



The English Language
Teachers' Association
Frankfurt / Rhine-
Main-Neckar

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ELTAF NEWSLETTER 3/2025

Welcome to the ELTAF Newsletter 3/25!

What would you like ELTAF to do? And what would you like to do for ELTAF?

There are suggestions in this issue, so read on. Maybe the photos of Members' Day will encourage those who couldn't be there to be at ELTAF events. As well as the excellent workshops given by ELTAF members, a very important aspect of the day was meeting other members. Many were still there right at the very end, so it seems that everyone enjoyed themselves. Keep an eye on the email list for news of ELTAF events and please get in touch with the committee if you have ideas for events and activities or if you would like to take a more active part in

ELTAF!

Next year ELTAF will be 40 years old and we have come a long way since then, but the changing pace of life today means that there is always more to do. ELTAF members are the most important part of ELTAF and all contributions, however small, are welcome. It would be great to hear from

YOU!





ELTAF is a regional professional organisation for teachers of English as a foreign language.

We strive to provide our members with all the tools they need to continually develop both their teaching skills and their businesses by offering workshops and networking opportunities. Our members come from all over the world and from all ELT and related areas.

ELTAF is a registered association in Germany. All committee work is done on a voluntary basis, at weekends and in off-hours. Although this does not excuse mistakes or delays, we hope that what we do, and our services will be seen in this light. Nevertheless, we strive continuously to improve the quality of our work and are grateful for constructive suggestions and comments. For more information see www.eltaf.de

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EDITORIAL

Judith Mader



ELTAF Editor
editor@eltaf.de

Dear ELTAF Members,

I have been Newsletter Editor for almost a year, and I want to thank everyone who has made my work so pleasant and easy. It has taken a while to get the hang of things, but the contributions that have come in and the compliments have made things easier.

I hope you like my choice of red for this issue. It seems appropriate to brighten up the dull days of winter and celebrate the year's end and a new one. Green for the next issue for the coming of spring?

A large part of this issue is about **Members' Day** on 14 September which can be considered by all who were there to have been a great success. I hope you enjoy the reports by **Valerie, Rhianon and Madeline** of the sessions given by **Robert, Ridha** and **Emma** and the photos of an enjoyable, and enlightening day. I enjoyed meeting old friends and making new ones. A big thank you goes to all those who made it such a memorable occasion. And for those who couldn't make it, I hope we meet next year!

Many thanks for all the icebreaker ideas, of which more to come. This issue also has the Christmas / end-of-year activities which you kindly sent. There are articles from our regular contributors, **Richard, Paul** and **Larry** and from other members. **Pauline and Nicola** about setting up their own language school, **Maria** about the use of English in the world (an area of ELT very dear to my heart). **Tracey** has written about the ELTAF TalkShop in Wiesbaden and we meet new member, **Bonnie**, and longer-standing member **Gabriele**. There is also information about the Pickwicks Club which might be of interest to members or their learners.

Next year ELTAF will be 40, so I've included an article by **Kate Cowe** who founded ELTA-Rhine, to set the scene for our anniversary issues. Older members will remember those days, while younger ones may find the piece historically interesting.

Please do keep the contributions coming so that my next year as Editor is as pleasant as this one. If you have any requests or want to comment on anything concerning the Newsletter, please get in touch. I and the whole committee would love to hear from you.

I hope you all enjoy a holiday at the end of the year and are looking forward to a peaceful and happy 2026!

All the best

Judith

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Liz Jolliffe



ELTA Chair

chair@eltaf.de

Dear ELTAF Members,

As the year draws to a close and the festive season begins, I'd like to wish all our members a joyful and relaxing pre-Christmas period!

I hope you find some time to unwind, enjoy good company, and perhaps even sneak in a few mince pies.

It was such a pleasure to see so many of you at our recent **Members' Day** – familiar faces as well as new ones. Events like these remind me what makes our ELTAF community so special: enthusiasm, generosity, and a shared love of teaching and learning.

Speaking of community, we had a wonderful **ELTAF Christmas Party on 29 November!** It's always a lovely way to round off the year – full of laughter, stories, and a little seasonal cheer. There were crackers and our Dirty Santa game – the same procedure as every year 😊.

Looking ahead to 2026, we'll be looking for **new Advisory Board members** to join our well-seasoned team and give us fresh ideas. If you've thought about getting more involved, don't be afraid to come forward – now's the time! You'll meet wonderful colleagues, help shape our activities, and contribute to keeping ELTAF vibrant and supportive.

2026 is a special year as we will be celebrating our 40th anniversary! None other than Judith Mader, who has put together this great newsletter, was a founding member of ELTAF back in 1986. How should we celebrate? Let us know your ideas!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Judith as well as each and every member of the Committee and Advisory Board for all their hard work keeping our wheels well-oiled this year. We're a happy bunch and I'm grateful to all of you.

Wishing you all a peaceful Advent season and a very Merry Christmas.

Liz

chair@eltaf.de

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Sprachen fürs Leben! 

ELTAF AGM

14 February

2026

Please come!

Dear ELTAF Members,

We cordially invite you to join this year's AGM on 14 February 2026, at 14:00 at the ISM, International School of Management, Mörfelder Landstraße 55, 60598 Frankfurt.

The AGM is your chance to participate in shaping our association and to take an active part yourself. We are always on the lookout for members who wish to become more involved. If you are interested, please contact Liz Jolliffe (chair@eltaf.de) and come to the AGM. Here is the agenda:

1. Welcome
2. Election of a Recording Secretary
3. Committee's Report 2025
4. Treasurer's Report 2025
5. Auditor's Report
6. Dismissal of Current Committee 2025
7. Nomination and Election of Committee and Advisory Board 2026
8. Any Other Business

If you have any topics, you would like to discuss, please send a message to contact@eltaf.de.

We look forward to seeing numerous members on the day for an interesting and lively discussion and some delicious cakes. 😊

Liz Jolliffe
ELTAF Chair
chair@eltaf.de

Thank you from the ELTAF Editor and the ELTAF committee to

Wendy von der Pforte for proofreading and

Rudi Camerer for help with layout.

MEMBERS' DAY

20 September
2025

ELTAF's signature event, Members' Day, is held every year, usually on a Saturday in September. This year it was on Saturday, 20 September at the ISM International School of Management in Frankfurt, an ideally suited venue located south of the river Main and easy to reach.

Members' Day is a professional development opportunity with plenty of time for ELTAF members to network and attend workshops given by fellow members. The Day usually ends with a raffle accompanied by a glass of Sekt. Members can bring a friend and the event is also open to members of other ELTAs in Germany.

Tea and coffee, lunch, cakes and Sekt are included in the registration fee. If you didn't attend this year's event, maybe the photos and reviews of workshops will encourage you to take advantage of Members' Day next year!

The day started with a welcome speech from Liz Jolliffe, ELTAF chair. The first workshop was held by Robert Zammit, who used the main area of the venue for his session on Role-working. Read Valerie Gulotta's review to find out what went on.

This was followed, after a break by Ridha Mejri whose topic was our future as teachers when AI does (almost) everything. See Rhiannon Tan's review for more details on what went on and how we felt afterwards – certainly not downhearted!

After a delicious lasagne lunch, Emma Gledhill-Schmitt, a very long-standing and active ELTAF member discussed the subject of AI in a specific context, tertiary education, testing and assessment. The discussions we had with each other and Emma and the knowledge we shared meant that we could easily apply the topic to any other contexts we teach in. Read Madeline Bohr's review to find out more.

The whole day was accompanied by a treasure table of books & teaching materials to give away, organised by ELTAF committee member, Larry Henry.

