plans for the future?

Expanding, Expanding, Expanding! South America, Asia — wherever we can go.

Thank you very much, Grantly. We wish you all the best for your theatrical performances in Munich —and elsewhere — for many years to come!

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.

Eight Notes on the Conventions and Rules of Commas

You're not alone if you are confused about when you should use a comma and when not. **Mark Olival-Bartley** boils it down to eight simple points.

The anecdotes of two disparate yet timely occasions — one, unfortunate; the other, amusing — brought the vagaries of comma use in English to mind of late: This summer, I fell violently ill to a food-borne pathogen whose unwieldy name, *Campylobacter*, alludes to its motile and conspicuously comma-shaped design; sometime during my recovery, delving into the tonnage of my backlog of doctoral reading, I came across an apocryphal story about Oscar Wilde who, mocked by a philistine as to the lackadaisical workdays of poets, to the effect, quipped, "On the contrary, Sir, I spent the entire morning deliberating the insertion of a comma and, throughout the course of the afternoon, laboring toward its excavation." All this is by way of saying that, their pestilent wildness notwithstanding, students of English must learn to reckon with commas, which differ in usage appreciably from their German doppelgängers.

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More so than any other mark of punctuation, the comma is governed more by unregulated convention than outright rule.

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Yet, before we dare declaim the use of the English comma in the classroom, we, as the purported language experts, must also reckon with its apparent haphazardness ourselves. More so than any other mark of punctuation, the comma is governed more by unregulated convention than outright rule, which, confusingly, not only differs from variety to variety — from, say, British English to American English — but from idiolect to idiolect. Gleaned from Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style* (Macmillan), Green-

baum's *English Grammar* (Oxford UP), *Webster's Dictionary of English Usage* (Merriam-Webster), and Swan's *Practical English Usage* (Oxford UP), the eight notes that follow are meant to convey the most important conventions and rules in English regarding commas that we ought to bear in mind as we model their usage and address our learners' questions.

1. Convention: In a series of three or more terms, phrases, or clauses with a single conjunction, a comma may be used after each (except the last); this is the so-called Oxford comma, which, counterintuitively, is more prevalent in American than in British English.

> *black, red, and gold*
> *in the morning, in the afternoon, and at night*

2. Rule: A comma is used to offset non-essential clauses but not essential clauses.

> *The class, which had been bored, found interest in the waywardness of commas.*
> *People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.*

3. Rule: While permissible in German, independent clauses in English cannot be spliced with only a comma; either add a coordinating conjunction before the comma or substitute a semicolon (or dash or colon) for the comma.

> *English punctuation is highly flexible, and it can even be fun to teach.*
> *English punctuation is highly flexible; it can even be fun to teach.*

4. Convention (and virtually a rule): Use a comma to offset a subordinate clause when it appears before the independent clause in a complex sentence; this is more prevalent in American rather than British English.

> *Because it is complex, English punctuation allows for subtle expressions of meaning.*

5. Convention: Use a comma to offset any word or phrase that comes before the subject of a sentence; this is more prevalent in American rather than British English.

> *Occasionally, I drink coffee in the afternoon.*
> *In the afternoon, I drink coffee occasionally.*

6. Rule: Use commas to offset the noun phrases of appositives.

> *Barack Obama, the forty-fourth President of the United States, hails from Hawaii.*
> *Munich, the capital of Bavaria, is a wonderful place to live.*

7. Rule: Use commas if words or expressions are used in unusual places or otherwise interrupt the normal progression of a sentence.

> *My students, however, did not feel the same way about commas as I did.*
> *Dashes, believe it or not, are even more supple than commas.*

8. Rule: Use commas in direct speech.

> *Incredulously, the student said, "There's no way that a comma should be there."*
> *"I'm more partial to the question mark," joked the student.*

———

Mark Olival-Bartley teaches at MVHS and leads the Amerikahaus Literary Circle. He also tutors writing at LMU München, where he is writing a dissertation on the poetics E. A. Robinson's metasonnet.

Blackout Poetry

Students can create and engage with poetry at any level. **Birgitta Berger** explains how. Birgitte led a workshop called "How to give your learners more autonomy" at Melta Day on 21 September 2019 (see Event Reports).

Creative writing can be an incredibly rewarding way to engage teenagers in English classes, but success depends on a couple of ifs: if they can choose the topics and genre, if they don't feel overwhelmed and shy away from the idea from the start, and if they can involve other skills and techniques beyond language. I discovered that blackout poetry can be an ideal first step towards unlocking learners' creativity and encouraging them to experiment with language while enjoying themselves.

To create blackout poetry, take a piece of newspaper or a page from a discarded book and skim the text until a word or phrase catches your eye. Circle the word or phrase. Look for other words to join the first word to create a sentence or several lines. Letters can be blacked out to change plurals into singular; punctuation can be "used" as needed simply by circling full-stops, commas, exclamation and question marks. Lines can then be drawn to connect the words and make their order visible, which you might need to do if you have been "hopping" around the page.

In the simplest form of blackout poetry, the lines of text remaining after the chosen words and phrases have been circled are simply blacked out as happens when personal data or confidential information in documents made available to the public is redacted. To make your work more colourful and creative, you can use different colours for the "blacking out", and you can add ornaments or draw pictures to make the content of your poem visible. And you can cut

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They made something novel and unique using the language they still consider foreign.

—————

out your blackout poem in different shapes and forms, again adding extra meaning to the words chosen.

All you need are a couple of discarded books, newspapers and magazines. There are plenty of paperbacks around that have become so shabby and discoloured that they probably won't find many more readers — ideal material for blackout poetry. What else do you need? Collect some markers, felt-tip pens
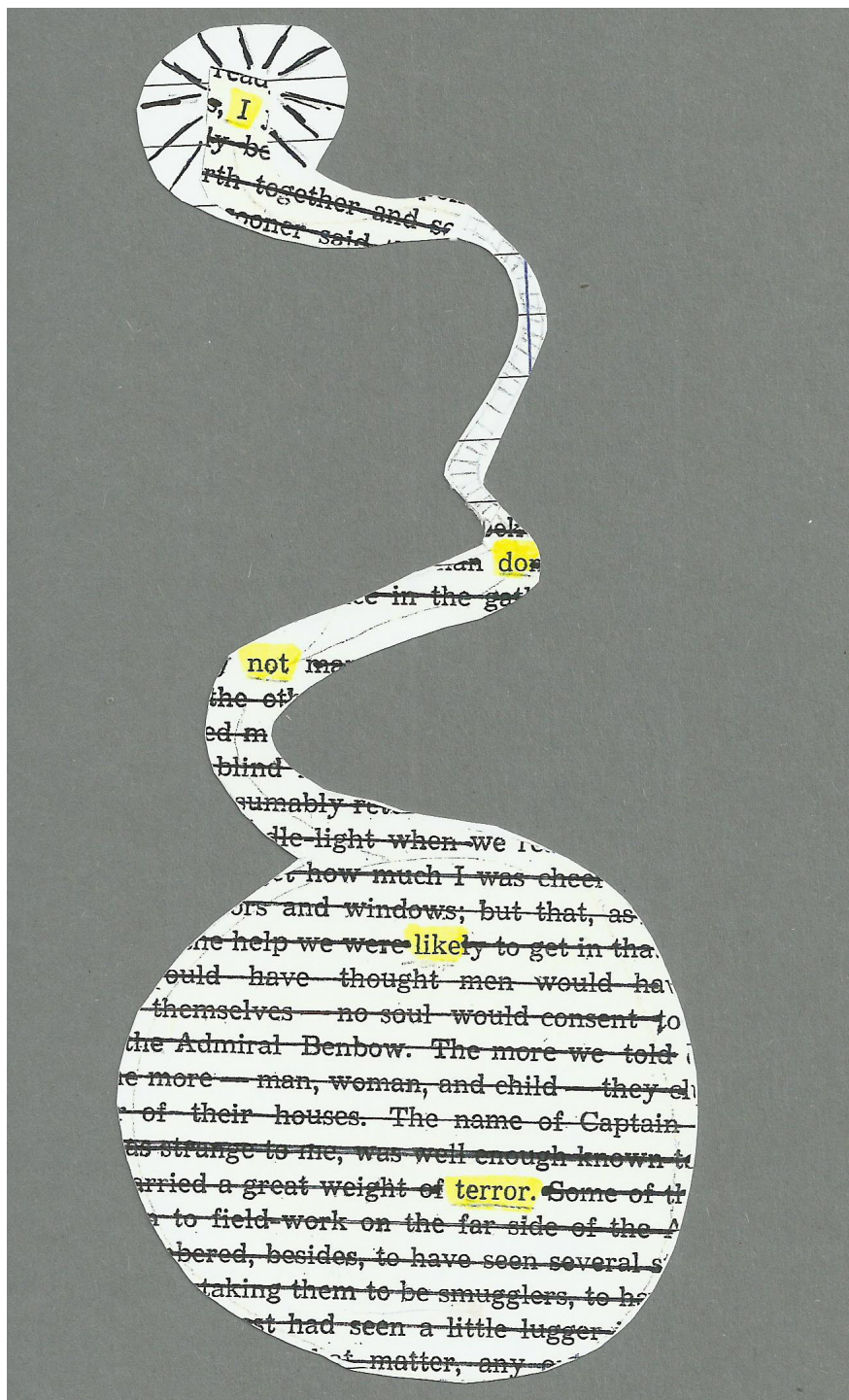
in black and various colours, scissors for cutting out shapes and you're ready to go. Try out a couple yourself before you take the idea to class!

Words cannot describe blackout poetry nearly as well as the thing itself, so here are some examples of blackout poems, created by 14- and 15-year-old students.

For most of them, it was the first English poem they had ever created. Not all poems made sense, but the objective was for the learners to discover that they could make something novel and unique using the language many still consider foreign. Most students did more than one poem; many subsequently felt adventurous enough to try out other poetry forms such as Dadaist and concrete poetry, cinquains, triangle triplets and diamonte poems. The next blackout poems they create could become the first or last sentence of a story yet to be written. Poetry in EFL can be so exciting!

References
The following selection of books will give you some more examples of blackout poetry, information about its origins, and facsimile pages to turn into your own blackout poetry.

John Carroll: Make Blackout Poetry: Turn These Pages into Poems. Abrams, 2018.

Austin Kleon: Newspaper Blackout. Harper Perennial, 2010.

