

STUDIEN ZU FACH, SPRACHE UND KULTUR



Facetten der Fachsprachenvermittlung Englisch – Hands on ESP Teaching

Ines-Andrea Busch-Lauer (Hg.)

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Facetten der Fachsprachenvermittlung Englisch – Hands on ESP Teaching

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Vorwort der Herausgeberin

In den vergangenen Jahren ist die Bedeutung von Fachsprachen aufgrund der rasanten Entwicklung in den Fächern und der globalisierten Kommunikationsanforderungen noch einmal deutlich angewachsen. Wir können in diesem Kontext zwei Entwicklungstendenzen verfolgen. Zum einen zeichnet sich eine weitere Spezialisierung innerhalb von Wissensdomänen ab, so verzweigen sich zum Beispiel die Anwendungsfelder im Bereich der Informatik durch Gesundheitsinformatik, Kraftfahrzeuginformatik, Robotertechnik, Künstliche Intelligenz, Virtuelle und Augmentierte Realität. Zum anderen verschmelzen Teilgebiete, die auf den ersten Blick keine Gemeinsamkeiten verzeichnen. Ein Beispiel, das diesen Prozess verdeutlicht, ist die Biomedizintechnik, für deren Fachkommunikation neben physikalischen Grundlagen natürlich medizinisches und biologisches, aber auch technisches Fachverständnis notwendig ist. Durch die zunehmende Globalisierung und die damit einhergehende verstärkte Nutzung der englischen Sprache als Lingua franca in Wissenschaft, Wirtschaft, Technik und Gesellschaft haben sich auch die Kommunikationsanforderungen an Absolventinnen und Absolventen¹ von Hochschulen und Universitäten zugunsten der produktiven und anwendungsbereiten Nutzung von Fremdsprachenkenntnissen in Fachenglisch verschoben. Mobile Endgeräte ermöglichen zudem Fachkommunikation überall und zu jeder Zeit. Auslandsaufenthalte während des Studiums, Institutspartnerschaften und internationale Projekte, in denen bereits Studierende eingebunden sind, fordern von den für die Fremdsprachenausbildung Verantwortlichen an Hochschulen und Universitäten, ihre Ausbildungsmodelle und Curricula im Zuge des Bologna-Prozesses den beruflichen Praxisanforderungen besser anzupassen. Daher gewinnt die Vermittlung der in den verschiedenen Fachdisziplinen verwendeten englischen Sprache an Relevanz. In diesem Kontext ist vor ca. einem Jahr die Idee zum vorliegenden Sammelband entstanden. Ziel der Beiträge ist es, eine Bilanz aus den praktischen Unterrichtserfahrungen von Fachsprachenleh-

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1 Das generische Maskulinum, das in einigen Artikeln genutzt wird, schließt auch Personen weiblichen Geschlechts ein und dient der Sprachökonomie und Lesbarkeit im Text.

ren zu ziehen und den Facettenreichtum der Ausbildungsmodelle aufzuzeigen, Problemfelder der fachbezogenen Fremdsprachenvermittlung in verschiedenen Institutionen zu benennen und Lösungswege zu beschreiben. Der Band verfolgt aber auch das Ziel, Novizen im Fachsprachenunterricht eine Orientierung zur Gestaltung von Curricula und Fachsprachenkursen zu geben und die Möglichkeiten von e-Learning und kollaborativem Lernen aufzuzeigen.

Die in diesem Sammelband vereinten Beiträge sind auf Grundlage der praktischen Unterrichtserfahrungen von Kolleginnen und Kollegen aus verschiedenen Bildungseinrichtungen entstanden. In einem ersten Teil des Bandes gehen zwei Beiträge auf das Anforderungsprofil und die Aufgaben eines Fachsprachendozenten im Hochschulunterricht ein. Den zweiten Teil des Bandes prägen Erfahrungsberichte von Kolleginnen und Kollegen aus dem fachbezogenen Englischunterricht an verschiedenen Institutionen. Wie ist die fachbezogene Sprachausbildung organisiert, welche Ziele verfolgt sie, wie wird man den kommunikativen Anforderungen aus der Praxis im Curriculum gerecht?

Der dritte Teil des Sammelbandes konkretisiert diese Modelle durch Beispiele praktischer Materialerarbeitung und Evaluation, um das erreichte Ausbildungsniveau auch einer validen Prüfung und Zertifizierung unterziehen zu können.