We ended with Japanese cakes and an idea swap shop, which was facilitated by Judith Mader. This was a chance to ask other ELTAF members teaching related questions. The questions were written on cards, collected and sorted into groups dealing with similar subjects. In groups, members were given a set of questions to discuss, documenting the results of the discussion on posters. Very lively discussions were held, and members had to be reminded several times to write something on the posters! Read the results further on in this Newsletter.



MEMBERS' DAY

20 September
2025
Workshop 1
Role-working:
Enriching the
Foreign
Language
Classroom
with
Robert Zammit



info@resonanz-institut.de

reviewed by
Valerie Gulotta

Robert's introduction to his workshop was that it would involve standing, sitting and walking. It promised to be an interesting session of discovery and Robert didn't disappoint.

He began by asking questions that would lead us to stand in a line, positioning ourselves depending on our answer. The first question was: *How much do you like using role plays in class?* The line spread long and wide with answers of no, sometimes and yes.

The second question was: *How often do you do role plays?* The line was denser in the middle with often and thinned out with never and always. The final, but important question was: *How much do you (as trainers) like doing role-plays?* There were responses all the way across the spectrum. Robert then questioned the whole group: *What is a role play?* Answers included: *Dialogue, communication, interaction, forced, acting, practice, awkward, etc.* The list was varied and long. It became clear that attitudes to role-playing in the classroom were strong and very mixed - almost a love-hate relationship.

Robert responded that role-plays could be seen as a valuable playground for language learning, offering much untapped potential. Robert posed the questions: *What is a role? Do we play a role when we are speaking to our partner? Do we play different roles depending on which culture we are in? Does a policeman play the same role depending on the country he is in e.g. Germany, US, or Russia?*

Robert also asked: *Can you change the role depending on the setting?* e.g. a wife working in the company where her boss is her husband. *Do they work together or is he in control when he is the boss?* His answer was that it requires the wife and husband to decide what works for them by setting their role-boundaries. He then asked that we think about the roles that we have in our lives. The interesting question was: *Are we defined by the roles that we play? Are we playing roles?*

Robert placed two empty chairs facing each other and asked us to propose a specific situation for demonstration purposes. He rejected the first proposal of two persons meeting and getting to know each other at a conference as it was too unspecific. The next suggestion was a one-to-one meeting between a boss and an employee. Robert then elicited from us the details of the persons, the situation, their wants and needs. This was the crux. While standard role-plays typically involve predefined situations and assigned roles, in this case the entire scenario was created by the group itself.

The employee, Dr. Mary Harper, wants to work from home. Dr Steven Grüber, the boss, has worked for the company for over 25 years, is married and about to retire. Dr. Mary Harper, the employee, is a 24-year-old mother with a young child and has a stay-at-home husband.

The participants split up into two groups (Grüber and Harper). The separate groups defined three different roles that their persona

carries (mother, employee, career-oriented person, etc.) The participants split further into three sub-groups and discussed their position, goals, possible things to say.

Robert asked for the time and place the meeting would take place. The boss and the employee would eventually have a 7 a.m. meeting to discuss the home office conundrum - working on a project from home or in the office.

The role play began with Dr. Grüber meeting Dr. Harper at 7 a.m. All the Harpers and Grubers came together and did the role-play. The twist was that they did not know which particular "sub-role" their counterpart was currently playing. After changing partners, Robert introduced another twist and the roles were changed. Dr. Harper was now Dr Grüber and vice-versa!

The feedback from participants was that this was an interesting role play: "Although I had played the other role and had insight into what the other character thought, it was still challenging". The experience showed how rewarding a role play could be and that, with preparation, this role play could be implemented in the classroom setting, online and in-person.

From Robert - obviously this exercise is not for absolute beginners - who are virtually non-existent in German anyway. The lower the level, the more preparation time in sub-groups is necessary.

As the entire content is originating from the participants and the group, and the participants themselves choose the role they want to play, identification with the situation and the personas is strong. So, when the situation is played out, the language is secondary. Everyone wants to get their way and speaks (hopefully using the language they prepared beforehand), not because they want to practice the language but because it is a matter of "life or death" - without any real risk. They play.

Thanks, Robert Zammit, for bringing the fun back to role playing!



MEMBERS' DAY

20 September
2025

Workshop 2
What will we do
when AI does
(almost)
everything?
with
Ridha Mejri



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Reviewed by
Rhiannon Tan



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The question on everyone's lips in recent times is "What is happening with AI?", with mixed reviews. As with anything new, it is often initially received with either enthusiasm or doubt. As English trainers, we may often ask ourselves what this means for our future in our field and even go as far as to say AI will even make our jobs obsolete.

In Ridha's workshop, we explored the way AI is evolving, looking at it from the perspective of both being an advantage and disadvantage compared to what a human being can do. We separated into teams to focus on these points and then came back together to share our thoughts and experiences. Along with the presentation slides and short video, we were also invited to use an app projected onto the screen so we could add our thoughts anonymously. This tool was useful to show how to incorporate technology effectively in the classroom.

In Ridha's workshop, we delved into questions such as *What will you do when AI does almost everything?* *What does AI do better than humans?*, and *What are the disadvantages of AI in education?*

Most importantly, we were led to the question *How can I harness it?* This technology is not going away and will only evolve over time. Yes, AI can also guide us in the classroom by structuring a lesson and finding details. As professionals, we can adapt the material AI creates to make it more our own. Ridha also pointed out that our assets should also be integrated into our classrooms, assets which AI does not override, such as empathy, cultural understanding, adaptability and building authentic connections. These are aspects of our teaching which as human beings we can continue to incorporate. Just because AI is becoming increasingly popular, it does not necessarily have to take over.

In summary, I thoroughly enjoyed this workshop, guided by a humorous and open trainer who offered us a fun insight into AI, with all its pros and cons. The takeaway message was clear, and I left the room with more confidence and reassurance in my capability to use AI in the classroom without losing myself.



MEMBERS' DAY

Workshop 3

AI in Tertiary
Education, Testing
and Assessment.
with
Emma Gledhill-
Schmitt



Emma.Gledhill-Schmitt@hs-gm.de

Reviewed by
Madeline Bohr



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The third Workshop of ELTAf Members' Day was led by Emma Gledhill-Schmitt, Head of Language Center, Geisenheim University, Geisenheim, Rheingau. It was refreshing to hear from someone who is very obviously so passionate about her work and interested in input from the greater community of English-language instructors, and the workshop was billeted as a discussion and knowledge-sharing session.

The students in Geisenheim are enrolled in courses on winegrowing and landscaping, areas which have traditionally been very German and local. However, even those traditional areas are changing and today, there are many international students enrolled at Geisenheim University.

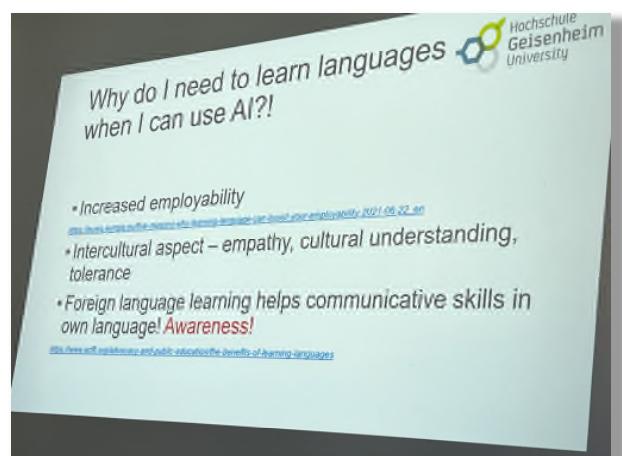
Emma started with a presentation and explored how AI is reshaping language teaching, from student use in assessments to new evaluation formats. It stresses critical reflection, intercultural skills, and employability benefits of language learning. AI should be integrated as a supportive tool while maintaining communicative, competence-based teaching that fosters flexibility, empathy, and global awareness.

