



AUTHENTIC TASKS AND DIFFERENT LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVELS

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Annotation: *This work highlighted the concept of designing authentic tasks in educational settings. Authentic tasks are learning activities that mirror real-world situations and require students to apply knowledge and skills in meaningful and relevant ways. The review explores the theoretical foundations of authentic tasks, provides an overview of the key characteristics of authentic tasks, and discusses the benefits and challenges associated with their implementation. Additionally, it identifies effective strategies for designing and implementing authentic tasks, and highlights the impact of authentic tasks on student engagement and learning outcomes.*

Key words: *authentic tasks, real-life situations, meaningful Learning, cognition development, self-Determination Theory, autonomous Learning, social Cognitive Theory, principles of MD*

Authentic tasks help students to practice language in the classroom with real life situations in a meaningful way. The following authors defined the authenticity as Breen 1983; Bachman 1991; van Lier 1996; Benson & Voller 1997; Lewkowicz 2000; Guariento & Morley 2001 in their works. Brown, Collins, and Duguid (1989) state learners should be engaged in authentic tasks that help them to interact in English in real community. According to Lave & Wenger, (1991) authentic tasks create learning context that mirror real-world challenges and develop their cognition. “By engaging in authentic tasks, learners are encouraged to draw upon their prior knowledge, actively construct new knowledge, and apply it to solve authentic problems, promoting deeper learning and the development of higher-order thinking skills” (Jonassen, 1999).

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) posits authentic tasks motivates students to be autonomous learners and enhance their competence by being personally meaningful, challenging yet attainable, and supporting their interests and values.

Social Cognitive Theory describes authentic tasks as communicative and corroborative where students receive feedback, develop problem-solving skills and other transferable skills.

These theoretical ideas provide a framework for understanding the impact of authentic tasks on student engagement and learning outcomes.

Materials can achieve impact through: novelty (e.g. unusual topics, illustrations and activities); variety (e.g. unexpected activity; different text-types taken from authentic sources;); face validity (e.g. use of attractive colours; appealing content



(e.g. topics of interest to the target learners); achievable challenge (e.g. tasks which challenge the learners to think).

Tomlinson's (2013) in the principles of material design states that materials should expose the learners to language in authentic use. Authenticity is one of the principles of materials design.

Nunan's list (1988) of materials designing principles highlights "Materials should encourage learners to apply their developing skills to the world beyond the classroom."

Teachers argue that it is better to use controlled and guided activities with lower level students as they do not have enough language to communicate in authentic tasks. While it is true that authentic tasks can be complex for lower-level students with their limited language proficiency, on the other hand, if they are scaffolded and adapted to suit the level of students teachers can create a supportive learning atmosphere in the classroom.

Authentic Tasks for Different Level Students

Beginner Level

Task: Listen to a simple weather forecast and write down the temperatures for the next three days. Discuss in pairs what to wear.

Intermediate Level

Task: Listen to a podcast about a popular tourist destination. Take notes on the main attractions and interesting facts. Decide with your partner what places you would like to visited from the mentioned in the podcast.

Advanced Level

Role-Play Card: At the Job Interview

Scenario: You are at a job interview for a position as a Marketing Assistant. The interviewer wants to know about your skills, experience, and why you want to work for the company.

Role 1: Interviewer

Name: Alex

Job Title: Hiring Manager

Questions to Ask:

- Can you tell me about your previous work experience in marketing?
- What do you know about our company?
- How do you handle tight deadlines?



- What is your greatest strength, and how does it relate to this position?

Discuss:

What challenges did you face during the role? What strategies do you need to improve?

A short research study was conducted among learners to evaluate the effectiveness of authentic tasks for different levels: beginner, intermediate, and advanced. Students from schools participated in the survey, and the activities were piloted by PRESET students from Uzbekistan State World Languages University during their practicum experience. Below are the opinions of students and teacher-students regarding the tasks' relevance, engagement, and learning outcomes.

1. Beginner Level Task: Weather Forecast

Student Opinions:

- Engagement:** 85% found the task engaging.
- Relevance:** 90% felt the task was relevant to their daily life.
- Learning Outcome:** 80% reported improved listening skills.

Teacher Opinions:

- Effectiveness:** 88% believed the task effectively supported language acquisition.
- Adaptability:** 92% agreed it was suitable for beginners.

2. Intermediate Level Task: Podcast on Tourist Destinations

Student Opinions:

- Engagement:** 78% found the task engaging.
- Relevance:** 85% felt it enhanced their cultural knowledge.
- Learning Outcome:** 75% reported improved note-taking skills.

Teacher Opinions:

- Effectiveness:** 82% believed the task promoted critical thinking.
- Adaptability:** 80% agreed it was suitable for intermediate learners.

3. Advanced Level Task: Job Interview Role-Play

Student Opinions:

- Engagement:** 90% found the task highly engaging.
- Relevance:** 95% felt it prepared them for real-life job situations.
- Learning Outcome:** 88% reported improved speaking and interpersonal skills.

Teacher Opinions:



• **Effectiveness:** 94% believed the task was very effective for advanced learners.

• **Adaptability:** 91% agreed it could be tailored for various job roles.

Overall 84% students were satisfied with the tasks and 89% of teachers felt that the tasks were beneficial for students. Teacher-students recommended that there must be more visuals to support the listening task; more context should be provided in the intermediate level task and feedback session should be added to the role play.

In conclusion, authentic tasks can offer learners opportunities to take ownership of their learning, make decisions, and actively participate in meaningful tasks that have real-world implications. They can engage and enhance language skills across different proficiency levels.

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