Natürlich kann ein solcher Sammelband nicht alle Optionen fachbezogener Lehre dokumentieren, aber ausgewählte *Best-Practice*-Beispiele sollen erfahrenen Dozenten Impulse für ihre Arbeit liefern und Novizen Mut machen, sich der Vermittlung von Fachsprache und der Befähigung zur Fachkommunikation ohne Ressentiments zu nähern.

Ich danke an dieser Stelle allen Autorinnen und Autoren für ihre Bereitschaft trotz mannigfaltiger Lehrverpflichtungen, Beiträge für diesen Sammelband zur Verfügung zu stellen und für die Zeit, Mühe und auch Geduld, die sie in diese Publikation investiert haben. Mein Dank gilt auch dem Verlag Frank & Timme für die Unterstützung des Projektes. Wir würden uns nun sehr freuen, wenn der vorliegende Band Anregungen gibt, fachbezogenen Englischunterricht durch die im Buch beschriebenen Erfahrungen zu bereichern.

Leipzig, im Juni 2015

Ines-A. Busch-Lauer

Exploring the Brave New World of Ubiquitous Global English Education – Perspectives of an ESP Professional

1 An Introductory Word to the Reader

In the following we shall be looking at the manifold roles of ESP teachers in today's world where Global English has become a universally accepted necessity for interpersonal, international communication. Whereas this trend certainly is no longer new, its growth over the past years has been vastly accelerated by a variety of governmental regulations supporting and encouraging cross-border migration and, above all, by our digital interconnection.

As teachers of the world's lingua franca, we are in the envious yet challenging position of being constantly in demand in myriad ways. Knowing our grammar rules, being able to spell properly and being well-read are no longer sufficient to teach the many different types of learners in front of us, and the diverse language-related activities we must proficiently command at a moment's notice. To remain professionally relevant in a world where lifelong learning is a universal requisite and competition is king, much is required of us as English teachers-in-demand.

No doubt, all of us sharing this demanding yet privileged vocational calling have had similar classroom experiences and developed our own inner list of engrained truisms describing our personal pedagogic philosophy acquired through the years. With this in mind, it is clear that many ideas in the following text, and throughout this book, will be nothing new and, indeed, are common knowledge for all of our esteemed colleagues.

With my contribution to Professor Dr. Ines Busch-Lauer's newest book in her long line of valuable and interesting publications, I would like to reflect generally on a variety of aspects inherent in the field of ESP knowledge transfer, and also share my own perspectives and experiences as a professional work-in-progress in this challenging, influential, very dynamic – and relatively new – field of international education. Lifelong learning and ongoing skill-set

enhancement have become essential for both native English-speaking professionals, such as myself, and non-native speakers alike.

The more I know, the less I know, and that is a good thing. You never stop learning a foreign language, nor the skills and abilities to competently teach and communicate it to an ever-growing group of eager (and occasionally reluctant) learners. As ESP professionals, our tool kits must accommodate all types of learners and a wide array of demands for applying our language competences.

I hope and even assume that the reader will occasionally find himself nodding in agreement to my experiences which mirror his own – and/or violently shaking his head in horizontal negation because of a completely opposing opinion or conclusion – and, perhaps, even being amused by the more trivial and mundane elements accompanying our rewarding professional work, where the human element remains key.

Teamwork and much more... A word of appreciation

I would like to finish this preface with a word of deep appreciation and gratitude to the countless colleagues with whom I have had the pleasure of collaborating through the past 15 years or so. As a *Quereinsteiger* in the field of ESP education – translated in the worldwide web at the time of this writing as a “professional/ occupational/ vocational lateral entrant”, but termed in my own personal translation as a career crossover – the list of competent, kind co-workers who have shared their knowledge, pedagogic wisdom and generous support with me is endless. Their collective expertise has been pivotal for my ongoing, very enjoyable adventure as an ESP professional.

