



Stowarzyszenie Nauczycieli  
Języka Angielskiego w Polsce

Reaching  
the  
Peaks

Bielsko-Biała

15th-17th September



## Debate #2

17th September, Sunday 12.40pm

Room 120

# Book or no book?

**Hugh Dellar**

(advocate for coursebooks)

**Joanna Łucka & Daria Domagała**

(advocates for authentic materials)

**Monika Bigaj-Kisała**

(advocate for RPG and alternative materials)

moderated by Roman Ociepa



## Coursebooks

### Hugh Dellar

**Hugh Dellar** is a teacher and teacher trainer with over twenty years' experience in the field. He is also the co-founder of **Lexical Lab** ([www.lexicallab.com](http://www.lexicallab.com)) and co-author of two five-level General English series, **Outcomes** and **Innovations** (now in its second edition), both published by National Geographic Learning. His first methodology book, *Teaching Lexically*, came out via Delta Publishing in 2016. He has recently been working on a Nat Geo high-school series called **Perspectives** and running his first series of teacher- and language development courses as part of a London-based summer school.

His email is [hugh@lexicallab.com](mailto:hugh@lexicallab.com)

### Hugh's statement on Coursebooks

Coursebooks offer teachers stability, security and a sensible framework around which to base the core of their teaching. I also believe that having solid foundations upon which to base your teaching allows you the freedom to tailor your input more closely to students' realities. It leaves you with more time and space free to focus on student output, and to think about how best to turn it into fresh input.

The idea that only individual teachers can somehow divine their students' particular needs is a delightful, but ultimately unrealistic, one as what most students need is fairly general: repeated exposure to as many of the most frequent words in the language as can be managed in the time available; greater understanding of how these words work with other words and with grammar; advice on how best to shoulder the burden of having to learn this much language; the chance to read and listen to appropriately graded texts across a wide range of social, academic and work-related topics; space to discuss their own responses to these texts – and to tell stories / anecdotes using the lexis studied – in class . . . and then to have the teacher help them say these things better; heightened awareness (via repeated work on this) of how language sounds when spoken: the linking, the elision, the assimilation, the weak forms, and so on . . . and the chance to hear a broad range of accents, both native and non-native . . . and so on.

Being able to cover all of this – and more – in a time-efficient way is a huge ask, and providing thorough and principled coverage of these many areas is one of the ways coursebooks can aid and assist both teachers and learners.

While it is obviously possible (albeit very time-consuming) for teachers to craft their own lessons around so-called authentic materials, the fact remains that such materials are not actually authentically designed for language learners. Coursebooks are far more authentic for the classroom! There's also the issue of language level, recycling and the fact that the destination is not the road to factor in!

Finally, I also believe that more reactive pedagogies, such as Dogme, place an unrealistically high demand on the teacher, and can often inadvertently end up being rather more teacher centred than lessons that use a coursebook as a base.

Of course, none of this is to say that coursebooks are perfect. They are merely well-crafted tools designed to be used by expertly craftspeople – you, the teachers!

### **Bibliography and Internet sources**

Griffith, A. and Burns, M. *Outstanding Teaching: Teaching Backwards*. Crow House Publishing. 2014.

Hutchinson, T. and Torres, E. The textbook as agent of change. *ELT Journal*, Volume 48, Issue 4, 1 October 1994, Pages 315–328.

Tomlinson. B. *Developing Materials for Language Teaching*. Bloomsbury Academic. 2013.

### **Web sources**

<http://www.lexicallab.com/2017/04/complicating-the-coursebook-debate-part-2-cant-we-just-be-friends/>

<http://www.lexicallab.com/2017/05/complicating-the-coursebook-debate-part-3-coursebook-use/>

## Role-playing games and alternative materials

### Monika Bigaj-Kisala

**Monika Bigaj-Kisala** completed her BA in literature at the University of Rzeszów and MA in linguistics at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. She has been an EFL teacher for 13 years. Having taught in schools in Poland, Ireland and England, for the last three years she has been working with Empik School Rzeszów as a teacher and as a Director of Studies. A huge part of her life is led online, where she writes her blog ([thatisevil.wordpress.com](http://thatisevil.wordpress.com)) and constantly searches for alternative materials which originally are not designed for teaching purposes, but she implements them into her curriculum. She enjoys enriching traditional courses with multimedia, online projects and games. She tries to share her enthusiasm with fellow teachers, especially when it comes to board games and Role Playing Games which are her favourite hobby. She carries out workshops for teachers bored with regular coursebooks and ready for a change. She deeply believes there is a special place in hell for those teachers who bring Raymond Murphy's copies to each class.

Her email is [monikakisala@gmail.com](mailto:monikakisala@gmail.com)

### Monika's statement on Role-playing Games and Alternative Materials

I'm that kid who learnt English playing computer games and watching Cartoon Network before it was dubbed. Then came Role Playing Games with rulebooks written in English. Technology and alternative sources have always had a special place in my heart and when I became a teacher (which was unavoidable, as the teaching streak is strong in my family) it was obvious technology would play a huge part in my way of teaching.

I started pretty much like everyone else, with games, MOOCs, Skype, and later on Facebook – using the Internet to learn how to teach, as the methodology of teaching English changes too rapidly to rely on books. Years ago I started using TED, YouTube, Slideshare and various Google tools in the classroom, and I realised it was the latter that made my students more enthusiastic – apparently watching Times Square on EarthCam while doing grammar drills made classes surprisingly enjoyable.