Stacia Leigh: Distance Between. Blackout Poetry and Art. Espial Design, 2018.
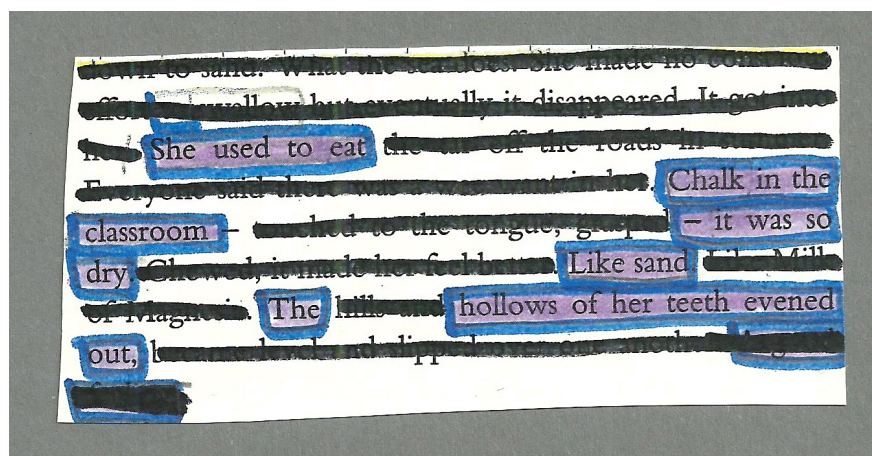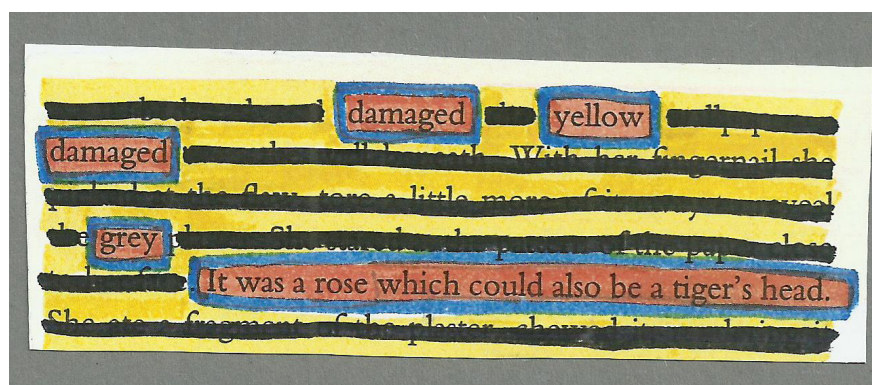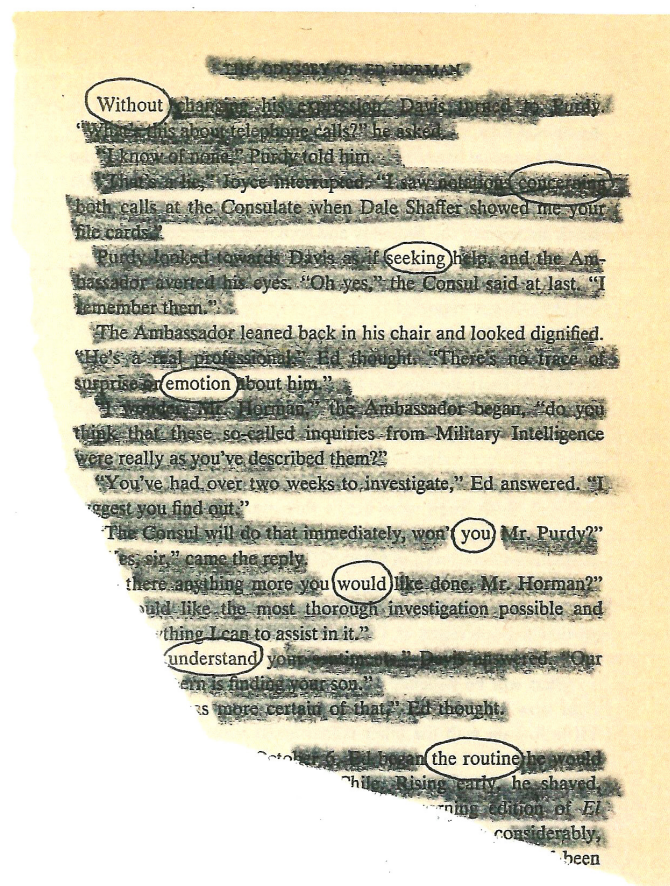
Birgitta Berger has been teaching at Montessori schools in the Munich area since 2000, working with all age groups from kindergarten to exam preparation in Years 9 and 10. She provides in-service training for Montessori language teachers through the Montessori Bildungsakademie/MoBil and the Akademie Biberkor.

Doing their Homework

Melta member and LMU lecturer Vivienne Arnold has initiated a new project-based course at LMU. One of her students, **Elli Danielewicz**, tells us a bit about LMU's new magazine and interviews a student from Uni Augsburg who works on a similar project.

At the beginning of the 2019 summer term, a new course for LMU English Studies and Education students was on offer: a hands-on writing project in which students can practice their skills while producing a magazine called the /ˌmægəˈziːn/. If the name looks strange to you, that's because it's the word magazine spelled phonetically.

However, initiating the project wasn't easy, which is why we decided to interview Toby, the editor-in-chief of a similar project that has been running at Uni Augsburg for quite a while. At Uni Augsburg, the class produces a magazine called *eMAG*.

While the course behind /ˌmægəˈziːn/ teaches writing skills to students in later semesters, the Augsburg course is a project that runs parallel to another writing skills seminar and is directed at younger students who are roughly in their third semester.

Some members of the *eMAG* team also take the course voluntarily for more than one semester and even help to organize it. As Toby revealed to us, "the entire course is supposed to be run by students" who sit down together in the semester break and work on a — quite tight — semester schedule. They update their teacher, Mr. Jehle, every week on what has been going on, and he helps the team solve problems that arise.

To learn a thing or two, we decided to ask them a few questions regarding how they handle it all.

Do you think the project-based way of learning of writing skills is a better way than a traditional class to improve your English?
I believe a mix between a theoretical approach and a practical one is useful. You can't learn a language simply by reading it. You have to use it to get better at it. And part of that certainly is writing, too, in all its forms. But at the same time, it's also necessary to have a good foundation to start working on a project such as *eMAG*. You need to have a basic understanding of how to structure your writing and know the differences between writing in German and English. And that is something we couldn't really learn in just one term of one session a week.

In our course, we have tried to assign different roles to people. What roles do you have? Is the work distributed in an even way?
I think a little graphic taken from our guidelines does a better job at visualizing this than I could in words.

The cover of our first edition of the /ˌmægəˈziːn/ (Summer 2019)

New members either work on layouting or promote the magazine along with working on their articles. Both teams are supervised by team leaders who know how everything is supposed to be structured and help out wherever necessary. If they don't know the solution to a problem, it's usually my job to figure something out. I guess problem-solver would be one of the better descriptions for what I do.

There is a lot of organizing things behind the scenes, too, of course: finding printers, organizing everything to be in line with our university, making decisions on how to go forward or cutting inappropriate articles, though we do try to avoid that at all costs. Nonetheless, it happens every once in a while.

We struggled a lot to find a good balance between the workload of the different teams. Layouting is a time-consuming but necessary part of it all, which makes it a difficult area to cut down on. Last term, we struck a good balance by giving each member of the Media, but not the Layout team, the task to write one addition-

Group photo of the /ˌmægəˈziːn/ students at our launch
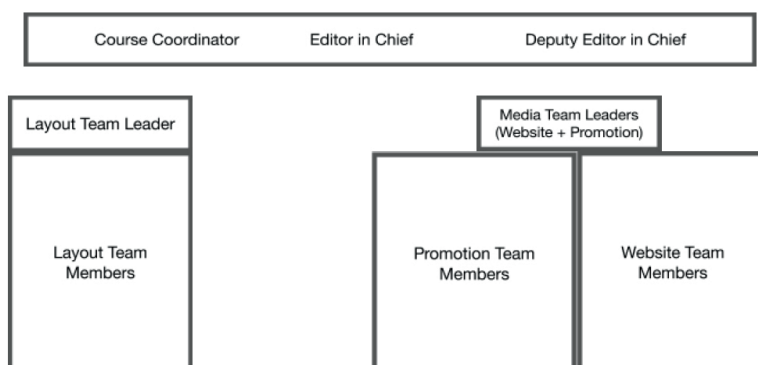
How the roles are distributed at eMag

al article, which would be published on our website. This helped even out the workload for the most part.

Our first magazine didn't have a theme; everyone just picked a topic. However, we now think it is best if our magazine has a general theme for each semester's edition.

How do you decide on a theme for each edition?
That's one of the funnier parts of class! Each term, during one of the last sessions, we dedicate one hour to brainstorming ideas that could be interesting as a theme. After we have a list of potential topics, everyone gets to vote on what will be the theme for the following issue.

Do some of those students who are studying to become teachers plan on using the skills later in schools?
What will be useful, I imagine, are the skills you learn without even noticing: teamwork, problem–solving, time management. These skills are becoming more and more important in our society.

So maybe that is our little contribution to the development of our students in the course. Most importantly, it's a fun time for everyone in what might otherwise be a monotonous university day.

Elli Danielewicz is currently studying to be a teacher of English and School Psychology at the LMU Munich. She's a big-time tea lover and likes meditating and playing parlour games.

English and German: Family Tie

Cognates are words that look alike, sound alike and mean the same thing in two related languages. German and English are full of such vocabulary items, such as hand-*Hand*, cat-*Katze*, house-*Haus*, brother-*Bruder*, etc. Introducing cognates to your German-speaking learners will make it easy for them to start learning English and increase their motivation.

Adverbs: Why are they so hard for Germans? The German language does have adverbs, but they usually take the same form as the adjective: *Das Buch war sehr gut. Das hast du gut gesagt!* This is like the English word fast: The car is fast. Peter drives too fast. Compare: *Das war absolut richtig.* That was absolutely correct. So how do you make your German learners aware of the use of adverbs? Try this:
Ich habe meine Autoschlüssel im Büro vergessen. Das war dumm. Now ask your students to combine these sentences in German: *Ich habe dummerweise meine Autoschlüssel im Büro vergessen.* Nobody would say: "Ich habe dumm meine Autoschlüssel im Büro vergessen." Why? Germans do change the adjective into an adverb with "-weise" when they comment on the complete sentence: I left my car keys in the office, and I think that was dumb. The suffix "-weise" corresponds to the English way which we use for some words (in a friendly way, we cannot say friendlily).
By Stefan Fodor

Teaching a webinar or: Leaving your comfort zone while staying at your desk
A true story

Last December, **Stefan Fodor** gave his first book presentation as an online webinar. Here, he shares with us his experience and gives us some tips if we should ever like to give it a go.

When I started my teaching career, I never imagined that someday I would be presenting a worldwide webinar from my own home. But I suppose many of us language trainers did not anticipate our current roles when we first began teaching.

Regardless of how our respective career paths led us to the field of ELT, teaching means leaving your comfort zone. There is always a first time: teaching your very first class, your first larger group, your first business class, your first one-to-one, your first Skype class, your first you-name-it. In that sense, teaching a webinar is no different. It is about leaving your comfort zone and trying out a new format you have never tried before. And no matter how nervous and worried you might have been before you started, the feeling of relief and professional satisfaction is great when you have done it (and done it well).

Of course, you don't start out as a webinar presenter. It's something you grow into. I had been a trainer for German and English for many years when I was offered a freelance position on the authors' team of *DaF im Unternehmen*, a Business German textbook series published by Klett (yes, networking pays off, if nobody knows you are out there, nobody will think of you when something comes up).

