

HOW TO USE AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN TEACHING ENGLISH

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The classroom action research was conducted to improve the students' reading comprehension of short functional text through the use of authentic materials for eight grade students of SMP Tunas Karya Pontianak in the academic year 2016/2017. The result showed there was improvement on students' reading comprehension on short functional text from cycle 1 to cycle 2. Based on the observation through video recording, the activities in the first cycle did not run smoothly. There were some problems that happened in the first cycle. The first problem was the situation in the class. The students were less active and they looked strained. Some of them were closed their face with their book because they felt ashamed to be recorded. However, in the next meeting when the students were accustomed to be recorded during the teaching learning process, the classroom were noisy especially when they got the group works. The group works discussion was less effective. The second problem was the students still confused in finding the detail information from the short functional texts. The students also had difficulty in finding the meaning of the words used in the texts. The last problem was some of the authentic texts were not printed well and not readably clear enough. As a result, the students' individual test score in the first cycle was unsatisfactory. The teacher decided to continue the action in the next cycle. In conducting the second cycle, the researcher gave a well printed text to the students, so the text was readably clear enough. The texts were also completed with the meaning in Bahasa Indonesia so the students could recognize the word used in the text easily. The teacher also change the group works into individual and share discussion. The students had to finish the task by themselves, but they had to share the answer and compared their answer to their friends' answer. This activity made the students to be confident with their own answer. The discussion ran well and the students were more enthusiastic. Based on the explanation above, it was seen from cycle 1 and cycle 2 when the teacher using authentic materials of short functional text, the students be more enthusiastic in reading the text. They could easily recognize what kind of functional text is it. The classroom situation was being livelier because the students took part actively in the classroom discussion. In conclusion, the research findings of the classroom action research were satisfying. The students' comprehension of short functional texts was improved significantly by implementing the authentic materials. The students showed their interest

during the teaching learning process. The prediction of the action hypothesis was accepted.

The use of authentic texts is addressed for teaching reading comprehension as well as for creating materials to improve the teaching-learning process of this skill. The information and theories held by the experts in this field are discussed with regard to whether they correspond to the materials available in the market. In addition, results of needs analysis instruments applied to Universidad Nacional students are provided. so that instructors can have the tools to identify the readings that students may find more meaningful and therefore improve their reading skills.

Choosing materials is a difficult task and instructors must be aware of many aspects before selecting specific material for their students; for example, whether the level is appropriate, the activities meaningful, or the material helpful for the students to reach the stated objectives. However, other important elements are not necessarily represented in textbooks, such as the fact that readings should contain language as it is really used since students will eventually be exposed to authentic texts (texts not created for teaching purposes) outside of class. This aspect forms part of the research that has been carried out in which I have analyzed whether theories or information established by experts are present (explicitly or implicitly) in the texts available. Much of this material, although valuable, does not include a variety of authentic readings which integrate authenticity, meaningfulness, and students' needs or interests. In this project, I have applied instruments to obtain information about the kinds of texts the university students like and need to read. The level of the book chosen is also relevant. We must ensure that the level really suits students' needs. The problem lies in that textbooks indicate the level that they were designed for, but many do not provide a description of what that level actually represents. For this reason, all exercises and material should be designed using an accepted framework of reference such as the CEFR.

There are many theories that professors should be familiar with and take into account when teaching. AH that is needed is investigation, analysis, and application. I have reviewed information by various authors which will provide insights on the use of reading comprehension materials. Textbook writing requires the consideration of many aspects, such as layout, organization of the text, the level for which it is intended and usefulness, but there is one aspect that I would like to give special attention to: the use of authentic texts (those that were not written exclusively for language learning) for teaching reading

comprehension. My interest derives from the belief that students should be taught to understand readings like the ones they may eventually need or prefer to read in their own context (outside the classroom) using the target language . Authenticity is an aspect that should not be set aside . Unauthentic texts (readings created for I caching purposes) often do not transmit culture with the same richness and are not as motivating as an authentic text. Several authors have approached this topic ; I will now refer to I he opinion of sore of the authors who favor using authentic texts. According to Grel let and Swaffar. " Authentic texts are vital ; they motivate students, offer a real context. transmit the target language culture, and prepare students to read outside the classroom. „4 Brown also has stated that "Simplifying. or 'doctoring up ' an existing short story or description is therefore not only unnecessary but also is a disservice to students who are thereby deprived of original material with its natural redundancy. humor, wit, and other captivating features. „5 These authors have strong beliefs and defend the use of authentic texts. 1 must say that 1 agree with the authors when they refer to literary texts that were adapted. If vocabulary is changed to make it simpler, then the effect of what is being transmitted in the text changes. Many specialists oppose using unauthentic texts and a number of studies show that using material created for native speakers has its advantages. One study carried out by Vigil is described below. In reading, Vigil (1987) found significant differences in comprehension with beginning language students who read unedited authentic texts. Not only did their comprehension skills increase, but there were also improvements in oral and written language performance. The results of these and other studies indicate that we may be underestimating the positive effects of authentic texts on both listening and reading comprehension. 6 When teaching reading, we must consider all of the above aspects and our purpose or objectives. If our intention is to help our students read, then why are we simplifying texts for them? Are they going to face simplified texts in real life? Will they be able to understand and enjoy authentic readings when they encounter them in non-academic environments ? If students are not trained in class to face the kind of texts they will find outside the classroom, then how will they understand the cultural connotations? Will they even feel motivated to read anything in the target language? Wouldn't it be frustrating to face different kinds of texts for the first time and not know how to go about doing it? These are questions that we will have to answer, in order to help our students deal with real life situations. If we, as teachers, provide students with interesting and fun texts to read, our students will enjoy them more and acquire the language as a result. In order to reach language