2 ESP Professionals: Possible job descriptions

2.1 Who we are

So, for those of us who actively work in the world of ESP education, what exactly belongs in a comprehensive job profile – i.e., a detailed job description for who we are and what we do professionally? For a start, there are several acronyms in circulation used to designate educational work with English as a second language: English as a Foreign Language (EFL), English as a Second Language (ESL), English for Special(ised) Purposes and English for Specific Purposes (ESP), to name the most common ones. Fundamentally, we are

teachers and educators for learners of all ages and nationalities whose mother tongue is not English. Furthermore, in today's globalised world where we teach numerous types of learners in a multitude of situations, we ESP teachers may find ourselves being many things to many people – educational “allrounders” – with job titles such as lecturer, examiner, assessor, trainer, adviser, consultant, administrator, proofreader, translator, as well as facilitator, enabler, or intercultural mediator in certain situations.

At the most basic level, we, like all educators, clearly must possess pedagogic expertise and be skilled in didactic methodology, with an innate love of and enthusiasm for the joy of teaching and helping others to learn. However, with the dynamic growth and important role of Global English for communication, the forms in which it is used have expanded accordingly. And, as a logical parallel to this development, the various ways in which ESP is taught and often requires practical expert “support services” have significantly increased, also.

For ESP professionals, this has led to an infinite array of ESP classes on offer needing our creative teaching expertise, as well as a host of language-related activities requiring our linguistic proficiency – e.g., reviewing, correcting or translating English language in texts such as scientific publications, commercial presentations, university modules, marketing brochures and websites, and supporting the optimisation of spoken English in various presentation situations. The list of potential applications in demand is quite long and full of surprises. This, indeed, keeps our work as ESP professionals challenging, interesting and also fascinatingly educational.

2.2 What we do

In our many roles as ESP professionals, we may find ourselves teaching and working with English language in different types of situations. Our classrooms will have a variety of learners with different CEFR language levels, frequently coming from different backgrounds, in courses with diverse specialised topical focus and their respective structure and technical language needs. We become masters of flexibility by necessity.

In the sections below, we shall look at just a few types of ESP teaching situations. They all share some key factors which impact a teacher's classroom planning. These include the number of learners, the overall duration of the course and length of each individual class session, the venue constraints such

as size of room and equipment available, the subject being taught, and the age and approximate CEFR level(s) of the learners in the classroom.

The three situations discussed below are:

- a. German university-level academic courses
- b. Group training in the commercial sector
- c. Individual lessons

a. German university-level academic courses

In the German university system, many if not most study programmes at the Bachelor degree level require students to take and pass a compulsory course in the *Fachsprache Englisch*, typically a one to two semester module designed to focus on content and relevant technical terminology for the subject of that study programme. The English course will also usually include language-in-use practice, and have interdisciplinary aspects such as presentation skills and job applications. Class sessions are usually 90 minutes in length, tending to be weekly, or at times bi-weekly or in blocks. At German university, there is commonly no mandatory attendance for the registered students.

To create cohesion in the lesson plans and continuity in the language learning progress, I strongly encourage the students to come every week for their own benefit. Face-to-face learning experiences offer what I refer to as the “three-dimensional” factor, so valuable for learning retention and so rare in today’s digital age.

Over time, ESP university lecturers can find themselves assigned to the *Fachsprache Englisch* courses for several very diverse study programmes, from Mechanical Engineering to Media Journalism, from Computer Science to Nanotechnology, and countless further possibilities. Designing and preparing a course for such varied subjects demands that we delve into a new world of specialised content and technical terminology, researching fundamental topics in the field and becoming informed about current subject-related developments. What colleagues sometimes refer to as a typical student “mentality”, whereby certain character traits, backgrounds and interests are more common among the students within a particular study programme, can also be of relevance to teachers for optimally planning what materials and activities to use, and how to conduct our courses.

All students at German universities should (theoretically) possess B2 level English skills when beginning their studies, and teaching basic grammar is therefore not a primary goal; rather, due to the time and examining constraints for such university compulsory courses, grammar knowledge is practised and strengthened by the above-mentioned tasks and the interactive nature of the university English seminars and the oral component of using their language in class.

At least one final mark is given for these specialised modules. At most universities, part or all of that mark is based on a required oral presentation. These oral presentations have specific guidelines to be fulfilled and are delivered in the class before the fellow students. Depending on the university examining regulations for the English course, the presentation mark could be 100% of the final course mark, or more typically, a % of the final mark to be combined with the written examination results.

The oral presentations are an important and informative component of the course for both student and teacher. Many colleagues will agree, I think, that the most challenging aspect of the presentations can be the subjective nature of the marking process.

