



Module 8

Authentic Materials

Approaches to Language Teaching: Extension

Video Length: Approximately 11 Minutes
Notes to the Trainer

For best results, have participants go through the readings for this module prior to viewing the video. As you work through this module, use pairs or groups whenever you think it might be effective. After each group activity, debrief the answers and use them for further discussion of various points. Refer back to the main points when appropriate. It is important that teachers apply the concepts in the module to their own classrooms. The primary goal is for participants to begin thinking positively and creatively about what authentic materials they can find and adapt to their own local teaching situations.

See Appendix A for additional handouts that can be used for general observation and discussion tasks with any of the modules.

Before Viewing

Ask participants to get into small groups and list authentic materials that they have used or had access to as they learned English. The materials can be written; something they have listened to; toys or other tangible objects; or something they have seen or manipulated in the “real” world.

Once participants have created a list, ask the following questions. Elicit multiple answers.

1. Which of the things on your list did you find most interesting? Most enjoyable?
2. Which of the things on your list did you find most useful in helping you learn the language?
3. What was the source of the things on your list? Where did you find them? Use them?

If the lists are likely to be long, participants can use a graphic organizer such as a Venn diagram or concept map and then perhaps post them on the walls for others to read. If short, the trainer can make the results available via the blackboard or overhead projector.

Extension Ideas

Use an old pile of magazine and have participants cut out authentic items and make collages of items that could be used as part of an English language lesson.

Debrief

Have participants compare results. For an overview of graphic organizers that can help with the process in compare-contrast activities, see one or more of the following.



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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/in-services/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

| Terms | Definitions |
|------------------------------|---|
| Authentic materials | 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. |
| Authentic tasks | 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. |
| Classroom library | An area of the classroom where students can find books and resource materials for individual or group study. |
| 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Extensive Reading Pages</i> http://www.extensivereading.net/ • <i>Extensive Reading: Why? And How?</i> by Timothy Bell. 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.

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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

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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.

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| | Materials | Activity / Topic | Level / Skills |
|----|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| A) | Wall map Magazines Pictures | 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. | Intermediate Integrated skills |
| B) | | | |
| C) | | | |
| D) | | | |

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?

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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*.

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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.

Module 8: Authentic Materials

Answer Key to Module 8, Authentic Materials

Here are some suggested directions for answers to the questions for this module. Actual answers may vary depending on local context and the kinds of experience that viewers bring to the task of interpreting and applying video and text concepts.

Module 8, Video Segment #1, Realia

1. The teacher in the kindergarten class is using four large dolls that she made from simple materials at home. Although these dolls are not 100% “authentic” according to our definition, the teacher tries to make them real. She gives the dolls names, tells students they are visitors to the class, has students wave to them, and pairs them with children in the class. The dolls are dressed in real clothing that resembles school uniforms. The dolls could easily be used for other activities, such as having the children describe the dolls’ clothing.

The older children brought realia that was not culture-specific. It could be from the target culture or their own culture. The two realia items in the video were a metal truck and a CD player. These could be used for other activities, such as a follow-up writing activity, either about themselves or describing the realia and what it might be used for.

Advantages for both sets of realia:

- They are inexpensive.
- You can use real items (clothing, toys) from every day life.
- They can be used for many language purposes and activities.
- They provide variety in the classroom.
- They can engage students’ interests.

Challenges:

- They may require changes in curriculum and / or extra planning.
- They can be a distraction if not carefully integrated into lesson.
- You may need alternative forms of assessment for task-oriented activities.

2. The teacher is using the dolls to teach the words and the meaning of the words, “boy” and “girl.” They are useful realia because they provide a focus for the learning and add an element of fun for these very young learners. The activity could be done without the dolls, using the children as examples. However, using the dolls makes the activity more interesting and enjoyable for the students.

The older students have brought their items to class as part of an activity in which they describe themselves and their interests. The realia makes the activity more meaningful and directly related to the students’ own lives. This relationship makes the activity more motivating.

In both cases, vocabulary / reading / writing tasks can be combined with the oral activities we saw in the video.

3. The kindergarten children are 4-6 years old and have little or no knowledge of English, so the purpose of the activity is very simple, to learn two fundamental vocabulary words and concepts. The realia, and especially the way the teacher uses the realia, are appropriate for this task. After much repetition and teacher effort, students do begin to respond correctly to the fundamental vocabulary and to other language that the teacher is using. Note that she uses only English, and the children are able to follow along very well. Many of the children probably understood the vocabulary and its meaning earlier, but because this is the first day of school, , were too shy to respond.