An interesting aspect for me personally was that AI seems to have actually improved and deepened the learning experience, making it more cooperative, critical, and multi-dimensional. Instead of the focus being on the all-knowing teacher, who imparts knowledge to his students, there has been a shift, and learning has become more student-centered.

Following her presentation, Emma opened the discussion to the participants on the impact of AI in tertiary education and was interested in our input - and of course what our answer would be to a question she is often confronted with: *Why do I need to learn languages when I can use AI?!*

A lively discussion ensued. Some of our members felt that AI was a dangerous development and that it de-personalised communication. And That there are potentially trust issues around depending on a digital tool to manage language.

On the other hand, it was argued that we now live in a globalized world and marketplace, where traditional roles must evolve for us to keep up. The international lingua franca is undoubtedly English, however, given diverse cultural environments, AI can also be useful. One participant cited the example of using ChatGPT to reword email texts to Asian customers to make them more culturally appropriate.



But it is not only our business world that has changed. The quality of language instruction has evolved in tertiary education as well. As Emma said, "We don't talk about the present perfect tense for 90 minutes in our classes."

If AI can help us improve communication today, it would be fatal not to use it, and as the tool is being developed, we must learn how to manage it. However inter-personal relationships remain essential in everyday dealings, and AI has its limitations.

So, although our expertise is being challenged, we as instructors / teachers continue to play an essential human role in the complex digitalized world of today and tomorrow and if we use the tools available to us, we can execute that role even more effectively going forward.

Our Tertiary Treff is a group of ELTAF members who work (not necessarily exclusively) in the higher education sector, be it in state or private universities, training schools or work with Azubis. Although we haven't managed to have a face-to-face meeting for a while, we will be trying to organize something online soon.

At the recent Members' Day, I held a workshop on the changes we've made at Hochschule Geisenheim University's Language Center, where I work, as a result of AI.

Other ideas for discussion topics at future meetings could be:

- Alternatives to traditional exams
- AI tools use in classrooms
- Blended teaching models – what really works?
- Teaching ESP – best practice ideas
- Embedding intercultural training in classes
- Task/ Scenario-based learning
- Feedback techniques
- Linking competencies to the English classroom

The list is, of course not complete, and can/ should be added to...

Many of these are things which we are currently working on in the Language Center in Geisenheim:) Please let me know if you'd like to be added to the email list for this group.

Emma.gledhill-schmitt@hs-gm.de

Head of Language Center
Hochschule Geisenheim University

MEMBERS' DAY

Swap Shop Questions and Answers

The final session of Members' Day was a Swap Shop. Accompanied by a glass of Sekt (if they wanted), participants were asked to write a question on a card during the day and hand it in. The questions were then (roughly) categorised by the committee and, in small groups, participants discussed the questions they had and made a poster of their discussion.

Although some people had to leave, others felt their discussions could have gone on for longer! There wasn't time for everyone to read and talk about all the 5 posters, so the results are below. I think we all realised what a great group ELTAF members are and how much we can learn from each other. Could this be repeated?

Everything here is taken verbatim from the posters which were produced. The order of the groups is random.

1 a) How do you build your students' confidence when it comes to using English in business contexts?

- Role-plays
- More speaking practice

1 b) Any tips for responding to beginner students who persistently use German?

- Respond in English consistently
- Create a comfortable learning environment

1 c) How important is it to teach politeness conventions in English lessons other than British-American ones?

- It is important to teach polite conversation / communication because that is professional behaviour

The last question needed some clarification and time ran out!



2 a) What do other ELTAFers recommend as their most successful channels for marketing their own teaching / training services?

- nebenan.de
- LinkedIn
- Xing
- Facebook
- ELTAF

2 b) How do I find students?

- Social media – (FB, Instagram, LinkedIn)
- Recommendations (written / spoken)
- Website / QR code
- Do a good job
- Network / association
- YouTube
- Business cards / QR code

2 c) i) Is it getting difficult for you to find work?

- Companies expect employees to speak English
- Cutting costs
- Replaced by digital platforms

ii) Are the rates slipping?

- Some!
- Retrain as coach
- Specialise (presentation skills)

There was something on just this subject in the first issue of the ELTAF Newsletter this year. It is on the ELTAF website <https://eltaf.de/6200-2/>

3 a) How do you deal with latecomers to a lesson?

- Teach them to politely excuse themselves
- Discuss respect (briefly)
- Keep the class moving
- Points system and consequences

3 b) How do you remember students' names?

- Name tags
- Repeating the name often
- Name games
- Correlating names and jobs

3 c) How do you end your lessons?

- The Goodbye Song
- Review of lesson
- Questions
- Tasks for next time (both for teacher and students)

4 a) How do you deal with really difficult students?**4 b) How do you deal with conflict between course participants?****4 c) What do you do with disruptive students?**

The three questions were treated as one.

- Seek support from supervisor
- Talk to students outside class
- Call to order immediately in class
- Ask person to leave
- Decide on the spot how to manage

5 a) Are books still of any use in English teaching?

- YES e.g. for ideas, inspiration and structure
- NO Using students for inspiration ex. Topics out of everyday situations

5 b) How do you teach technical English? What sources do you know?

- Research for material
- If you don't know anything about the subject, you need to be prepared (vocab)
- Get them to talk about their job (student-centred)
- Include websites, books, etc....

5 c) How do you teach vocabulary?

- Do quizzes / crosswords / taboo
- Fill-in texts
- Put the vocabulary into context
- Describe words you don't know
- Do songs



MEMBERS FOR MEMBERS

I asked ELTAF members to come up with their favourite end-of-year / Christmas activities. Here are some great activities. Thanks very much to

**Katherine Steinmetz,
Jacki Merritt, Wendy
von der Pforte, Elborg
Nopp and Gabi
Glaser-Pfeifer**
for giving us all
access to these ideas.
Have fun!

If you want more ideas, Klett Verlag has downloadable worksheets for English and other languages. Click here:
<https://www.klett-sprachen.de/downloads/kopiertvorlagen-zu-weihnachten/c-871#englisch>

Person of the Year

TIME magazine produces an annual list of “Person of the year”

It comes out end of November-time. I always use this as the basis of a warm-up activity - “Who is your person of the year?” It could be someone in your family, friend, company or a celebrity.

And then in January after I have done a quick google of things to look forward to in 2026, I do a warm-up activity called *What are you looking forward to in 2026?* Again, could be something personal, in the company or Germany-wide. I've had a lot of success with this.

Looking Back and Planning Ahead

As the final lesson before the Christmas break approaches, I've planned a reflective and engaging session for students. This year, instead of a traditional lesson, I and my students will be dedicating time to a group reflection on the past term and year.

First, students will be asked to write briefly about three key things:

1. What they've learned this year.
2. What they've enjoyed most about our lessons.
3. What they'd like to learn or see more of next year.

The second half of the lesson will be a group discussion where each student shares their thoughts. This is always a rewarding experience for everyone, creating a valuable space for students to acknowledge their progress. It's also incredibly helpful for me, as it provides direct feedback on what teaching methods and topics are resonating well, allowing me to better plan for the new year. This collaborative reflection ensures we end the term on a positive, insightful note and helps shape a great learning experience for all in the coming year.

International Christmas traditions – Short Quiz

Which countries do you think the following traditions belong to?

