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Global Education Through Narrative

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It is generally believed that teaching topics should reflect the interests of students. While this is certainly a valid consideration, it is equally true that material influences students' interests. Teaching materials are generally focused on certain topics (movies, tourism, homestays, shopping, hobbies, etc.). Thus, teachers present a limited world view that implicitly defines why students study English.

The world faces a plethora of problems, some serious. It can be argued that typical tourism, shopping for fun, and a general lack of awareness contribute to these problems. Are students getting the best input to make them responsible citizens of the world? More importantly, do educators have a responsibility to inform students of unfortunate global realities? This paper will demonstrate the effectiveness of global issues teaching materials that utilize narratives. The narratives are presented by a unique adaptation of dictogloss (grammar dictation).

一般的に、教材のトピックは学生が興味を持っているものがいいとされています。一方、他にも有効な考え方があり、教材が生徒の興味を惹きつけるということもあるのです。現在の教材は必要以上にいくつかのトピック（映画、旅行、ホームステイ、買い物、趣味など）のみに限られています。よって、教師はなぜ生徒は英語を勉強するのかという、絶対的な定義にとらわれ、限られた情報しか提供していないのです。
世界はたくさんの問題に直面しています、その中には深刻なものもあります。典型的な旅行や買い物、娯楽、だけではなく、世界で起こっている問題に対しての認識不足に対して論じてもよいのではないでしょうか。学生は世界の責任ある人間になるために最良の方法で情報を得ているでしょうか。もっと重要なことは、教育者は学生に世界で起こっている不幸な現実を伝える責任を持っているでしょうか。The presenterは世界の問題を物語としてあつかった教材の効果を説明します。物語はユニークなadaptation of dictoglossによって描かれています。

Asking the Right Questions

Teachers generally strive to provide students with content that they have an interest in. With this in mind, many teachers steer clear of global issues type topics: environmental degradation, issues of war and peace, social problems such as poverty, etc. Instead, students are given a steady diet of topics that focus on food, travel, movies, etc. Undoubtedly,

most students have interest in these topics. Thus, an educator using global issues should challenge him/herself to answer the question, "Do students *like* studying global issues?"

Students almost certainly prefer discussing movies to, say, third world poverty. Thus, should global issues educators persist with our efforts to teach peace and our vision of responsible world citizenship? Or should we reconsider the axiom that says teachers should provide students with material that they are most interested in?

Interest, however, occurs at many levels. If the issue were only *liking*, global educators themselves might choose a topic like movies over environmental degradation. If, however, the issue is what topic do we *care* more about, then the answer is equally easy: the global issue. Most educators who have tried using global issues find that students consistently react positively and even enthusiastically to such topics. They care about human life; they care about the environment and the world we all share. Every person is, at a deep level, aware of the truths articulated by both science and religion: everything is connected.

The results of the presenter's survey given to 40 students of global issues—29 English majors and 11 from a class of mixed majors, all in typical conversation classes—was presented. The students had studied with narratives describing serious global issues such as child soldiers, child prostitution, landmines, etc., for the entire semester. If such content could be successfully taught in typical conversation classes, it becomes difficult to imagine a university classroom where global issues are inappropriate (if judging appropriateness by student response). A typical survey response reads, "I think that I've been kept closing my eyes about international social problems. I felt the warmth of people who is trying their best and people who is supporting them even they were born in terrible environment." Several commented that the narratives were sad, but added that they were useful and interesting. Only one out of 40 stated that the stories were too sad without some qualifying comment, and the rest ranged from mildly to strongly positive responses to the global issues topics.

Perhaps the main reason for student's interest in these serious global issues is they had a chance to learn something while studying English rather than be asked to give opinions. A common problem for global educators, and content-based instruction in general, is presenting materials at an appropriate level.

Use of narrative

Although the following method can be used for teaching any topic, it is useful for global educators because teachers can write the narratives, thus choosing the topic and level of language. There are three steps for this unique use of narrative: presentation and discussion of a picture story; grammar dictation (dictogloss); then practice of the narrative.