All students want to receive a mark 1, and increasingly many also expect to be able to negotiate some sort of mark 1! In the essential teacher-student feedback sessions, representative commentary one might hear from the student could be as follows:

All of his fellow students thought he did a wonderful job, making no mistakes! Indeed, they all found him extremely competent and could understand absolutely perfectly! Therefore, he is firmly convinced that he should be given a mark 1. And so, why do I as the teacher giving him the mark not agree with this undisputable fact?!? He definitely deserves a mark 1!!!

My rule here is to remain firm: once I have determined the mark (which is, in itself, often an agonizing process for me where I am often much too generous), it becomes non-negotiable. To create a fair and level playing field for the marking process, we could agree that it is essential to establish clearly defined guidelines in writing with regard to the timing, written handout, length of talk, key language aspects to be achieved, plagiarism no-go's, etc. This provides some concrete criteria upon which all students' presentation marks will be based. As the language ability range in university courses may, in reality, be quite broad, I make an effort to mark each individual presentation on its own

merit and based on that student's current level and effort, rather than trying to determine a class "benchmark".

There are some recent developments in German university courses which I would like to mention here. For one, the length of the lecture period in each semester is being shortened from 15 or 16 weeks to 14 weeks at some universities, which reduces the available time for actual teaching, for the required and time-consuming class presentations, and for exam preparation. Depending on the size of the class, this factor can make a definite difference with regard to how materials from the module curriculum can be integrated into our course.

Additionally, as good English abilities increasingly have become a key requisite for the internships our German university learners must complete in their study programmes as well as for the Master's degree programmes at many German universities, university ESP lecturers are often being asked to provide assessments for their students' English abilities, for example, in the form of a "DAAD Language Certificate for German Applicants" or a letter of reference evaluating and/or recommending the student. Fulfilling these requests is another aspect of our job profile in which we support our learners outside the classroom.

Also, the "internationalisation" process is currently being implemented in the German university system. This has resulted in a more multicultural classroom, with the ESP language seminars having both German students as well as many students from a variety of other countries. This intercultural aspect can be a wonderful, value-added factor for the group, providing frequent, priceless opportunities to embrace cultural awareness and learn from each other. With regard to our English language teaching, a different set of problems in pronunciation and other acquired abilities can arise among these non-German students, which we can actively address in the lessons. Our own intercultural skills can also serve us well in the multicultural classroom as we become aware of potential, subtle differences in attitudes to such things as punctuality, hierarchy, learning styles and expectations, which could require our special attention in the group. All in all, this development is an enrichment and clear win / win for our university classrooms!

b. Group training in the commercial sector

In today's globalised world, professionals in nearly all lines of work in Germany will find themselves needing English for lingua franca communication in their

jobs. From the automobile industry to telecommunications, the media, banking, medicine, travel and marketing, English is ubiquitous throughout the working world. Since employees must command and maintain a good level of English language competence for immediate practical use, many companies support their staff's development with ongoing training opportunities. Particularly large, international companies sometimes expressly prefer native English speakers for these trainings.

Typically these are in-company training situations, which could be set up in different ways – for example, initially as a group of twenty 90-minute weekly sessions. Then, another round of twenty 90-minute sessions could follow one or more times, depending on budgetary constraints. Or, a company could choose to arrange a specific needs-based intensive course, such as a three-day training for Telephoning Skills. Often these groups are very small. The employee's language level may have been approximately pre-assessed by the company's Human Resources Department, possibly with an online English mini-evaluation, and a few people with similar levels are then put together into one training group.

These courses are usually very interesting, with a high level of motivation and a light-hearted, fun atmosphere. These learners are already in the real working world and actually need their English skills, both professionally for their jobs as well as for other personal reasons, such as holiday travel or being able to keep up with the English their children might already be learning at school! The English training sessions not only advance their English competency, but are also a relaxing “mini-break” away from their working day.

For us as ESP professionals, these situations can be valuable opportunities to experience typical workplace language-in-use and learn about practice-oriented English in the daily workflow. Often large companies have a specific internal terminology for their work processes, which does not appear in our normal teaching materials and can be extremely useful for our own knowledge enhancement. Teachers in such in-company sessions may need strong creative planning abilities and flexibility in order to establish solid learning continuity and also accommodate the individual participant's needs – e.g. meetings, conferences, sick days, holidays – within the small group. Trainers tend to enjoy a strong degree of didactic autonomy to select which materials they wish to use and how they structure the course.