Your trainer will provide the correct answers. Total your score and compare with others

Argentina	Brazil	Egypt	Iceland	Ireland
Pakistan	Poland		Spain	

1. The main Christmas meal is eaten during the evening of Christmas Eve. It is often a barbecue served in the garden.
2. Sometimes children leave a sock near a window. If Papai Noel (Santa Claus) finds the sock, he'll exchange it for a present!
3. Christmas Day is celebrated on January 7th.
4. On January 6th, women traditionally have a free day and men do the housework and cooking.
5. December 25th is a public holiday, but it is only in memory of the founder of the country.
6. The main Christmas meal consists of 12 dishes. Carp (a river fish) is the main dish.
7. Sometimes a sea bird is eaten on Christmas Day.
8. On December 28th, people play tricks on each other (like on April 1st in the UK and USA).

Answers on p. 34

Using Christmas jokes to teach idioms to B2-C1 learners

Inspired by the silly Christmas jokes found in Christmas crackers, I used these three jokes to teach some advanced idioms to a group of adults:

1. How much does Santa pay for parking his sleigh? Nothing – it's on the house.
2. What's the perfect Christmas present? A broken drum – you just can't beat it.
3. Why did the scarecrow get a big Christmas bonus? Because he was outstanding in his field.

Here's how I went about it (although there are of course many other ways):

1. Language focus

I gave students the three idioms and let them explain what they thought the meaning was:

- a. You just can't beat it
- b. It's on the house
- c. He was outstanding in his field

Then I supplied some definitions to match with the idioms.

- a. When a restaurant gives you something for free as a gift from them.
- b. Someone who is excellent in their area of expertise.
- c. Something is so good that nothing can be better.

2. Joke-time

I cut each joke in half and gave the questions and answers to the students to match. I also checked their understanding of scarecrow.

Then I asked them to explain the wordplay:

- What's the literal meaning?
- What makes it funny?

3. In other words

Students reformulated the expressions, e.g.:

- "It's free of charge" (but what nuance is lost?)
- "It's unbeatable."
- "He is exceptionally good at his job."

4. Personalisation:

- Have you ever had food or drinks that were "on the house"?
- Describe something you think that "you just can't beat".
- Talk about a person you know who is "outstanding in their field".

5. Final reflection:

Which of these idioms could you use at work? Can you think of a suitable situation?

6. Optional (for German speakers):

Could you also tell these jokes in German?

PLEASE NOTE:

1. I used this activity with Spanish C1 learners. With German learners, however, I think these jokes would work for B2 since the idioms are similar in German: *geht aufs Haus* – *unschlagbar* – *herausragend*.

2. You might want to make sure students are familiar with the concept of Santa landing his sleigh on the roofs of the houses he visits, as it's a cultural reference that doesn't exist in Germany.

MEMBERS FOR MEMBERS

Ice-breakers Part 2

These ideas were collected by ELTAF member **Charlotte Falb** from the ELTAF email list and very kindly collated and passed on. It is no longer possible to identify the members who sent them in response to a request, but the number and range of responses show how lively the list chatter was then. For that reason and also the variations, I have not changed these and included a few variations of basic activities some of which were in the last issue.

Thank you, Charlotte for hanging on to these and to all those who recognise their contributions!

A good ice breaker for a pre-intermediate group is the following activity: Find someone who ... - has the same favorite color as you - has the same favorite dish as you - has the same favorite fruit as you - has the same favorite music as you - has the same favorite actor/actress as you - has the same favorite hobby as you - has the same favorite drink as you - has the same favorite vacation destination as you

A good one for total beginners is the Silent Interview which may have come out of the *Lernspielekartei* by [Thorsten] Friedrich and [Eduard] von Jan[+] (not sure): Get people to "interview" their partners without using speech, through mime that is (you could explain this in their first language or else demonstrate, e.g., touch your own wedding ring with a questioning expression, mime playing the piano etc.) Make it clear to everyone that they should try to find out what really interests them. After a few minutes of this, get them to share what they've found out with the whole group (still through mime); give them the appropriate language for each item then. If you have false beginners or a pre-intermediate group, you can leave this task to the group and see how far they get; help with missing bits.

For Groups between 10-20. Everyone stands in a circle. You start by explaining that you will just say your name 'I'm Helen' and then do an action which is typical for you. This may be a hobby, an action from work, something just idiosyncratic - whatever. One rule though, is that no-one is allowed to repeat the same action once one person has done it! The next person has to then say 'She's Helen' - repeat the action (no words allowed!), then add their own name and action. Like all these repetitive games, people think they'll never manage it, but sometimes they do. When it gets back to you - the teacher - you also have to then repeat the whole circle! After that, you can then ask the person to your left to repeat once more, this time using words to describe the actions, (or what they thought the action was!) This is the best way for me for learning names, which is why I usually do this activity in all my new classes!

Another one - which I think I got from an ELTAF workshop and have used several times with great success ever since. Students interview each other for 10 minutes each. The person asking the questions has a piece of paper, which they may use with a pen or pencil to draw things about their partner. No written words allowed! Afterwards, I put all the drawings up on a pin chart, or on the wall and ask someone to pick one out which they didn't participate in and try to say a few things about the person being described. Then the person who actually did the drawing can come up and 'explain' all the symbols/ matchstick drawings etc.

Learning names by using an action. You can also say you are going on a picnic, to the beach, etc. and each person should bring something that begins with the first letter of their first name.

Or for advanced groups adjectives to describe themselves. Really works and is lots of fun.

Everyone stands together in the middle of the room. Then tell the people who originally come from the Frankfurt (?) area to move to one side, the ones who don't to the other. Brief introductions/conversation within each group, return to the middle, then split up into two new categories, e.g. people who own a pet and people who don't (if you have a large group, you might want to name more than two categories each round).

Give them A3 paper and coloured pens and ask them to draw a few quick illustrations/symbols of people/things/occupations etc. that are important to them at the moment. Mill, show pictures and explain or ask questions.

Play 3 to 5 extracts of very different types of music. As you play each extract, place its number on a card on the floor and ask people to remember what sort of music each number stands for. Everyone then stands near the number of the piece they liked best, that represented their current mood best, or whatever you want to focus on. Exchange of ideas in the groups. You could also ask each group to find a number of things they have in common.

Make a Find Someone Who worksheet that focusses on learning styles, predilections and successful strategies, attitude toward corrections and so forth (e.g. "Find someone who gets a funny feeling in their stomach when they feel they've made a mistake", "Find someone who can tell you a good technique for learning vocabulary", "Find someone who feels confident when giving a presentation in English", "Find someone who's got the same reason as you for coming to this course" etc.).

Don't introduce yourself. Just welcome them into the classroom. 2. Each participant writes a question they want to ask you down on a piece of paper. E.g "What's your name? Where do you come from?" 3. Collect the pieces and redistribute randomly. (To encourage less than perfect contributions, tell them you will do this beforehand.) 4. They take turns asking you the questions on the piece they now have. (Some questions may be double, so invite each learner to write two questions down in stage 2 if the group is small.). 5. You quickly write them down on the board as they read them out, inviting correction if necessary and then answering them with your own personal information. (Useful response for too personal questions: "I'd rather not answer that if you don't mind.") 6. When you have gone through them all, ask them to mingle and ask each other the same questions while you listen, noting down various facts - they can read the questions off the board. 7. Finish by asking: "Who lives in ...?" etc:
The merits of this method are: A kind of "centering" beginning, as no formal introductions marks a different environment. Anonymity at the writing stage. Unexposed reading to the trainer. (Who is not the question owner - probably!) Peer correction. Peer interaction. The exchange of personal details.

