

Advantages of Using Authentic Dialogues in Teaching Speaking Skills to Adult Learners

В процессе преподавания иностранного языка зачастую возникает вопрос относительно того, использованию каких учебных материалов следует отдавать предпочтение при обучении слушанию и говорению. Современные методики обучения предлагают использование аутентичных диалогов и других оригинальных источников, а также диалогов с учебной целью. При обучении взрослых и те, и другие материалы находят свое применение на разных этапах изучения языка. Преимущества аутентичных материалов очевидны при обучении взрослых на продвинутом этапе.

In the EFL teaching world there is currently a continuing debate as to which type of class materials for oral and listening activities is more suitable. The choices are between authentic dialogues and materials taken from authentic sources such as radio interviews, magazine articles etc. and scripted dialogues with the teaching purpose prepared especially for the lesson by the teacher or some other English teaching source. Generally, the argument for authentic materials is that the materials should represent what learners will be confronted with in every day life when using English. On the other hand, proponents of scripted materials feel that by preparing the material students are not introduced to issues that may be beyond the scope of the current level. Both arguments are equally valid, and prompt to use both types of materials in classes. Below is what we consider the main advantages and disadvantages of both types of dialogues.

Scripted Dialogues (dialogues with teaching purpose)

Using scripted dialogues is probably most useful when a teacher is trying to focus on correct form. This is particularly appropriate when working towards stimulating oral work. By using a scripted dialogue, the teacher can steer the class towards new or recycled language skills while keeping irregularities to a minimum. Especially in the case of lower level classes, where communication skills are generally the primary target of such an activity, the use of a scripted dialogue allows the teacher to concentrate on structures and use his/her knowledge of the class's ability to model the conversational flow. The issue of shared knowledge does not need to be addressed, as well as other linguistic subtleties (such as flouting co-operative principles in order to express irony).

Authentic Dialogues

The act of collaboration must start with dialogue. You cannot build relationships without having an understanding of your potential partners, and you cannot achieve that understanding without a special form of communication that is authentic dialogue. The advantages of authentic dialogues are probably mostly in the area of listening comprehension. By using these authentic dialogues, the teacher can focus on variations in pronunciation, and how intonation and incomplete structures are used to express meaning. By having students

focus on such areas of openings and closure, a teacher could then lead the class to discussion about, and practice of, appropriate types of openings and closure as well as other appropriate language (or inappropriate as the case may be). Other, more subtle issues, may also be addressed by using authentic dialogues. For an advanced class, the issues of flouting cooperative principles may be discussed by using the manner in which this is achieved in an authentic dialogue as an example. Students could then model oral activities on the exchange and see how close they can come to producing the same effect. The following strategies will help teachers to enable effective discussion to take place in inquiry-driven learning environments.

1. Frontload to create controversy about an idea or issue

Begin by introducing students to an idea or issue with a contested philosophical, ethical or moral dimension. Present puzzling problems and questions without predetermined answers. Whatever the idea, issue, question or problem, it must be intrinsically interesting to students (and the teacher), open to a variety of solutions and/or interpretations and be sufficiently challenging without being abstract.

2. Employ cooperative learning strategies to engage all students

For students to understand new information, they must be given the opportunity to engage in a process of coming to know. Small group learning provides scaffolding for students to learn new strategies, test their hypotheses and revise and refine their thinking. Cooperative learning enables students to gain a much deeper understanding of the different perspectives on contested ideas and issues.

3. Invite students to work collaboratively to generate key questions

Sometimes teachers pose questions (about which they have spent time considering their answers) and expect students to answer them without any real time for thinking and reflection. Reverse the established rules in the classroom and have students construct their own key questions about texts, ideas or issues. Don't always expect students to answer the questions that they generate.

4. Pose questions or problems with multiple answers or solutions

It is important to design problem-based classroom activities that encourage students to consider multiple perspectives on ideas and issues. Ask students open, multi-faceted questions where the answer cannot be arrived at easily or quickly.

5. Connect questions or problems to students' lived experience

It is vitally important to ask questions and design problems that connect to the lives of students. Authentic dialogue and meaningful discussion is much more likely if questions and

problems tap into students' prior knowledge and are connected to their world beyond the classroom.

6. Require students to use critical, higher-order thinking skills

It is not enough to design challenging questions and problems that are important to students; these questions and problems must require students to use and develop higher-order thinking skills. Critical thinking will enable students to address problems, develop a range of possible solutions and support these solutions with convincing, well-reasoned arguments.

7. Use a jigsaw method of problem solving to prepare students for collaboration by solving individually different problems

The solutions of these problems are then combined, with modifications, during collaborative solution of a larger problem. Students should be more engaged in problem solution and this higher engagement causes more relevant knowledge events and thus more efficient learning.

8. Give students adequate wait time to respond to complex questions

Research indicated that a common mistake that teachers make is not allowing students enough time to answer complex questions. When complex questions are posed, it is important to give students time to think and reflect before they formulate a response. Some classrooms silence is not necessarily a bad think.

9. Have students perform their understanding in a public way

After students have had the opportunity for authentic, purposeful discussion, they will be much better placed to demonstrate their understanding about the text they are studying. Have students perform their deepening understanding of texts, ideas and issues in elaborate forms of written, spoken, visual or multimodal communication.

These strategies will help English teachers to promote authentic dialogue and genuine inquiry in their classrooms. In this type of classrooms, the teacher no longer just teaches but also learns alongside his students. The student is no longer simply taught but also teaches his peers. The teacher and student become jointly responsible for learning in a classroom communities characterised by authentic dialogue.

References:

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