

Taboos and Issues

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The authors

Richard MacAndrew has taught in Poland, Sweden, Malaysia and the UK. He is now a full-time writer of ILT materials, but goes back into the classroom whenever possible. He has previously written English (Oxford) for ILT (1992) and has also had work published in OUP, CUP and Macmillan Heinemann. He would like to thank Rory Kelly for his invaluable input and encouragement during the development of this book, and Maria Menden for her moral support and ideas on method advice.

Ron Martinez, a native of San Francisco, is an EFL teacher and teacher trainer with extensive classroom experience in the United States, Spain and Brazil. He is currently working as a materials developer for OUP, CUP schools in San Paulo, Brazil. He is the author of 'Conversation Lessons for ILT'.

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Disclaimer

Much of the material in this book is deliberately controversial. The publishers and the authors would like to make it clear that any views expressed are solely to provoke classroom discussion and do not reflect their own personal views or attitudes. Teachers are encouraged to refer to the Introduction and use the text as a guide to guidance on handling this material.

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Introduction

Introduction

Teachers often complain that teaching materials are bland and devoid of the very topics we discuss in our daily lives. The title of this book suggests that the material covers controversial and difficult issues which students may be reluctant to discuss. Many of the issues are indeed controversial but the material is in no way intended to shock. In fact, the contents closely resemble those we find in our newspapers every day.

There are good reasons why general classroom materials avoid topics which may lead to controversy or division in the classroom. Most teachers may be hesitant to use such materials. However, many more experienced teachers recognise the educational value of materials which move clearly within the real world.

This book presents just such stimulating and relevant topics. These broad categories are covered:

1. topics such as smoking, talking about death and prostitution
2. serious issues such as racism and genetic engineering
3. personal matters such as appearance, hygiene and nudity

The material is not intended to form the basis of a course but a resource from which teachers can, with their students, select topics which interest them. The material should only be used with classes you know well and where the students are sensitive enough to respect and treat both you and their fellow students. Even then, you must use the material sensitively. Individual students or members of their family or close friends may have individual, personal, even painful, experience of many of the topics. In some cases, you may want to consult with an individual student before using a particular topic in class. It is essential that teachers remain alert for difficulties. If a particular issue becomes too sensitive, the teacher must be willing to abandon the topic and be prepared to move on to something completely different.

How is unit 10 organised

Most units follow this pattern:

left hand page: introductory discussion and one or more short texts
right hand page: language work and further discussion

Methodology

It is expected that this material will be used by experienced teachers. The teachers' notes, therefore, have been kept to a minimum and comprise only about notes, the answers, and occasional extra ideas.

Working in mixed the sensitive nature of many of the topics, we suggest it will usually be best to start by asking students to think silently about some of the questions before they are asked to say anything at all. They then work in pairs and small groups before the topic is opened up to the whole class.

In a similar way, with the reading texts, students often work in pairs, with each reading a different short text, which they then report to their partner, before the material is dealt with in the whole class.

During individual or pair work, teacher action is to observe. This may well be to help out with language or other matters, but you can also judge whether and how the topic can be opened up to a wider class discussion.

It goes without saying that, as the teacher, you should remain neutral throughout any discussion, seeking only to encourage students to express their views.

Students will often have strongly-held views, and possibly profound personal experience which they are willing to share with the class. Indeed, trying to engage students in this way is perhaps the prime purpose of the materials. While encouraging and helping them to express their views and experiences, you must, however, never lose sight of the fact that it is a language lesson and they must be in one way encouraged into discussing or revealing things about themselves with which they are in any way unhappy. A student who wishes to remain silent must have their right to do so respected.

Using the Internet

Because the topics are controversial and regularly in the news, it will almost always be easy to find related material by a quick search of the internet. Carefully trying to find or think key words into a search engine will be sufficient to give you contemporary examples relevant to the topic.

Richard MacAndrew
Ron Martinez

Taboos And Issues

DJ Losen



Taboos And Issues:

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