NEW TO ELTAF

Bonnie Lewis



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Hi there!

I'm Bonnie. I'm originally from Australia, where I did my Bachelor of Arts degree in French Language and History in 2012. I remember the first time I met someone who was teaching English as a Foreign Language in Brisbane in 2009. They told me about the “gruelling ordeal” of gaining their CELTA certificate (more stressful than their master's degree, apparently!) and I remember thinking, “I'd actually love to do that one day... but I very much appreciate the heads up about how intense it is!”

Fast forward ten years to Frankfurt, Germany in 2019. I had moved to Germany in January 2018 and finally had the financial means and a flexible job that enabled me to commit to a full-time CELTA. I absolutely loved the experience - and very much appreciated that I'd been warned 10 years prior! I have been teaching ever since.

It was tough though, timing-wise. The pandemic meant that I didn't gain any practical teaching experience in-person until almost 3 years after I completed my qualification, and I was largely alone in my online teaching bubble apart from one very helpful colleague in the teaching team at a university I was working for who helped me learn the ropes of lesson planning in my first ever class.

I didn't realise the extent of what I'd missed until I started teaching in the classroom again in 2022 and when I joined the team at the Hochschule Kaiserslautern this year as an English Language Coach. The in-person interaction has brought in so much more energy to my classes, even though I still find positives in online teaching – especially one-on-one.

The impact of having colleagues to bounce language teaching ideas off is what inspired me to join ELTAF, even though I'm not based directly in the Frankfurt and Rhine-Main-Neckar area. I'm hoping to be able to join for a networking event sometime in the coming months.

Manage your ELTAF Membership

Keep in touch!

If you need to change/update/cancel your email address for the ELTAF mailing list or the ELTAF Newsletter, please write to Contact@eltaf.de.

This is also the email address to send a cancellation of membership and any questions about payments.

If you have questions concerning the www.eltaf.de website, please write to Kristen Speer: webmaster@eltaf.de.

To join ELTAF go to www.eltaf.de

I moved to Frankfurt am Main from Northern Germany in 1995 to join a British internationally operating law firm supporting a team of, at the time, around 15 lawyers as a language professional.

Before moving to what is the “south” of Germany for me, I did my studies at Kiel University. My goal was to become a translator for English and French into German and besides pursuing my language studies, I was keen to get additional expertise under my belt by following courses in public law. To improve my language skills and cultural knowledge, I spent two academic years in the UK (South Wales) and France (Deux Sèvres). During this time, I attended some university courses but mainly worked as an assistant to German teachers in schools. With German as a foreign language not being in very high demand at the time, granting me a full timetable meant working with numerous teachers across different school- and class-types, providing experience in addressing different groups, their requirements and goals.

In retrospect, this was the foundation of my career and this is true until today.

It was a challenge to change perspective entirely and look at my mother tongue being taught as a foreign language. I was glad I had at least put some effort into preparing myself for this task by following a hands-on course at my home university prior to going abroad.

Little did I know that teaching German as a foreign language would later be in so much higher and constant demand.

In 2005, I founded Gabriela Lund Communication and work as a trainer, training material designer, and coach for specialist (language) subjects in the field of communication. I am also a translator for FR or EN to DE (FR/EN -> DE) with HR/employee development and marketing/PR/corporate communication as subject areas.

Looking at 20 years of running my own business this autumn, I can truly state that I have been teaching foreign languages in various industries and settings, and catering for different target groups, aims and needs. Being a member of ELTAF and BESIG ever since I heard of both organizations in the late 1990s, have proved valuable investments in more than one way and helped and contributed significantly to offering language training professionally.

FROM A MEMBER

Gabriele Lund



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MEMBERS WRITE

The Feel of English: Bridge, Medium, Inspiration

Maria Schmitz



English today is not just a global language—it is an empowering agent in international workplaces, creative industries, and diverse cultural contexts. Drawing from two insightful videos, the concept of *The Feel of English* emerges as both an intercultural tool and a source of creative energy, offering valuable perspectives for educators and learners alike.

In one video, global manager Kai Bendix shares how his English skills played a central role in navigating the Indian business environment. For Bendix, language was never just vocabulary but a key to intercultural understanding. English became the medium through which he built lasting business relationships, negotiated successfully, and acclimatized to new cultural dynamics. His story highlights how English enables adaptation and trust-building in cross-cultural encounters. For language learners, his experience reinforces the idea that developing a “feel” for English involves not only mastering grammar but building intuitive, interpersonal awareness in real contexts.

The second video broadens the lens, exploring English as a creative and professional asset in filmmaking and architecture. Jean-Pierre Jeunet uses English words for their musicality and rhythmic quality, enhancing the aesthetic of his films. Terms like *no man's land* and *hypermarket* evoke modernity and nuance that other languages may not replicate. Jeunet's approach illuminates how English, with its adaptability and energy, becomes a channel for innovative expression — even sparking debate about authenticity and international appeal.

Architect Renzo Piano credits English with expanding his options and fostering international collaboration. Fluent English allowed Piano to break free from the constraints of his mother tongue, engage with global clients, and embrace new concepts. He notes the language's flexibility and openness to borrowing from other cultures, helping drive progress in architecture worldwide. Piano also cautions that cultural gaps and non-equivalent terminology remain a challenge — so ongoing openness and empathy are crucial.

Both videos acknowledge the limitations of English as a lingua franca, emphasizing the importance of balancing global communication with respect for local cultures. For English teachers, these stories underscore the need to foster not only linguistic competence, but the intangible “feel” of English — the intuition, adaptability, and intercultural sensitivity students need to thrive in today's interconnected world.

English is more than words: it is a bridge, a creative force, and a window on the global imagination.

If you haven't seen the videos entitled The “Feel “of English, you can have a look here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xjNJcIJzJ5I>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJ8W9yCkyYs>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdvXNcBGwzAza4wPpVgJJ4w>

THE FUNNY STUFF

Paul Abbott



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AI is the beginning of a Golden Age or the end of civilization.

Sometime more or less very soon, either many of us will be high as kites performing dazzlingly new forms of work, or the vast majority of us will complete a devolution into pathetic dopers, each with a permanent case of the munchies for the never-ending stream of vids, gifs and reels on our devices. Paradoxically it's those of us who haven't consumed any funny stuff who feel a little paranoid.

As usual it's best to keep calm. Some forms of compensated labor, professions I guess, have no reason to freak out. For example, I am convinced that neither AI nor AI-driven robots can cut hair. No amount of technology – camera arrays, next-gen sensors, cloud storage, 3D printing, etc. – can do what human stylists in consultation with their clients do. Elon Musk probably disagrees and just look at his hair. My stylist recently demonstrated his complete confidence in his profession's sustainability by smoking a marijuana cigarette before inviting me, his client, to sit down. Without endorsing such a lifestyle, I recommended the career to my kids. As usual they ignored me.

Regarding the English teaching form of compensated labor, can we English teachers afford to casually smoke a marijuana cigarette before taking our position in the classroom, which for a colleague who is a little high would, I imagine, be a seat kind of in a corner between whiteboard and blackboard? More to the point, where will those of us not under the influence of THC but under the influence of AI find a seat? Admittedly both substances generate weirdness. To the best of my knowledge that is where the similarities end, although AI technology seems to come from California and an industry that, UNLIKE the English teaching profession, is a notorious party cellar for stoners, right? Remember it was Elon Musk, who reportedly is currently trying in a serious way to corner the AI market and who smoked marijuana on camera. It was not David Crystal! I'm just trying to say that there are some really weird things happening.

