

Teaching languages authentically in the classroom

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‘Classroom learners not only spend less time in contact with the new language, they also tend to be exposed to a far smaller range of discourse types.

For example, classroom learners are often taught language that is somewhat formal in comparison to the language as it is used in most social settings.

In many foreign language classes, teachers may even switch to their students’ first language for discipline or classroom management, thus depriving learners of opportunities to experience uses of the language in real communication.’

Lightbown, P. & Spada, N. 2012, How languages are learned, Oxford University Press, p.39.



THE PROBLEM/THE ‘WHY’



- Observe the work of Italian language schools in Italy to learn HOW they equip foreign students with language skills
- Pedagogy, classroom activities, modes of instruction, use of Italian in the Italian-only classroom
- Monitor student engagement and progress
- What does best practice look like?

THE IDEA



LEARNED AND OBSERVED

Dilit International House, Roma
Istituto Venezia, Venezia
Scuola Leonardo Da Vinci, Firenze
Accademia Della Crusca, Firenze

COMMUNICATIVE

A teaching approach which places emphasis on communication and interaction between learners, interaction with authentic texts and a keen focus on 'real-life' language use.

INDUCTIVE

A means of grammar instruction by first meeting grammar features used meaningfully in-context, learners make sense of the grammar in their own words by 'noticing' patterns and rules, increasing learner agency and ownership of the language acquisition process.



APPROACHES AND PEDAGOGIES

- Teacher must model spoken language
- Every student has an interlanguage to ‘exploit’
- Students encouraged to speak irrespective of level
- When fielding questions, demand the TL
- Use of classroom aid posters
- Use of cognitive grammar strategies (gesture, images)
- Set the culture



THE IMPORTANCE OF TALKING



THE POWER OF THE SPACE

- Texts must be authentic and purposeful
- Must demonstrate a variety of text types
- Must employ a variety of writing styles
- Don't hold back with younger levels
- Use snippets of texts
- Modify/alter texts
- Multi-modal texts
- Image and illustration
- Consider the context



AUTHENTIC TEXTS

- Input provided by the teacher must be repeated
- There is no 'set' number of repeats
- Consider repeating particular 'parts'
- Allow for moments of reflection
- No dictionary/language support
- No pens or writing
- Development of understanding and cognitive processing skills



REPETITION OF INPUT

- Position of students is crucial
- Pair and share a powerful learning tool
- Students must justify their choices
- Students negotiate their linguistic knowledge
- Strong cognitive process
- Reflect on their own learning
- Empowers students
- Powerful differentiated learning tool



WORKING IN GROUPS

- Find a correction mode that suits you
- Corrections provided at the close of activity as a group
- Allowing students to self-correct
- Power of student partnerships (pairs)
- Offer thematic corrections
- What's the negative impact of over-correction?
- Self-efficacy VS learning outcomes



CORRECTIONS

DILIT INTERNATIONAL HOUSE, ROMA



ACTIVITIES AND TASKS

ACTIVITY 1: DESCRIBE THE IMAGE



ACTIVITY 2: FROM IMAGE, TO TEXT, TO GRAMMAR



ACTIVITY 3: INPUT TO TEXT



ACTIVITY 4: INPUT TO PERFORMANCE



ACTIVITY 5: GUESS WHO?

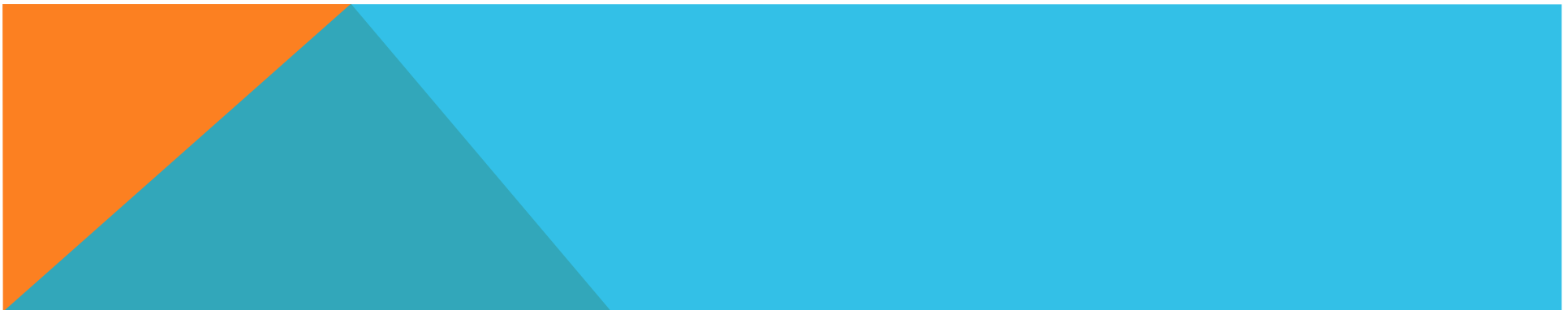
- Are you female or male?
- Are you dead or living?
- How old are you?
- What's your job?
- Are you famous?
- Are you married?
- What made you famous?





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