

ELT 2020

INSIGHTS INTO THEORY AND PRACTICE FOR FUTURE EFL TEACHERS



PRESENTERS:

Univ.-Prof. Dr. **Sarah Mercer**, KFU Graz

Dr. **Volker Eisenlauer**, Universität der Bundeswehr München

Dr. **Thorsten Merse**, LMU München

Max von Blanckenburg, MA, LMU München

Dinorah Sapp, MA, University of Mississippi

Neil Stainthorpe, MA, Pädagogische Hochschule d. D. Linz

Mag. **Verena Novak-Geiger**, BA, Universität Klagenfurt

Friday, 17 January, 2020

8:20 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Stiftungssaal der Kärntner Sparkasse (O.0.1)

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8:20am

Opening by Carmen M. Amerstorfer & Blake Shedd

8:30-9:20am

Neil Stainthorpe

Playing with Language – Fun, Games, and Creativity in the Language Classroom

What's the missing line in this excerpt of the following poem entitled "The Modern Art Excursion"?

Two students right behind me
 Were all enthusiastic
 In a box they'd just discovered
 Lots of old, discarded plastic.
 They shouted "It's perfection!
 Full of Chinese Yang and Yin!"
 A passing cleaning lady murmured,
 "....."

How you fill in the line probably reveals how much you enjoy playing with language. Playing games and playing with words is part of our everyday lives. Many people enjoy the element of challenge involved when playing games.

- We watch quiz programmes. Who doesn't feel clever when they know the answer to a "Who wants to be a Millionaire" quiz question?
- We do crosswords. Could you provide the 4-letter word which is the answer to the crossword clue "information from all points of the compass"?
- We groan when we hear puns, for example, in the form of "Dad jokes" or when we find wordplay clever. "There's no justice – just us!" (Terry Pratchett)

These are just a few examples of the many ways in which words, games, humour and, hopefully, fun are intertwined. How can these be incorporated into the EFL classroom in such a way as to facilitate learning? This 50-minute workshop aims to explore these questions, and in a very practical, hands-on way, give the participants the chance to try out activities which can be adapted to their own teaching context.

About the author:

Neil Stainthorpe is a native English speaker, English teacher and teacher trainer with over 32 years of experience at the Pädagogische Hochschule der Diözese Linz (formerly Pädagogische Akademie), covering, at tertiary level, the fields of Pronunciation, Grammar, Cultural Studies, Methodology, Vocabulary Acquisition and Teaching Practice supervision. Additionally, he taught for many years at primary level, and has taught at all levels (beginner, intermediate and advanced) of adult education, including university access courses, university business courses, evening classes, as well as in-service training courses for primary, lower and upper secondary teachers.

9:30-10:20am

Verena Novak-Geiger

Making it stick - The Role of Memory and the Brain in Foreign Language Learning

Learning a foreign language involves not only keeping new vocabulary but also learning the rules of the language with the aim of enabling communication. For example, the learner has to remember the newly learned words and grammatical rules, consolidate them, retrieve them and learn to apply them. Nevertheless, how is this possible? How do we make it stick?

The theme of this interactive lecture is the role of memory and learning theories in foreign language learning. Memory, the system on which learning depends on, is of great importance for future language teachers but the insights gained through behavioural and neuroscientific research on the nature and functioning of memory receive little attention within teacher training. However, this knowledge can have a positive impact on both planning the teaching unit and instruction. Additionally, learning theories that are important for language learning are presented as well.

The aim of the interactive lecture is to inform about the formal memory systems, the processes of consolidation and reactivation as well as to show the neurobiological basics in the brain. Among other themes, Verena Novak-Geiger will explain differences of the neuroanatomical structures that are involved and the role of the limbic system for the consolidation of information. Furthermore, results from neuroscientific research on the learning process and the process of storing language and words are summarized. In addition, practical derivations will be shown and participants will be given the opportunity to discuss and exchange ideas about possible applications in class.

About the author:

Verena Novak-Geiger has studied Psychology as well as English and American Studies at the Alps-Adria-University of Klagenfurt. Currently, she is working as a University Assistant at the School of Education. She writes her doctoral thesis in psychology and is interested in the interdisciplinary approach of neurodidactics, experimental psychology as well as in the research on memory and bilingual cognition.