Sorry. I teach ESL at a university. Under the influence of AI – and nothing else! – where do we as English teachers sit? Can we just smoke a J and sit in the corner? Let a deep fake Shakespeare teach the kids? Judging by the tell-tale smells that drift around our campus, somebody is trying it, even though I think smoking marijuana is forbidden on campus which is kind of strange because they sell beer in the cafeteria. In any case, it was not I! I would never do such a thing. I was stone-cold sober sitting in my office trying to come up with teaching content for a new class. Demand keeps moving. It's a very dynamic, never-ending stream. I got out my device, opened my favorite funny stuff and lit it up. The results were mind-blowing. Critical Thinking is hot! I trimmed a little here, a little there, gave the prompt a highlight, a streak and a shave, et voila! The do was done, complete with class-by-class activities and homework tasks. Wow. I felt a little paranoid, yes, but no problem. Who's the next client?

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Richard Tily



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Follow the adventures of our intrepid hero Roderick Crawford as he negotiates the twists and turns of life as an English teacher.

Roderick was waiting for Ferelith, (Scottish for "true sovereignty"). A coach for senior executives, using Shakespeare's characters as role models, she had given Roderick a random list of eight "Executive Coaching Lessons" to find in King Henry V.

This, he had from the play: Young Henry was spending most of his mediaeval free time living it up in the London taverns. When his father, Henry IV, unexpectedly passed on, Henry inherited his, somewhat rundown, realm and an unhappy populace.

So, having discussed with his counsellors, the decision was the classic distraction: find an outside enemy. "Invade!" in this case France!

Later, along the way, and against his express orders, some of his old drinking pals were caught stealing gold relics from a church. Their prompt confessions falling flat, they fell on their swords, so to speak!

When the famed battle of Agincourt finally came, the competition, was in its thousands, fresh and wearing the latest fashion in shiny, polished steel. In contrast, Henry's lot had had enough of sleeping rough, and were wishing they hadn't signed on in the first place.

However, Henry was, as all great leaders are, determined to win. He reframed the battle as not for riches, but for "England's Glory". As luck would have it, the weather was with them. Despite the overwhelming odds, and with the help of the trusted English longbows, and his strategic hilltop management, the battle was won. The tributes duly exacted were shared among his nobles. (At the date of publishing they still haven't been returned to their rightful owners!)

This was the list Roderick had reordered in line with the plot.

1. See change as opportunity.
2. Before making important decisions, consult the experts.
3. Make sure everyone is on board.
4. People must face accountability, regardless of their position.
5. Don't lose sight of how the employees feel.
6. Employees need a mission they can all identify with.
7. Make good use of available resources.
8. Share success with everyone who helped.

Roderick had a new group from a publishing company on that day. The lesson was, "Publishing on Kindle." Then it suddenly dawned on him, young Henry had given him the perfect framework for managing all his future group lessons from B1 upwards.

Just then he heard the group coming up the stairs - but he still had not started! Then a quick peek in *Time to Speak* turned up No 48 Why does €1,99 look cheaper than €2? "Kindle books are priced so low!", he thought.

I hope his session tuned out well and he can tell us about his new B1+ strategy the next time we meet.

To be continued...

THOUGHTS FROM A SMALL VILLAGE

So you don't
know it?
So what?

Larry Henry



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So, do you know the difference between a lug nut and a lug bolt? And why it matters in your teaching?

Those who know me have probably heard me say I am one of the least technical/mechanical people they know, so the title here may come as a surprise. But hear me out – it does have something to do with language teaching and learning, and how we teachers and instructors approach it.

First, a little background. For several years I have been running weekly sessions at a company that produces machines, and over 80% of their customers are in non-German speaking countries. So, I am tasked with providing English language learning and support for their staff, many of whom are relatively young interns.

As you might imagine, working on English skills is not a really high priority for many of these young machine workers, and oftentimes the only reason they show up is because they are, effectively, required to. So, keeping them interested in content (not to mention language) is a continuing issue.

One approach I often take is to get them to talk about what is happening in their lives, and then use this information to generate activities and exercises that will interest them.

Such as when an intern came in with a rather large bandage on his arm, and worked on describing how he had been injured trying to change the tire on his motor scooter: the tool he had been using had slipped, and he had scraped his arm on exposed parts. But during this process, we came across a language issue: What do you call the things that hold a wheel to an axle?

Now, while I am neither terribly technically or mechanically inclined, I do know the basic structure of a tire/wheel/axle assembly and was able to help him produce a pretty good description of what had happened. Or so I thought.

You see, in addition to the interns in these sessions, there is also a more senior electrical engineer, whose English skills are far above those of the rest of the group. But he is an enthusiastic fan of languages and language learning and attends because he really wants to continue to improve his English. In fact, he regularly provides me with significant challenges to my teaching abilities through his questions and desire for clear and precise terms and expressions. He really does keep me on my toes!

And he did just that in this situation.

With a pretty high degree of confidence, I described lug nuts, which are screwed onto fixed bolts that come out of vehicle axle hubs. However, my explanation was met with some puzzlement by the group, and my engineer took the opportunity to correct me, saying that wheels are held in place by lug bolts, which screw into holes in the hub.

As this conversation progressed, it became clear that both of us were sure their concepts and terms were correct, and that the other was, at least in some way, incorrect.

The session ended, and we both agreed to revisit the discussion the following week.

In the next few days, I looked into this, and learned that we were both correct, depending on where the wheel in question existed in the world. Lug nuts are the most common wheel-to-axel fasteners in North America, and lug bolts are most common in Europe. Who knew? I certainly didn't and ended up feeling a bit sheepish about taking such a firm position, without first considering that there might be a different perspective from someone brought up in a different part of the world.

This brought to mind other similar examples: Describe how to make a cup of tea; talk about a typical Sunday; what is a normal family? Should a past event be described using the simple past or the present perfect? All of these can be interpreted very differently, depending on the cultural backgrounds of the speaker and listener.

This is the lesson I learned from all of this: No matter how sure you are about something (be it a concept or idea, or a grammatical "rule"), you might be dealing with personal preconceived ideas of how things "must" be, and need to be very careful about being too prescriptive. My suggestion is to take a moment or two, think about whether there might be another side to the topic, and, if necessary, deal with your belief being challenged.

And now you know about the difference between lug nuts and lug bolts!

TRANSITIONS IN TEACHING

Starting your own company

Pauline Bramall-
Stephany
& Nicola Thompson



www.linc-training.de

mail@linc-training.de

Question 1: Have you ever thought about starting your own school?

Then we hope to offer some advice in this article. If not....

Question 2: Do you have your own language school? If so, we'd love to hear about your experience.

So, this is our story.

In the 80's and 90's we were freelance English trainers working at different companies in the Karlsruhe area. Then in 1999 our biggest customer, Siemens, decided to move the training to their headquarters, meaning there would be no on-site language training in Karlsruhe. This was a huge shock as our training accounted for the largest part of our income. Fortunately, we had a good working relationship with the head of HR who asked us to start our own company.

At that time, our children were very young, but it was a matter of business survival, so in 1999 we took the leap and set up a GdbR called **LinC Training** (Language in Communication). It was extremely exciting but also scary! Now 26 years later we can look back at a successful enterprise, but also tumultuous development with many ups and downs. Competition was tough and we soon realised that we shouldn't have all our eggs in one basket, so we started knocking on various company doors. At the start we wanted to focus on presentation and negotiation training, but these types of customer are few and far between. We decided to concentrate on business customers rather than the general public, offering training at all levels and German as a second language or any language required, even Croatian, Hebrew and Japanese!

Through our connections we had managed to build up a small customer base and extend our training to various government ministries in Stuttgart. We rented an office and some training rooms, took on some excellent freelance trainers, bought reasonably priced high-quality furniture and also hired a part-time secretary, always making sure we kept our investment low. Some good advice we were given was to always keep a close eye on our cash flow!

