

decentralised teaching

paul walsh decentralisedteachingandlearning.com

pwalsh1974@gmail.com

what's the best lesson you've ever done?
take 30 seconds to think about this

my best lessons have been...



games/ team building activities



making beer

background:

in January 2013 I started working at a berlin startup.
what is a startup?

A startup is a company working to solve a problem where the solution is not obvious and success is not guaranteed

Neil Blumenthal
(co-founder of Warby Parker)





Angela Merkel visited Wooga
in 2013 (social gaming)



they make 'Jelly Splash' - where
you connect groups of coloured
blobs to make them explode.



Angela Merkel visited Wooga
in 2013 (social gaming)



they make 'Jelly Splash' - where
you connect groups of coloured
blobs to make them explode.

"People pay money
for that?"

how is working at a startup different from a conventional company?



f - flat hierarchy

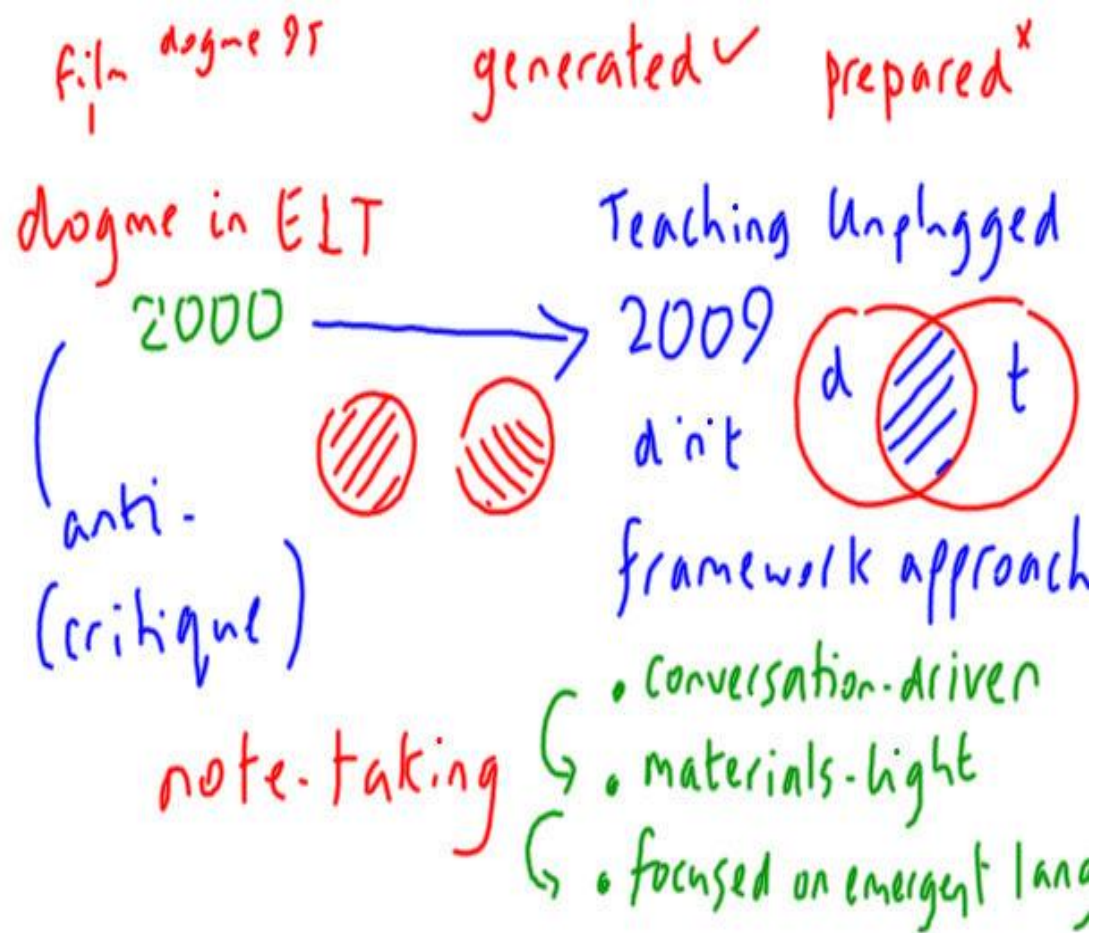
i - iterative working

d - decentralised teams

e - electronic communication

l - learner needs

alternative teaching approaches didn't help me
with this new working environment - I needed a
new approach!