10.20-10.40am Coffee break

10:40-11:30

Max von Blanckenburg

Exploring Political and Cultural Performance with Language Learners

The term performance is commonly associated with theatre or drama activities when discussed in the context of English language education. In this sense, learners can act out scenes, practise dialogues and use the foreign language in playful, creative ways. A performative approach to EFL can, however, go far beyond that and view performance as a fundamental mode of creating as well as understanding social reality.

In this interactive lecture, I will start by drawing on the notions of theatricality and performativity as a theoretical foundation and heuristic for exploring various forms of text and social interaction. With this terminology, communicative acts and artefacts can be conceptualised and made sense of by relation to the theatre as a sign system. That is to say, one may understand communication in terms of role-based interaction taking place in stage-like settings. Creating, playing with and critically reflecting on roles and role settings can, then, become a promising endeavour in language learning contexts.

In a second step, I will argue that the term performance may be applied to various instances of (self-)presentation in the political sphere. Hence, exploring political discourse may be understood as a matter of investigating the public, often multimodal and digital stagings of political figures (e.g. on Twitter or Instagram) as well as the reactions and redesigns these performances evoke. Thirdly, we will analyse a music video to get insights into the ways in which performance may become relevant in the creation of a cultural group's identity.

These considerations will be grounded in the observation that didactic theory needs to be made fruitful for concrete contexts in which language learners develop their analytical and productive competences. Therefore, we will reflect on how the theoretical framework and the examples highlighted in the lecture can inform the design of tasks and activities that offer rich learning opportunities and transcend a purely functional conception of language teaching towards including broader educational goals.

About the author:

Max von Blanckenburg is a research associate and lecturer at the Chair of Teaching English as a Foreign Language at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (LMU Munich) in Germany. His academic interests include the role of rhetoric in foreign language education; teaching with literature, film and music; digital learning as well as performative approaches in EFL. He gives talks at national and international conferences on a regular basis, has directed various theatre projects with language learners, and teaches university students at all levels of their academic teacher education programme.

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11:40am-12:30pm

Sarah Mercer

**Language Teaching for the 21st Century and Beyond:
Integrating Language and Life Skills**

Local, national and global societies are changing at a dramatic pace. It is difficult, if not impossible, for educators to be able to envisage what skills their learners will need in the future to succeed in the workplace and life beyond. However, it is clear that teachers will be expected to prepare learners in ways that extend a narrow view of their traditional academic subjects. Today, the largest ongoing global reform in education is the integration of reformulated 21st century life skills into schooling at all levels. Most countries worldwide, including Austria, now include life skills as part of the national school curriculum. Yet, teachers receive little or no training in how to integrate these life skills into their subject-specific teaching. In addition, the research on this topic is surprisingly scarce giving policy makers and educators little to draw on for support. The question is no longer whether we should be teaching 21st century skills, but rather how we should be doing this (Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

Current understandings of 21st century life skills have been expanded from the traditional 4Cs (critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication) to include additional skills such as, socio-emotional competence, citizenship, ecoliteracy, and compassion among others. In this talk, I will introduce Positive Language Education, which is a dual focused approach to developing linguistic competence alongside life skills. I reflect on the rationale for integrating language and life skills in sustainable ways, which are motivating for learners and teachers. Essentially, teaching with dual educational objectives in mind (English language and life skills) is already happening in many language education contexts through the format of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). The experiences of schools and educators with CLIL provide inspiration to learn from in terms of the challenges of a dual strand teaching approach as well as the benefits to be gained. In this talk, we will explore the rationale for PLE, consider the scant research in our field and relevant studies from other disciplines, as well as practical ideas for ensuring that our learners of the future are not only linguistically prepared but socially and emotionally equipped to flourish in the years to come.

About the author:

Sarah Mercer is Professor of Foreign Language Teaching at the University of Graz, Austria, where she is Head of ELT methodology. Her research interests include all aspects of the psychology surrounding the foreign language learning experience. She is the author, co-author and co-editor of several books in this area. She has been Principal Investigator on various funded research projects. She works on the editorial board of several journals and is currently vice-president of the International Association for the Psychology of Language Learning (IAPLL). In 2018, she was awarded the Robert C Gardner Award for excellence in second language research by the International Association of Language and Social Psychology (IALSP).