While companies normally do not require official testing results at the end of a round of English training, various forms of feedback are collected from both the ESP trainer and the employees trained. Trainers may be given a “company curriculum” of topics to be covered in the training sessions, and then asked for very detailed information about the specific materials they actually used and lesson plans followed.

Generally, company trainings can be an interesting and welcome change of pace for ESP teachers, offering the chance to meet other competent, adult professionals from different fields and work together in a comfortable, company venue.

c. Individual lessons

With the growing acceptance of English as the global lingua franca, professionals in the business world and many academic fields face an ever-increasing need to attain and maintain a high level of English proficiency. In the past few years, we have seen the benchmark for international English lingua franca communication steadily being raised. A few years ago, in many situations it was often considered sufficient to make oneself understood and at least to not miscommunicate in the English language, with people willing to otherwise ignore or not even notice the incorrect use of language.

These days, the worldwide accepted lingua franca standard is higher, and much more is expected from professionals. For them, being proficient in their ability to use English in their work, both spoken and written, is a core competency expected among peers.

How lucky for us ESP facilitators that such interesting and motivated individuals seek out our expert services in the form of one-on-one English lessons! Managers, business owners, project leaders, professors and many other high-level professionals with very complicated schedules find that the most effective way to work on their English language skills is through flexible, customised 90-minute lessons on a regular basis, as their working lives allow. Tailored to the personal learning needs and designed to be a relevant linguistic support for their professional applications of English, these lessons require us to make a careful selection of suitable material and a thorough assessment of the client’s abilities and learning objectives, as well as our solid lesson preparation.

These individual lessons demand a high level of concentration and commitment from both the teacher and our client. Creating a good working rapport is key, and this is made easier by the high level of personal motivation and professionalism these clients innately bring to the sessions. They can also serve as a wonderful learning experience for us, as we must become knowledgeable about the material we have selected to meet our client's needs, often being required to assimilate new terminology and new subject matter we will be teaching them. One-on-one lessons are opportunities for invariably interesting encounters with professional people possessing high expertise, who are themselves usually model lifelong learners. How delightful that we have the pleasure of working with them and learning from them – usually the 90 minutes just fly by!

3 Professional Tool Kits

ESP professionalism encompasses a rich list of skills and abilities contributing to comprehensive competency in our field of expertise. As in all areas of the working world, many societal changes have impacted the overall working conditions for our line of work. To name a few, these include job (in)security, crowded schedules, pressing targets and frequent deadlines, longer working hours and weekend responsibilities, blurred lines regarding when and if the working day ends – i.e., being available and actively reacting 24/ 7 via mobile communications. Added to this are increased administrative tasks such as digital mark registration formerly done by other parties, and the “support services” being mentioned in different sections of this text.

3.1 We never stop learning!

Perhaps one of the core competencies in our ESP professional tool kits is active lifelong learning. As language professionals, we work with the transfer of knowledge to non-native English speakers in a plethora of teaching settings and language-related activities. Further to the years of academic study and intellectual focus needed in our field is our lifelong acquisition of the inherent dynamic evolution in the language, which is critical for our ability to teach our learners. In the case of our language, English, this is dramatically expedited by

today's interconnectivity of lingua franca English communication by non-native speakers, and the changes which quickly ensue and propagate. Added to this are the overall rapid developments in technical and scientific fields whereby completely new terminology is constantly being created, often with accompanying new acronyms, to describe previously non-existent devices, technologies and processes.

In addition to the developments in the English language itself, we can venture to say that the world of teaching and learning is also undergoing an evolution, perpetuated by the far-reaching changes in language being communicated in all its forms – e.g., written, audiovisual – and widespread interconnectivity across borders. These communication opportunities are redefining how people acquire knowledge in general, and in which forms it is presented, accessed and supported in supplemental ways, such as blended learning platforms.

As the majority of us actively deal with proofreading and translating in their many different forms on a regular basis, being current on the above mentioned aspects of language is critical for our ability to work effectively as ESP professionals.