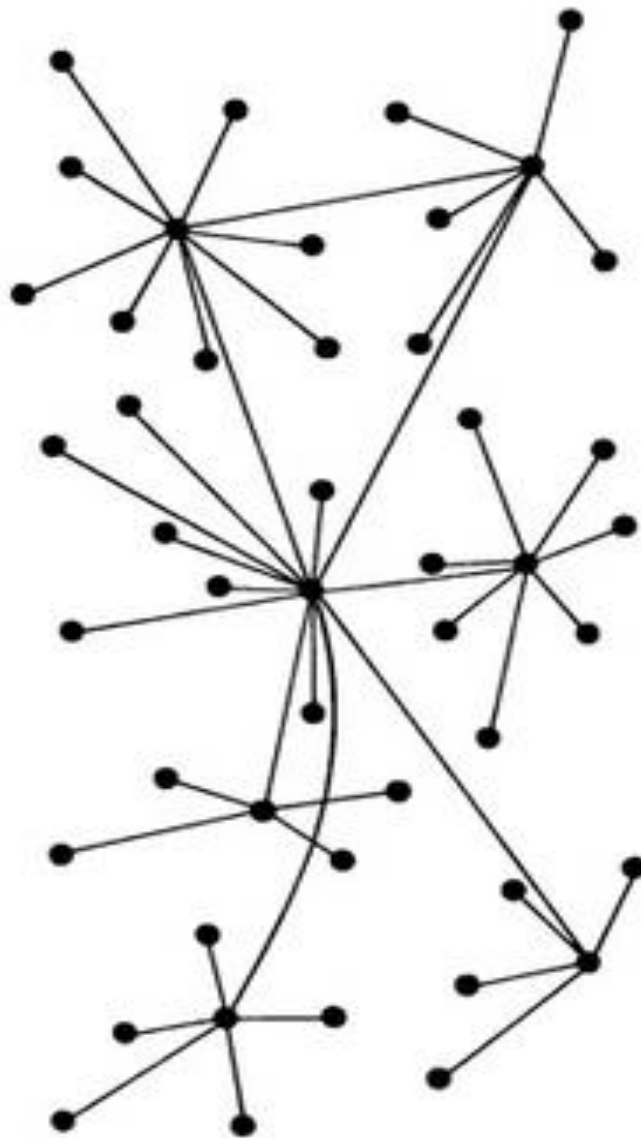


"The aim is to expose students to a target discourse community, and help them become members of that community."

Evan Frendo, 'Business English, ESP, and Dogme' (2010)

business english:
conversation driven?
materials light? emergent
language?

decentralisation
what is it?



DECENTRALIZED
(B)

decentralisation is a
dispersal of resources



therefore it is also a
dispersal of power
(control over resources)





centralisation is a
concentration of resources

or power





versus



in decentralised systems the end user is important
end users help to maintain, propagate and improve
decentralised systems

at their best decentralised systems are:
more responsive to local needs
more efficient
more resilient

but what's the driving principle
behind decentralisation?

but what's the driving principle
behind decentralisation?

subsidiarity - problems should be
solved at the lowest capable
level

an example from the classroom: teachers can solve problems in the classroom that we couldn't 10 years ago e.g. "What's the most common verb after 'like'?" (british english)

(?) Collocations - words that live together

Use LIKE after: REALLY, QUITE
before: BEST, VERY, MUCH, AT ALL

2.B.1
I really like spring, but I don't
like it at all.
↓
I don't like winter at all.

Like - preposition

After feel, taste, sound,
look, smell

2.B.1 This smells like ...

Verb + prep

What does your friend look like?

Collocations - words that
live/go together

Use Like after: REALLY, QUITE
before: BEST, VERY MUCH,
AT ALL

EX: I really like spring, but I
don't like winter, at all.

I like football but I like tennis best.

Like - preposition
After, FEEL, TASTE, SOUND, LOOK & SMELL

I like football

Like

enjoy, find nice
like + plural noun
I like parties

Preposition: What is Peter like?

on, of, over
out

- I like swimming. (general)
- I like to go for a swim every day.

Verb + prep

What does your friend look like?

Collocations: words that live together

Use like after: really and quite
before: best, very much, at all

I really like spring, but I don't like
winter at all.

Use Like after: Really, quite (a little)

before: best, very, much, at all

Example: I really like spring, but I don't like
winter at all.

I quite like spring

I like football but I like tennis best.

(the best.)

(?) Collocations - words that live together

Use LIKE after: REALLY, QUITE
before: BEST, VERY, MUCH, AT ALL

2.B.:
I really like spring, but I don't
like winter at all.
↓
winter is what I don't like

Like = preposition

After feel, taste, sound,
look, smell

2.B.: This smells like

Verb + prep

What does your friend look like?

Collocations - words that
live/go together

Use Like after: REALLY, QUITE
before: BEST, VERY MUCH,
AT ALL

EX: I really like spring, but I
don't like winter, at all.

I like football but I like volleyball
best

Like - preposition
After, FEEL, TASTE, SOUND, LOOK & SMELL

I like football

Like

enjoy, find nice
like + plural noun
I like parties

Preposition: What is Peter like?

on, of, over
out

- I like swimming. (general)
- I like to go for a swim every day
- Swimming in the morning

Verb + prep

What does your friend look like?

Collocations: words that live together

Use like after: really and quite
before: best, very much, at all

I really like spring, but I don't like
winter at all.

Use Like after: Really, quite (ein wenig)
before: best, very, much, at all

Example: I really like spring, but I don't like
winter at all.
I quite like spring

I like football but I like tennis best.

(the best.)

(?)

Collocations - words that live together

Use LIKE after: REALLY, QUITE
before: BEST, VERY, MUCH, AT ALL

2.B.:

I really like spring, but I don't
like it at all.

↓
I really like spring, but I don't like
winter at all.

Like = preposition

After: feel, taste, sound,
look, smell

2.B.: This smells like ...

Verb + prep

What does your friend look like?

Collocations - words that
live/go together

Use Like after: REALLY, QUITE
before: BEST, VERY MUCH,
AT ALL

EX: I really like spring, but I
don't like winter, at all.

I like football but I like tennis
best.