12.30-2:00pm Lunch break

ELT 2020

2:00-2:50pm

Dinorah Sapp

Experiential Learning to Improve Grammar, Speaking, and Writing Skills

English language teachers want their students to learn concepts beyond a textbook page. How can language teachers create experiential projects where students improve their language skills? This workshop will demonstrate three kinds of experiential activities and participants will create their own to implement in their classrooms. Experiential Learning can be defined as “learning through reflection on doing” (Felicia 2011). This is particularly important in the English language classroom because instead of rote memorization, students acquire knowledge through multiple modalities. All three activities presented move students from simple “understanding” to the most complex levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy— “evaluating” and “creating.”

The workshop will focus on the following three types of activities:

1. **Creating Community through Interviews and Photography:** Participants will learn how students can improve their speaking and writing skills by interviewing classmates or other people within their school, language center, or community, and through the creation of visual representations. Inspired by the popular website “Humans of New York,” students take pictures, interview the “humans” around them, and post their pictures with captions to a class blog or create posters. Using Bloom’s Taxonomy as a framework, the presenter will demonstrate step-by-step directions on creating a lesson plan, assessment rubrics, and a sample blog.
2. **Improving Student Learning through Engaging Field Trips:** Participants will learn how to create engaging field trips (in-town and virtual) that target a specific Grammar topic, are relevant, and improve language learning. The presenter will share how a particular unit on countable and uncountable nouns was tackled (for example: box of cereal, tube of toothpaste) by taking the students to a local grocery store for the ultimately scavenger hunt. The presenter will highlight pre- and post-test scores to demonstrate student improvement. Participants will brainstorm ways to create their own engaging field trips and walk away with a lesson plan, scavenger hunt handout, and assessment rubrics.
3. **Writing through Music while Singing the Blues:** The purpose of this activity is to demonstrate how teachers can adapt and incorporate local culture in their classroom, in this case through music. Participants will learn how music (the Blues as an example) is used in the classroom to develop writing skills. Writing a Blues song provides a cultural experience that integrates various language and academic skills. Participants do not need any formal music training to participate or implement this activity. The presenter will share a lesson plan and assessment rubrics for Blues songs.

About the author:

Dinorah Sapp is a Lecturer in the Intensive English Program at The University of Mississippi. She also holds a Master’s Degree in Language Education from Indiana University. Her ESL classroom experience has been at the elementary, high school, and university levels. She has taught courses in all language skills and participates actively in regional and international conferences. Dinorah has lived in Germany, Austria, and Ecuador. She was recently chosen to be an English Language Fellow, a program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, to provide professional development to Chilean English teachers for a year in Santiago, Chile.

3:00-3:50pm

Volker Eisenlauer

Virtual Reality for ELT Purposes

Recent Virtual Reality (VR) applications are on the cutting edge of learning technologies designed to facilitate self-directed and holistic language learning experiences. The visually engaging and immersive learning environments provide contextualized input by simultaneously reducing and extending human action and experience (Eisenlauer in print). Although VR as a new medium has not yet fully reinforced its symbolic codes and conventions, the afforded semiotic practices stem from a long tradition of preceding media technologies and its corresponding literacies, such as hypertext, film and gaming.

This workshop is directed at exploring meaning creation practices via and within VR for the purpose of English Language Teaching. More precisely, it will focus on how non-coding savvy teachers and students can design and implement immersive language learning spaces with the help of 360-degree cameras and audio recording devices.

The theoretical part will provide a concise outline of the key concepts of study, i.e. virtual reality, 360-degree media and VR enhanced language learning. 360-degree media enable language immersion by recreating different aspects of reality and allow for customization according to individual learners' backgrounds and preferences. Through interacting with and manipulating 360-degree content, language learners construct meaningful experiences that will in turn represent new knowledge in interpretable and understandable forms. Moreover, immersive language learning environments allow learners to do and experience things that would be impossible in real life, such as practicing public speaking without consequences (see Virtual Speech). During the practical part of the workshop, participants can try out 360-degree cameras, audio recording devices and VR publishing platforms. This gives them the opportunity to gain new insights how to draft VR language learning tasks, how to shoot 360-degree sequences and how to edit and deliver VR language learning experiences. Outcomes of previous workshops on ELT in VR can be accessed at <http://s522687631.online.de/>

Eisenlauer, Volker (in print) Digital Literacies in Virtual Reality Learning Contexts. In: tom Dieck, M. et al. (2020): Augmented and Virtual Reality. Changing Realities in a Dynamic World. Heidelberg: Springer.

