Using resources that aren't textbooks

Webinar handout

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What is the Dogme approach to teaching?

The Dogme approach encourages dynamic, conversation-driven learning by prioritising authentic communication over rigid pre-planned materials. Teachers using Dogme focus on their students' immediate needs, fostering natural language emergence through dialogue. Below are three key areas of a Dogme approach.

1. **Adaptability and listening**

- Be adaptable, seize spontaneous opportunities, and listen closely to students' needs.

- Provide clear and helpful feedback based on observed issues.

- Remain fully present to ensure students feel heard and valued.

2. **Emergent language**

- Address errors, alternative expressions, and questions as students communicate.

- Use clarifications and support to help students refine their ideas and gain confidence.

3. **Student engagement**

- Praise students' stories and ideas to build confidence.
- Encourage storytelling, problem-solving, and other tasks that promote authentic dialogue.

Suggested activity: Personal storytelling

Below is one of the activities shared in the webinar. This is suitable for any age from teenage upward, for any level above A2.

Objective: Encourage students to share personal experiences while practising descriptive language.

Preparation

- Step 1: Ask each student to choose a meaningful photo or short video from their phone.
- Step 2: Instruct them to think of a story or memory related to their chosen image.

Sharing in pairs

- Step 3: Pair students up and have them share their stories with each other. Set a time limit so they know what to expect. Monitor and help with emergent language when needed.
- Step 4: The listening partner should ask genuine, follow-up questions to explore the story further.

Class discussion

- Step 5: Students present their partners' stories to the class, using prompts like, "My partner told me about…"/ "I asked her what…." / "It was interesting because…"
- Step 6: The whole class can then ask additional questions to dig deeper into each story. The teacher can here also work with emergent language.

Further reading

Find more links to read more about Dogme and to watch an recorded example of a Dogme lesson by Luke Meddings: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/knowing-subject/d-h/dogme

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A recording of Cecilia's webinar can be watched here: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/news-and-events/webinars/webinars-teachers/managing-resources-mini-event