Annotated Bibliography for Authentic Materials Use

General


Both of these books from TESOL’s New Ways series are well organized and creative. New Ways in Using Authentic Materials in the Classroom has lessons covering a wide range of authentic materials from television and radio to newspapers, maps, and recipes. This book is perhaps one of the best introductions to using authentic materials. New Ways in Teaching Listening devotes part III to “Listening to Authentic Materials.” Like the rest of the New Ways series, each lesson is formatted so that you can quickly see the targeted level, aims, class time, preparation time, and resources. Lesson procedures are detailed step-by-step; and are followed by caveats and options, references and further readings, and appendices as appropriate.


While a bit older, this book still provides many low-tech authentic material ideas in an organized fashion. Perhaps the best feature of this book is chapter four, Adapting Media to the Classroom. For teachers who are unfamiliar with using authentic materials in the class, this chapter has good suggestions. The actual lessons in this book cover a variety of everyday media: TV, radio, magazines, newspapers, freebies, telephone tapes, etc.

Print


Newspapers are increasingly posting their content on the internet. This provides fresh, accessible, authentic materials for teachers of LCTLs. So while this book was published for English language teaching, teachers of LCTLs can find various creative ideas for using newspapers in the classroom. Grundy’s book is part of a series by Oxford University Press, Resource Books for Teachers. This entire series is helpful, but this book is particularly recommended because the lessons are easily adapted to the LCTL.

Comics are not necessarily the first thing that come to mind when one thinks about authentic materials; however, they can be great fun for a class providing concise glimpses of a particular grammatical feature or cultural value. If you have access to comics in your LCTL, this is a good book to thumb through. The first section has general suggestions while the remainder of the book has specific comics the author has compiled. LCTL teachers probably don’t want to buy this book, but it is worth a look if you are interested in incorporating comics into the classroom.

**Literature**


If you love your LCTL, it is likely that you will have some of the works of literature from your LCTL. Literature is classic “authentic” material. These books give lesson ideas that make literature accessible. Collie and Slater focus on particular works of literature in English which are certainly adaptable to LCTLS; however, unless you are really committed to teaching literature you may not wish to spend your money here. If you are looking for an extensive example of different lessons that may be developed from one piece of literature, Bassnett and Grundy devote a chapter with sixteen lessons illustrating this. This book is more focused on poetry and is light on grammar. However, if you aren’t teaching a course in literature but would like to incorporate it in some fashion, this is a good starting point.

**Video**


Stempleski and Tomalin have compiled an easy-to-peruse set of lessons using authentic video materials. These materials may range from advertisements to music videos to whole feature films. If you are simply looking for ideas, *Video in Action* is a great place to look.

Altman and Lonergan have written books that are not focused on the ESL/EFL classroom, which makes these books that much more accessible to teachers of
LCTLs. Altman, in particular, is good at raising issues to consider for teachers new at using video material. There is a three-chapter-long general introduction to using videos in the classroom as well as chapters on “Video in Lower-Level Language Courses,” “Composition and Conversation Courses,” and “Video and the Law.” Lonergan takes a slightly different focus with sections on note taking skills, differing registers for different situations, as well as controlled language practice.

Music


Music can be both near and dear to LCTL teachers’ hearts and a profitable classroom venture for their students. These two books approach music in the language classroom from two different, helpful angles.

Griffee’s book is an excellent resource for teachers seeking to use the language in songs to highlight features of the LCTL. It has sections on “Vocabulary Extension,” “Listening Development,” “Writing Development,” and so on. Particularly helpful is its lack of reliance on specific songs. Some books for EFL/ESL teaching concentrate too much on English language pop songs that would not be useful for teachers of LCTLs.

Cranmer and Laroy, on the other hand, intend for music to be used to springboard students to language use. They suggest activities in which students listen to music and respond with specific grammatical structures or by creating narratives. This book is particularly appropriate if the teacher has instrumental music available from the culture of the LCTL.

The Internet


English still seems to dominate the Internet, but LCTLs are starting to make their appearance. Most notably www.google.com has taken the challenge head on and allows searching in quite a number of languages. Thus if you have reliable Internet access personally and/or for your class, these books will give you ideas and point you in directions you may not have previously considered. It helps if you yourself are already comfortable with computers and with surfing the Internet. If your LCTL does not have an alphabet that corresponds with the keyboard you have available, realize that this may pose an added challenge to your lesson plans and students.

Boswood’s collection of lessons is probably the most generic and general. Dudeney’s collection is quite original and inventive but dependent on the variety that is available in English and may not be in your LCTL. Windeatt et al. include lessons that have a grammar focus, which lends a valuable perspective.
Annotated Bibliography of Selected Journal Articles on Authentic Materials Use

General


These two articles give a general overview of authentic materials use. Pino has a particularly good list of what constitutes authentic materials. Sawicki provides rationales for their use and some samples of authentic materials in a variety of languages.

Technology, computers, Internet


As the author writes, “This article focuses on the exploration of authentic materials as available on the WWW in primary visual and verbal/textual modes.” In a concise, thoughtful article, Brandl helps foreign language teachers consider ways to integrate authentic materials found on the Web into their classroom. This article has the additional convenience of being readily available online.


At 396 pages, this guide is far more exhaustive than Brandl’s article. It provides sample lessons for various forms of media such as films, video, and audiocassettes. It also describes lessons that may be created from different forms of software from word processing software to databases, spreadsheets, and presentation software. Like Brandl’s article there is a section on the Internet.