(1) Picture Story (see appendix A: Picture Story)

After receiving the picture story, students brainstorm vocabulary, then think about and discuss the pictures. What's happening? Who are the people? Where are they? The gist of the narrative can be predicted. Basic sentence patterns can be provided for lower level learners, "There are some... I see a..." while higher level learners can use the pictures as discussion starters.

(2) Dictogloss

Narratives are generally five or six sentences, but may be more or less depending on the length and complexity of the sentences, and level of the students. For the standard method, first, the narrative is read at natural, or close to natural, speed. There should be a five second pause between narrated sentences. Students are instructed to listen the first time without writing, allowing them to attend to the overall meaning.

Next, the narrative is read a second time in the same way as above; this time students write each sentence. Ideally, they *can't* write the entire narrative with complete accurately due to the speed and length of the spoken sentences, the relatively short pauses between sentences, and the difficulty level. If students are struggling too much, the narration speed can be slowed down, and the pause between sentences made a bit longer, or the sentences repeated. Students should be able to at least write several key words from each sentence. Student papers should be monitored to make sure students are comprehending enough to take some notes, but not writing each sentence perfectly as dictated (which would indicate the sentences are too easy or dictation speed too slow).

Students then meet with a partner, compare notes, and *recreate* the text. This learning step, as mentioned earlier, can be especially effective when the partners are arranged heterogeneously. A higher level partner, for example, will take a more active role. The teacher, by deliberating arranging partners, can experiment to see which grouping works best.

Again, emphasize to students that they are not necessarily trying to remember the text exactly as it was spoken at this point; instead they should be encouraged, first and foremost, to write good sentences that approximate the meaning of the narrative. Students need to be reminded to look for and consider every difference between their written sentences: an *a* opposed to *the* ; a plural opposed to a singular noun, etc. Teacher involvement is minimal, but the narrative may need to be reread for low level partners who simply didn't understand. Ideally, students speak English only throughout this process.

Finally, students are asked to write sentences on the board, or are asked to read a sentence while teacher writes on the board. It is useful to choose students whose sentences are reasonably close to the dictated sentence, but have an error that will be useful to consider and correct. After each sentence is written on the board, read and consider together what further corrections are necessary. If a sentence is gramatically correct but different from the narrated sentence, it should be pointed out. The narrative for the sample below (Appendix A) is: (1) My father disappeared when I was two. We don't know why. (2) Cambodia was in a terrible condition that year. (3) My grandmother, mother, sisters, aunt and cousins lived together in a crowded house. (4) Cambodia's war ended in 1989. (5) People in my village still lose arms and legs to landmines. (6) Now that the war is over, I can concentrate on studying. I want to be a translator.

Dictogloss Negotiation

One variation on the basic dictogloss method noted above is to have students discuss the spoken sentence with a partner *before* writing anything. After a minute or two of this discussion students are told to write what they discussed (which will approximate what they heard).

Student-controlled Dictogloss

For another dictogloss variation, the teacher explains that the teacher will act like a tape recorder would, complete with stop, rewind and fast-forward buttons. Emphasize that each student is responsible for controlling the teacher. Proceed to read the narrative at natural speed; if no student says "stop" do not stop even if it's clear that students are unable to write. Students are responsible to say, "STOP," when they can't keep up, and "Go back to (the last word or phrase they have written)." Encourage students to be persistent; they can "rewind" the teacher as many times as necessary. This works best with the rule that a student can only say "stop" one time. Without this rule, the same few students—invariably the highest level students—will completely control the pace. The lower level students might be lost, but be too shy to speak. After each member of the class has controlled the teacher once, then anyone can again control one time, until all have taken a turn. Once the class comprehends that everyone can and should control the teacher, this rule need not be followed absolutely.