Shortly before the end of the project, Klett needed someone to present *DaF im Unternehmen* in Poznan, Poland, where several institutions had decided to introduce it as their standard Business German textbook.

I also gave similar presentations at teacher-training courses in several cities in Germany. But although I always enjoyed that, there was a downside: I needed to be away from home, and, in some cases, I had to cancel some classes (freelancers usually don't like doing that). And then there was my carbon footprint with all those airplane trips…

That's why the idea of doing this kind of work as a webinar presenter is so attractive: you get to stay at home, and it is easier to fit the workshop into your schedule. Just like our (business) students, trainers often find it difficult to come to a workshop in the evening or after a long week of teaching, and by participating from home, they can also save on travel costs. And, even more importantly, you can reach a much

wider audience, as trainers from anywhere in the world can join, even from remote places where publishers would never be able to set up a workshop.

Another option would be to give your presentation on behalf of a large professional association such as Iatefl, Besig, or DaF-Webkonferenz (for German trainers). You need the support of a larger organization, not only for marketing purposes but also (and even more importantly) for technical reasons.

You may have a lot of contacts, but most likely a publisher or Iatefl will have more. And you don't have to worry about marketing the webinar yourself.

At the end of the day, you also would like to get paid for your work. The trainers tuning in to a webinar usually expect to do it for free. Even if some trainers were willing to pay a small contribution, the mere idea of collecting payments from all over the world would be a logistical nightmare. So if you were trying to market your own webinar worldwide privately, it would be unrealistic or unfeasible to expect any income. For a publisher, it's a book promotion, so it's worth it for them to pay you a bit. And for Iatefl (or similar organizations) it's part of their service to the community. Usually, they make past webinars only available to paying members, so that is also an argument in favour of becoming a member.

That's the business side. But there is also the technical side. First of all, you need a virtual meeting room, which comes at a price. For my webinar, Klett used Adobe Connect. You also need someone to work behind the scenes to take care of questions regarding technology, login problems or book recommendations. The person assisting you also needs to monitor the chat so that they can bring interesting questions to your attention. Your co-host has their mi-

crophone on mute, but you usually have a private chat box.

What is the difference between giving a regular presentation and teaching in a virtual environment? The biggest difference is not only the physical but also the visual separation. Obviously, you are not in a seminar room with a group, but by yourself in your home office. But unlike in a virtual group meeting, you are also cut off from your audience visually and aurally — but they can see and hear you. It's a little bit like being a radio broadcaster, speaking in the hope that somebody out there is listening. All you can see is a list of participants and the chat box with their entries, so at least you know that some of them are actively participating. You also cannot make eye contact, and you don't see them nodding in agreement or frowning if they can't follow your argument or disagree.

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Once you are on the air, there is only one way, and that is forward.

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On the one hand, for your audience, it's very comfortable. On the other hand, they cannot communicate directly with each other (only via the chat function); they cannot help each other out as in a regular classroom, and they usually can't raise their hands to ask a quick question. They have to formulate their questions in writing and hope there is enough time at the end for the presenter to answer them.

For you, as the presenter, the experience is totally different. You need to dress properly. You also need to make sure that your home office looks presentable or that you have a backdrop that prevents participants from seeing what is behind you. I would also avoid having personal items like family photographs, etc. in the background, but that's a personal choice. And finally, you have to think about lighting because the participants need to see your face properly: a bright sunny window might present a problem. In my home office (a 6th-floor room facing South, no curtains), I had to cover up the windows with a dark cloth so that the sun wouldn't shine on my face from the side.

Seems like a lot of preparation and attention to detail? You're absolutely right. When presenting a webinar, preparation is everything. I imagine we have all been in classroom situations where we have had to wing it. As an experienced trainer, you can pull it off. With a webinar, it won't fly. Think of a webinar more in terms of a live TV show that has a precise theme and a strict time limit. Once you are on the air, there is only one way, and that is forward.

That's why a good script is so important. I handed in my presentation about a week before it was scheduled to go on air. We went through it to make sure that everything would work from a technical point of view, and I also received valuable feedback that helped me judge the length of my presentation. We actually developed a minute-by-minute schedule so that I would always

know if I was on track or if I needed to speed up.

Every presenter knows (or at least should know) that there is a danger of becoming monotone. In a live situation, you can spot the hidden yawns. Then it's time to change your pace, ask a question or alter the pitch of your voice so that your audience can re-focus. For a webinar, you have to plan such breaks ahead of time. A very good method is using an online poll, usually with multiple-choice questions so that they are easy to answer. A poll requires your listeners to think for a moment and physically reach for their mouse to click on an answer.

Usually, the whole process takes about a minute or so. While they are answering, you can see the bars reflecting their various choices, and when they have finished giving their answers, you end the poll and publish the results. You can then comment on the outcome of the poll, which may be exactly what you expected (perfect!) or totally different from what you thought (surprise!). We did this three times during the webinar. The fourth time around, we changed the format and asked an open question, which required the audience to write something into the chat box. It's harder to prepare for their answers, of course, but it is more engaging, and you come closer to having something like a personal interaction with your listeners.

At the end of your presentation, there is usually time for a few questions from the audience (unless you have taken your time along the way and you now need to sign off in a hurry). They will write them into the chat box, and you and your co-host will pick the most relevant questions for you to answer. Unfortunately, the format does not provide room for engaging discussions among the participants like what you might see at IATEFL or BESIG conferences. There are only disjointed comments in the chat box, but that is only a minor drawback.

Now, if everything has gone well, technology hasn't let you down, and your brain hasn't suddenly stopped working, you will have made it safely to the end of your talk. If you have ever been in a school play, a musical performance or prepared a speech for your grandmother's birthday, you know the feeling: you have put so much work into getting ready, and then it seems it's all over in a flash. This is no different.

Before you know it, you will hear yourself making your final comments, thanking your audience and saying good-bye. You put your mike on mute, turn off the camera, take off the headphones and dash for the kitchen to get a drink. My recommendation: put on your sports clothes and go for a jog in the park to get rid of the adrenaline. And when you have taken your shower, turn on the computer again and read all the positive comments from your audience! And maybe that's the time when instead of promising yourself "I'll never do something like that again!" you begin to think: "Why not? It was pretty cool." And so you have boldly gone where you never thought you would go before!

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Stefan Fodor is a native of Munich. His university studies took him to exotic places such as Rheinland-Pfalz, Ireland and the US states of Illinois and California where he earned postgraduate degrees in history. Since his return to Munich in the early 1990s, he has devoted himself to foreign language teaching. Stefan works as a freelance trainer for German and English and as a writer of language training materials.

English and German: Family Tie

German doesn't have continuous, right? Think again! There is a German verb form that is equivalent to English continuous: *Ich bin am Arbeiten. Wir sind am Gehen. Ich war (gerade) am Kochen, als* … "German Continuous" is used infrequently. German speakers often are not even aware of it, but once you point it out to them, they often find it easier to get their head around the concept of the continuous tenses. By Stefan Fodor
By Stefan Fodor

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Rich Mum, Poor Mum

In the last issue of Melta News, **Susan Jane Alexiadis** shared how she got the inspiration for her business, English Native Speakers (ENS). This time, she explains — step by step — how she turned this inspiration into to a business that runs itself.

There is so much talk nowadays about passive income. Apparently, smart people have at least seven kinds of passive income, whereby their money is working for them, even while they sleep. Being a classroom practitioner, it took me a few years to get my head around this concept. But last October, I decided to try my hand at it.

The first step was finding a need. I didn't have to look further than my own backyard. My daughter started Grade 3 at our local primary school and was clearly going to be under-challenged by the regular English lessons. Instead of complaining about the problem, I created a solution and presented it to the teacher. It was essentially an English extension programme, based on the Bavarian social studies (HSU) curriculum. The teacher loved it, as did my daughter. And, as it turned out, there was a heap of other families lining up for it too.

Writing the learning programme was the easy part. But how to get it out there? This was way out of my area. My initial amateur attempts, such as sending Google-drive links, soon proved too unwieldy and too reliant on the "honour system". If I was really to make a business of this, I needed to do it right.

I thought it might help those of you who also have a business idea if I shared what the process of getting a business up and running is like here in Bavaria. So, here are the steps I took, roughly in this order…

1. I registered my business at the Gewerbeamt in the KVR in Munich. It was the nicest encounter I have ever had with anyone at the KVR. Ten minutes and €42 later, I was on my way. Thankfully, it was a one-off payment. The Gewerbeanmeldung (business registration papers) arrived by post a few weeks later. Easy!

2. I applied for a Umsatzsteueridentifikationsnummer (VAT ID number) at Bundesamt Saarlouis. It arrived a couple of weeks later by post. So far, so good.

3. I registered my business name with the German Patent Office. This was done with the help of a patent lawyer. It was less complicated than I thought it would be and cost a one-off payment of €300. The registered trademark is valid for the next ten years. The certificate also arrived by post, but this one took a bit longer.

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If I was really to make a business of this, I needed to do it right.

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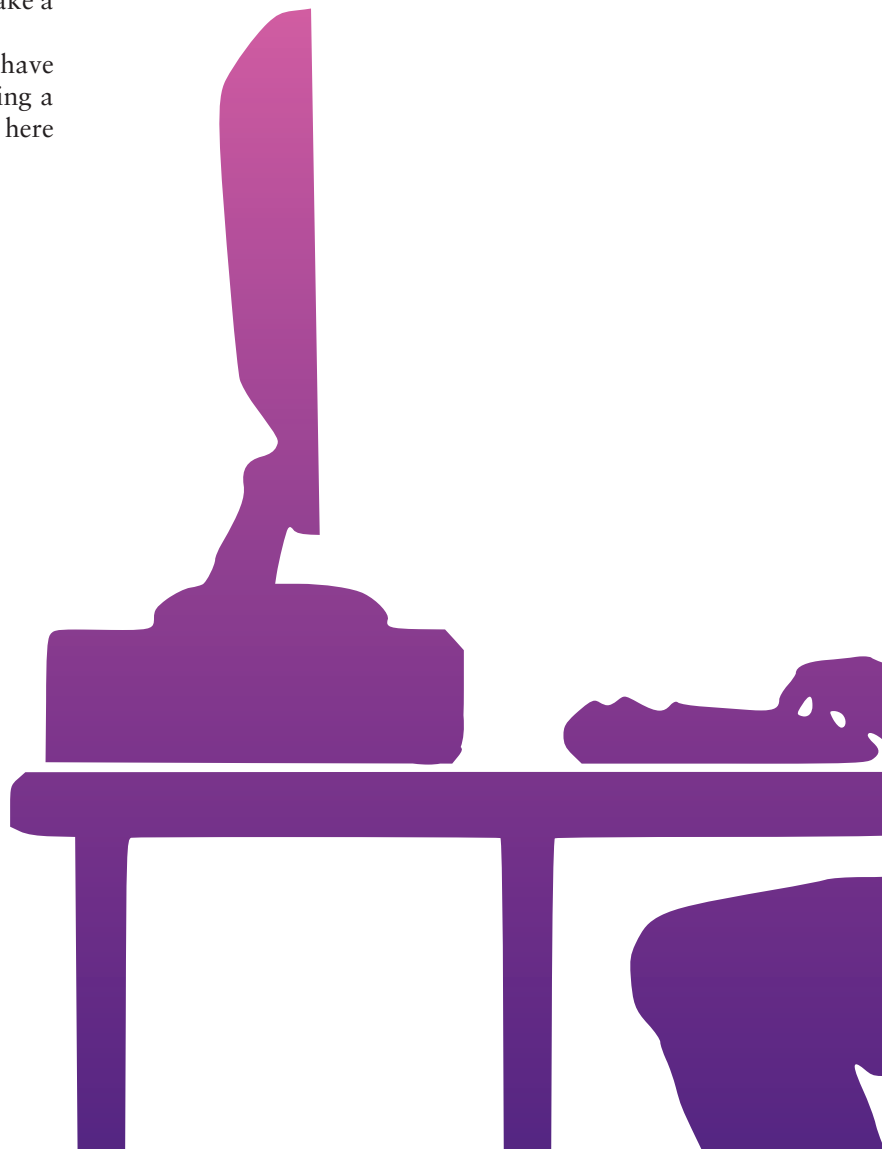
> **"LIFE IS A JOURNEY, NOT A DESTINATION."**
> RALPH WALDO EMERSON

4. I got a graphic designer, Ursel, to design my logo and flyer.

5. I found a young IT genius, Roger, to make me a website. He used the colour scheme of my logo and flyer. It was my job to provide all the content so that Roger could work his magic. He uploaded the 180+ PDF documents that make up the programme.