acquisition, students should be exposed to input and internalize it without even realizing it.⁷ Krashen states in his acquisition theory that "in order to acquire, two conditions are necessary. The first is comprehensible input containing $i + 1$ [i represents the student's current language competence and $i + 1$ the next level of competence], ... and second, a low or weak affective filter to allow the input 'in' .."⁸ Krashen also states that the following affective variables are important for acquisition: Motivation, self-confidence, and low anxiety.⁹ Providing these conditions when teaching reading gives students with the chance to acquire the language unconsciously as they read. "Our intermediate students may find real texts, read for interest and pleasure, easier than our pedagogical materials. Moreover, if the above analysis is correct, it may be that free pleasure reading will result in more acquisition of the language ." In For optimal input, Krashen has proposed the following requirements: comprehensible material, interesting relevant texts, passages which are not grammatically sequenced, a sufficient amount to read, a low filter level (which is met if the texts are comprehensible and interesting), and tools for conversational management. In regard to Krashen's acquisition theory, we can see that choosing the texts to be used in class is not a random process; in fact, we must be sure they meet the necessary standards. Both conversation and pleasure reading have the potential of meeting the requirements for optimal input for acquisition very well. We have reached the conclusion that an interesting conversation and reading something for pleasure, are excellent language lessons. This comes as no surprise to millions of people who have acquired language using only these "methods", and have acquired them very well . Having a variety of authentic texts that are interesting enough that all students would like to read them even in their native language, and avoiding the great number of pre-reading and follow-up activities that accompany many texts, will then result in pleasure reading. This means a low affective filter, relevance, low anxiety, input with no grammar sequence, and comprehensible input ($i + 1$) resulting then in acquisition of the target language. Krashen has made it clear that the input must be relevant. To provide the students with relevant information, both our classes and the material used must be meaningful. We must always be aware of the fact that if students are exposed to materials or topics which are not appealing for them, then effective reading comprehension, in this case, will not take place. In addition, I would like to emphasize the meaning of relevance, since it is crucial. What does relevant input mean exactly? To answer this question I will refer to Amabile who explains meaningful learning. Meaningful learning ... may be described as a process of relating and anchoring new material to relevant established entities in cognitive

structure. As new material enters the cognitive field, it interacts with, and is appropriately subsumed under, a more inclusive conceptual system. The very fact that material is subsumable, that is, relatable to stable elements in cognitive structure, accounts for its meaningfulness. 12 This can be applied to the use of authentic material. If we choose texts containing aspects that students can relate to themselves, such as their social context, their feelings, or the world they have created and believe they live in, students can find a connection with the text and reading can become interesting. We must also be aware of the necessity of keeping the reading activities meaningful as well. Ausubel's theory also refers to the fact that people keep in their long-term memory aspects which are meaningful to them, but fail to remember at a certain point those which were not significant. 13 So, if a student is taught how to skim a text, but does not know why this strategy is used, and the text is not attractive, the student will probably fail to remember how to skim a text. Providing a meaningful context is crucial for students to internalize the language, but if rote learning (learning aspects in isolation) is what occurs in the class, then students are prone to forget Everything that they have learned. For example, if teachers use a text and begin extracting specific grammar points, the meaning of reading is lost, and students will be focused on trying to understand the grammar point instead of reading for pleasure and learning to read. That is, the class will no longer be reading; it will be grammar-based. In the end we may find that students are reading texts which are adapted to be grammar sequenced and interest may be completely lost. Reading must be done meaningfully; breaking up the text in pieces and isolating items will not provide students with meaningful learning. A phrase we should always remember is: "Don't kill the reading text, recognize when it is dead. ", 14 By this, Cory-Wright meant that many teachers try to "take advantage" of a text as much as possibly focusing on grammar points. specific content and endless activities that students end up hating along with the reading itself. She argued that we must know how to work on meaningful tasks and not overload the students with uninteresting activities. Cory-Wright's insight dialects Ausubel's meaningful learning theory (explained above) in the sense that reading should be pleasant and the focus should not be shifted to the individual components of the text on Another aspect to consider when using the material we choose is the diverse learning styles that we can observe in the classroom.