

Tips for making your online teaching *On Point*

In early December I gave a webinar about teaching digitally with *On Point*. It was fascinating to hear about online teaching experiences in these strange times. This blog post covers some of the issues and recommendations that came up in the chat.

Platforms and websites

It wasn't surprising to note that Zoom was one of the most popular platforms amongst teachers, and one of the reasons it works well for language teaching is due to the breakout room feature. This allows you to incorporate pairwork and groupwork into your lessons, just as you would in the face-to-face classroom. Platforms without this function require a greater degree of adaptation and free-flow speaking tasks are harder to orchestrate. It seems that the situation is changing, though, and more and more teachers should soon be able to use breakout rooms during their lessons.

There were so many recommendations of websites to help with the preparation and delivery of online lessons. In the box below you'll find a few of the ideas which were suggested by the participants.

It's certainly worth checking some of these suggestions out to see whether you could use them in your lessons.

- Mentimeter:** great for presenting your lessons and involving students in polls
- Padlet:** a mood board where students can share ideas in a visually dynamic way
- Kahoot:** a game-based platform – great for vocabulary lessons
- Quizizz:** fun for games to keep your students engaged
- Wordart:** good for vocabulary lessons and for students' discussion input
- Edpuzzle:** useful for creating your own video lessons
- TED Talks:** good to use with higher level students, followed by discussion tasks

The reality of teaching online

Several participants shared some of their thoughts and experiences. In some cases online teaching has helped teachers to use a wider variety of content in their lessons, but negative aspects were also raised. Here are some comments from participants:

'Online courses have required soooo much more preparation time.'

'Many older students prefer face-to-face for sure.'

'I can show video and be much more interactive online than in classrooms with no technology.'

'Motivating older learners to try out the 'new' tech is key. I've spent hours literally getting older participants on board. When they do they love it though.'



It was interesting to note that some teachers are still delivering face-to-face lessons, but that students need to maintain distance and wear masks – which presents its own difficulties when it comes to group speaking tasks. We discussed the possibility of students using their phones to communicate in these situations, and another participant mentioned the use of small individual white boards for students to communicate with.

While switching over to online teaching certainly has been an adjustment for most, it's important to remember that even during the strictest of lockdowns, it's actually still possible to deliver your lessons. I mentioned positivity during my presentation and it's true that teachers' and learners' general attitudes towards online learning can have an impact on its effectiveness. So go into your lessons with a positive attitude and exploit the advantages online teaching has to offer.

How *On Point* can help

We have digital versions of both the Student's Book and the Workbook available on Blink. Currently we have levels A2, B1, B1+, with A1 coming in January, followed by B2 and C1 in 2021. Blink users can set up online classrooms and use the Student's Book interactively with Zoom, along with the annotation and note features. Teachers can also assign homework from the Workbook, which students can complete online. It's also possible to launch all of the audio and video content through Blink.

During the webinar we discussed the use of online video lessons as a way to keep students engaged and to keep teacher talking time under control. *On Point* includes a video lesson after every two units, so there is plenty of content to choose from. Take a look at the website to find out more.

On Point was developed to help teachers save on prep time. With our take and teach approach, you'll find

yourself saving time preparing the content of your lesson, and in turn using that saved time to familiarize yourself with the platform you are using or getting to know the Blink version.

For the future, when the majority go back to face-to-face teaching and possibly lack technology in the classroom, the Delta Augmented App can be used by teachers and students to download and play videos and audios just by scanning the page.

It certainly has been a challenging year for language teachers, but the ability of teachers to adapt has been remarkable. The general feeling is that both students and teachers are keen to get back to face-to-face teaching, but in the meantime, so many teachers are finding ways to make their online lessons dynamic. It may be that online teaching continues to be part of teaching life well into 2021 and we hope that *On Point* can make your lives easier as you navigate the rocky road of teaching during a pandemic.

Scan and play!



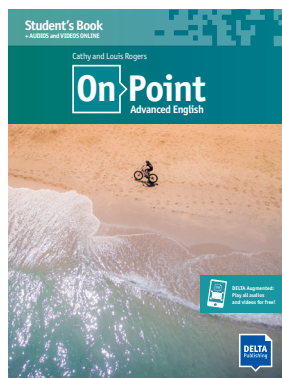
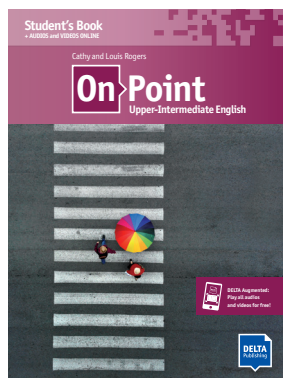
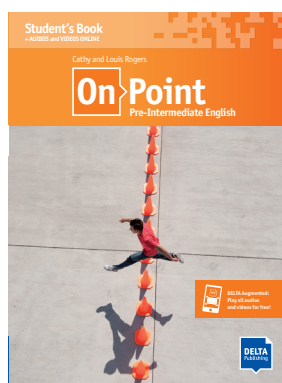
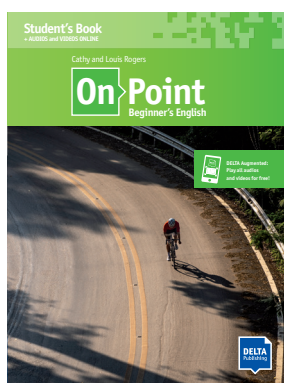
Scan the pages of the book and use the free DELTA or Klett Augmented App to play the audios!

www.deltapublishing.co.uk/augmented
www.klett-sprachen.de/augmented



Cathy Rogers,
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Teacher turned editor turned author, Cathy has been active in the ELT world, internationally and at home in England, for the past 18 years.



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www.klett-sprachen.de/onpoint

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Scan the QR code to watch a video clip from *On Point, Elementary English*