Like - preposition

After: FEEL, TASTE, SOUND, LOOK & SMELL

go

Use Like after: Really, quite (a little)

before: best, very, much, at all

Example: I really like spring, but I don't like
winter at all.

I quite like spring

I like football but I like tennis best.

(the best.)

I like football

Like

enjoy, find nice
like + plural noun
I like parties

Preposition: What is Peter like?

on, of, over
out

- I like swimming. (general)
- I like to go for a (every day) routine
swimming in the morning

Verb + prep

What does your friend look like?

Collocations: words that live together

Use like after: really and quite
" " before: best, very much, at all

I really like spring, but I don't like
winter at all.

(?) Collocations - words that live together

Use LIKE after: REALLY, QUITE
before: BEST, VERY, MUCH, AT ALL

2.B.:
I really like spring, but I don't
like it at all.
↓
winter when I don't like

Like = preposition

After: feel, taste, sound,
look, smell

2.B.: This smells like

Use Like after: Really, quite (ein wenig)
before: best, very, much, at all

Beispiel: I really like spring, but I don't like
winter at all.
I quite like spring

I like football but I like tennis best.

(the best.)

Verb + prep

What does your friend look like?

Collocations - Words that
live/go together

Use Like after: REALLY, QUITE
before: BEST, VERY MUCH,
AT ALL

EX: I really like spring, but I
don't like winter, at all.

I like football but I like volleyball
best.

Like - preposition

After: FEEL, TASTE, SOUND, LOOK & SMELL

I like football

Like

enjoy, find nice
like + plural noun
I like parties

Preposition: What is Peter like?

- on, of, over
out
- I like swimming. (general)
 - I like to go for a (every day routine)
swimming in the morning

Verb + prep

What does your friend look like?

Collocations: words that live together

Use like after: really and quite
" " before: best, very much, at all

I really like spring, but I don't like
winter at all.

(?)

Collocations - words
that live together

Use LIKE a/w: REALLY, QUITE
like: BEST, VERY
AT ALL

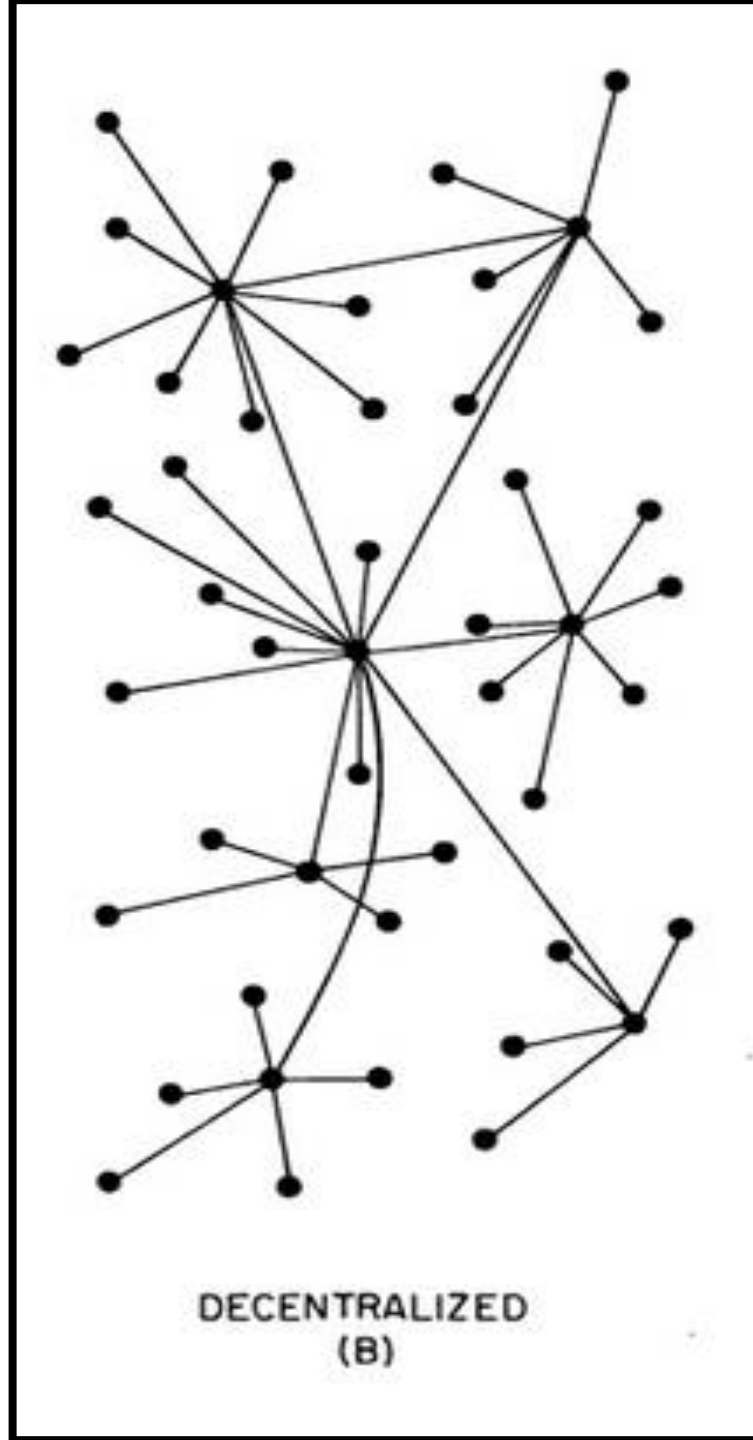
(3)

