

Sound Bites for Better Teaching

Authentic Texts Lead to Authentic Language

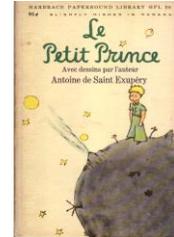
Marcel LaVergne Ed.D.



Created



Semi-authentic



Authentic

According to Lonergan¹, there are three types of texts that L2 teachers use in the classroom: created, semi-authentic, and authentic. In beginning and intermediate classes, students are usually exposed to the language of created texts, i.e., those textbooks created for non-native speakers to achieve pre-determined curricular goals: they contain the targeted vocabulary, grammar, and culture to be learned as well as activities designed to learn the material. In some instances, students are also exposed to semi-authentic texts, i.e., those based on original language materials, adapted to fit curricular needs. Hopefully, in advanced classes, students are mostly exposed to authentic texts, i.e., texts created by native speakers for native speakers of the language. The latter provide "real life" linguistic input as well as valuable cultural information for our students.

(1) Lonergan, Jack. 1984. *Video in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
<http://coerll.utexas.edu/methods/modules/culture/02/texts.php>

Self Evaluation (no right or wrong answers)

Do you find it easy or difficult to incorporate authentic texts in your beginning classes?

Do you use authentic texts as a way to increase vocabulary, to illustrate grammar rules, and/or to teach culture?

How many authentic passages are there in your textbook? How would you categorize them?

Do you make it a point to include the authentic passages found in your textbook or do you tend to bypass them because of lack of time?

Are your intermediate classes based primarily on a commercially created textbook or on semi-authentic and authentic materials?

What percentage of time is spent on authentic materials in your advanced classes?

Do you have a library of authentic texts in your classroom, department, or school?

How often do you read authentic texts in the language that you teach?

TIP

When choosing to include authentic materials into your curriculum, you should consider applying Krashen's Input+1 criterion to determine the difficulty level of the texts. If too difficult, authentic materials can discourage students.