(3) Narrative practice (see appendix B: Narrative Practice Exercises)

The narrative as it was originally spoken is then practiced with a series of exercises that allow students to gain mastery over the material. First, partners work with a verbal *Find the Differences*. One student reads the narrative aloud (which all students listened to and wrote), but with some changes, some mistakes. The mistakes may be grammatical, vocabulary, or minimal pair pronunciation. Student B listens and says "STOP" when she hears something strange. Student A circles these mistakes.

Next, students practice by shadow talking with a partner. One partner reads the narrative, and the other listens and repeats. Students should be taught to read the narrative smoothly and naturally, at a pace that will challenge but not confuse the repeating partner.

The third step is to have a student, still working with a partner, read partial sentences and try to finish them. The listening partner, who is silently reading the actual narrative, acts as coach, giving hints, asking proper questions, or translating a word when needed to jog the speaking partner's memory.

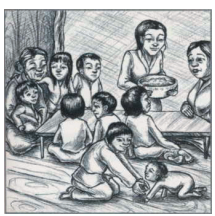
The fourth step is to have a student, still working with a partner, tell the narrative while only looking at the pictures. The listening partner performs the same role as noted above. Students at this point can be asked to transform the narrative from first to third person. This forces students to think carefully about everything they are saying, and to make the necessary grammar adjustments.

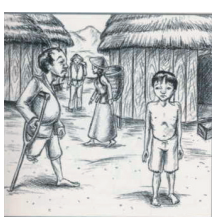
The final step is to have a couple of students step to the front of the class to tell the narrative. Students who have mastered the language of the narrative can be encouraged to concentrate on pronunciation, speaking smoothly, and speaking skills such as making eye contact with audience members, speaking in a loud enough, clear, strong voice, etc. Throughout the semester each student is given the chance to present the narrative in front of the class.

With this method students have the chance to internalize language structures through a logical series of exercises that don't simply ask students to memorize by silently rereading several times. The internalization occurs naturally. Learning language at this level tends to not be forgotten, giving students confidence that they can indeed succeed at language endeavors. They also feel success for using English to learn about the world and social problems, and become aware of (in the case of the presenter's materials) some social problems that plague citizens of the world. The examples below were taken from the presenter's self-published global issues textbook: *Global Stories*.

Appendix A: Picture Story

6. One Rural Village





Brainstorm Spaces

disappeared

beg

beggars

relatives

war

disabled

(school) subject

Preparation Workshops

1 Brainstorm words related to the pictures. Write them in the spaces above.
2 Describe each picture. What do you see? How do the people feel? etc.

Appendix B: Narrative Practice Exercises

3 First Narration: Find the Differences

Partner A: Read the story below at natural speed. Pause after each sentence.
Partner B: Listen and say "STOP" if you hear something different or strange.

Circle and count the differences.

My father appeared when I was two. We aren't knowing why.

Cambodia was a terrible condition that year.

My grandma, mother, sisters, aunt and cousins lived together in a crowd of houses.

Cambodia's war began in 1989.

People in my village still lost armies and legs to my lands.

Now that the war is over, I can concentrate on hobbies. I want to be a rock star.

4 Second Narration: Shadowing

Partner A: Read the story, pausing after every few words.
Partner B: Listen to your partner and repeat what she says. Don't read. Just listen and repeat. When finished, change roles.

5 Third Narration: Structured Narrative

Look at the pictures and make sentences using the following partial sentences. Your partner will help you if you forget:

Picture 1: ...when I was... We don't...

Picture 2: Cambodia was in...

Picture 3: My grandmother... lived together...

Picture 4: Cambodia's... ended in...

Picture 5: People in my village... to landmines

Picture 6: Now that the war is over... I want to be...

6 Fourth Narration: Storytelling Practice

Partner A: Tell the story while looking only at the pictures.

Partner B: Ask questions or give hints when your partner needs help.

7 Fifth Narration: Storytelling

A few class members tell to class, changing "I" to "Haeng." Do the good speaker/good listener checklist.