6. I wrote all the website texts.

7. I filmed 110+ videos, with the help of Roger. There was one video to go with each task. These were uploaded to the website using a video sharing platform called Vimeo, which ensures that the videos can't be pirated.

8. I set up an online payment processing platform, Stripe, with the help of Roger.

9. I went live with the website: *www.ens-programme.com*

10. I posted on expat Facebook groups Bavaria-wide.

11. I launched a Facebook advertising campaign (again with the help of trusty Roger!) targeting English-speaking families with children aged 6-11 years living in Bavaria.

12. I sought the help of Aktivsenioren Bayern. This is an organization through which retired business people support the establishment of new business. My mentor helped to implement some tighter online security precautions to protect the downloadable PDF documents. He also helped me make a business plan to check the viability of my business.

13. I reclined with my feet on the desk reading a newspaper, while the money rolled in.

Well, not quite! But now that I've done the hard part, it is definitely a very low-maintenance business. The website is self-explanatory, self-service and completely automated. But I don't think that I will ever be classed in the category of "Rich Mum". Maybe from one of my other six sources of passive income that are still to come. Still, I have helped to fill a need in the English-speaking community here in Bavaria. And, I am helping my own children reach their true potential as bilinguals. Who knows where it may lead. Watch this space!

Susan Jane Alexiadis is an educator, writer and translator. Australia is her country of origin and Munich her city of choice. An experienced primary school teacher, Susan now writes educational programmes for English-speaking children living in Germany. Her passion is for language and literacy, and for her three (bilingual) children.

Teaching English through Food

Musing on childhood, language learning and meals, **Betsy Hollwec**k shares her insights into how English learning can be transformed through the topic of food. And there's a treat at the end!

When I was in first grade, I had a teacher who played the violin. Every summer, she would go to Quebec to study and play, and thus had to speak French. During the year, she had no one with whom to speak French, so to keep her fluency, she taught us, her pupils.

She taught us the way one would teach six-year-olds: without books (we could neither read nor write our own language, let alone another), speaking the way normal French-speaking children would speak. Of this year, I have two vivid memories: when she taught the class to pronounce "n", as in "non", we had to pinch the bridge of our noses so that we could feel the vibration the letter made when properly pronounced. She also taught us how to eat a meal.

Someone was the father, someone the mother, and there were two children (a "typical" family). The mother cooked, the father asked when dinner was ready, and the children set the table. We ate meat, potatoes, and a vegetable (I forget which it was, but I don't think spinach, as it was well known that we school children hated the spinach served in our real cafeteria; it was always a fight to get us to finish our lunch when spinach was served).

We practiced over and over, to where we thought that French children ate nothing but meat, potatoes and a vegetable. Oh, and there was cake — once I made a cake for French class; it was made of paper with cotton balls on the top for decoration.

Today, I teach somewhat similarly (about food, that is, not the pronunciation part), though what's on the menu is more likely sushi or mashed potatoes. Mashed potatoes are very interesting — what is "mash"? How do you do it? Is it like "mash the bell"? What exactly is gravy?

Food opens a whole world of vocabulary — not just of the foodstuffs but the terms related to it. Planting, growing, harvesting — many "-ing" words. Do, does, does, does not, don't, doesn't (Do you like green eggs and ham, Sam I Am?).

Shopping, preparing, serving. Cleaning up? Do you wash the dishes, or do the dishes? Future/"going to" — what are you going to cook tomorrow? Will the lamb chops be on sale? Do we even need parsley?

Modals: what shall we cook next week? Should we invite Sheila? Would you serve x with y? Why/why not?

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Mashed potatoes are very interesting.

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I recently taught math with food. When one does math, it is usually done silently, in one's head, in one's own language. Yet learners need to practice saying mathematical equations out loud. The class reviewed the mathematical symbols and functions (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division) and their symbols out loud, and we did a few math examples, for fluency's sake. Then we role-played.

The learners worked in pairs. The shopper wanted to buy four bananas; the merchant sold bananas, for €1 each. The shopper gave the merchant €5; the merchant said "Thank-you". The shopper and the merchant had to come to an agreement as to what happened next. But they all had to say, "One banana costs €1. 4 x 1 = 4, and 5 – 1 = 4. You owe me €1".

Such interesting conversations! One merchant had no change and

offered an extra banana. One shopper didn't like the look of the bananas and tried to get 6 for €5. One looked elsewhere. One wanted to call the police immediately to report the merchant for theft. Two others bargained for the whole case of bananas; the buyer could/would take the bananas home and sell them to the neighbors for a profit.

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One student wanted to call the police immediately to report the merchant for theft

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As we come to the end of the year and the winter holidays, food is of particular importance. For me, the holiday season starts with the last Thursday in November — American Thanksgiving (though Halloween, an unofficial holiday, and St. Martin's Day, November 11, deserve a nod as well) — and doesn't stop until January 6, though some of my past Orthodox students observe until Candlemas (February 2). Holidays are always good sparks for conversation as well as reading/writing lessons. Once my students, all adults, wrote letters to the Christkindl, who comes with St. Nicholas on December 6. They wrote what they wanted, why, why they deserved what was on their wish list, and if they couldn't have it, what they'd like instead, and why couldn't they have their first wishes anyway (justifications)? I then distributed "Nicholas bags" (filled with cut-out pictures of oranges, nuts, chocolate, etc.), and they had to describe what they'd received and whether they liked it or not (one ate no tree nuts due to allergies). Note: make the contents of the bags age/position appropriate. A bottle of 10-yr-old Scotch, a tin

of caviar, a wheel of Stilton, a case of Persian melons or tray of candied dates. This is food, after all!

I will conclude with a recipe to try with or without a class, and with very best wishes for the upcoming year:

Sage and onion Christmas shortbread with cheddar and cranberry baubles, by Alyn Williams

Sage and onion
1 large onion, finely chopped
6 sage leaves, finely chopped, or 1/2 tsp dried
1 dash of olive oil
1 pinch of salt
1 pinch of pepper

Shortbread
125g of unsalted butter, softened
125g of plain flour, sifted
15g of caster sugar
1 tsp black pepper
1 pinch of salt

Baubles
150g of half fat medium cheddar cheese, finely chopped
25g of cranberry sauce
1 tsp English mustard
3 tsp low-fat cream cheese

Place a pan over medium heat and add oil. Once the oil is hot, add the chopped onion and a pinch of salt. Cook until the onions soften and start to caramelize.

Add the sage and pepper, and cook for 3 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat, and spoon the contents onto a kitchen towel to cool.

In a bowl, whip the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Season with black pepper.

Gradually mix in the flour and a pinch of salt until a ball of dough forms — you may not need all the flour. Add the cooled sage and on-

ion and gently work into the dough. Wrap in cling film and refrigerate for 20 minutes.

Roll the dough out on a lightly floured surface to 1–2cm thick. Use a small Christmas-tree cutter to cut out the shortbread, place on a baking tray lined with parchment paper and return to the fridge for 10 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Transfer the shortbread to the oven, and cook for 8-10 minutes until golden brown. Remove and allow to cool on a wire rack.

Add all of the bauble ingredients to a blender, and blitz into a smooth purée. Transfer to a piping bag with a 5mm nozzle. Once the trees are cool, pipe little dots onto the "branches" of the shortbread and serve.

Note: To serve with drinks (wine, etc.), leave off the baubles. You can use a cutter of any shape.

"Life is weather. Life is meals". *Light Years*, by James Salter

Happy Holidays!

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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.

Vocabulary: Teach, Rinse & Repeat

Tim Howe reports on the Melta workshop led by **Adam Bandstra** on 20 July 2019.

Always on the lookout for innovative and more interesting ways of teaching vocabulary, I had great expectations of this session. Subtitled "Vocabulary: how we think about it, what we do with it, and how we teach it", it sounded as if it would be just what the doctor ordered.

Glancing around a packed room, Adam Bandstra is visibly overwhelmed. "Cool," he says, "I'm standing in front of a group with 400 years' experience." Adam immediately taps into this experience with a brainstorming activity. "What sort of vocabulary do you teach?" he quizzes. We suggest all the usual things — nouns, adjectives, adverbs, links, business vocabulary. Flashing up a pre-prepared slide, Adam adds a few more ideas to the mix, including hyponyms. "What are those?" some-

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"Create a Tinder ad," offers one tech-savvy colleague. "What's a Tinder ad?" asks another.

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one asks. "A member of a broader class," explains Adam. Well, we'd certainly learnt something new there.

Adam then proceeds to invite suggestions for what to do with all these words. "Create a Tinder ad," offers one tech-savvy colleague. "What's a Tinder ad?" asks another.

Next up is a slide showing pictures of some 100 objects. As we discuss all the different ways of exploiting the material depicted, we enter what's probably the most useful and hands-on part of the workshop. Suggestions include:

- memory game
- categorising the words into our own categories and guessing what's in each other's category (Adam obviously likes categories.)
- to whom would you give these gifts?
- which items had you ever returned with a complaint?

A dab-hand with graphics, Adam next produces a slide of verb groups, encouraging us to link them with words from a list of nouns and then create stories with these word matches.

In his final activity, Adam hands out a legal text ("Time Limits in Detention"). Again, what would we do with it? Suggestions include:

- pick out key words, passives, modals
- translate into plain English
- do a roleplay

From his activities, it is clear Adam champions the teaching of words through groups and categories, coupled with any type of vocab-boosting task to do with ranking. I also like his suggestion to use the song "If I were a Boy" by Beyoncé for If-clauses. Pity the internet wasn't working, though. That perhaps needed better preparation.

