

Bring your World.....and we'll build on it together

Adapted from Luke Meddings in 'Teaching Unplugged' "Bring your English....."

Steps to Topic based and tailor-made

- Get to know your students (find out about their personal situation and their individual interests)
- Be open-minded, flexible and curious
- Keep eyes and ears open for suitable material
- Give input which enables your students to generate input in return
- Always ask yourself:
 - What is my material? (= students)
 - What is my individual teaching context?
 - What is there on my shelves (in my PC)?
 - What can I do with it?
- Trust your instincts and go with the flow

Working with a course book

- Use your course book as a basis not as a straightjacket.
- Add material which is primarily topic-based not grammar-based
- If you (have to) start off with grammar-based material, help your students put it into a personally relevant context
- Give your students grammar overviews, because in course books they sometimes just get one detail / aspect of a grammar topic (e.g. would)
- Give your students vocabulary overviews for a topic (e.g. weddings)
- Give your students overviews of confusing words contrasted (leave/let)

Short-term work with a topic

- Begin lessons with the students themselves whenever you can
 - do a bit of small talk and see what comes of it
 - get them to talk about their highs and lows of the past week (in pairs)
 - use a weekly motto to stimulate comments
- Create topical posters with contributions from various classes
- Create Tangram Puzzles
- Give individual students hobby / interest related reading material for reading for fun (they may understand higher level texts, because they know their subject)
- Give students individual issues of a magazine (e.g. Spotlight) and tell them to choose one article for reading at home and then share it in the following lesson and comment (or comment in writing)
- Go for a walk and talk (low level e.g. What's/Who's your favourite..., higher level: provide them with questions - or statements to discuss - on any topic)
- Give students topics to locate corresponding information in a text (instead of comprehension questions) That way they will be able to cope with material above their level

Long-term work with a topic

- Choose a general topic which can easily be divided into sub-topics (e.g. Communication, People and Places, Our five senses, Firsts, Memories, Power, Switzerland, Advertising, Media. Arts)
- Brainstorm the topic and create a mind-map to which you can keep adding during term
- Brainstorm suitable material (including objects)
- Mind our five senses
- Mind the four skills, even if some students only want to practise speaking
- Work on grammar / structures / vocabulary depending on what comes up and adapt it to your students needs

Ask: Do the topics we choose relate to anything else in our students syllabus in other subjects?

Focus on responses rather than mastery

Use pair work as much as possible

With uneven numbers pair up with one student yourself (taking turns)

Respond to content of students' written and spoken output

Bibliography

Teaching Unplugged, Dogme in English Language Teaching, Luke Meddings and Scott Thornbury, Delta Publishing 2009, ISBN 978-1-905085-19-4

Photocopiable material with CD included

Speaking Extra, Mick Gammidge, Cambridge University Press,

Topic based graded material to read, listen and watch (=real world stories):

National Geographic Footprint Reading Library with video (DVD really), Heinle Cengage Learning

Controversial Issues

Ideas and Issues (Intermediate, Upper-Intermediate, Advanced)

Chancereel International Publishers LTD

Large Number of Booklets on Controversial Issues

Issues (Series), Independence, Educational Publishers, Cambridge

Film

Popular films for language use (1 + 2), Workman Graham, Chadburn Publishing

Collections of Articles on special topics

Viewfinder. Langenscheidt

Miscellaneous

Vocabulary in Use Series, Cambridge University Press

Where in the World am I?, Mystery Geography Puzzles, Lagoon Books, 1969, ISBN 1899712410

Life's Little Instruction Book, H.Jackson Brown Jr, Thorsons, 1991 ISBN = 0 7225 2828 0

Internet

www.lonely-planet.com

www.howstuffworks.com

www.bbc.uk.com

www.teachingenglish.org.uk

www.britishcouncil.org

www.swissnews.ch

www.worldradio.ch

www.onestopenenglish.com

www.menschenbilden.ch

Magazines

Spotlight / Business Spotlight / Spot on / Modern English Digest

Country Living, Good Housekeeping, Focus,

Swiss News

Onair (free from worldradio.ch) / Air (free at Zurich airport)

In German: on modern pedagogy relating to Pestalozzi's teachings

Menschen Bilden, Brühlmeier Arthur, Stiftung "Schule für das Kind", Baden Verlag 2007

Plus
All your course books
Anything you read / see / hear / experience
dream of