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The older children are from 8-10. They are able to perform at a high beginner level of proficiency, so they can communicate in basic English. This was a “show and tell” type of activity. It appeared that the students were doing the assigned task and understood what they were saying.

4. The younger children smiled and giggled when the teacher introduced the realia. Because of their age, they had trouble sitting still, but generally they were paying attention. Later they began to participate with enthusiasm.

The older children seemed to enjoy talking about themselves and what they liked to do. They also conveyed a sense of pride in being able to do the task.

Subsequent lessons might include:

- Additional vocabulary that builds on the realia;
- Story-telling (oral and/or written) activities;
- Drawing, acting out, or singing about related topics or themes.

Realia items for teens and/or adults could be:

- Cooking utensils, food, tools, machine parts;
- Clothing, accessories, craft items;
- Items from nature, from the workplace, or from local markets or venues.

Module 8, Video Segment #2, Printed Text

1. The project described in this segment of the video is an album of collected tourist information about the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt. It was a group research project requiring integrated skills. Students of all ages participated. Older students mentored younger students. Students gathered together materials from sources such as brochures, maps, newspapers, magazines, and the Internet. Individual students were responsible for different parts of the album and included information about the sources for all the pictures and information they collected.

There are several possible purposes for an activity like this, from simple language practice to an authentic purpose (adding to the school library).

Some possible specific purposes:

- Practice language skills;
- Learn research skills;
- Learn and practice language associated with tourism;
- Motivate students to use language for an authentic, purposeful activity.
- Foster a sense of school community;
- Help build the school library collection.

2. The album contained pictures and information from authentic English sources about Egypt and the Sinai region. Topics for other similar kinds of projects could relate to almost any theme or topic in the curriculum:

- Animals, scientific events, climate / weather, planets / space;
- News, cultural events, holidays, celebrations;
- Health issues, advice, medical innovations, future trends;
- Recipes, cooking tips, local chef's specialties, gardening, farming practices;
- How-to tips for home, hobbies, workplace, community.

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3. Refer to *Module 10: Alternative Assessment* for information on scoring rubrics and project guides.

Module 8, Video Segment #3, Images

This video segment shows places for making authentic materials accessible to students:

(a) on the walls (calendars, posters); (b) in book carts; or (c) in content or skill area corners of the classroom.

| | Materials | Activity / Topic | Level / Skills |
|----|--|---|--|
| A) | Wall map Magazines Pictures | 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. | Intermediate Integrated skills |
| B) | Brochures Magazines | Students found and collected pictures of their hometowns from magazines, brochures, and the Internet. Using the pictures, they wrote about their hometowns and then created a class poster for the wall, using the pictures and writing together. | Intermediate Integrated skills |
| C) | Magazines Newspapers Photographs | A "jobs" unit. Students cut out pictures and articles for a "World of Work" bulletin board. They made another bulletin board of work places they visited over a vacation break, using their own photographs, company brochures, and magazine pictures. Students also read about work and available jobs in community newspapers as extensive reading. | High intermediate to Advanced Integrated skills |
| D) | Biographies Pictures from books or the Internet | Students chose a famous person to read about. Then they found a picture of the person and put it on a poster along with their own written biography of the person. The posters were then put on the walls for other students to read. | Intermediate to Advanced Integrated skills |

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1. Example A. Learners were high school students. The material and activity were appropriate because the students were immigrants and had to take American history classes in their school. This material and activity could be used with almost any age and proficiency level, because it depends heavily on pictures. It could be used in another country to plan a real or imaginary trip in that country.

Example B. Learners were young adult students attending a private language school. The material and activity were appropriate because they stimulated authentic communication. The students came from different small towns in the region, so this gave them an opportunity to share information about their homes with other students in class. Again, this activity could be adapted to any age or proficiency level. For example, if all the students came from the same town, they could work in groups to create a poster or album about their town. Each group would be responsible for one particular aspect of the town and would try to collect information written for English speaking visitors to the town.

Example C. Learners were adult second language learners trying to get jobs, so this unit was important to their survival in the community. Bulletin board-like displays are a good way to address student interests and needs, and can be used with any age level or topic. Doors, window shutters, and open wall space can serve as similar kinds of spaces.

Example D. Learners were high school students. They wrote biographies about people who were well known in one of the cultures where English is spoken as a native language. Photos like the ones they used can come from sources such as magazines or the Internet. Using images as a prompt or support for writing works well with all levels and ages of students.

Module 8, Video Segment #4, Multimedia

1. The video shows and/or talks about:

- “Low-tech” materials such as radio and cassette tape players.
- “High-tech” materials such as video cassette players, CD / DVD players, and computers.
- Native speakers or content experts as classroom guests are another option if they are available.