

Outside Interest

Students involvement in learning outside of class.

Problems with students:

- Some come to class without any supplies (no paper, pencil or pen).
- Most want to receive information passively.
- Few students engage in the course content outside of class.
- Plagiarism when asked to do written work outside of class.



Teaching philosophy

- Teacher centered approach vs. a facilitating approach
- John Dewey (1859-1952) inspired teaching methods in which the teacher and students learn together (the pragmatist/progressive model advocated 'hands on learning')
- The importance of the teacher does not stem from her possessing knowledge, rather she has the knowledge and skill to facilitate students' own learning.
- Today, when knowledge can be accessed instantly, facts are less important than skills.
- The goal of the teacher is to guide students interest and discovery.

Back to boredom

- How to you facilitate learning and skills in students that prefer to learn passively?
 - When I gave written assignments, more than 20% of students cheated/plagiarized.
 - When given reading assignments, students would read a pdf in a foreign language on their phone, on the tram, on the way to class. I know because I saw them!
 - Students rarely read articles or texts in English on their own time or at their own initiative.
- How could I get students to actively learn?

- I wanted to come up with something that would focus on the skills my students needed to further develop (speaking in front of people; reading authentic texts; and paraphrasing, without memorizing).
- I wanted to come up with something that would put the burden of discovery and learning on them, thereby increasing their active participation.
- I wanted to come up with something that would interest them.

Headlines!

- Students are tasked with finding an article, of their own choosing, online.
- They then read that article and present it to the class.
- They then ask a question about the topic to the class.
- This (usually) provokes a discussion among the class.



Headlines

- A few days before the scheduled presentation students are required to send the article to my email, along with the question(s) they plan on asking in order to provoke a discussion.

Headlines Step 1.

- Students have to navigate mainstream publications, read through headlines, select and read an article that interests them.
- They then have to decide whether or not this article is of interest enough for them to read it. If not, they have to go back and select another article.
- Understand the article well enough to explain it to the class, but without memorizing the article's phrasing.

Headlines Step 2.

- Students then have to present the article in front of the class. The presentation is very simple, no more than five minutes, no visual aids, no powerpoint, no notes.
- This gives the students some very much needed experience in speaking English in front of an audience. Since they aren't supposed to memorize the text they have to better understand the article in order to explain it in their own words.

Headlines 3.

- Students have read the article well enough that they can ask a thought/discussion provoking question.

- Each time we have a headlines period scheduled, students email their chosen articles and question to me a few days ahead of time.
- In order to receive any points for doing this assignment they must do it four times in a semester.

Grading Rubric

| | |
|--|------------|
| Summation: article was well summarized and the student did not memorize the text | 2 points |
| Presentation: the student made eye contact with the class and spoke clearly. | 1.5 points |
| Discussion: the question asked was interesting and the student voiced her opinion after letting other students share theirs. | 1.5 points |
| Total | 5 points |

How could this work in lower levels?

- Let students present on things they interact with regularly in life that are in English. For example, TV shows, youtube videos, video games, music, movies, or books.
- Have students do this task a few times a year.
- Teachers could go give the assignment a bit more structure, perhaps teaching students how to summarize something quickly with the five W's (who, what, when, where, why).
- The point is for students to engage with English on their own. My hope is that this helps them learn through their own active interest.