

Using Primary Sources: A Strategy to Promote the Teaching of Civilization to Algerian Students of English

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Abstract

Bound by a shared belief, teaching experience sustains that Algerian university teachers of civilization (American or British) are at their wits' end trying to apply university teaching approaches as “magic” formulas hoping to remedy the problem of how to get their students involved in the aforementioned discipline that has earned a bad name for itself. The discipline in question is regarded by students as boring, monotonous and concerned only with rote memory. Students of English feel that they are forced to mug up facts that have to be regurgitated at the time of the exams or tests. In this regard, what method should teachers adopt to help students enjoy, imbibe, and digest the lectures contents? This paper discussed the feasibility of integrating primary sources in the teaching of civilization, a strategy that most of us rarely, if not never, apply despite the online availability of various digitized primary sources formats. The paper exposed and explained the advantages of modeling and experimenting with this strategy that eventually helps in the maturation of students as future researchers and the enhancement of their critical thinking skills. The hypothesis was highlighted by a case study that proved the efficacy of using primary sources in the teaching of civilization. The outcome showed how learners become highly motivated by engaging themselves progressively and hence shifting from passive and listless dependents to active and curious autonomous learners of English .

Keywords: autonomous learners, civilization teaching, critical thinking skills, primary sources, university teaching approaches