On balance, this was an enjoyable workshop, and Adam certainly sensitised us to all the different types of vocabulary we need to be teaching. With our 400 years of combined experience, however, I suspect most of us have been doing this for some time already.

Adam Bandstra has a BA in English and Post Independence Indian Literature, and an MA in Applied Linguistics and English Language Teaching from King's College, London. He also holds the Cambridge Diploma in English Language Teaching for Adults (DELTA with Distinction) and the Cambridge Diploma in English Language Teaching Management (DELTM with Merit).

He has worked as an English language teacher, curriculum designer, translator, teacher-trainer, academic manager, business communications trainer, and school principal in the USA, Germany, the United Kingdom, India and Turkey. Currently he works as a Business English trainer in and around Augsburg and is a committee member for IATEFL's Teacher Training and Education SIG.

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

Warm-up:

Students take a picture of something with their smartphones (for those who don't have one, they can choose something from a magazine/newspaper/flyer, etc.). If it's in English, then all the better. It could be a building/advertisement /item for sale, whatever tickles their fancy.

Students should be able to talk about their picture for one minute and give reasons why they chose it. This activity can generate a lot of speaking practice/interaction and sometimes extends far beyond the usual 5 to 10-minute warmer slot. Encourage other students to ask questions relating to one another's contribution.

By Breda Howe-Helmecke

English and German: Family Tie

Germans are always so exact, so why is their future tense so sloppy? Germans often have problems with expressing the future in English because, in German, a statement in the present tense (*Ich gehe in Rente*), combined with a future reference that indicates an even a more distant future (*in vier Jahren*), will usually suffice. Using the real future tense would often be understood as too big and exaggerated (*Ich werde zum Bäcker gehen* — I shall indeed go to the bakery), so Germans tend to save it for strong emotional statements (*Ich werde dich nie verlassen*).
By Stefan Fodor

Volunteers needed

The refugees and asylum seekers arriving in Germany over the last few years have faced many challenges. Not only have they had to adjust to life in overcrowded, poorly equipped and understaffed shelters or other forms of substandard accommodation, they've also been compelled to learn German. To help them, the government and private organizations have set up special language programs. The expectation is that these programs, which are largely grammar oriented, will enable refugees to attain B1 competency within a relatively short time. To date, the failure rate is nearly 50 percent. And now another difficulty has raised its ugly head. To have any chance of succeeding in the German school system and/or on the German labor market, it turns out that refugees — both children and adults — must also know English. And for that, there's very little extra help available from either the overstretched public school system or private organizations. The task, however, is not a difficult one, particularly for experienced English teachers. It consists primarily of helping students do their English homework and improve their speaking skills. Under the circumstances, a little tutoring can go a very long way.

So if you have a couple of extra hours a month and would like to lend a hand, Elif Beinert at the Münchner Flüchtlingsrat (aktiv@muenchner-fluechtlingsrat.de) would be very happy to hear from you. You can tell her that Melta sent you. (Melta Chairman Randy Perry is a volunteer for this organization.)

Reflections of a Dinosaur

Fran Vince reports on the Iatefl Business English Special Interest Group (Besig) conference, which took place 11–13 October 2019 in Berlin. The theme of the conference was "Back to Basics".

The dinosaur? It's me, I admit, with more years than I can recall of English teaching behind me. The Besig annual conference, at 32, is a mere youngster by comparison but an amazing event nonetheless!

In lecture rooms bearing impressive names such as Einstein Cabinet, Curie Cabinet, Newton Cabinet, Pasteur Cabinet or Bunsen Saal, we were able to enjoy a wide range of topics, talks and workshops. I do declare that the conference gets better every year. Besig means business, and business-like it has become: it runs more efficiently and uses vastly improved technology. Remember the old days when nearly every session experienced a glitch of some sort? We were amateurs at the game 32 years ago, no less dedicated in our work as teachers, I am certain, but lagging behind the business world that we were attempting to teach.

This conference, working together with the Global Issues Sig, called upon us all to think "back to the basics". It looked at then and now. It also went one step further by asking us to consider the impact we all have personally on society today and on core issues such as sustainability and environmental protection and how we, as teachers, can help.

Helen Strong gave a lively food-for-thought session called "How to Live the Life you Want". She told us that she'd upped and left England as her 30th birthday was approaching, turning her back on her home, her job, her husband and even her dog. She settled in Germany, began teaching business English, and recently, with her 50th birthday looming on the horizon, decided it was time for another life change. This year she moved to the Outer Hebrides, started up a B&B on a tiny, very romantic-looking but extremely remote island where she also offers life coaching for those guests who would like it. Not that I am altogether sure what a life coach is or what I would

learn from one, to be honest, but that is going back to the basics with a vengeance.

I attended sessions on how to teach online, face challenges in a BE classroom, develop a career as an intercultural trainer, teach presentations, customise, coach and much more, but what I enjoyed greatly and perhaps even remember best were the plenaries. This year there were three, with the final one taking place right at the end of the conference. They were three very different plenaries by very different speakers bearing very different messages. We were treated to a mixture of romance, parsnips and new-age!

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On the Friday, Anne Kankaanranta considered the dynamics of English as a corporate language and talked about BELF — Business English as a Lingua Franca. She mentioned an event that had given her food for thought. Talking to students in a company where the corporate language was English, she asked them how easy or difficult it was for them to communicate in the English language. They found communicating with colleagues, in meetings and presentations not difficult at all. However, they found official reports and briefs that came from HQ very difficult — so difficult, in fact, that they simply ignored them! So, the language of business English can, therefore, be split into two — the English for everyday life in the company and the official, more formal, written English.

On the Saturday, Steve Brown gave an entertaining, if somewhat

doom-and-gloom, talk on life today and the role we have to play in it. His talk was entitled "Indoctrination, Empowerment or Emancipation?" on the role of ELT in global society. We were shown dramatic scenes of natural (and other) disasters, including a picture of a certain gentleman who is running the scene in the USA. Can one call him a natural disaster, I wonder?

Steve complained that most coursebooks today are far too globalized and hence do not cover the PARSNİPS (the taboo topics — Politics, Alcohol, Religion, etc.), which he feels is a great pity. People in Scotland, he explained, like talking
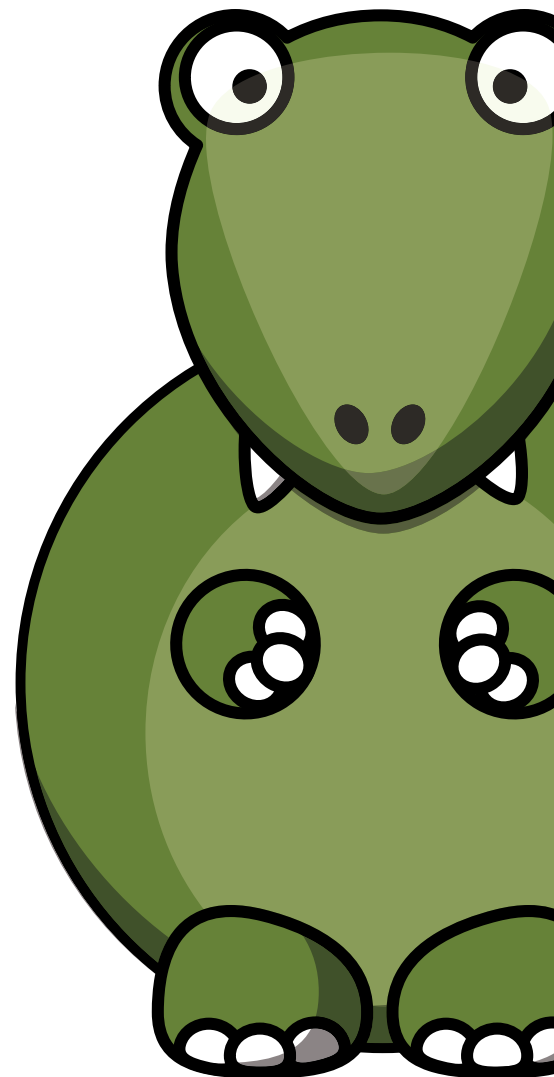
about alcohol, but you will never find it mentioned in a coursebook, he says, because these books are also used in the Muslim world where people may get offended. I would like to challenge that statement, however, as most trainers supply extra materials of their own or download from the internet, don't they?

Steve did not actually say that we are getting it all wrong as teachers, but he feels we are not getting it all right either. We could do far more towards educating people to recognise and help with the enormous problems the world is facing today, a more socially responsible approach to ELT.

Plenary number three was what I would like to call "new-age" as far as plenaries go. It was dubbed "Business English Trends: Two Ians in Dialogue". Ian Badger is a book author and business English trainer. Ian McMaster is the editor-in-chief of the business communication magazine Business Spotlight. They each began by giving brief, five-minute roundups of the talks they had given at the conference. With Business Spotlight turning 20 years old this year, Ian M had given a talk on 20/20 visions, based on his 20 years of research. They then retired to

comfortable chairs at one side of the stage where they engaged in a kind of chat show, exchanging experiences and firing questions at each other and discussing the problems trainers and publishers will face in the future. Ian B questioned what Ian M meant by the comment "merely being a good listener" is not enough. Well, the good listener also needs to ask relevant, pertinent questions. They discussed topics that ranged from problems involved in understanding native speakers to the future of publishing. They also addressed the question: will everything be online in years to come? I found the session highly entertaining and a great way to round off the conference — it kept us awake and sent us home with a number of things to reflect on!

Before I sign off, I should like to say a warm thank you to the Besig organisers and joint coordinators, Dana Poklepovic and Evan Frendo, and their team of helpers behind them. We saw and heard more of Evan as he introduced the speakers and topics at the plenaries and gave other announcements. He has such a strong, yet warm, clear voice that I could listen to for hours! Hope that comment does not make your ears go red, Evan!

Fran Vince has taught English all her life. She studied English and music in London, moved to Germany in her early 20s and founded Vincenetenglish in the 90s. She now lives in Turkey, from where she acts as back "of beyond" office for her daughter Heidi, who now runs Vincenet. In Alanya, Fran assists on the foreigners' committee, is a member of the German–Turkish society and enjoys singing in an international choir.

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.

For further information about Melta, contact
Randy Perry, Chair
chair@melta.de

Visit Melta at www.melta.de

Melta Day 21.9: Got a question about using technology in the classroom?

Susan Merz and **Miles Parker** team up to report on the Melta Day workshop by Michael Saunders (see bio on p. 8) and Nik Granchev. You can find notes from the workshop below the report.

The afternoon session of this year's Melta Day was held, as usual, indoors at the Gasteig, while the outdoor temperatures of this sunny day reached an almost scorching 20°C. Nonetheless, among several other contributors to this year's special day, two cool computer geeks, Nik and Michael, were in top form to introduce us to, and help answer our questions about, technology in the classroom.

Nik, who was raised in Bulgaria, sees himself as a digital native. Michael, on the other hand, is from northern England and has been a computer journalist for the past 20 years. He has recently realized that teaching English is "way more interesting"!

