

Video Production and Language Teaching

Perhaps more so than in previous years, we've all been challenged in 2020 to reconsider and re-configure our teaching, learning and assessment activities. Whether this has involved synchronous face-to-face tutorials and workshops via Zoom, or asynchronous lectures recorded in our own homes, we've all been forced to adapt, to innovate, or make-do. With more students choosing, or having to study online and in isolation, we, like many at UTAS, have faced two main challenges: the need for engaging and innovative online content, and the issue of assessment in a non-invigilated learning environment.

Textbooks & Video Production

In German programme, we've had a bit of a head-start. Most university-level German language courses are based on the structure and content of commercial textbooks, that are – often as not – aimed at either a North American readership, or at learners living in a German-speaking country. In an attempt to redesign German units that responded to, and aligned themselves with the University's Strategic Direction, we authored our own textbooks *Bausteine eins* and *Bausteine zwei* (Building Blocks one & two) that are unashamedly *for* and *from* Tasmania. And having written them ourselves we are able to offer them to students free of charge, saving them close to \$150. While firmly anchored in a distinctly Tasmanian context, these textbooks provide commencing students with an audio-visual, thematic guide to, and practice with the basic building blocks of the German language. Given the nature of modern languages, this necessarily includes a focus on the four language competencies: speaking, writing, reading and listening.

Bausteine^{zwei}

Integrated TextBook & Workbook for Introductory German



Billy Badger 2020 2. Ausgabe

Photo by Christine Wiedner

At the beginning of 2020, we expanded our *Bausteine* brand by starting our own YouTube Channel [Bausteine eins](#) to host short (5-10 minute) weekly chapter-by-chapter summaries with an interactive component. But within a matter of weeks, Covid-19 hit our shores, and the focus of these videos necessarily changed from a summary of key concepts to a delivery of key content. From the outset, the emphasis of our videos has been on original Tasmanian-based content

with high-production value: This meant rather than just simply reading a script in front of a web-camera, we went down the much more labour- and time-intensive road of producing videos with controlled lighting, appropriate place-based B-roll using recognisable Tasmanian locations, branded elements and content, and broadcast quality audio. Here's a [video from Week 9](#).

While there are quicker ways of producing video content – each video took around 30 hours of filming and editing – , our videos are conceived as durable content with the production values familiar to users of the YouTube platform. And the analytics indicate videos produced in this way are more appealing to students. While anecdotal evidence from students suggests the broad appeal of this style of video, a comparison of MyMedia recorded lecture analytics with YouTube's own superior analytics reveal that the YouTube videos

- are viewed by more students
- are frequently watched in their entirety
- are often watched (at least in part) several times
- are watched by non-enrolled viewers and act effectively as a positive advertisement for not only our Programme, but also Tasmania as an appealing place to study.

For the more technically minded, here's an overview of the basic equipment we use:

- Basic Filming duties: Multi-cam setup using two DSLR cameras.
- Aerial footage: DJI Mavic Pro drone (4k)
- Sound: RødeLink Wireless Lavalier Mic & Zoom H5 Recorder.
- Teleprompter: Glide Gear TMP100.
- Key Light: Aputure Lightstorm 120D
- Backlight: desk lamp & Aputure Amaran Video lights
- Film Editing: Adobe Premiere Pro & After Effects