Module 8: Authentic Materials

Compare and Contrast Graphic Organizers from Write Design
Web site: http://www.writedesignonline.com/organizers/comparecontrast.html

Graphic Organizers
Author: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory
Web site: http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/students/learning/lr1grorg.htm

Graphic Organizers for Content Instruction
Author: Judie Haynes
Web site: http://www.everythingsl.net/inservices/graphic_organizers.php

As part of the debriefing, bring into the discussion the many kinds of resources that can be authentic materials, such as maps, advertisements, labels, graphs and charts, schedules, menus, posters, brochures, songs, speeches, radio programs, video, television, ads, news, and so forth. Bring as many physical examples as you can to the training event.

### Preview Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authentic materials</td>
<td>Materials used in the target culture for actual communicative needs. They should enable the learner to hear, read, and produce language as it is used in the target culture.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authentic tasks</td>
<td>Tasks or activities that are used in the “real” world for actual communication needs. Teachers can have learners do authentic tasks for practice or for real world application.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom library</td>
<td>An area of the classroom where students can find books and resource materials for individual or group study.</td>
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</table>
| Extensive Reading/ Listening | Free, voluntary reading of or listening to material that the learner chooses for pleasure or other personal purposes. For more on this topic, see:  
  - Extensive Reading Pages  
    http://www.extensivereading.net/  
    http://iteslj.org/Articles/Bell-Reading.html |
| Holistic language   | Language treated as a whole, with integration of skills. |
| Realia              | Objects used for teaching aides, such as food, photographs, tools, clothing, tools, items from nature, etc. |
| Target audience     | The people for whom something is created or performed. For example, a tourism brochure targets tourists and uses pictures and language that will appeal and be accessible to them. When students create a project, their target audience is whoever will be reading or using it. |

Now start the video. Listen to the introduction. Complete the guided observation and reflection tasks for each of the video segments. The next part of the manual is for trainees and is available on separate pages for ease of copying.
Module 8, Authentic Materials

Introduction, Expanded Narrative

The textbook is a powerful teaching tool that provides many benefits to teachers. Recently, textbooks have begun to include more authentic materials. Teachers are also using more and more authentic materials to supplement the textbook. Authentic materials are those used in the target culture for actual communicative needs.

Here are some reasons for using authentic materials in the classroom:
- They enable the learner to hear, read, and produce language as it is used in the target culture.
- They reflect real use of language in culturally appropriate contexts.
- They are interesting and motivating.
- They can be chosen according to learner interests or needs, or be chosen by learners themselves for their own purposes.
- Through their use, learners can begin to develop survival language skills, learning to develop a tolerance for what they cannot understand in order to get as much information as they can from what they do understand.

Module Focus

There are different kinds of authentic materials: realia (objects), printed texts (books, newspapers), different kinds of images (photographs, posters), and multimedia materials (audio tapes, video tapes, CDs, DVDs, computer-based programs). For authentic materials to be effective, teachers must learn how to choose them, how to adapt them as needed, and then how to use them for authentic-like activities in the classroom. For example, bringing in a globe to talk about geography, bringing in menus to talk about restaurants and food, bringing in sports equipment to talk about sports.

Some guidelines for choosing authentic materials:
- The materials are appropriate for the learner age group in terms of interest and level of language proficiency.
- The materials contain examples of the point of the lesson, illustrating authentic use of the language points.
- The materials are in a style of English learners are most likely to hear and use. For example, listening texts can include any of the various forms of native speaker English and/or examples of native and non-native English that are likely to be used in the learners’ environment.
- Materials are available locally, on the Internet, or have been collected by the teacher.
- The materials are of good quality, whether print, sound, pictures, or other graphics.
- The materials can be used in the classroom for authentic-like tasks or activities.

Video Segment #1, Realia: Observation Guide
[Read before viewing.]

Look for the following as you view the video. Repeat it as many times as needed.
1. Describe the realia in as much detail as possible.
2. Notice how the teacher is using the realia. List what you think the purpose is for this lesson and for using this type of realia.
3. Notice the age and proficiency level of the students. Look for behaviors that tell you whether or not this activity is a good match for these students.
4. Look for behaviors that tell you whether or not students are enjoying this activity and whether
or not they are learning the words and their meanings.

**Reflection**

[Read and answer after viewing.]

1. How old are the students? What is their English proficiency level? Is the realia appropriate for this level? How did they demonstrate understanding?
2. How do you think the teacher got the dolls? Could the teacher conduct this lesson without the dolls? What are the advantages and challenges of using this type of realia and the realia that the older children brought to class?
3. What are students’ reactions to the dolls? To the show-and-tell items from home? What are some things the teacher might do in subsequent lessons to build on each of these lessons? What are some real-life items you might find in a classroom for teens? For adults?
4. Do you think the realia for each class effectively met the purpose of the lesson? Why or why not? Could the teacher use the realia again? If yes, for what purpose(s)?

**Video Segment #2, Printed Text: Observation Guide**

[Read before viewing.]