They began their presentation by explaining the importance of choosing secure passwords. By way of clarification, they introduced us to an episode of "Last Week Tonight" starring John Oliver together with Edward Snowden. This humorous TV spot proved to us the importance of using so-called password phrases instead of mundane hackable passwords like 1,2,3,4,5,6! After watch-

Nik Granchev, committee member and Melta's web administrator is originally from Bulgaria and is always ready to support us with our technical issues. "I came to Munich eight years ago to study. I completed my CELTA in August 2018 and have been enjoying teaching ever since. I like to use technology in the classroom to make things simpler and to have more variety in my lessons. I love to travel and meet new people!"

ing this, we were asked to create some of our own. It could be a short saying or a fact about yourself which could be expressed using capital and small letters interchanged with a mixture of numbers and figures. Example: I Like ice cream in the summertime. ILiC1ts.

How to spot and watch out for "phishing emails" was another topic our Melta boys covered. We were urged to check the sender address carefully and to watch out for funny characters and mistakes in the written text.

As alternatives to using common web tools such as Google or Microsoft Office, we were urged to try sites such as Duck Duck Go rather than Google. Libre office, a nonprofit organization that doesn't collect data and is compatible with Word, was suggested as a substitute to Microsoft Office.

The session also included ideas for using an array of online websites which offer readymade lesson plans (always welcoming words to harried teachers) based on Ted Talks and YouTube videos. One example they showed us was *eslbrains.com*, a free website offering student and teacher worksheets.

A word of warning from our tech geeks concerned the using of USB sticks in internet cafés or on public computers: beware of viruses! For virus protectors, they recommended Avast and Bitdefender; Wondowndefender is also OK.

As a final word to the wise: keep your data on an external hard drive! For this, Google is quite secure, they said. On the other hand, we should be careful where we store our pictures.

Our techy teachers: Michael Saunders (left) and Nik Granchev (right)

Summing up, the information was extremely useful and presented in a lively and informative manner. The dynamic duo, Nik and Michael — two tech wizards — succeeded in giving very quick, qualified responses to our many haphazardly spontaneous questions. These young men provided us with a bright and intelligent overview of a variety of technologies, which can be very useful for the ESL classroom.

This proved to be another high point in a well-organized Melta Day.

Most of us agreed we could use more sessions like this throughout the year!

WORKSHOP NOTES
by Nik Granchev

Technology tips and resources
Edward Snowden on passwords: *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzGzB-yYKcc*

Use two-step authentication where possible – e.g. when you log into a site, you also get a message sent to your phone to confirm. Most major online services provide this. Alternative web browsers with extra security built in: Firefox (*https://www.mozilla.org/en-GB/firefox/new/*), Brave (*https://brave.com*)

If you use Firefox, add an extension to block adverts: *https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/ublock-origin/*

Alternative encrypted email in Switzerland: *https://protonmail.com*

LibreOffice, the entirely free office suite, made by a community and compatible with Microsoft Office: *https://www.libreoffice.org* (Download instructions: *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qdEUlcby0A4*, installation instructions: *https://www.libreoffice.org/get-help/install-howto/*

In LibreOffice, use change tracking to show changes you make to a document. This is useful if a student sends homework, and you want to show what you have changed and to add comments. In LibreOffice Writer, the word processor, go to the menu: Edit > Track Changes > Record (and Show). You can also go to Insert > Comment to add a comment.

ESLBrains – videos with lesson plans: *https://eslbrains.com/filter-bubbles*

Q+A session

Transferring your coursebook audio files to your computer

Put the CD from the book into the CD Drive of your laptop/computer. Then open Windows Media Player. On the left side in the panel, click on the CD drive (Usually CD Audio (E:)) After that, in the top panel next to create playlist and organise, you can find a button — RIP CD — press it and then wait for the process to finish. You can find the files in the default Music directory — Local Disk C: users>username>Music.
Add QR codes — fancy barcodes — to printed materials so that students can scan them on their phones to access things on the internet. For in-stance, if you want students to see a YouTube video, first go to YouTube, find the video, then copy the full video address from your web browser (select it, right-click, copy). Then go to *http://goqr.me*, click the globe on the left to enter a URL (website address), then paste it into the box. A QR code should be generated on the right. Click Download to save it to your computer – now you can add it to any printouts you're making.

You can use presentation software to reveal an image a little bit at a time, which is useful for some classroom activities. In LibreOffice, create a new presentation (in the menu, go to File > New Presentation). In the following dialog, "Select a template", just click Cancel — you only want a blank one. Then go to Insert > Image in the menu and choose the picture you want to reveal. Place it on the slide and use the handles at the corner to resize.

Next, go to the menu and Insert > Shape > Basic > Rectangle. Click and drag to draw a rectangle over part of the image. With the shape selected, go to Format > Animation in the menu to show the sidebar on the right. Click + to add an animation, then choose Exit for the category, and Disappear for the effect. If you now go to the menu and Slide Show > Start, you can see the shape disappear as you keep going through the slides. You can now add more shapes and the same type of animation to cover the rest of the image.

In Microsoft Office, create a blank presentation. Then go to Insert > Image in the menu at the top, and choose the picture you want to reveal from your computer. Place it on the slide, and use the handles around the picture to resize.
Next, go to Insert > Shape > Rectangle. Click and drag to draw a rectangle over part of the image. Click on the newly created rectangle and then go to Animations (in the menu at the top). Open the big white box in the top left with different animation effects. Scroll down to exit animations and choose one to your liking. (simple disappear recommended).

If you now start the slide show by pressing the button in the bottom right, you can see the shape disappear as you keep going through the slides. You can now add more shapes and the same type of animation to cover the rest of the image.

Miles Parker is from Maine, and he loves living in Munich. During the summer, he likes to putter around his veggie garden, and in the winter, he's often found at the Film museum watching a movie. Nowadays, he works mostly at the VHS, which gives him a chance to meet people from all around the world.

Susan Merz, originally from Toronto, Canada, currently teaches and coaches business English students at companies south and west of Munich and does some translating on the side. Her passions are hiking, skiing and travelling, especially to Italy where she completed her CELTA certificate in Rome. She has been in Germany for longer than she can remember, is the mother of 3 adult children, and enjoys living in Starnberg with her handsome Golden Retriever, Pino.

Melta Day: Voice training with Frances Lucey

Diaphrams and uvulas: **Tim Howe** (see bio p.24) reports on Frances Lucey's Melta Day workshop

What does a classical opera singer and a teacher have in common? They both need to work tirelessly on voice production and clarity to do their job effectively. While this might be de rigueur for opera performers, it's a skill that's often neglected in teaching. So, when professional opera artist Frances Lucey offered a coaching session in the art of clear voice production, I naturally leapt at the opportunity.

After (nearly) an entire day of sitting, the Dubliner's plan to get us off our seats, stretch our legs and move us around to perform various voice-training exercises was just the ticket. Frances kicked off with some warm-ups for our vocal cords, challenging us to break out of our comfort zone. This largely involved having us repeat "mamma mia!" at various pitches. We might have been forgiven for thinking we were auditioning for a particular West End musical. The best was yet to come, however. "Ever wondered why performers pull funny faces before they go on stage?" the soprano asked after we'd notched up almost a dozen "mamma mias!" "They're loosening up their muscles," she winks.

Next up, we paired up and practiced exhaling at a piece of paper placed halfway between us. If the paper moved, it meant we had used our diaphragm. A flattened diaphragm, Frances explained, keeps a supply of air in the lungs which, when released, is used to support the mouth for effortless singing — or teacher talking. It holds the air in the body and gives the performer control of a steady breath. It turns out that steady breathing, often the first point of study in classical voice training, is essential for teachers, too. Without good breath support, the voice fatigues quickly — something we've all experienced in the classroom.

Although Frances made it seem like child's play, I was already having trouble following some of the instructions. Of course, it could have just been that my concentration was waning after today's wall-to-wall workshops. "You have to depress the root of your tongue and lift your soft palate," the singer encouraged, before going on to emphasise the importance of the uvula (the narrow muscular structure at the back of the mouth). Noting my difficulty in trying to locate my own uvula, Frances instructed me to say "Aahh!" Smiling at the result, she added, "You can't see your uvula right now, but your partner can." For a split-second, I wasn't sure whether to feel embarrassed or relieved.

No prizes for guessing the grand finale in our quest for the perfect vocal projection. Frances flashed up the lyrics of "Mamma Mia". Before we could say "Abba", we were singing the full song at the top of our, by now, impressively breath-supported voices.

Was the session helpful? The sixty-minute taster certainly was fun, albeit somewhat hurried and confusing. Still, when it comes to making ourselves heard in the classroom, Frances Lucey has certainly sensitized us to the importance of both breath and vocal production.

Would I do it all again or come back for more? For another group-binding bash at Abba, definitely yes.

Frances Lucey comes from Dublin where she studied Music and French before joining the Bavarian State Opera Studio to finish her training as an opera singer. She was subsequently a soloist in the National Theatre for eight years before leaving to join the Gaertnerplatz Theatre where she still sings. In August 2018, Frances completed a Celta course and is now teaching English as well as singing.
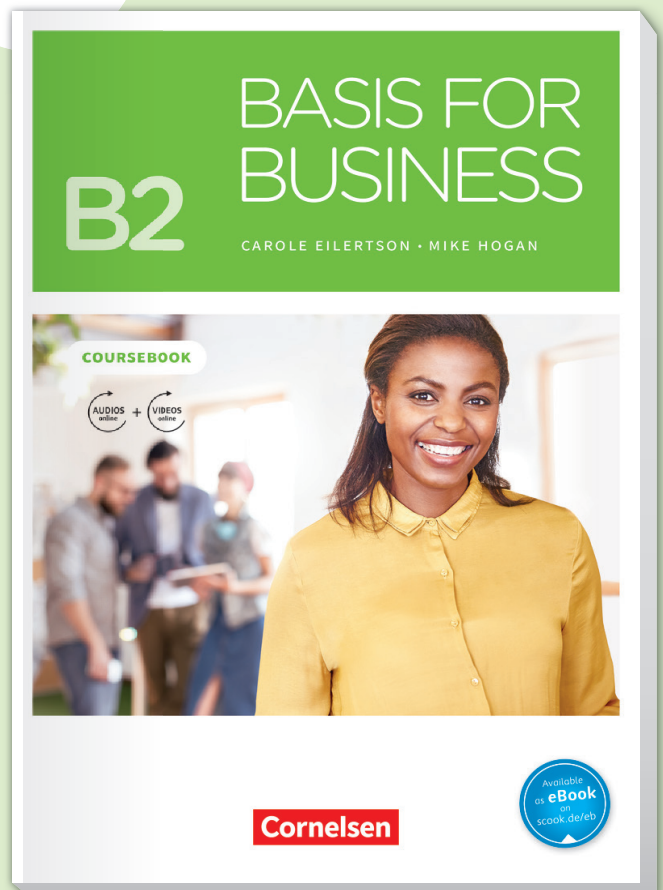
Melta Day: Simulation Light

Engaging business English courses, simulation light and a dating agency for "the undateables": **Ilá Cristina Coimbra** gives us a brief account of Dana Jelinkova's Melta Day workshop.