There is a wealth of opportunities for our further professional training at any given time throughout Germany. Our colleagues from various ESP backgrounds – many academically based and some private and commercially promoted – are quick to organise excellent, thematically-focused workshops and conferences with informative, relevant discussions and learning platforms to support our teaching and language-related activities. Such valuable learning offers are welcomed and appreciated, and are absolutely necessary for our professional development. Due to scheduling and planning constraints as well as the financial aspects involved, it can, in reality, be challenging, to take advantage of them as one would like. In many cases, and particularly for the sizable number of ESP freelancers, the time and money aspects can be formidable, prohibitive hurdles.

3.2 Resources: plentiful yet scarce

A key element of our professional tool kits is the ability and ongoing commitment to selecting relevant, interesting teaching material for the specific teaching purpose. Relevant is an important word here, because many resource materials quickly become outdated from a content standpoint. For example, the events,

the dates and the prominent names used in a language exercise can easily become passé and must be replaced with new relevant exercises that focus on this language point from new sources, for which we must search. This is quite time-consuming, but can also be seen as a kind of informative input for our own knowledge base with regard to current themes, areas of interest, and language trends.

For many ESP teaching situations, no one traditional textbook is used by the class learners. Thus, we teachers must hunt for and compile a variety of pertinent material as a basis for the designated purpose of the course. This can come from many different sources, the classic one being language textbooks dedicated to English language teaching and increasingly also as ESP/ LSP (Language for Specialised/ Specific Purposes) material for one subject – e.g., Marketing, Presentations, Media, Automotive Engineering, Telephoning, Emails, etc. At present, publishing houses commonly offer these materials in several different versions – e.g., paper or e-version – and a variety of digital options to support both the teaching and the learning process. This could include, for instance, online assessment tests and digital access to extra material.

A potentially frustrating trend in the traditional language textbook market is the ever-faster release of “updated” versions for existing language material. Books which had not been on the market for very long quickly seem to become obsolete, and we are given the feeling in the continual marketing carousel that acquiring the newer editions is essential. These new editions require an investment, which can be sizeable in order to get all components of the “update”. Often there are very few real changes to the material, which is sometimes only evident after one has spent time to go through it thoroughly. For one’s planning, it is important to know that new language material is frequently published long after the originally announced release date, and that key components of the book series such as, e.g., the Teacher’s Book, are not always released simultaneously, but rather at a still later date. Discerning which available teaching materials on the market might serve our pedagogic needs and therefore deserve our attention can be a challenge.

A boon for ESP professionals in our eternal search for suitable material is the increase in potential resources we can integrate into our lesson plan, including EFL literature such as magazines and trade journals, internet websites and online news sources, video clips, relevant professional presentations (such as the TED Talks series), not to mention the increasing open source

links for teaching tutorials or even lectures across a span of subjects, and the blended learning platforms available. The possibilities are many, yet having the time to research and find true language teaching resources (and not simply an entertaining clip or quiz) is not easy in the internet haystack. Employing current buzz words from news or current affairs can often kick off a wonderful comprehensive language lesson, whereby we can spontaneously build upon the dynamic interaction and the English-in-use that is generated – vocabulary, linguistics structures, and pronunciation issues that are important for all learners. This reminds us of something that all professionals have no doubt experienced – what might be considered a teacher’s truism: one of our most valuable resources is the learner(s) sitting in front of us, and our creative ability to exploit what is offered us.

In addition to the importance of lifelong learning and resource management, there are a long list of “tools” we may consider vital to our individual competency empowerment as ESP professionals. Here I would like to briefly highlight the roles of organisational savvy and creativity.

3.3 Organisational feats: Time and energy management

In today’s world, every professional discovers his own personal “best practice” methods for organising job responsibilities. And, it is important to note, that many roads lead to Rome with regard to what works best for each of us in our varied working lives. As ESP professionals, our actual teaching time is just the tip of the working iceberg. Our classes and what they require of us can be truly daunting and require a daily master plan!

Organisational savvy, even those small and otherwise insignificant measures to plan ahead, can collectively give us peace of mind, freeing up our time and energy for the actual teaching experience and the interaction this involves. When logistically feasible, doing the detailed planning and administration for an entire course in advance can serve as a valuable “jumpstart”.

