USING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN TEACHING ENGLISH

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Annotation: *This article examines at how creating realistic materials for English classes might enhance the quality of instruction. It links what they learn in the classroom to real-world situations and aids pupils in acquiring practical language skills. Advice on selecting and modifying these assets is provided in the article. According to the article, educators should use authentic materials to add excitement and vibrancy to their courses.*

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Nowadays, teaching a language requires more than just textbooks if teachers want their classes to be more engaging. Textbooks might be helpful to save time on preparing a course syllabus and plan; however, after some time, being dependant on them solely is likely to be boring for their students. Here are some of possible reasons :

1. Monotonous content: Textbooks can sometimes present material in a repetitive or formulaic manner, making the content feel dull and predictable.

2. Lack of authenticity: A lot of textbooks use oversimplified language that could not accurately represent how people naturally write or speak in everyday contexts.

3. Too much emphasis on grammar and exercises: Certain textbooks overfocus on grammar rules and related exercises, which may not be the most stimulating approach to learning a language.

The reasons that are given above do not suggest abandoning using textbooks in classrooms, but varying their lessons can create a lively atmosphere among learners. To avoid tedious lessons, teachers can use authentic materials.

According to the definition given by University of Michigan in 2017, "Authentic materials are those created for some real-world purpose other than language learning, and often, but not always, provided by native speakers for native speakers". This means that authentic materials are not specifically made for teaching purposes. These types of materials can include followings:

1. TV shows, movie clips and trailers, online videos, and commercials

2. Radio broadcasts, songs, and podcasts

3. Photographs, maps, and advertisements

4. Magazines, letters and emails, news articles, brochures, websites, blogs, and social media posts

5. Recipes, food labels, menus, and product descriptions

We can count a couple of advantages of using authentic materials during lessons. Some examples are the followings:

1. Bridge to real-world communication: Learners can make the language learning process more relevant and applicable by bridging the gap between classroom instruction and real-world communication through the use of authentic materials.

2. Motivation and Engagement: Learners find real-life content to be more engaging, which boosts their motivation and involvement in the language acquisition process.

3. Contextual learning: When given in real-world situations, language structures and meanings are easier for learners to understand, leading to a more natural comprehension of the language.

Let's see an example of using a song as an authentic material: Ask your students about their favorite genre, artist, band, theme and so on. According to their wishes, choose a song. Then, during the lesson, briefly explain the context and the theme of the song. Additionally, you can quickly introduce the singer. The next step is playing the song once without providing lyrics. Ask students to pay attention and indentify some keywords or phrases related to the themes discussed. After that, distribute the lyrics of the song to the students and listen to the song again. Now, you can discuss any new vocabulary introduced in the song. You can conclude the task by having students express their thoughts and feelings by writing a short paragraph, or just talking about it in front of the class.

Teachers also can have role-plays to experience more real life situations and put your students' knowledge into practice. Let's choose the topic of "Eating out" and see another example. Divide your students into 4 groups – name Group 1 as "Managers". Their responsibility is to create a menu according to the demands of the clients. Then they have to present their menu and the price list to the class. Group 2 – "Cooks" – have to talk about the ingredients and the cooking process. Group 3 – "Clients" – order food and Group 4 – "Waiters" – take orders from them. You can adjust the scenario to your preferences while using it in the classroom.

This approach not only improves language skills in a more engaging way, but also makes the learning experience memorable and entertaining.

However, there are some factors to consider before applying original resources to your lessons, such as challenges your students might face while using them. For example, since those types of contents are usually meant for a fluent audience, some learners who are at a lower level are likely to struggle to comprehend the material. To prevent any such problem that might arise in the class, we should choose resources according to the level of your students. An alternative solution is providing them with some relevant vocabulary and grammar rules in advance so that they are better prepared to carry on and understand

everything easier than before. Another issue is that even though you are using an authentic material to make your lessons more entertaining, your students may still get bored if you choose a wrong topic. A possible way out for this problem is identifying the interests of your audience and aligning the topics/materials to their life goals. By considering these factors, you can improve the process of learning and the lesson quality.

To conclude, if teachers want to conduct more effective and useful lessons and avoid them consisting of only boring, old-fashioned rules and exercises, try using more authentic materials. As discussed above, this method boosts motivation and engagement, and facilitate contextual learning.

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