September 21 was a sunny Saturday and the first day of Oktoberfest: all the reasons in the world for a great part of Munich to be somewhere outdoors having a *Maß* (or three). However, that was not exactly what happened at Gasteig that afternoon. In fact, the excitement seen in room 3145 had nothing to do with beer or sun: we were all gathered to take part in a day full of sharing experiences and attending brilliant workshops on Melta Day.

Among so many inspiring sessions about learners' autonomy and technology, Dana Jelinkova was there to share with us ways to deliver engaging business English courses that have maximum output from the students. She called the technique "simulation light". The course is based on the topic of setting up a business and planning all the steps to do so. From drawing up a business plan and getting investors to planning a launch event, students have to continually make decisions, express their opinions and negotiate throughout the process of setting up a company.

To make us experience how much output this approach to teaching business English can generate, Dana put us into small groups and distributed a handout in which we could draw up a business plan to present to investors. On this paper, we had to fill in some fields.

Dana Jelinkova has taught numerous general and business English courses in Prague and Munich and, as a CELTA tutor, enjoys the challenge of training future teachers.

First of all, we had to decide on the type of business we wanted. There were some suggestions to choose from: a bar, a coffee shop, an estate agency, a courier service, a dating agency, etc. This last option was the one my group decided to go for. The first thing we did was to write a brief description of the business. Inspired by Channel 4's documentary series "The Undateables", we decided to start a dating agency that would suit people who are deemed not eligible to be dated because they didn't meet typical beauty and social standards. By the time we had decided this, we had already outlined the service we were going to offer and the name of the business.

The handout also had sections to encourage us to reflect on market trends, the location of our business — which we agreed should definitely be near a romantic park — the objectives for the first months and the target customers. Last but not least, we had to think about the prices of our service. As we wanted our agency to be a face-to-face service, we based these costs on the number of computers we would need, the size of the place we needed to rent and the rent itself.

After drawing up our inspiring and fun business plan, we presented it to the other group as if they were investors. Then, after convincing the big sharks we were worthy of their money, we set out to plan the launching event. The other group also had a business plan to present to us as if we were the big sharks for them, and it turned out our businesses were complementary: they had set up a bookshop café. So, we joined forces and decided to launch both our businesses together in a joint event, which intensified and enriched the discussion. The final task was to draw a poster and present our project, services, marketing strategies and party planning to the other groups.

If we analyze the linguistic output in this simulation, we can see a wide variety of communication skills and language structures that are key for business English learners. Here is a brief list of some possible linguistic outcomes and the steps that are connected with each:

- Language for negotiating, suggestion and persuading: deciding on the type of business, on the name of the business and on the managing team. For example: "I agree that a coffee shop is a very popular place; however, there are already too many in Munich. Why don't we go for the courier service?"
- Relative clauses: describing the business. For example: "It's a dating agency that focuses on people who don't conform to social standards".
- Language to state opinions: deciding on the type and name of the business, drawing up the marketing plan. For example: "I don't think we should have an online service. I believe our target customers need more face-to-face interactions".
- Modal verbs, speculation and prediction: discussing market trends, estimating start-up costs and service costs. For example: "We might need three computers to register the profiles and run the matching program" or "We will need at least 20 paying members in the first three months".
- Connectives and conjunctions for explaining reasons: deciding on the location of the business, planning the launch party, presenting costs to investors. For example: "We need our agency to be near a park because it is more romantic" or "Since many of our customers may be introverts, a bookshop café is the perfect location for the launch party".

The possibilities are amazing and almost endless. Also, if we think about structuring a course around the top-

Melta Day: How to give your learners more autonomy

Zoe Kosarev (bio p. 9) shares some of her impressions of the Melta Day workshop given by **Brigitta Berger** (bio p. 13).

ic Dana brought us, we can plan a business English program that can not only be useful and generative in terms of language but can also be engaging, interesting and transformative. The students might discover, for instance, that they are good business planners or might find out they actually would like to have their own business.

Our group realized, after performing all the steps of the simulation, that we would love to run a business that could make a difference in people's lives and make some money. Although I truly believe that making a difference is why we became teachers in the first place.

Ilá Cristina Coimbra has been an English teacher since 2001 and a teacher trainer since 2011, primarily focused on preparing students and teachers for language exams. Ilá holds DELTA Module 2, CELTA and CPE certificates and has been attending and presenting at local, national and international conferences since 2014. She is also the author of *Raise Up!*, a coursebook that aims to make the ELT classroom more inclusive and diverse, and she is one of the founding members of BRAZ-TESOL Voices SIG, a special interest group that focuses on equality in ELT.

On 21 September, I attended an excellent and thoroughly enjoyable Melta Day event. We had lots to take away with us — some of which I have already applied in my lessons. The event began with a great workshop given by the lovely Birgitta Berger centred on how to give your learners more autonomy.

Using her experience and Montessori background, Birgitta introduced us to various methods and activities that "enable students to take control and responsibility for their own learning". Autonomous learners should feel a greater willingness to learn (particularly useful when teaching children or teenagers) because they are taking charge of their own learning, adapting where necessary to suit their needs. They often show higher levels of motivation, especially as they are able to judge their own successes based on personalised goals.

Birgitta put theory in action by introducing us to a range of activities we were able to practice during the workshop. These included authentic communication activities such as word ping-pong and word snake. We also looked at learner-created materials such as word cards and dominoes. Much amusement was had when it turned out not all the participants were completely clear on how dominoes worked — and Birgitta accepted that some ICQs (Instruction Checking Questions) would have been useful at that point.

We also did a pictures and questions activity in which we chose a
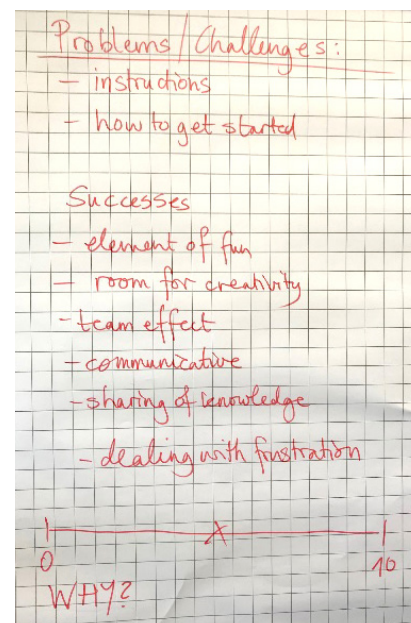
picture and wrote four open questions based on the image that were then used as the basis for a discussion. These images and questions (as well as the dominoes, word cards, etc.) can be kept, labelled and used again.

All of Brigitta's activities focused on communication. The teacher can encourage the use of the target language by ensuring that the images and vocabulary practised are relevant and by correcting mistakes either at the time or later.

All the participants were thoroughly engaged in this workshop. We made new friends, laughed and discussed loudly — the 90 minutes flew by! Thanks again, Birgitta, for such an interesting workshop.

> "A LEARNING CURVE IS ESSENTIAL TO GROWTH."
> TAMMY BJELLAND

Fierce Conversations

Reviewed by **Jeff Aristy**

Published in 2008, *Fierce Conversations*, by Susan Scott, is certainly not a new book. However, despite its age, Fierce seems to have started something. It has inspired a successful management training concept, paved the way for several other titles that cover similar terrain and brought urgency to the idea that we need to start talking — right now — about the things that are deeply problematic in working life.

As a former CEO of several American companies, Scott saw how communication is failing: pointless meetings, conflicting priorities and multiple projects are never fully aligned with the people and functions they affect. Her book explores what communication is, why don't we communicate and then, after investigating those fundamental questions, she begins to lay the groundwork for how to have an effective conversation.

Scott uses the word "conversation" understanding how abstract and multi-layered the word "communication" has become. Fierce is about clarity, and, to achieve this clarity, Scott takes us back to the core principles of effective conversations: asking meaningful questions, showing empathy and listening to people — committed listening is hard work, but necessary.

The book is also chock-full of interesting quotes: "While no single conversation is guaranteed to transform a company, a relationship, or a life, any single conversation can." Here, she is reminding us of the potential value any meaningful conversation can carry and how "any single conversation can" change everything. A valuable sentiment inviting us to look back on our own lives, at those important moments (the day we met our partner, an evening with a friend, that job interview) that powerfully evidences how our lives very often twist and turn and depend upon unexpectedly important conversations. "Speak and listen as if this is the most important conversation you will ever have with this person," she writes, arguing that if we can achieve the right level of commitment to the person we are speaking to, something wonderful may emerge.

Fierce Conversations is about being strong, powerful and authentic in the moment, which Scott qualifies by writing this: "A fierce conversation is one in which we come out from behind ourselves, into the conversation, and make it real." This is another reminder that much of the communication we think we are engaging in is more about pretence, protecting self-esteem and creating smoke screens that conceal and constrict communication rather than liberate it. Scott touches upon these uncomfortable realities about human behaviour and how, especially in corporate life, adults struggle with the risk of self-disclosure. These truths might be at the heart of why communication is perennially failing and that fear may be a major driver of human interaction. The book gives the reader a kind of mandate to become more courageous — to become more fierce — in our interactions in order to open up opportunities.

To help us achieve this, Scott provides four key objectives we need to bring into our interactions:

Objective 1: interrogate reality

Reality, Scott argues, is complex, multiple and is always competing with itself. We do not own the truth. Consequently, every time we talk to another person, we need to be in a mode of enquiry. This sounds sensible. However, if we look at corporate life, we very often see a belief in expertise and knowledge, a belief that I am right and you are wrong. It is these entrenched beliefs that might be undermining the ability of individuals and organisations to communicate productively.

Objective 2: provoke learning

A fierce conversation means that we should always walk away from the conversation with something new gained from or something new given to the person with whom we've been speaking. In some of the more memorable anecdotes in the book, Scott recounts how many corporate leaders often have "versations" rather than conversations. This means they talk at someone rather than with someone and how this data dumping offers little value or relevance to the listener.

Objective 3: tackle tough challenges

Here Scott returns to the fear factor. She says that many competent business professionals are not having the
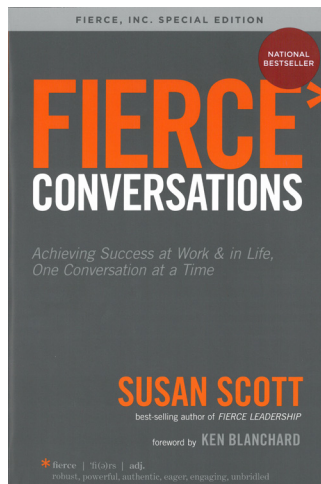
Jeff Aristy is the founder and Managing Director of Big Apple Business in Munich, Germany, a company specialising in coaching, training and consulting services. *j.aristy@bigapplebusiness.de, www.bigapplebusiness.de*

Losing my Voice and Finding Another

Reviewed by **Tim Howe** (see his bio on p. 24)

right conversation and not saying what they should be saying in a meeting, to a colleague or a team lead. Business English trainers all know the scenario where our clients complain about what they find frustrating about their jobs, rather than having a conversation with their boss or colleague about a difference of opinion.

