

## Foreword

Susanne Even, Dragan Miladinović, Erika Piazzoli, Manfred Schewe, Fionn Woodhouse

Dear readers,

in the final issue of 2022, you will find a total of four articles (three in English, one in German), four contributions to the window-of-practice section (three in English, one in German), a conference report (in German) as well as three book reviews (in German).

Three of the four articles and all window-of-practice items are proceedings from the 8<sup>th</sup> Scenario Forum Symposium, which took place online on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> June 2021 (see the report by Brandenburg, 2021). Under the symposium theme “Sore Back, Square Eyes? Going Performative in Digital Teaching and Learning”, we invited contributors to reflect on their experience with the emergency online teaching provision caused by the pandemic from March 2020. At the time when the symposium took place, for many educators the teaching landscape appeared as a patchwork of different shapes: many were back in their classrooms, others still taught exclusively online and some in hybrid format. It was therefore our goal to bring colleagues together to take stock of their teaching experience from March 2020 to June 2021. We chose a title to address potential issues (sore backs and square eyes) online teaching and learning can have on the one side, but also wanted to express our optimism in going forward on the other. We saw our symposium as a place to not only discuss potential issues of online teaching and learning but to provide participants with the opportunity to share their positive experiences, their learnings, best-practice examples as well as their creative solutions to complex problems.

While there were, and still are, questions of connectivity, availability of hardware and software as well as questions around the online transfer of interaction, physical presence and embodiment, we believe that the contributions to the symposium, some of which you will find in this issue, brought together creative, inspiring and encouraging insights and approaches to going performative in online education which will be sustainable far in the future.

In the first article of the proceedings, “Teaching and learning online through performing arts: Puppetry as a pedagogical tool in higher education”, Laure Kloetzer and Ramiro Tau discuss and reflect on their university course “Psychology and Migration” which used performative approaches as the main pedagogical tools. In their piece, the authors describe in detail how design and assessment of the course changed due to the pandemic and discuss how puppetry suited their pedagogical needs as well as the online setup. With the backdrop of students’

learning diaries, Kloetzer and Tau conclude that “moving performing arts online in higher education (...) allowed unpredictable developmental possibilities for most students (...) [and] it was highly appreciated by the students, as it offered a refreshing alternative to their exhausting online studies.” (p. 18).

In “Teaching tool codified gestures - Can more people learn more?”, the second article of the symposium proceedings, Natasha Janzen Ulbricht shares her experiences with the use of Earth Speakr app<sup>1</sup> in teacher training, focusing on potential benefits and challenges for students, student teachers and trainers. The article centres on drama lab session in which trainee teachers, based at the Freie Universität Berlin, taught English language skills to primary school pupils online. By presenting the pupils' linguistic output through the app as well as the trainee teachers' reflection on its use - or non-use - in class, Janzen Ulbricht gives detailed insights across the learning process of both groups.

The third contribution to the proceedings “Performativer Fernunterricht aus der Perspektive angehender DaF-lehrender. Eine qualitative Inhaltsanalyse” by Georgina Frei and Olivera Rančić examines students' experiences with drama-based activities in online teaching. For this purpose, 13 German trainee teachers in Germany and Serbia were interviewed after participating in an online drama workshop. While the authors inductively derive three categories from the data, in this article, they report their findings regarding a single category, namely *Evaluation of the learning experience*. Finally, Frei and Rančić conclude that the results allow the assumption that performative approaches have genuine potential for foreign language learning in the digital context, but also that this potential needs to be explored in more detail.

The *window-of-practice* section consists of four contributions. First, in “Bringing it all together online: Performance, outreach, and education”, Juliane Wuensch, David Bolter and Nina Morais present their *German Theatre Project* at the Department of Germanic Studies at Indiana University that works across high schools, undergraduate, postgraduate, and faculty staff. With a focus on how the project adjusts from producing rich performative learning experiences in person to via online spaces, and the learnings that arose from the process, the article gives a range of insights into how the “transition to online was a productive challenge, but nevertheless a success” (p. 72).

---

<sup>1</sup> The app is part of the Earth Speakr artwork allows children between 7 and 17 to create disguised video messages aimed at political decision-makers. More details are provided in the article.

In the second piece, Cedric Lawida presents his practical report “Potenziale digitaler Medien für das szenische Lernen am Beispiel von StoryboardThat”. He raises the question of the extent to which digitality blurs the supposedly rigid boundaries between media and art forms. He then proceeds to discuss how the tool StoryboardThat can be used to bring the art form of theatre into the sphere of comics and how this can create individual learning opportunities for students. Lawida showcases his approach by reporting on a teaching unit he conducted on a German play and offers thought-provoking insights behind the scenes.

Eva Göksel and Nicola Abraham’s contribution “Conquering the Zoombies” is a provocative reflection exploring online teaching with drama in Swiss and UK based settings. Whilst readily acknowledging the difficulties of online teaching and learning generally, Göksel and Abraham move to challenge perceived notions of “not possible”, extolling the virtues and benefits of using performative approaches online with ready examples highlighting student engagement and collaborative learning. Framing digital platforms as tools “that enabl[e] us to continue using humanising pedagogies that embrace reciprocity and connection through creative exchange” (p. 111), the authors call for valuable “strategies of resilience” to be remembered and incorporated in performative teaching practises.

Finally, with “Secret agent meets pirate professor on Zoom: Collaboratively creating characters in a digital space”, a last contribution to the conference proceedings, Stefanie Giebert charts the successes and setbacks of going performative in digital teaching with a 2.5-day theatre workshop of English learners in a German University setting. Taking core drama elements of collaboration, connection, listening and trust building, Giebert delves into the workings of moving a range of theatre-based activities and exercises to online platforms. These practical examples give good insight to potential pathways for supporting the original intentions of the activities as they are moved to very different digital contexts.

There is also a contribution to the general section, “The form and meaning: When English language teachers learn to teach through drama” in which Li Ding details an action research project investigating the challenges language teachers face in learning to teach through drama. Utilising Shulmans concept of teacher knowledge as a frame, the project follows a team of 18 teachers in a Chinese primary school context, gathering both qualitative and quantitative data sources over a one-year period. Points of learning for individual teachers, both positive and negative, are further explored allowing Ding to draw out general challenges faced and make suggestions for potential ways forward in teacher training related to participatory drama practice in the teaching of English.

## Even, Miladinović, Piazzoli, Schewe & Woodhouse: Foreword

In their conference report, “Performative Didaktik – Didaktik performative” Nils Bernstein, Sara Milena Ricking write about their impressions of the workshop on performative didactics, which took place at the University of Hamburg on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

The issue is rounded off with three book reviews. Miriam Pieber reviews Katharina Delius monograph “Förderung der Sprechkompetenz zur Synthese von generischem Lernen und Dramapädagogik. Eine Design-Based Research-Studie im Englischunterricht”. Georgina Frei discusses the publication “Handlungsorientierung im Fremdsprachenunterricht. Eine Einführung” by Dagmar Abendroth-Timmer and David Gerlach. Finally, Hanna Bingel-Jones assesses Almut Hille and Simone Schiedermaier’s “Literaturdidaktik Deutsch als Fremd- und Zweitsprache. Eine Einleitung für Studium und Unterricht“

We hope you will find a lot of inspiring and thought-provoking impulses in this issue!

The editors

## Bibliography

Brandenburg, T. (2021). Report: 8<sup>th</sup> Scenario Forum Symposium. “Sore Back, Square Eyes?” Going Performative in Digital Teaching and Learning Spaces. *Scenario*, 15(1), 142-145.

<https://doi.org/10.33178/scenario.15.1.11>