Growing slowly but surely, things developed nicely. But then in 2008 the economic crisis led Siemens to cancel all department courses which had so far been our mainstay. We were suddenly faced with large overheads but virtually no income for several months! Luckily, we had put money aside, but we had not envisioned something as dramatic as this. Life got a lot tougher as we had to still pay the rent and our trainers! If we hadn't taken on several courses at the *Duale Hochschule Baden-Württemberg (DHBW)* we would most likely have had to close down. Fortunately, we got through this bad phase and business happily picked up again after that until the pandemic! The story after that is familiar.

We are now both past retirement age but still enjoy teaching and as our *LinC* baby is still successful we won't be selling out just yet. That will be the hardest part! **So, after 25 years what led to our success?** Clearly some luck, business sense, good connections,

agility, listening and negotiating skills, optimism, supporting families and lots of energy! Most importantly: a team of very professional and loyal trainers with a pedagogic and linguistic background played a key role in our clients' deciding for **LinC Training** and coming back.

At the end of the day 'Two heads are always better than one' and one of them should definitely be good with numbers!!

Submitting an article for the ELTAf Newsletter

*Articles may be submitted by members and non-members (Word files).

*Any subjects of interest to English teachers or English speakers may be addressed.

*Ideally articles should be about 500 words, but not longer than 1000 words.

*Articles should be accompanied by a photo of the author (jpg format)

*Other illustrations (jpg format) are welcome, especially with longer articles.

*The author's email address will be included unless this is specifically excluded.

If you have any questions about contributing, please contact the ELTAf Editor editor@eltaf.de

ELTAF TALKSHOPS

ELTAF TalkShop
Wiesbaden
Tracey Junglas
(front right in photo)

It was a grey, wet, cold and blustery Saturday afternoon on October 4th in Wiesbaden, but the company was warm, lively, and pleasant in Café Lumen, the location for the ELTAF TalkShop, organised by Wendy von der Pforte.

We were a small group of five: Judith Mader, Liz Jolliffe, Tracey Junglas, Madeline Bohr, and of course, Wendy – but the weather outside was instantly forgotten as we made ourselves comfortable and ordered something to drink (and eat for those of us who had missed lunch).

This was my first TalkShop and I'm sure it's not going to be my last. It's a great opportunity to meet up with fellow language trainers, teachers, educators (whatever title we use) and chat away in our native tongue about everything and anything.

All in all, a lovely afternoon spent interacting and sharing ideas and a very big thank you to Wendy for organising the get-together.



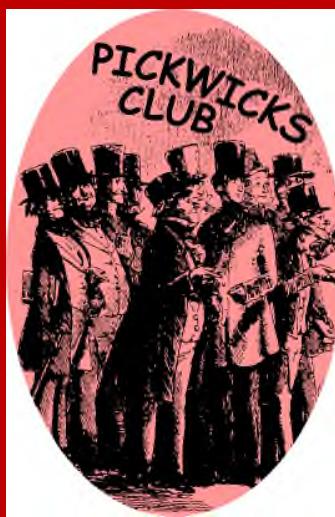
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ENGLISH & MORE

Pickwicks
English
Speaking Club
Sally Lamm



Pickwicks English Speaking Club was founded almost 50 years ago in Frankfurt as a social club for native speakers of English and those with a strong command of the language. Since then, the group has been meeting every Wednesday in an informal setting to chat and socialise.

Over the years, the club has also arranged a wide range of weekend activities, including some memorable short trips within Germany and abroad. In latter years though, for a number of reasons (not least of all the gradual shift in the average age of members, and of course the pandemic), there has been a decline in weekend activities. Now, Pickwicks is de facto simply a 'Stammtisch', with the occasional additional activity.

Our membership embraces native speakers from several countries, plus people with a good command of English from all over the world, and we always welcome new members.

If you are interested in learning more about Pickwicks go to <https://pickwicks.de/> and <https://pickwicks.de/contacts/> or write to info@pickwicks.de

Place an ad in the ELTAf Newsletter

The ELTAf Newsletter appears three times a year and is sent to all ELTAf members, as well as to member organizations and institutions in the Rhine-Main-Neckar area. Circulation is approximately 350.

Deadlines for copy are 20 February, 20 June, and 20 October.

Ads in the Newsletter may be sent in two formats:

1. Display ad in JPEG format, 800-pixel maximum width
€120 per issue (€300 for 3 issues)
2. Text ad of 35 words or less, including link(s). Colour can be specified
€75 per issue (€190 for three issues)

Individual ELTAf members and members of other ELTAs in Germany receive special discounted rates.

OUR SISTER ELTAS

ELTA-Rhine

Kate Cowe



Founder Member
ELTA-Rhine e.V.

In May this year, I'll be giving up my office in Köln, though not my old clients. It is full of my old Business English/ESP books, materials, files: relics of my career that I no longer need. And this is also true of the ELTA-Rhine material and memories that I come across in my office. The early days of ELTA, and indeed English teaching itself, were largely technology free, and the success of the association depended on people making a commitment and doing the business. There were no smartphones or zoom and if we wanted to see what ELTAF in Frankfurt were doing we had to go and see for ourselves.

The content of the ELTA-Rhine newsletters was of high quality from the start, and it was important, as everything - information, reviews, upcoming events - had to be packed in. It was the sole medium of communication to members and potential members. No website then. The newsletters may have been written on the members' pcs, but the pages had to be put together physically, put into order, taken to the printers to be transformed into a newsletter, and then - horror of horrors - stuffed into envelopes by committee members, addressed, stamped and posted to the growing number of members! There was no editor at the beginning, only a committee joint venture: teamwork writ large!

What is the difference between ELTA-Rhine then and now? It seems to boil down to a) more personal contact and b) less technology. A good example is in an ELTA-Rhine events email, for an event which can be accessed online offering "make your lesson slides come alive". Years before, we had a workshop offering techniques to make your state-of-the-art flip charts come alive, or at least, look less chaotic than usual!!

A good example of a) personal contact was the membership fee collection: I was the first treasurer, and members would give me the cash in return for their receipt and membership card, usually at an event. The result of this directness was that, as well as having to strictly record all this money crossing my palm, (sometimes a lapsed member would see me in the street and have a guilty conscience...!) it meant that I more or less knew all the members. After an event, members and the speaker would usually go for a drink, thus offering ample opportunity to network, find friends, common interests, work, and to secure a volunteer to write a review for the newsletter! My first ever visit to the brewery Früh in Köln was after an ELTA-Rhine event held in the science lab of a girls' school behind the station. The speaker was Nick Briege, and what he spoke about is lost in my memory, but not the pub experience!

ELTA-Rhine was an excellent forum for local English teachers to meet and exchange ideas and information. In my clearing out, I came across handouts for a workshop in 1994 that I did with members Fiona Penny and Phil New on *Minimalist teaching in the classroom*, valid even today. Member swapshops were certainly on the agenda in the early days, along with outside speakers from other ELTAs or from publishers. Highlights of the early period include excellent sessions with Vicki Hoilett, Tony Lee, (both now sadly dead) Michael Lewis, Crayton Walker, Frank Steele, Rita Baker, and

others. Some of these people wrote the very English teaching books I am now throwing away, which shows how time has passed.