About the author:

Volker Eisenlauer runs the educational media lab the Faculty of Human Sciences, University der Bundeswehr Munich, Germany and holds a guest-lecturer position in English Linguistics at the University of Klagenfurt. His areas of interest include Multimodal Studies, Virtual Reality and Learning Technologies, Pragmatics and Critical Discourse Analysis. He received his Master's degree in Applied Linguistics from Macquarie University, Sydney in 2002 and his M.A. in German Philology from the University of Augsburg in 2004. In his dissertation Volker Eisenlauer approached the Social Network Site 'Facebook' from a Critical Literacy Perspective. He presented his findings at various major conferences, among them ICOM 5 (Sydney 2010) and IprA 11 (Manchester 2011, Antwerpen 2015), and published in established volumes on language and media (cf. Multimodal Studies, Routledge, Bloomsbury).

4:00-4:50pm

Thorsten Merse

Countering the Silence:

Dialogues between Foreign Language Education and Queer Theory

Time and again, foreign language education has been charged with ignoring themes and identities pertaining to sexual and gender diversity – often subsumed under the acronymic rubric of 'LGBTIQ' issues (i.e. lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/sexual, intersex, and queer/questioning). This criticism includes that people involved in the teaching profession imagine (or rather, have for a long time imagined) their classrooms to be made up of monosexual student cohorts only, which marginalizes LGBTIQ learners to the point of silence – thus denying them, and all other learners, the opportunity to learn about sexual and gender diversity. Other researchers claim that coursebooks, often used as the mainstay of education, play a crucial role in perpetuating the invisibility of LGBTIQ people and themes by creating a world for the learners in which only heterosexual and clearly female or male people exist. Thus, it appears, foreign language education seems to tell and retell the single story of heterosexuality for some – rather than a story of LGBTIQ diversity for all. At the same time, however, progress has been made towards educational transformation in this particular domain, e.g. through curricular updates that now make LGBTIQ themes and identities a requirement, or through research that seeks to move beyond pure accusation ('LGBTIQ is missing') and instead offers suggestions for productively integrating an LGBTIQ lens in regular lessons.

This interactive lecture aims at negotiating a pathway for a sound and productive pedagogy of 'teaching queer' in Foreign Language Education. To achieve this aim, I will bring Foreign Language Education into a deep dialogue with Queer Theory – the academic project for theorizing, criticizing and debunking systems of sexual and gender classification, norms, privilege and marginalization. In doing so, I will conceptualize Queer Theory as a relevant link discipline for foreign language education that is worth accessing. I will carve out important theoretical queer trajectories (e.g. the concept of heteronormativity) and integrate them into key components of English didactics (e.g. inter- and transcultural learning, or literature teaching). At the same time, I will remain sensitive to possible limitations caused by embracing Queer Theory uncritically in the specific domain of teaching and learning (about) English as a foreign language and Anglophone cultures. This interactive lecture will conclude with a range of practical teaching suggestions that include literary texts, films, and digital media, and ways of accessing these resources through suitable tasks.

About the author:

Dr. Thorsten Merse works as a postdoctoral researcher in the field of Englischdidaktik at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (LMU) in Munich, Germany. His primary interest in research and teaching lies in the field of cultural diversity, Queer Theory and heteronormativity within the pedagogy of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (including his PhD project titled "Other Others, Different Differences: Queer Perspectives on Teaching English as a Foreign language). His other research and teaching interests entail digital education, film and literature pedagogy, and global learning. Furthermore, Thorsten Merse is interested in developing teacher education at university level. He also publishes regularly in practical teaching journals for TEFL.

4:50pm - Closing by Carmen M. Amerstorfer & Blake Shedd

ELT 2020