This could include selecting a variety of relevant materials to cover the course objectives and compiling an actual script (paper or digitally, depending on the situation, for yourself or also for the group) with the respective task instructions, course guidelines, lesson plan timeline and accompanying administrative lists, all before the course begins. Remembering to have a clear

Plan B and even C can be worth its weight in gold. Importantly, we want to take optimal advantage of our digital devices, integrating them as “smartly” as possible into our working life. Finally, we need to be adamant about taking breaks during our working day, those mini-opportunities to recharge our professional batteries and replenish our sense of well-being.

3.4 Creative classes

In our role as many things to many people, we ESP professionals are creative in countless ways. Being able to constantly activate our creativity tool is quite a large order for all of us on an ongoing basis, as we seek to design and apply new ways to serve our learners and achieve our teaching objectives. Thankfully, however, the act of being creative seems to spur more creativity, often feeding upon itself – it’s the ripple effect. Just when we feel we can’t think of anything new, that our creativity is completely dried up, our learners and their needs inspire us in new ways, refreshing our creative spark. In many types of classes, we can effectively integrate wall maps into the lessons. These offer an interesting visual diversion for our learners and are effective for talking about news events, global situations and culturally relevant issues as well. They also direct the students’ attention to the world of exciting travel destinations many of them already know or would like to visit, and in the multinational classroom can serve as a unifying, inclusive tool, too.

Professional training sessions we attend can also be an inspiring source for new kinds of creative activities, as can exchanging ideas with colleagues. A vital factor for the success of most classes nowadays is the fun factor – our learners of all ages and backgrounds have become very used to being entertained in the digital age! Creatively seeking out quizzes or video clips which can inform and add sparkle to the learning experience can go a long way towards supporting our learning objective for the class, and energising the group and ourselves in fresh ways. Infotainment at its finest!

4 Common language problems we encounter

Where to begin? As a native English speaker, I would say the problems which most frequently catch my attention and solicit the urge to give an on-the-spot

language lesson are those mistakes which give false information and impede understanding in the communication flow. At the very top of this list belong verb tense (mis)use and singular/plural (dis)agreement. Both of these linguistic elements are crucial for clear communication. Generally speaking, it would appear that whereas our learners today can all speak a bit (or a lot) of English, their knowledge levels of such grammar basics often seem to have declined. Furthermore, interconnectivity and the internet often support the propagation of incorrect language usage leading to a high threshold of “mistake tolerance” among ESP learners, who assume that if it’s in the internet, it’s “acceptable enough” for communication!

With regard to verb tenses, I am often confronted with an important email or spoken conversation where I am told about a future event with past verb tenses, or vice versa – leaving me to guess which timeframe is the correct one for this “important” information. Or, even more baffling for the listener, everything is communicated in the simple present tense, when in actuality the event was last month. My reactions and assumptions are in the moment, but the event is actually already long past and requires no reaction at all from me! Particularly in the business world where time is money and appointments or deadlines can be binding, miscommunicating about timeframes can wreak professional havoc.

Some elementary examples of the singular/plural problem are as follows: “One projects are planned” (Is this one project or more than one?) or “These employee will be fired” (Oh dear! I hope it is only one employee and not several, but how can I be sure?). Some of our learners speak native languages where no articles or singular/plural quantifiers are used. For these students, adopting English rules for this grammar point takes much practice.

Along with confusing use of grammar, the ability to write correctly has declined across languages, possibly due to our fast-paced, digitised world where so much communication, both spoken and written, takes place in abbreviated form. However, since much written communication now takes place in lingua franca English, mistakes in spelling (despite, or due to, spellcheck programs) and sentence structures can lead to the recipient having no clue what the correspondence was really about. It’s a proverbial guessing game for the reader.

Finally, I am an enthusiastic proponent of focusing on all four components of language learning – much to the chagrin of many students, who would

understandably prefer to “just” talk! Clearly there is didactic value for learners when speaking in long turns, discussions and warm-up activities; and, as already stated, most of our learners can usually communicate at some level in spoken English, having had significant access to the language in our digitised, globalised world. Yet, achieving the level of lingua franca English required by our learners in today’s working world necessitates a solid foundation of grammar basics, comprehensive fundamental vocabulary, the capacity to understand a variety of text types and the ability to write correctly. Increasingly it can occur that a student can speak English rather fluently, but when tested in a written exam having a range of language skills such as listening, reading comprehension and writing, then performs at a considerably lower level.