Objective 4: enrich relationships

While it is possible to fulfil objectives 1–3, we can still leave people feeling frustrated in the end. A problem might have been solved, but the relationship is left unimproved. That means we need to ensure that every conversation should be designed to foster relationships as the foundation of efficient collaboration.

Scott's philosophy about communication is relevant and pragmatic. Her ideas are simple yet present a fundamental shift in how we should engage with others. As practitioners in ELT, Scott's book is also confrontative for us, asking if we, too, should think about bringing "fierce" into the classroom so that our clients can better meet the challenges of corporate life.

Non-fiction widely documents the language acquisition of young children, but there seems to be very little written about how adults gain language after growing out of the "soak-it-up" stage. In his book *Losing my Voice and Finding Another*, Cooper Thompson seeks to fill "this market" gap by describing the urge to express intense feelings towards others, yet not possessing words to utter these in a foreign language.

Linguistic dispossession — wanting to communicate certain feelings but lacking the words — is something many elderly readers can connect with. Particularly those who have had to learn a hard language from scratch. Thrown in at the deep end after marrying a German woman and moving from the U.S., Thompson faced this very conundrum. As a middle-ager who still resists the pressure to learn Polish after wedding a Pole, I can certainly connect with Cooper Thompson.

Reflecting on 12 years of his life in Germany, Thompson tells us how he initially lost both his voice, and almost his personality, too. At the outset, he didn't want to learn German, fighting both the language and the culture. Theming his tales in the "Losing" part of the book under chapters such as "Fear", "Anger", "Rules", Thompson describes the difficulty of learning German at night school from a teacher who could deal quite competently with learning tools but was totally at sea when it came to dealing with the oft agonising feelings experienced by some of her older learners.

Thompson soon began to understand that what he really needed was an approach to language learning that would take on this complex task
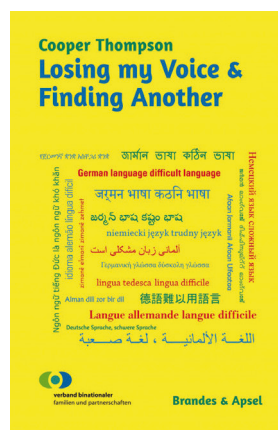
of language learning in the same way that children do. They listen and mimic and eventually create their own words, phrases and sentences. This clearly wasn't what was happening at his night school.

Moving on to "Finding Another", one of my favourite chapters, sees Thompson striking up an unlikely bond with an apparent neo-Nazi sympathiser. Thompson not only discovers that language is the key to overcoming prejudice, but he also surprises himself by just how much he can share with and learn from others by using just very simple language. Now able to express himself adequately, Thompson eventually finds himself able to counsel Germans — in German. In a later chapter, Thompson realises how the door to understanding German can perhaps be easier unlocked by pursuing activities not directly linked to having to understand language — such as learning yoga.

Losing my Voice and Finding Another will entertain and motivate readers who wonder what it's like — and are possibly seeking motivation — to learn a foreign language at a late stage in their lives. It's also a plea for a more sensitive, take-your-time approach to teaching foreign languages to adults. At the same time, it fills a wide gap in an English-language market.

Losing my Voice and Finding Another is available as an e-book on Kobo: *https://www.kobo.com/de/en/ebook/losing-my-voice-finding-another*

For free chapter online: *http://nuernbergcounseling.com/my-publications/second-language-acquisition-and-immigrant-experiences/*

Tribute to **Eamonn Fitzgerald**

Journalist, web manager, blogger, tweeter, voice-over artist, trainer, teacher-trainer, musician, raconteur and Melta friend Eamonn Fitzgerald died on 26 August at the age of 64.

Eamonn — or "Eamondo", as I fondly called him — grew up in a rural community in County Limerick at a time when Ireland was very conservative in its values. And although Eamonn retained some elements of that conservatism, he was an extremely modern person, fascinated by technology and its applications.

After studying law and then journalism in Ireland, Eamonn found his way to New York and then on to Munich, where he became a business English trainer, working in-company.

Eamonn joined Spotlight Verlag in October 1998 to set up the first website for *Spotlight* magazine. He was its content manager until 2010, when he became an independent social media consultant and returned to teaching.

Eamonn was a technology columnist and author for *Business Spotlight* from its first issue in March 2001. His "English 4.0" column explored the connection between technology and industry. And he produced one of his finest pieces of work shortly before he died, a cover story for *Business Spotlight* 6/2019 about the trade war and battle for economic supremacy between the US and China.

Eamonn's interests went far beyond technology and business, however. He was a lover of, and expert on, film, food, history, languages, literature, music, poetry, religion, sport, whisky, wine and much more. Each year, he re-read his (and my) favourite book, *The Great Gatsby*.

Those who knew him will attest to his charm, wit, kind-heartedness, generosity and willingness to take the time to discuss any topic under the sun with anyone, even those — or particularly those — who didn't share his views. He was described lovingly by his wife, Ann, as a "prickly contrarian" on his "Rainy Day" blog (*http://www.eamonn.com/*). Eamonn was a very likeable and inspiring contrarian.

Last, but not least, Eamonn was a great friend to many of us. His passing is an extraordinary loss, both personally and professionally. Our thoughts are with his family and, in particular, with his wife.

Ian McMaster
Editor-in-chief, *Business Spotlight*
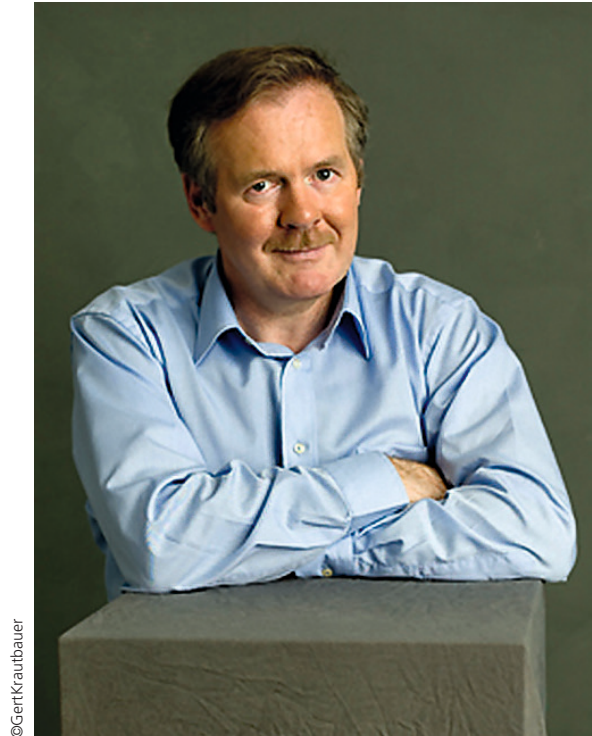
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Melta Events

7 December 2019

Annual Christmas Party:
See the Melta website for details

Spring
Exact date and time TBD

Patricia de Griese
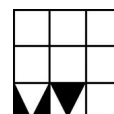Sponsored by Klett. Details coming soon to the Melta website!

External Events

18 April–21 April 2020

IATEFL Conference in Manchester
The IATEFL International Conference is one of the largest events in the global English language teaching calendar.

MVHS Events

J581522 / Full-time / December–February 2019
Emma Jones and Amanda Momeni · Gasteig · Rosenheimer Str. 5 · M–F 9:00–18:00 · Breaks on agreement · 02.12.2020 – 28.02.2020 · €1,745 · 12 places

Certificate in English Language Teaching to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA)
CELTA full-time courses are intensive and rewarding. CELTA part-time courses are suitable for people who have other commitments during the week or live outside of Munich and therefore do not have time to complete an intensive course. For further information please visit www.mvhs.de/celta

J581504
Amanda Momeni · Gasteig, Rosenheimerstr. 5 · Saturday 9:30–16:30 · 25.01.2020 · €65 · 12 places

CELTA Language Awareness Day
This one-day course is designed to help participants of the CELTA course by offering a brief overview of English language and terminology immediately prior to the CELTA course. The course is strongly recommended for CELTA participants. In special circumstances and after consultation with the CELTA Course Director, other teachers of English may be admitted on to this course.

The London office of the British Council and their partner UNICEF have developed the **"Vocabulary Challenge"** at *www.vocabularychallenge.org*. It's a project that was built to detect levels of English around the globe. Users who take the challenge (German native speakers) are given a German phrase and asked to fill in an underlined word in the sentence in English below. For every right answer, the British Council is giving £0.01 to UNICEF, so respondents are doing it all for a charitable cause.

Non-ELT Events

*We are born to sing"

Looking for enthusiastic singers for our informal singing group.
Plans are to meet once a week or once a fortnight.
We already have a venue in Munich.
Organization is in the early stages.
Keep the sixties, seventies and eighties rockin'.
Awakened your curiosity???

Then get in touch.
Breda Howe (Melta committee member):
bredahowehelmecke@t-online.de

melta

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

JOIN ONLINE
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.

Become a Melta member

Melta provides a forum for:
• Information and experience exchange
• Training and teaching development
• Social contact and support

Melta membership benefits include:
• Presentations by leading EFL/ESL guest speakers
• Practical workshops and demonstrations
• Our newsletter, Melta News, twice 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

Have you moved?
If so, please let the membership secretary have your new address.

Please let us know!

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!

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

IATEFL discount
Did you know that as a Melta member you can join IATEFL as a basic member?

Basic membership costs £21 (less than half the price of a standard membership) and entitles you to receive newsletters and discounts to IATEFL events at a lower cost than if you became a full member. If you would like to take advantage of this offer, please send an email to the membership secretary, and ask for a copy of IATEFL's basic membership form. The completed form and payment should be sent directly to IATEFL.

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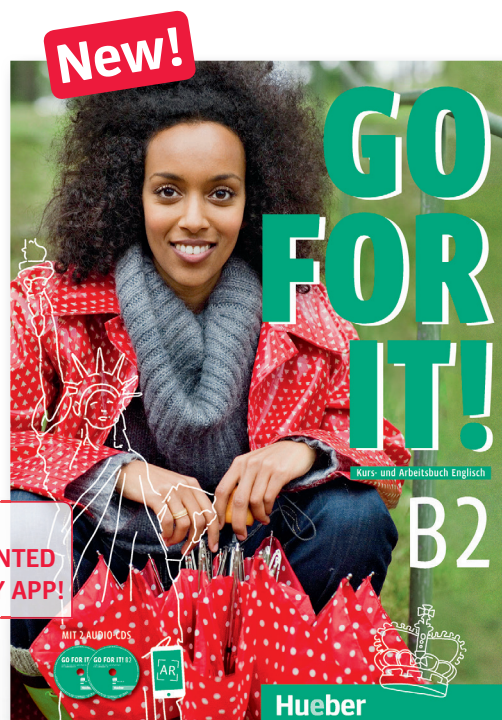
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