Collocations - words
that live together

Use LIKE a/w: REALLY, QUITE
like: BEST, VERY
AT ALL

	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTEXT	FREQ	
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	BEING	693	<div></div>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	GOING	215	<div></div>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	DOING	164	<div></div>

how can I use it?



to involve your learners in
the process of learning

results?

raise engagement

improve your teaching

clear a space for 'gold dust'

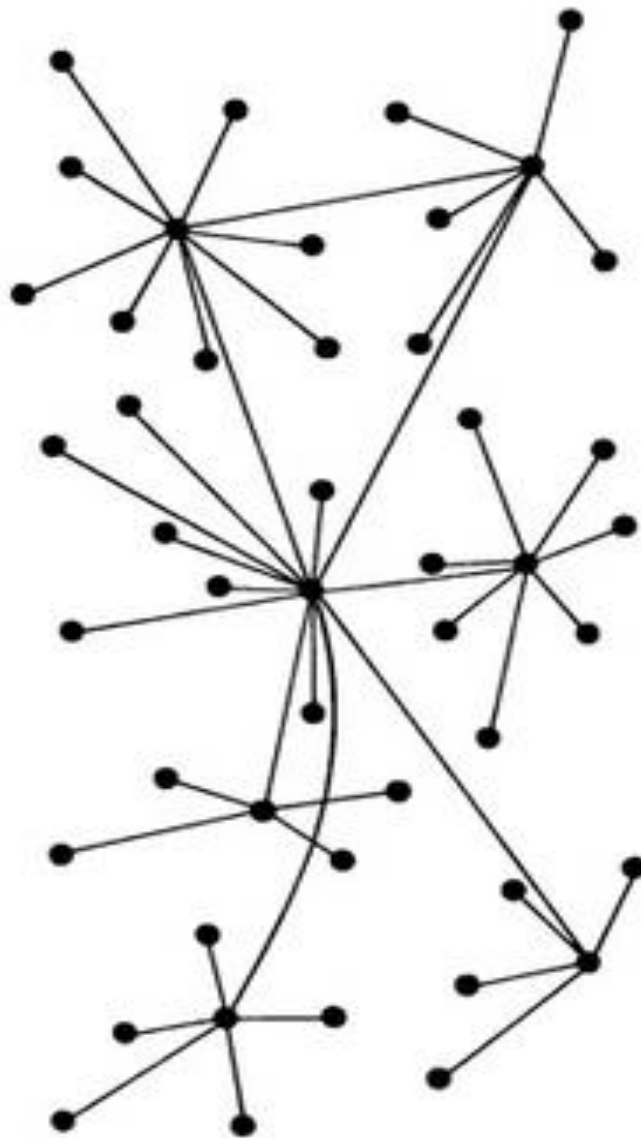
my experiment...