Then I discovered High Quality Blended Learning – it was a course by Brian Greenberg, Rob Schwartz and Michael Horn, and it changed my way of looking at educational process. Ever since. I've been trying to implement the four principles of HQBL into my curriculum. The easiest part was switching to online. Then came **mastery-base**, focusing on students' achievement rather than time, connected with encouraging students to set themselves **high expectations** ('I can do more than people say I can') and claim **ownership** over their educational process. The last part is the most difficult one – **personalisation**, and this aspect is something I've been working on the hardest.

Diana Laufenberg explains the common misconception is regarding personalisation as a notion used to describe students' own pace when moving through a prescribed set of activities. As many educators, I believe there is far more to that – personalisation gives students possibility to follow their own line of inquiry, to connect, analyse and synthesise.

Larissa Pahomov focuses on the vital aspect of shifting educational emphasis from content to skills. In her book *Authentic Learning in the Digital Age* she states that 'the research,

problem-solving, and content-creation skills that students are developing on their own time can reap big rewards in the classroom, provided that time and space are allotted for such activities.'

Working in a private language school gives me the benefit of choosing my own time and space. Working with teenagers and young adults allows me to experiment with students ready to embrace changes and always willing to try something new. The only thing I lacked was content – so I decided to design it myself.

My blog is focused on so-called alternative sources of education – finding ideas that weren't designed as teaching tools and yet implementing them into classroom environment. Even if I cannot escape the frames of educational system, I can still support students' inherent ability to question, look for answers, learn – and on top of that have a lot of fun.

### **Bibliography and Internet sources**

Diana Laufenberg (2012) "What School Leaders Need to Know About Digital Technologies and Social Media", San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Larissa Pahomov (2014) "Authentic Learning in the Digital Age", Alexandria, Virginia: ASCD

Graham Stanley (2013) "Language Learning with Technology", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

If you are interested in the idea of teaching focusing on skills and not on content and embracing failure as key part of educational process, you may watch the short TED speech by Diana Laufenberg "How to Learn from Mistakes" at: [https://www.ted.com/talks/diana\\_laufenberg\\_3\\_ways\\_to\\_teach?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/diana_laufenberg_3_ways_to_teach?language=en)

For a great beginning with High Quality Blended Learning you may visit coursera and the course "Blended Learning: Personalizing Education for Students" at <https://www.coursera.org/learn/blended-learning/home/info>

## **Authentic materials**

### **Daria Domagała & Joanna Łucka**

**Daria Domagała** has taught English and German to teen, adult and senior learners. She is an enthusiast of lessons based on authentic materials. Together with Joanna Łucka, she manages the website [www.authentic-teaching.com](http://www.authentic-teaching.com). She is passionate about online teaching and learning. Cooperating with Fluentbe as an academic manager, she is responsible for teacher training and development of online courses.

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**Joanna Łucka** is an English and German teacher with several years of experience. Working as an academic manager for the school Centrum Egzaminacyjne Goethe-Institut in Szczecin, she provides teacher training and explores new methods as well as teaching trends. She is an advocate of new technologies and authentic materials in the classroom as well as co-founder of the website [authentic-teaching.com](http://authentic-teaching.com) which she manages together with Daria Domagała.

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### **Daria's & Joanna's statement on Authentic Materials**

There can be no learning without feelings and emotions. Language coursebooks designed to be used worldwide convey a universal message and avoid any kind of controversy. As a result, they leave students indifferent and demotivated struggling to bond emotionally with the stories and texts in their books. Lessons based on authentic materials deal with real people, real stories and thus with genuine emotions. They do not have to be politically correct, they show real idols and role models who appeal to learners. Contrary to timeless course books, they are up-to-date, fresh and often controversial. There is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all solution in language learning as every student or every group is unique. Authentic materials allow us to deal with topics which matter to our learners. Teachers working with authentic materials can thus personalise the teaching process and use tailor-made content which fosters the learning progress.

Moreover, language is primarily meant for communication – not for the classroom. The language which students are exposed to in real-life situations is not adapted to their current level as in the course books. Learning with authentic materials helps students get used to not understanding every bit of the conversation. It helps them develop compensation techniques and underscores the significance of the context. What is more, authentic materials contain various accents and imperfect or non-native pronunciation, thus reflecting real life. We have to bear in mind that most students are exposed to non-native global English used as a lingua franca.

We shall not forget about the teacher who plays as important a role as the student in the classroom. Teaching with repetitive content from a course book may trigger a feeling of monotony or even frustration. Introducing engaging topics from authentic materials helps teachers stay motivated and keeps their brains going when learning about new phenomena and acquiring new vocabulary or new structures.

Yet, designing your own resources based on authentic materials can be time-consuming at the beginning. Skills required to select material and design lessons have to be developed

over time. The Internet abounds with ready-to-use high-quality resources developed by fellow teachers. Learning and teaching with authentic materials - though challenging - is motivating and rewarding for both students and teachers.

### **Bibliography and Internet sources**

David Heitler (2005) Teaching with authentic materials [http://www.pearsonlongman.com/intelligent\\_business/images/teachers\\_resource/Pdf4.pdf](http://www.pearsonlongman.com/intelligent_business/images/teachers_resource/Pdf4.pdf)

Charlene Polio (2014) "Using authentic materials in the beginning language classroom" <http://clear.msu.edu/files/1314/0078/8342/2014-Spring.pdf>

Rashid Hamed Al Azri and Majid Hilal Al-Rashdi. The effect of using authentic materials in teaching. *International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research*, Volume 3, Issue 10, October 2014, Pages 249-254. <http://www.ijstr.org/final-print/oct2014/The-Effect-Of-Using-Authentic-Materials-In-Teaching.pdf>

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/using-authentic-materials>

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