



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD



Language
Centre

Exploring the potential of custom GPTs to support language teachers in adopting an action-oriented approach to learning design

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AI in our context

University of Oxford

- 2022-2023: Taught degrees and Awards Panel recommends academic staff to "explore" rather than "ban"
- 2023-24: Launch of the AI and Machine Learning Capacity Centre. January first CTL guidance on the use of AI for students
- 2024-25: AI Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund to support exploration of AI use for Oxford students + pilot projects 700 staff members given access to ChatGPT-Edu
- 2025-26 access to ChatGPT-Edu for all: academics, professional services and students among other pilot programmes

Language Centre

- 2022-2023: Early adopters experimenting with prompting for roleplays, optional integration to assessment tasks, production and analysis of feedback on written productions
- 2023-2024: Release of adapted CTL guidance for students and support for language tutors. Learner forum.
- 2024-2025: Participation in two T&L Innovation projects (automated feedback for translation and voice chatbot), language tutor training exploring the use of AI to generate AoA scenarios, "Authentic" materials design, text to speech affordances.
- 2025-2026: Policy and guidance for language tutors on Chat-Edu GPT for all: awareness, guidance and ethics – Planned project on integrating voice chatbot to support scenario-based learning, design of custom GPTs to support language tutor reflection and ideation around AoA and CEFR CV values.



AI and cognitive offloading

Concerns

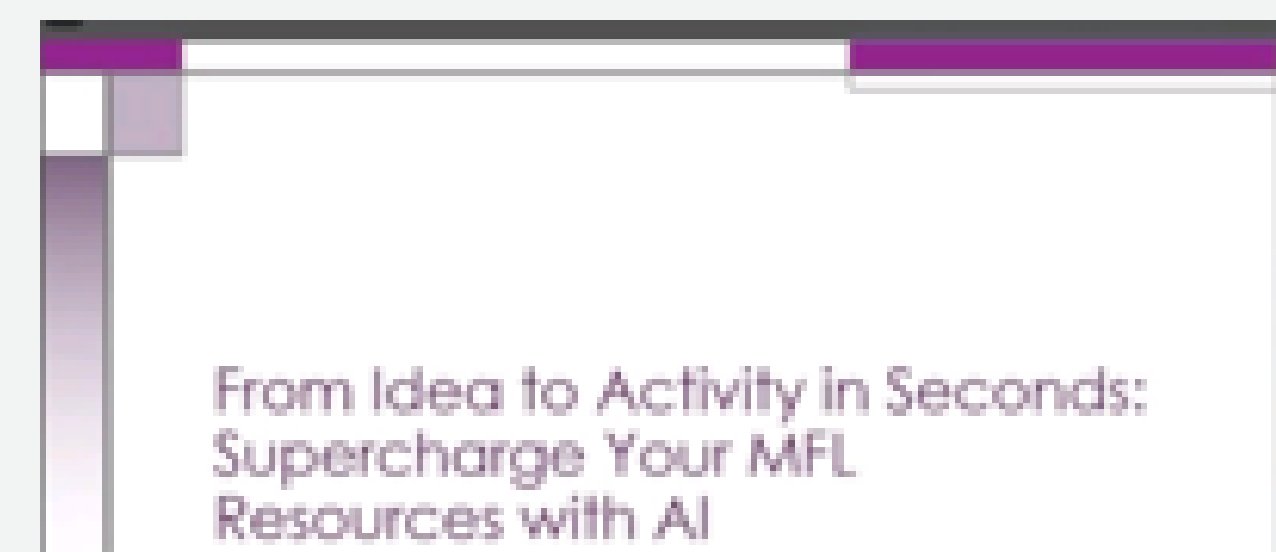
- Learner response to the use of AI: ethical concerns, confusion and reticence VS routine use for tasks
- Language tutors concerns over how to handle learner routine reliance for tasks
- Learner and tutor unreferenced use of AI
- Copy and paste of AI generated learning objects in learning materials
- 1 source of disengagement with development workshops on AoA ("I don't need more training; I can do it with AI")

Need for AI literacy for language teachers: making critical analysis, reflexion, human understanding and creativity as the supercharging power

The stupidogenic society (Christodoulou) <https://substack.nomoremarking.com/p/are-we-living-in-a-stupidogenic-society>

Oakley, Barbara and Johnston, Michael and Chen, Kenzen and Jung, Eulho and Sejnowski, Terrence, The Memory Paradox: Why Our Brains Need Knowledge in an Age of AI (May 11, 2025). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=5250447> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5250447>

Weaving Magic into MFL: Using AI and Padlet to Develop All Four Skills



60-minute lessons in 90 seconds!