Admittedly, managing our courses to evenly and adequately cover all four components in an interesting manner is an arduous task requiring commitment, but worth our striving for! Ultimately, it has the lovely reverse effect of improving the quality of students’ spoken English as well. Another linguistic win / win for everyone concerned!

5 International certificates

To support the need for standardised evaluation of the abilities of all ESP learners in a world where they are using their foreign language for academic and career purposes, the role of international certificates has gained new relevance and importance. A range of respected certificates are on offer in this lucrative market, each of which can serve as a comprehensive evaluation of level and value-added qualification for EFL learners. For us who teach in this field, becoming familiar and using these testing materials, for example, through the preparation resources being sold or accessible online, can be a valuable way to practise and enhance our own assessing abilities of the levels defined in the Common European Framework Reference (CEFR). Additionally, many of us become certified examiners for these tests, which offers us ongoing professional input because we are required to re-qualify our examiner status on a regular basis; and, also benefit from directly testing and experiencing real ESP learners who participate in the tests. It must be added that the international certificate market has become very “full”, and keeping up with the many

different tests on offer and their periodical revisions with accompanying changes to format can be a challenge.

6 International English: whose English is it?

Regarding what is “correct” in the international English language, it is important for us all to know about the many different and valid varieties of English around the globe. With respect to pronunciation, there are often several correct ways to say something – e.g., syllable stress or vowel variations – as well as variations in acceptable spellings or vocabulary. For teaching purposes, the learners need to be aware that these differences exist. For our adult learners who are already in the working world, they will need to know how their own company uses English in global communication – for example, on company websites to describe products and services, or in communication with international clients, or in English marketing. Deciding which English forms we choose to apply and then being consistent is key in these situations, as well as in our own ESP work with texts, translations and proofreading.

When teaching English to our German and non-German learners, it is important to remember that their use of English will primarily be in situations with other non-native English speakers. With this in mind, clarity in all aspects of their communicative abilities is vital. We need to focus on the most standard and widely-used pronunciations, spellings and terminology forms in our lessons, while at the same time helping our students become aware of the interesting varieties of accepted international English, and encouraging them to think outside of the “Is it British or American English?” box. They might one day find themselves working, e.g., in a multinational English-speaking project team in Hong Kong with a German boss who studied in California and has a South African wife. Here, and in many other scenarios, they will be exposed to English as a lingua franca in the real world of the near future, where international English is – at least for now – still the global lingua franca. In summary, our learners need to be linguistically prepared for diverse lingua franca-in-practice constellations in their professional futures. International English is an awesomely big language to explore – for all of us!

7 A closing word ... Rewards for educators in the brave new Global English world

In this book, Professor Busch-Lauer has asked us to contribute our professional perspectives about working in the multifaceted field of English, the world's current lingua franca. A comprehensive and critical view on this expansive topic would be incomplete without a closing look at the rewards and benefits inherent to our work. And, those rewards abound! Teaching in itself can be its own reward. Knowing that we are helping our learners acquire new knowledge is gratifying to us as teachers, and, in the case of our subject English, we are teaching our learners a practical and necessary lifelong skill. The field of global English education is an exciting, dynamic field promoting knowledge transfer to millions of people of all ages and nationalities to facilitate international communication – how exciting for us to be active contributors to this adventurous lingua franca project! It is our individual and collective pedagogic creativity and commitment that support and perpetuate innovative developments in Global English education – our input for such areas as designing and assessing teaching materials, creating and updating blended learning platforms, or organizing and taking part in peer group seminars and conferences is an ongoing, necessary component to this important field of education.

A lovely side effect of ubiquitous English as the world's lingua franca has been the blossoming of interest in multicultural awareness, both in theory and practice. Here, there is the mutual benefit of learning about and from each other, for both teachers and learners alike, as well as our increasingly multinational co-workers. It can be enlightening and absolutely fascinating, and can enliven many workplace settings.

These and many other rewards can serve to motivate us in our work. Positive feedback from our learners is not a daily occurrence for most of us, but the occasional word of appreciation (alas, often in incorrect but heartfelt English!) can revitalize our sense of purpose and make our work seem meaningful. (Those rare little thank you gifts of chocolate from grateful students are a delicious, welcome perk!)

So, we have come full circle and are back to our starting premise: our work is interdisciplinary, intercultural, interactive and interpersonal. We are working with people, and that human element is key for all of us.