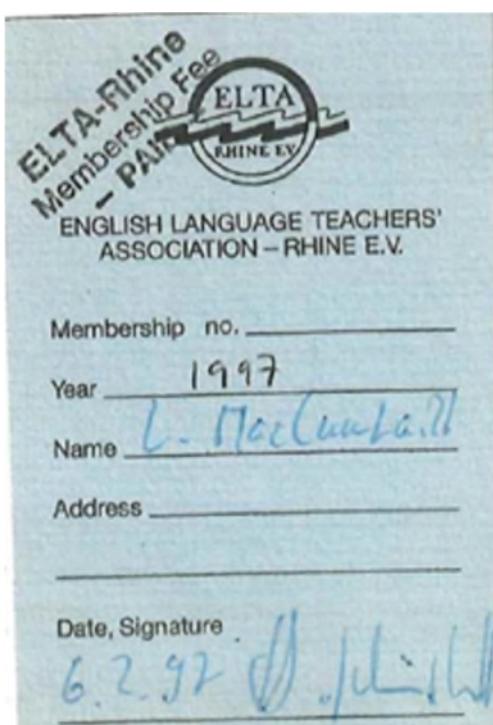
This photo is from a CALL weekend workshop we had at VHS Bergische Gladbach, with Nottingham University Professor Mike McCarthy, "bagged" at a conference, and invited as our keynote speaker. On his right is Lorcán Mac Cumhaill who was one of the organisers of this weekend event.



Lorcan was also responsible for CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning) 2000, an international conference held by ELTA-Rhine at the University of Wuppertal in 1995, with speakers from all over the world and members presenting. CALL

was in its infancy then, and the call for papers went out through the CALL group of IATEFL BESIG. Acceptances came through our letter box. This conference was a landmark in our history. the whole organisation (restaurants included) went into making it a new experience and a great success.

Just to round off, the early Christmas parties were held in members' houses (those brave enough to volunteer) and were always a hoot! The ELTA walks, though not necessarily a hoot in themselves, were still very social events and we talked and walked to interesting places in the region. The book group and choir still seem to exist.



ELTA-Rhine is as old as united Germany, established in September 1989, and I am glad that it has evolved and is still going strong. I hope it continues to fulfil a role in the local English teaching scene, especially in the now rather different and more challenging times!

A membership card with the original logo, designed and voted on by members to symbolize the river Rhine flowing through Dusseldorf, Köln and Bonn and uniting towns and teachers.

IATEFL INFORMATION AND NEWS

IATEFL Special interest Groups (SIGs)

Not all English language teaching professionals are the same!

As all English Teachers are different, IATEFL members can tailor their membership by joining one or more of the 16 SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS). Each SIG focuses on a different area of English language teaching. SIGs are a great opportunity for networking and gaining and sharing knowledge in a smaller community of like-minded professionals.

Each Special Interest Group has one or more of the following: newsletters and publications, regular mailings, webinars and conferences, podcasts, discounts on courses, and professional development events. All 16 SIGs like IATEFL operate internationally.

IATEFL Associates

ELTAF is one!



Over 100 national and regional Teaching Associations around the world are a part of IATEFL. IATEFL Associates bring together over 100,000 English language teaching professionals in all around the world. There are many benefits of being an IATEFL Associate and also of being an individual associate member. You can see them all on the [IATEFL website](#) Here are some:

- invitation for several representatives from the board of your teaching association to participate in the annual IATEFL Associates Annual Online Conference
- publicising your main annual event to an international audience on the IATEFL website and in our membership magazine, *IATEFL Voices*
- offer your members reduced rate Associate Individual membership of IATEFL, and so add another benefit to being a member of your teaching association

If you are not yet a member of IATEFL but would like to receive regular news and updates from IATEFL, please subscribe to our mailing list below. You can unsubscribe at any time.

<https://www.iatefl.org/civicrm/profile/create/?gid=60&reset=1>

As a member of ELTAF, you can join IATEFL at a discounted price. Just contact editor@eltaf.de for the discount code, and when you join IATEFL, select **Associate Individual Membership**. Add the discount code when you join and the price will be discounted for you.

To keep Associate Individual membership affordable for as many people as possible, membership of a Special Interest Group (SIG) is not automatically included in your membership, but you can pay to join as many SIGs as you wish once you've joined IATEFL. The discount code changes each year, so you will need to continue being a member of your local teaching association to renew your IATEFL Associate Individual membership. Just contact editor@eltaf.de when it's time to renew with IATEFL to get the latest code..

Special Offer!

As your teaching association is an IATEFL Associate, **you can benefit from discounted membership of IATEFL too!**



As an IATEFL Associate Individual Member you can...

- Keep up to date with all that's new in your profession internationally
- Build your network of colleagues from around the world, sharing your ideas and your challenges
- Attend regular webinars on a wide range of topics
- Search our archive of recorded webinars, articles and publications
- Get discounted prices on a range of publications and resources
- Join one or more of the 16 Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and shape your membership to your specific areas of professional interest (SIGs are not automatically included in Associate Individual Membership, but can be added for £24 each).
- Receive e-Bulletins, our bi-monthly Magazine and our annual publication 'Conference Selections'
- Benefit from member prices to attend the annual IATEFL International Conference and Exhibition
- Apply for a range of IATEFL scholarships only available to members
- Submit a proposal to speak at conference, or have your first article published with our support

How do I join IATEFL through my teaching association?

1. Contact your teaching association
2. If you're a current member, they'll give you a specific discount code
3. Create a free account on the IATEFL website: www.iatefl.org
4. In your 'dashboard' choose to join IATEFL as an Associate member
5. Put in your discount code, and then complete the rest of the form
6. Make payment of the discounted membership fee

IATEFL Individual membership: £76 per year

IATEFL Associate Individual Membership: £27 per year

Prices shown are for year: 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025



ELTAF EVENTS

Do try and attend!

ELTAF events are a great way to meet new people and make professional contacts.

ELTAF – EVENTS

2026

14 February ELTAF AGM 14:00 International School of Management Mörfelder Landstraße 55 60598 Frankfurt/M.	28 February 10:00 – 13:00 Webinar Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: Time- Saving Tips for Busy Teachers with Laura Edwards Online	14 March 10:00 – 12:00 Webinar Building Bridges – Engaging Activities for Enhancing Cultural Agility with Ridha Mejri Online
<p><i>Details on p. 5</i></p>		

For more details of ELTAF events and to register:

www.eltaf.de/future-events

ELTA events

ELTAF members can join any other German ELTA event at no charge.

For details see here

<https://teamup.com/ksav82wzoyizrzxxfi>

Answers to questions on p. 15

Christmas traditions

Students can work in pairs or in groups. Set a time limit. Provide the correct answers and award a present to the pair or group with the highest score.

1. Argentina
2. Brazil
3. Egypt
4. Ireland
5. Pakistan
6. Poland
7. Iceland
8. Spain



HELTA SWAP SHOP: HIGHLIGHTS

31 JANUARY 2026 (SATURDAY)
10:00 - 12:00 CET, ONLINE



If you were at the IATEFL BESIG conference in November, you probably came away buzzing with ideas.

If you weren't able to make it, you might be wondering what everyone was talking about.

Either way, come along to our swap shop where IATEFL BESIG attendees will share their favourite sessions, insights, activities, and inspirations - and everyone else can listen, learn, or join the discussion.

This swap shop is a simple, friendly way to connect, discover conference highlights, and start the new year with new ideas for your teaching.

Everyone's welcome - speakers, listeners, first-timers, and the IATEFL BESIG-curious!

Were you at IATEFL BESIG Athens?

We'd love for you to contribute to the programme!

Contact us at: chair@helta.de

Register here to attend

<https://tinyurl.com/26jhp6x>

Upon registration, the Zoom link will be sent to you.



Open to all HELTA, ELTA members, and friends.

Admission is free

Professional Development Certificates can be provided