1. Listen to the young men’s description of the student project, and then describe it in your own words.
2. List the different materials that, according to the speakers, were collected for this and other projects like it. What student activities went into preparing the project?
3. Who is involved in the creation and the use of the project? Where is it stored?

**Reflection**

[Read and answer after viewing.]

1. How would you describe the students’ level of language proficiency? What language skills are students likely to use in a project such as this one?
2. Compare your information with someone in your group, then share with other groups. What other topics and materials could you use in such a project?
3. Now, think about your own teaching situation. What are some similar projects and topics that your students could try? In your group, make a list of possible projects, topics, target audiences, and sources for materials. Think about goals you and/or your students would set for themselves, and subjects that are most likely to interest them. How will you and your students evaluate their work in the projects?

**Video Segment #3, Images: Observation Guide**

[Read before viewing.]

You will see examples of different kinds of authentic materials in image formats.
1. Describe in as much detail as possible the materials that you see; and,
2. Describe the activity that goes with them.
3. In addition, give the proficiency level and the kinds of language skills that you think are part of each example.

You may find an organizational chart such as the following to be useful for recording your information. Add as many details as you can. The first class example (A) is filled in as an example.
### Approaches to Language Teaching: Extension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>Activity / Topic</th>
<th>Level / Skills</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A)</td>
<td>Wall map</td>
<td>Students planned a trip to Washington, D.C. They put up a map of the trip route. They cut pictures of Washington, D.C. from magazines. Then they made posters showing what they planned to do there.</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Magazines</td>
<td></td>
<td>Integrated skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pictures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Reflection**

[Read and answer after viewing.]

1. Compare your list of materials and activities with a partner. Combine your lists to be sure you have listed all the materials and activities shown. Be sure that the activity list includes the topics of the activities.

2. What were the ages of the students? Do you think that the materials and activities were appropriate to each of the age groups? How could you adapt the materials and activities from the video to other topics in your curriculum? To other age groups?

3. What are some authentic materials that could be brought into your classroom? In small groups or as a whole group, brainstorm materials that you might be able to access for your students. Which ones on your list would be appropriate for your students in terms of their age, language proficiency, and reasons for studying English?

4. Now think of activities that you could do with some of those materials. If some of the materials are not quite appropriate for your students, how could you adapt them or modify activities to make them more appropriate?
Module 8: Authentic Materials

Video Segment #4, Multimedia: Observation Guide
[Read before viewing.]

Various forms of multimedia can be valuable tools in the language learning classroom. In this segment you will see several examples of multimedia use and one activity using video.

1. Make note of the various types of multimedia materials you observe or hear about in this segment.

Reflection

1. Have you used video or other multimedia materials in your own classroom or when you were learning English? If so, which ones were effective? Interesting?

For more ideas on the use of video in the language classroom, see:

EFL / ESL Lessons and Lesson Plans from Internet TESL Journal (go to the Video section)
Web site: http://iteslj.org/Lessons/

Web-based Resources for English Language Teaching & Learning: Video
Author: Leslie Opp-Beckman
Web site: http://oelp.uoregon.edu/teach_video.html

Summary Discussion

1. At the beginning of this module, the narrator said that authentic materials are good tools for language teaching and learning because they:
   • Are interesting.
   • Use real language.
   • Can be chosen for individual interests.
   • Illustrate accurate use of language in the target culture.
   • Help students get as much information as they can from material they don’t quite understand.

Look back at the notes and lists of materials you created while watching this module. Evaluate several of the listed materials according to these five purposes for using authentic materials.

2. The video also included guidelines for choosing authentic materials, including:
   • They are of interest to the age group of your students.
   • They contain examples of the point of the lesson.
   • They are in a style of English learners will hear and use.
   • They are available locally.
   • They are of good quality in terms of picture and/or sound.

Again, refer back to your lists and notes. Choose three materials and evaluate them according to these five guidelines. How many of the guidelines do they meet?

3. After viewing this module, do you think you will try to use more authentic materials in your class? Why or why not? If yes, what are you most likely to try? You can carry forward your answers to the next section, Now You Try It—An Action Plan.
Now You Try It—An Action Plan

Step 1
You can read some of the articles on the topic of authentic materials language (see Module 9 Readings plus the List of Additional Readings and Resources below). Using the video, you have seen a few examples and ideas from other teachers’ classes. Now, think about your own classes. How well do you know your students (or students of an age you are likely to teach)?

- What are some general interests of students that age? Of the girls? Of the boys?
- What are some likely individual interests of students in the group?
- From what sources are they most likely to hear authentic use of English?
- In what situations might they need to use English?

If you don’t know the answers, how will you get them (hint: ask the students!). Discuss your ideas with others.

Step 2
Design a lesson that includes the use of some authentic materials that you can find locally and that you think will fit with your answers in Step 1.

Step 3
Share your plan with others. Explain what activities might be used with your materials. Get ideas and formative feedback.

Step 4
Update your design, as needed. Try it with your class. If you are not teaching, ask the trainer or another experienced teacher for feedback.