12 weeks

no course book

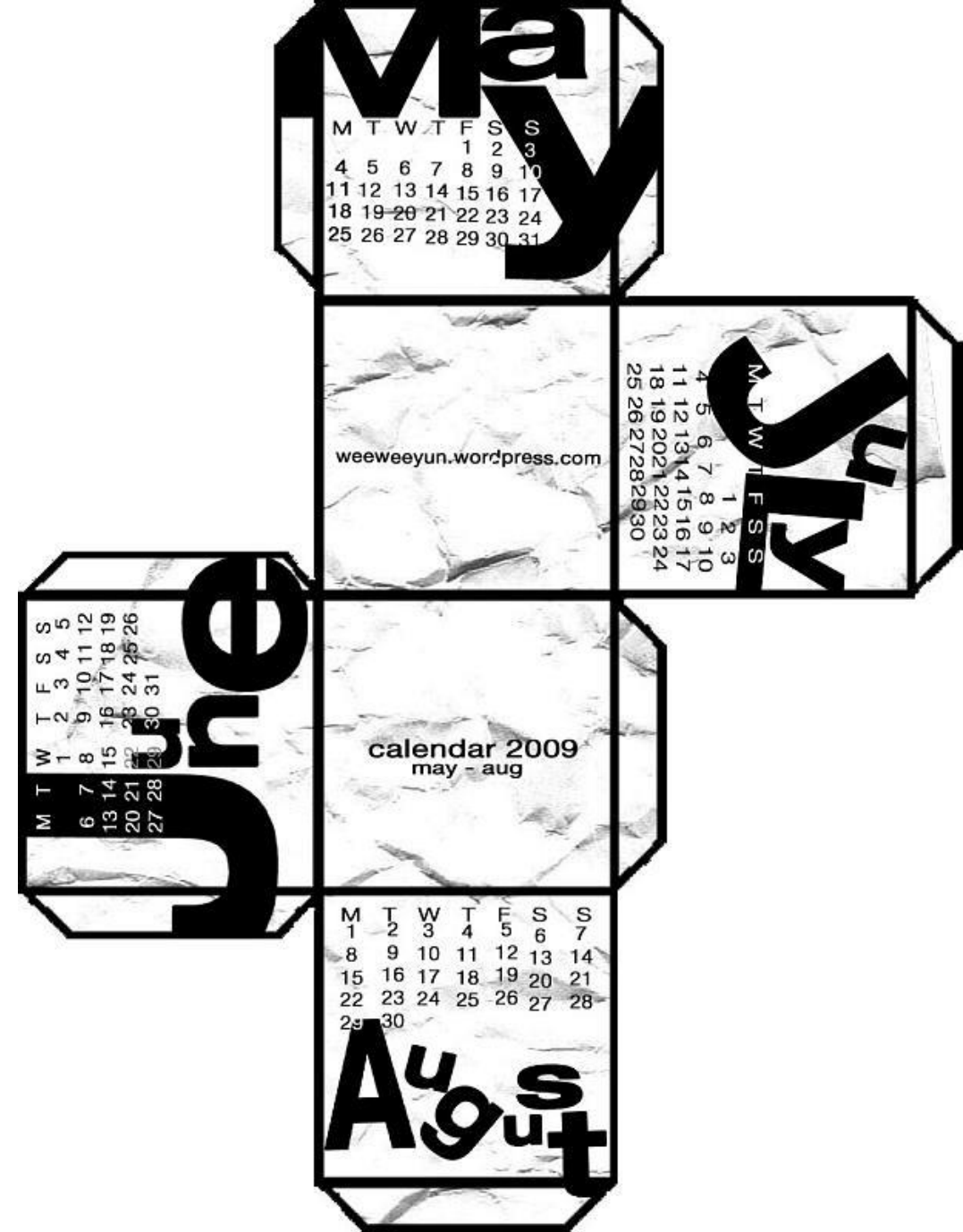
one class in berlin - 2hrs weekly

how do I **do** it?



DECENTRALIZED
(B)

set a priming period

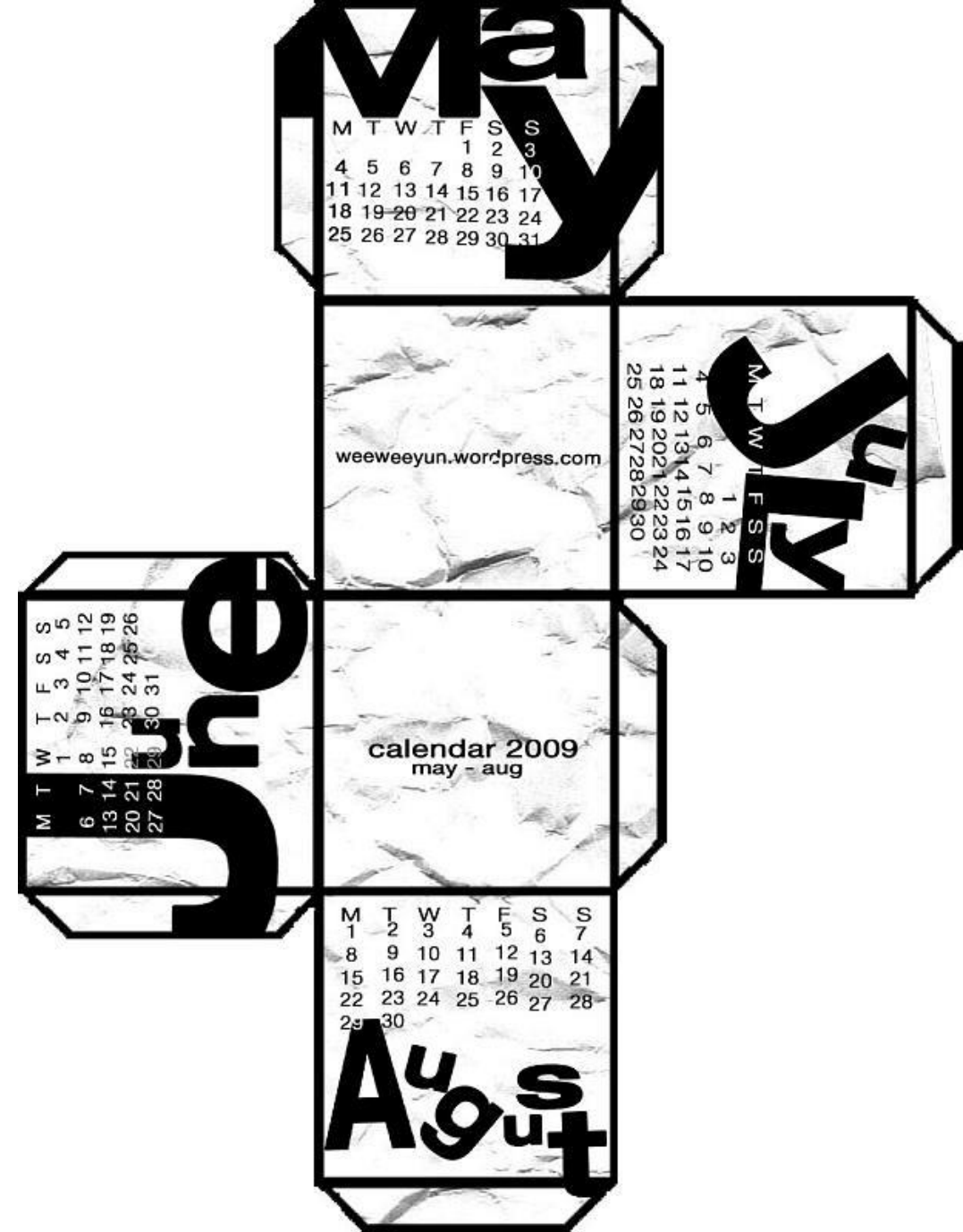


during this period you can:

try out new activities (e.g. TBL)