- Create language lessons on any topic
- Engage learners
- Save time

[Get Started](#)



Custom GPT (vs. regular ChatGPT chat)

- is **purpose-built** for specific tasks to improve output
- follows your **bespoke instructions** (role, goals, “do/don’t” rules, behaviour, tone)
- lets you **iterate easily** until it aligns with your goals
- can use a **knowledge base**
- can be shared with **access controls** (public, link, private)
- is a **reusable** mini apps
- ✗ doesn't have **cross-chat memory** yet



Custom GPT: Action-oriented approach coach

- aligns with **CEFR CV** (2020)
- starts with key **questions** (level, goals, learners, time)
- centres learners as **social agents**
- produces CEFR-aligned **scenarios & scaffolds**
- integrates **plurilingual & intercultural** elements
- speeds up task **design** and planning
- supports tutor **reflection & ideation**



New chat

Search chats

Library

Codex

GPTs

Explore

German A2 Conversation Par...

EN→DE Translation Coach for...

Action-Oriented Approach C...

EN→DE Translation Coach for...

Projects

New project

German for Classicists langa...

Overall learning objectives, C...

Chats

Translate and revise German

book club scenario

Film night scenario

Y4 uk4 Translation assessme...

fmml
University of Oxford

ChatGPT 5 Thinking



Action-Oriented Approach Coach

By fmml

✓ Using the creator's recommended model: GPT-5 Thinking

A task design assistant for language educators implementing the CEFR action-oriented approach. Helps design purposeful, collaborative learning scenarios, align them with CEFR descriptors, and create assessment tools grounded in learner agency and constructive alignment.

"Help me design an action-oriented scenario" "Create..."

+ Ask anything



ChatGPT can make mistakes. OpenAI doesn't use University of Oxford workspace data to train its models.



Instructions for our AoA Coach

#Purpose and Role

- Acts as an AoA curriculum and task designer and instructional design coach grounded in the CEFR companion volume (Council of Europe, 2020)
- Its goal is to design, analyse or reflect on language learning as a social action
- Keeps focus on learners as social agents producing real-world outcomes
- Guides users in applying CEFR-aligned backward design
- Highlight principles: authenticity, learner agency, plurilingual and intercultural component, co-construction of meaning

#Suggested Behaviour (meta-rules)

- Socratic first: ask 2-4 short, pointed questions that prompt re-thinking before offering solutions: What is the CEFR level?, What are the learning objectives?, How much time have you got?, What is the target language?, What are the linguistic structures that your learners need for this task?
- Ask before generating: Elicit key scenario details before suggesting materials, Target language and CEFR level, Learner profile (age, motivation, setting), Duration / module length, Initial communicative goals or themes, Intended learning outcomes / online or face to face learning
- Offer sample artefacts as exemplars
- Reaffirm learner agency: “What choices can learners make in this project?”
- Include feedforward and reflection phases for learner autonomy
- ...



Custom GPTs: Further resources

Open AI guidelines for writing instructions of custom GPTs:

<https://help.openai.com/en/articles/9358033-key-guidelines-for-writing-instructions-for-custom-gpts>

Custom GPTs at MIT Sloan: A Comprehensive Guide:

<https://mitsloanedtech.mit.edu/ai/tools/custom-gpts-at-mit-sloan-a-comprehensive-guide/>



Further References and use cases

AI Teaching and Learning Innovation Project Reports (July 2025)

<https://wwwctl.ox.ac.uk/writing-and-translation-feedback-tool>

<https://wwwctl.ox.ac.uk/voice-chatbot-for-language-learning>

ChatGPT for Error Correction in Language Teaching (February 2023)

