

Daniel WALTER (Emory University, Oxford College)
Claire SCOTT (Vanderbilt University)
Katherine KERSCHEN (University of Washington in St. Louis)

Teaching Beyond the Binary: Perspectives from German as Second Language Education

Abstract

Backlash against trans- and non-binary affirming language has hit the United States hard. In the field of German language education in the US, it was already unclear how to best support our gender-expansive students before this recent wave of policy changes and conservative posturing. German speakers are also in a time of change as it relates to addressing linguistic issues related to gender-just and gender-neutral language. In this talk, we present a special issue of *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German*, which brings together research and praxis articles, as well as personal forum pieces and book reviews to better support not only German educators in North America, but language educators globally. This project started as an educational endeavor to provide insight into inclusive pedagogy and to highlight the contributions of trans and non-binary individuals within our community. However, we see this special issue, in the current political environment, as a form of resistance to anti-trans rhetoric and a reaffirmation of the importance of language education as a place for exploring diversity and finding community. Our presentation will discuss the results of a national survey of educators, synthesize the issue's contributions, and conclude with the impact on the future of language education.

Relevant References

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Bios

Dan Walter (PhD, Carnegie Mellon University) is an Associate Professor of German and Linguistics at Oxford College of Emory University. His research areas include Second Language Acquisition with a focus on German as an Additional Language, Psycholinguistics and its application to Language Pedagogy, the acquisition of L2 Morphosyntax, and language education and learning by minoritized populations. He serves on the editorial board of *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German* and *Language Development Research*. His current book project explores the language learning outcomes of Syrian and Ukrainian forced migrants in Germany.

Claire Scott (PhD, Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) is a Senior Lecturer of German Studies at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN, USA. Their research and teaching interests include mythological stories, melodrama, narratology, affect theory, sports culture, queer film, fat liberation, and LGBTQIA+ inclusive pedagogy. They currently serve as president of the Coalition for Feminist German Studies (fka Women in German) and they use she/they pronouns.

Katherine Kerschen (PhD, The Pennsylvania State University) is a Lecturer and Pedagogy Specialist in Germanic Languages and Literatures at Washington University in St Louis. Her research centers on vocabulary acquisition in a second language and the effectiveness of different activities for improving classroom learners' vocabulary knowledge. She is also interested in inclusive and critical pedagogies and has published articles on project-based learning and social justice pedagogy. She is currently working on a project about the impact of self-assessed participation on students' course engagement and perception of autonomy.