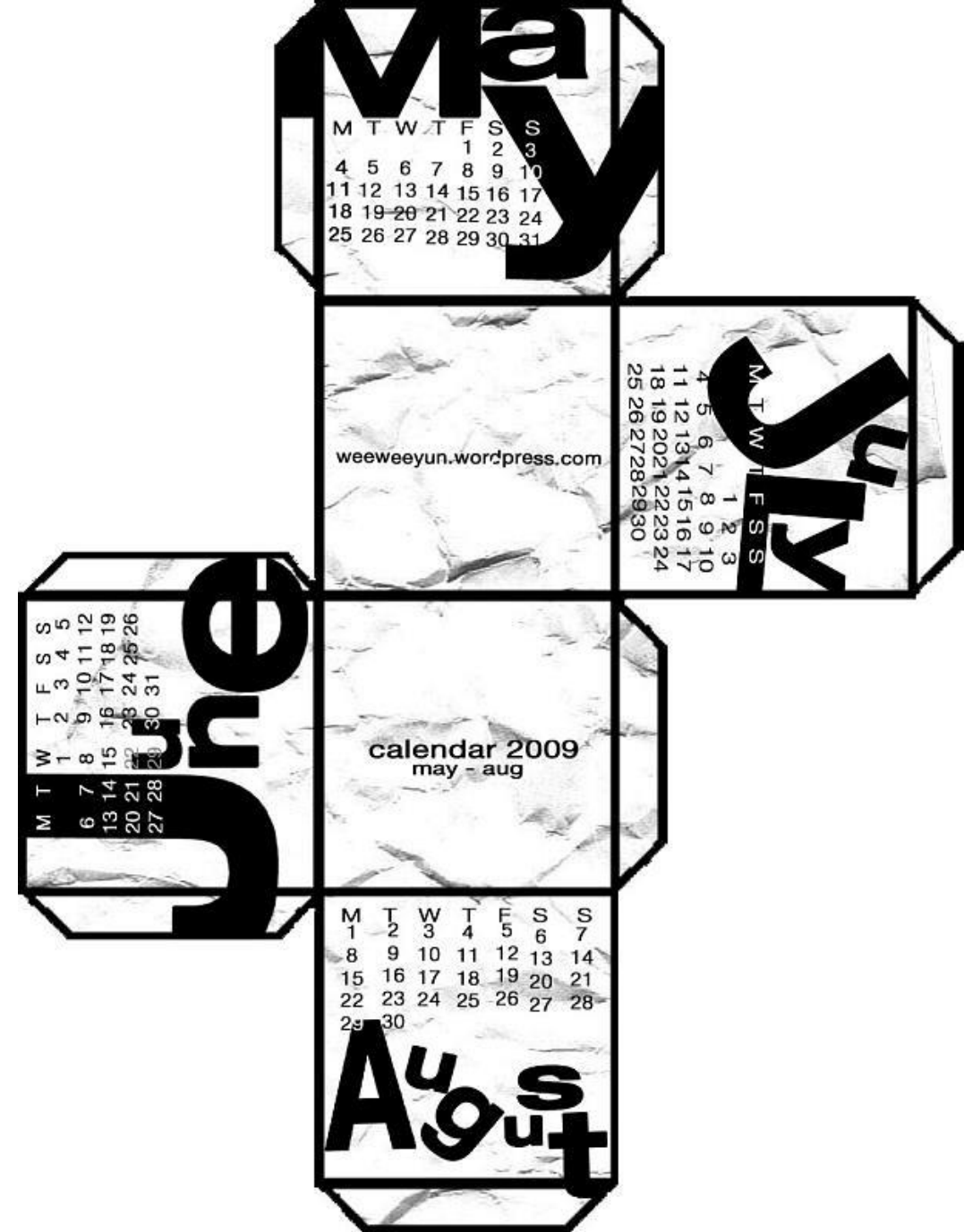
gauge learner reaction

reshape learner expectations



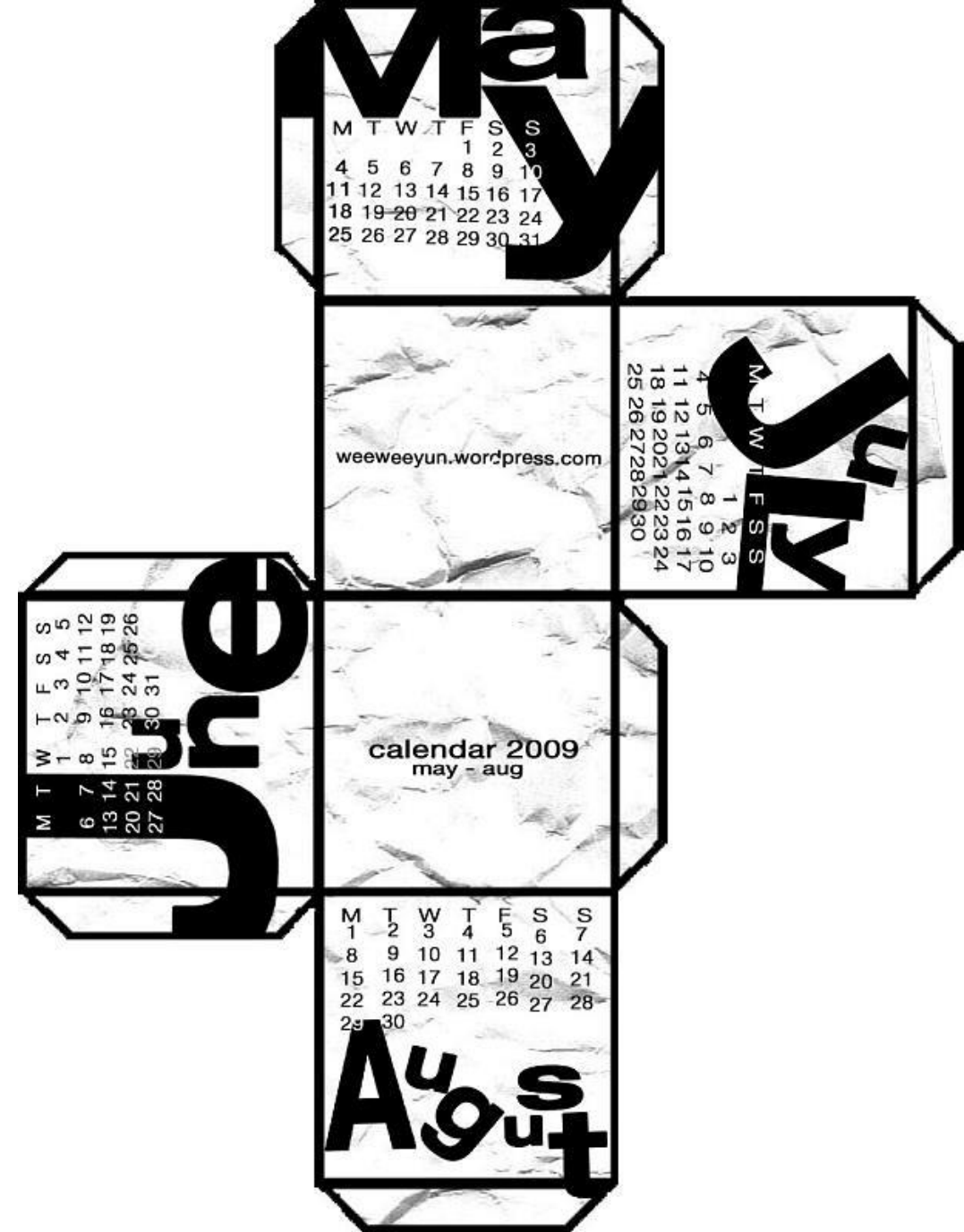
example activity - "lifelines"

- learners draw their lifelines
- learners go round and write questions on other "lifelines"
- learners answer the questions



next is an example of **my** lifeline -
notice the questions that learners
asked

this task is great for **conditionals**,
question forms or as a
getting-to-know-you activity

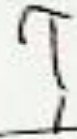


Bulgaria



2007

Macedonia (FY)



2008

Bosnia



2009

Saudi Arabia



2010

Move to Germany



2011

Why the 2 times to Bosnia? ✓

Why Art??? ✓

How are your piano skills? ✓

Where did you graduate? ✓

Why did you come to Germany?

What is your company you when

Why 2 times to Bosnia? ✓

4 Art??? ✓

How are your piano skills? ✓

Where did you graduate? ✓

Why did you come to Germany?

set a **start** date



- this clarifies your thinking
- forces you to plan, organise and arrange activities
- gives you time to ask your co-workers, DOS, for support and get people **on board** (e.g. HR department)

the first week is crucial. here you brainstorm,
discuss and negotiate your syllabus

use cards & marker pens to brainstorm. then
organise the syllabus into
weeks (write numbers on
the cards)

then type up the syllabus
in google docs



this idea is not new but
consists of Nunan's "Learner
Centred Curriculum"(1988)
+priming



do it.



turn-taking

conditionals in corpora



appraisals

