

Authenticity in EAP – gives meaning,
creates motivation



Motivation and SLA


- EAP students are not necessarily motivated language learners;
- Conventional coursebooks, even those specifically for EAP, use a variety of topics, many of which are not relevant;
- Why bother reading and writing about topics with no obvious relevance?
- Without motivation, language acquisition is limited – participation in class may even be reduced!

The link between motivation and authenticity

- Learner-centred approach;
- Relevance of tasks and materials;
- Extracting real information from a real text is motivating (Guariento & Morley, 2001);
- Materials constantly brought up to date;
- ‘...motivated to learn when they can gain new knowledge... helps to solve problems in their professional lives’ (Huang, 2002).

What is authenticity?

- **Text authenticity** – approximation to the world outside the language classroom (McDonough & Shaw, 2003);
- **Competence authenticity** – grammar choices, register and style, strategic – dealing with communication breakdown; aiming to correspond to native speakers (MacDonald et al. 2006);

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- **Learner authenticity** – learner’s positive feelings and reactions towards the materials and the pedagogical intentions inherent in them (Lee, 1995);
 - **Classroom authenticity** – provision of conditions when students can share problems, achievement and success – socially motivated (Breen, 1985); in other words, authenticity of social situation.

In practical terms ...

- Authenticity applies to materials, tasks, genres, assignments, classroom activities, classroom management – groups/pairs/individuals.
- On a foundation course, can everything be a rehearsal for next year?
- Can we teach the language and study skills while replicating many of next year's tasks?
- In St Andrews, this is exactly what we do on the Pre-Master's Course.

Context

- Pre-Master's;
- Largely Asian;
- School of Management;
- IELTS 6.0 minimum entry requirement.

Writing

- Different genres, different writing styles;
- Essays
- Reports
- Critical reviews – articles and books
- Case studies
- Blogs
- Dissertation

5,000-word dissertation


- Combines many authentic activities and skills, built up over the foundation year;
- Deciding on, and narrowing down a topic;
- Writing research questions and making hypotheses;
- Reading and synthesising to write a literature review;
- Writing questionnaires;
- Presenting and analysing data;
- Writing and justifying the methodology;
- Referencing and all that involves.

Reading – determined by essays

- Cultural differences can have a significant effect on businesses. Discuss this with reference to your own country.
- It is increasingly important to speak more than one language in the modern business world. How far do you agree with this statement?
- Describe some of the effective marketing strategies used by businesses today. Why is marketing so important for a company?
- Explain some of the economic, social and cultural aspects of globalisation and discuss whether or not you believe that it is a process that affects all people in the same way.

Background reading

- Working with the academics – what should a management postgraduate know?
 - History and development of the capitalist world;
 - The Reformation, The Scientific revolution, The Enlightenment, The Industrial Revolution;
 - Economists, Philosophers, Politicians from the past;
 - - isms and political ideology;



Select one of the following books to read during the Easter break. Next term, you will be required to write a critical review of the book.

Happiness: Lessons from a New Science, (Richard Layard)

Guns, Germs and Steel: A short history of everybody for the last 13,000 years, (Jared Diamond)

The World Until Yesterday: What Can We Learn from Traditional Societies? (Jared Diamond)

Banana: The Fate of the Fruit that changed the World, (Dan Koeppel)

The Wonder Box, (Roman Krznaric)

Beyond human Nature (Jesse J. Prinz)

How Much is Enough? Money and the Good Life, (Skidelsky & Skidelsky)


Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything, (Steven D Levitt & Stephen J Dubner)

Authentic tasks and activities

- Extensive reading;
- Reading groups and note-taking;
- Synthesising;
- Working co-operatively – group presentations;
- Note-taking in lectures;
- Discussion and debate – seminar skills;

Back to motivation

- Why is this so motivating?
- The students realise how little they know, especially in comparison to home students;
- It is inherently interesting material;
- Last year's students report back on how useful this course has proved for them!

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- The teacher provides correction and feedback on ALL written tasks, thus students feel they are supported linguistically.
 - In addition, the students keep written logs of daily news reading, with comments corrected for language errors;
 - Teacher and students are working together – a community where language learning can take place.



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