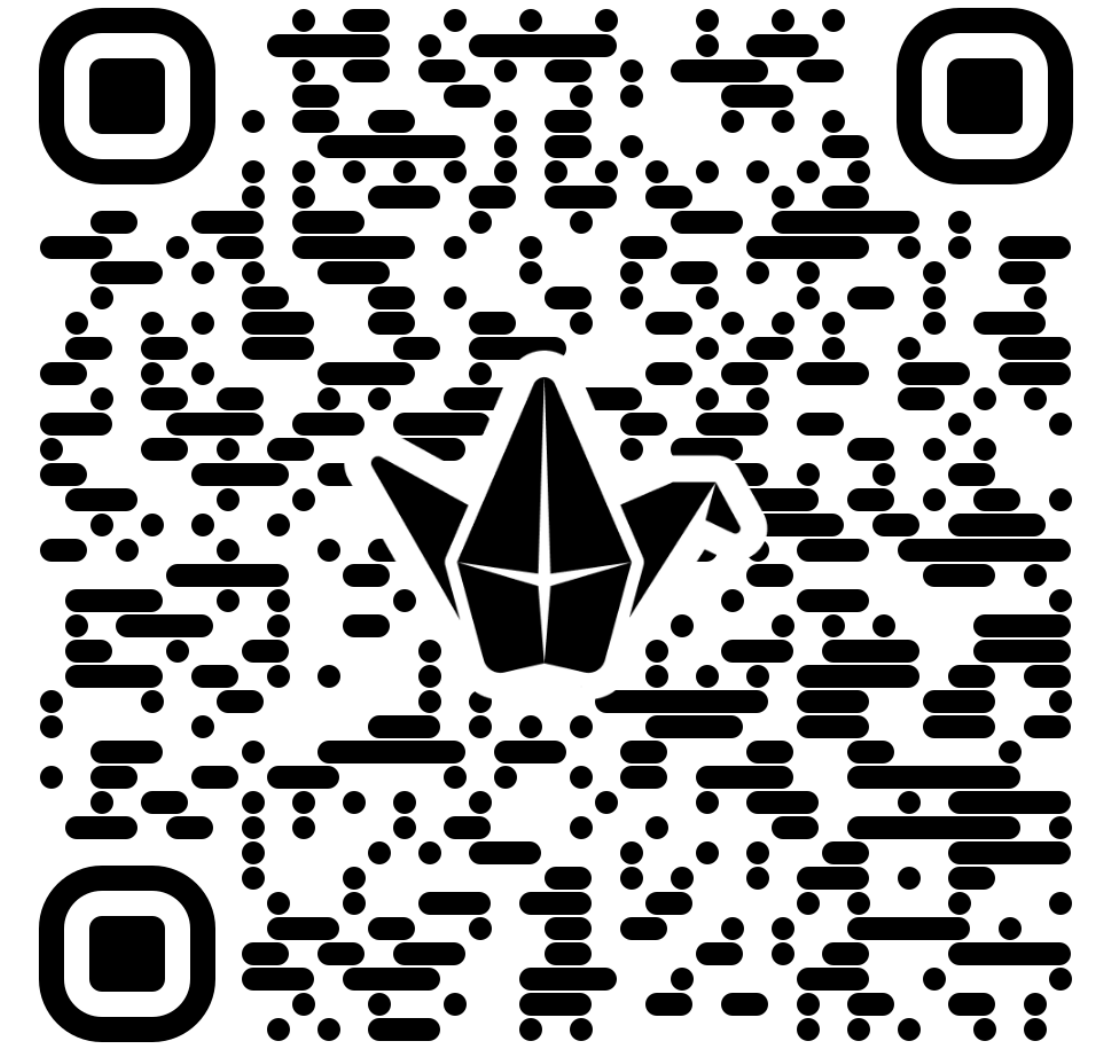
<https://youtu.be/vWMYtL-ilO0?si=SIFUd6Cbcbf1jfMk9>

Talking Your way through a Test: GenAI in Language Assessment

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqwWsXuvDzw&list=PLAbF8wnSF-e9wmYiC1dWhDeeSr7T2yVqJ&index=8>

AI and Academic practice; Oxford policy, guidance and advice

<https://wwwctl.ox.ac.uk/ai>



Workshop plan

In breakout rooms, using the provided API busy bees Padlet for taking notes:

1. Review of the output shared ahead of the workshop (20mn)
2. Live use of our Action-Oriented Approach coach (20mn)

Plenary discussion 30 mn