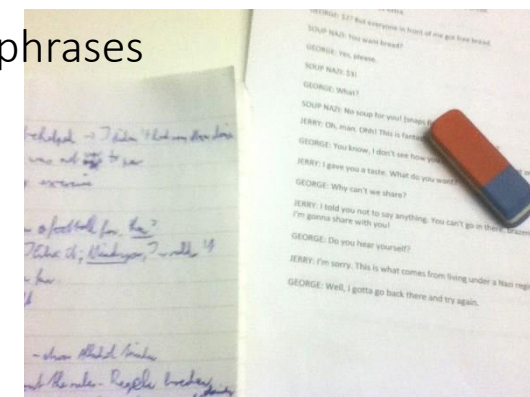


refugees



spoken grammar

useful phrases



example lesson: "35 and single"

starting question:

what's the best age to get married?



write **if-sentences** from the following point of view:

- the film-maker (paula)
- paula's parents
- paula's former boyfriends
- your own point of view

write if-sentences

get the learners to categorise their sentences into the following groups of conditionals.

these groups are based on real corpus data (not coursebook writers' intuitions)

real non-past	if you are going to get married, you better be quick (parents)
real past	if you wanted a career back then, you had to start working straight after university (film-maker)
unreal non-past	if you could talk to your former boyfriends - what would you say? (learner question)
unreal past	if we had got married, she would have had a family by now (ex-boyfriend)

which group of conditionals is the most common according to real usage (corpus data)?

real non-past	if you are going to get married, you better be quick (parents)
real past	if you wanted a career back then, you had to start working straight after university (film-maker)
unreal non-past	if you could talk to your former boyfriends - what would you say? (learner question)
unreal past	if we had got married, she would have had a family by now (ex-boyfriend)

this group comprises what we usually call zero and 1st conditional but with **LOTS** of variations (e.g. result clause with **going to**, **modals**, **present continuous**)

blog about it.



3 things to help you start Decentralised Teaching

In this post I give a general overview of the last 12 weeks, share some of the learner's comments and encourage you to decentralise your teaching too! Background I started ...
[Continue reading →](#)

FEATURED · 1 COMMENT



Week 11 – Turn-taking and the Soup Nazi

In this post we continue with Week 11 of our Decentralised syllabus, chosen by learners. In this lesson I use my favourite episode of Seinfeld to provide a focus to ...
[Continue reading →](#)

FEATURED



Week 10 – Appraisals and discourse markers

In this post I'm going to talk about a lesson I did on Appraisals, chosen by the learners as part of Week 10 of a Decentralised syllabus. For busy teachers ...
[Continue reading →](#)

FEATURED



Week 9 – IF sentences...and other animals

Introduction This post is about IF sentences or Conditionals. This is also Week 10 of the syllabus that was chosen by the learners. In this post I will share a ...
[Continue reading →](#)

FEATURED · 8 COMMENTS



Week 8 – Effective ways of Reporting Speech



Week 7 – Job interview Simulation

get feedback



get feedback



"huge interactivity
and some interesting
experiments for a
change"

get feedback



"always had the chance
to ask questions; good
atmosphere"

get feedback



"I always enjoy every
lesson"

evaluate.
do it again.

Week	Activity	Comments
0	Evaluation Syllabus 1 Plan syllabus 2 Reading on 'Fairpoppy/ startups in Berlin'	homework - prepare brief report
1	Small Talk - Socialising in English 'The Onion' news videos + discussion	
2	Twitter 'The Economist' Introducing Yourself (1) Reported Speech	
3	Teamwork - Negotiating Dealing with conflict Case study (5)	
4	Leadership Depersonalising using the Passive	
5	Managing discussions (2) Performance: Using questions (8)	
6	Appraisals Motivation	
7	Expressing dissatisfaction (7) Taking part in a teleconference (7)	
8	Case study (3) Planning Office Space Showing Understanding (3)	
9	Read (at home) and discuss articles from around the world Spoken grammar - how NS really speak Famous short stories / discussion	
10	Intercultural awareness Grammar - small bits of grammar combined w/ discussion	
11	Practically speaking - Dealing with misunderstandings	
12	Discussion: Interns/ The future of work Evaluation	



tell people
get them to do it too
make a community of decentralised teachers

thanks for listening

decentralised teaching

paul walsh decentralisedteachingandlearning.com

pwalsh1974@gmail.com

Images

Startup picture. Mike on [flickr](#). C.C. License 2.0, some rights reserved.

[Ralf Roletschek](#). [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Austria](#) license. (Angela Merkul)

teemu haila on [flickr](#). CC 2.0 Generic. (wooga)

Fidel Castro - MATS Terminal Washington 1959. In public domain.

Graham Stanley on [flickr](#). CC 2.0 Generic. (dogme)

Tsunami. Gabriel Andrés Trujillo Escobedo on [flickr](#). C.C. license 2.0.

Dandelion seed in flight. Brad Smith. Some Rights reserved. [BugMan50](#) on [Flickr](#)

US Radar Control, Potomac TRACON, Warrenton, Virginia, U.S. Source: <http://www.faa.gov/atpubs/FAC/INDEX.htm> Permission: PD-USGOV-FAA. In the public domain.

Bitcoin. Zach Copley on [flickr](#). CC license 2.0. (bitcoin)

Geralt on [pixabay](#). CC0 1.0 Universal (CC0 1.0) Public Domain Dedication (economy)

Wikipedia [image](#) 2010. Copyright Wikimedia Foundation.

Windows 8 screenshot. Jobin RV, [WikiMedia Commons](#). C.C. license 3.0.

Moscow parade 1990. Author DOD photo. Work in public domain, free of restrictions. [WikiMedia Commons](#).

ELT conference 2008. Original image by [Piotrus](#). Multi-license with GFDL and Creative Commons CC-BY-SA-2.5. From Wikipedia/[WikiCommons](#) (photo modified from original version).

Gold background. [Sisttre Daethe](#). Copyright reserved by author - more work available at [Deviant Art](#).

[Vivian Wong](#) on flickr (calendar). Creative Commons License 2.0 Generic (some rights reserved).

[Christian Mayrhofer](#) on flickr. 'The perfect time to start is always now'. Creative Commons License 2.0 Generic (some rights reserved).

Switch symbol. In public domain Creative Commons CC0 Universal. From [Pixabay](#).

Films

35 and Single by Paula Schargorodsky. New York Times. December 9th, 2013. Available [here](#).

Activities

"Lifelines" adapted from Alex Case's '[Option Trees](#)'.