

IMPLEMENTING AUTHENTIC EXTENSION TASKS TO INCREASE SLA - WAESOL 2010

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Language interactions that are "real" are more effective in helping students with second language acquisition and automaticity. However, most "homework" does not accomplish this. The answer is "extension" activities that let them go out and work directly with real language tasks. This workshop will offer many examples of interactive extension tasks

DEFINE TERMS (In terms of an EFL/ESL student)

Homework:

Often proscribed textbook-based work done at home to practice ESL, usually in the form of reading, writing and sometimes listening. Often structural in form (focusing on grammar or writing mechanics) and may include memorization, 'cramming' or test prep.

Examples?

Extension Activity:

"Extension: Task based activities which work with real language in two ways. First, students are required to use the new language to INTERACT WITH THE REAL WORLD. Secondly, students bring AUTHENTIC language from the real world back into the classroom' - Implementation of From Facilitative Language Teaching, Dr. Butler

Examples?

AUTHENTIC EXTENSION ACTIVITIES- KINDS:

Functional Objective Activities

- Active

Speaking: Students go out and SPEAK TO or WRITE TO English speakers focusing on a specific functional task, then write down or copy the interaction and bring it back to the class to share the next day.

Example: Students GIVE TRAVEL ADVICE to a peer. (Chatting to them / writing an email)

- Passive

Students go out and seek situations (based on ideas offered in class) to LISTEN for the function being studied or to READ texts looking for that function, then write down or copy (or just bring in the text) the interactions of people naturally using that functional language and bring them back to the class to share the next day.

Example: Students go to a travel agent and LISTEN to TRAVEL ADVICE and note down all the phrases/sentences used or students go to a travel website (lonely planet.com) and READ AND COPY a number of sentences that give advice to travelers. This will be brought back to class to share.

Structural Objective Activities

- Active

Students go out and SPEAK or WRITE TO with English speakers focusing on a specific grammar point focusing on a specific context where that grammar point is used, then write down or copy the language used with that grammar point and bring it back to the class to share the next day.

Example: Students GIVE ADVICE to a peer (by phone or by email) using the modals SHOULD and COULD. They then note down the whole conversation / email and bring it back to the class to share the next day.

- Passive

Students go out and seek situations (based on ideas offered in class) to LISTEN for the target grammar point or seek out authentic discourses looking for that grammar structure to READ, then write down or copy (or just bring in the text) containing the target grammar and bring it back to the class to share the next day.

Example: Students go to a travel agent and LISTEN to TRAVEL ADVICE and note down all the sentences using the modals SHOULD and COULD or students go to a travel website (ex: lonelyplanet.com) and READ AND COPY 5 sentences using the modal SHOULD and 5 sentences using the modal COULD. These will be brought back to class to share.

RESULTS- In- Class Wrap-up: Why do it?

Extension activities make the language real, focus on authentic uses of the language by real English users and provide powerful and meaningful contexts for the use of the target language. All of this aids acquisition by engaging the student's, enhancing motivation, activating skills and engagement that are dormant during 'text book' class work and offering the students very clear evidence on a visceral level that this language is a way to meet real needs in a real way.

I- Reinforcement

Using L2 outside of the classroom is the goal of all language learning, extension activities reinforces this on many levels. Pragmatic and do-able experiential work reinforces the utility of what is being learned as well as offering the immediate gratification and increased self confidence that comes from accomplishing a real task successfully.

2- Sharing

'Textbook' language, whether it is functional language or grammar examples, is clearly limited. By dipping into the rich reality of authentic language in use in the real world, students return with many lexical chunks, slang, idioms, varied vocabulary uses and so on that are often not taught in a text book but which nevertheless are important parts of SLA. The results are shared with the class, creating a motivating and acquisition- rich dynamic as well as an opportunity for teachers to discuss 'registers', implied language, contextual use of language and many other aspects of real language in use.

SHARING MODALITIES ACCORDING TO FLT:

Presenting: ex: reworking noted interactions into a skit, showing youtube videos of an interaction, sharing new FL/vocabulary on the OHP or Document Camera, sharing realia collected on the activity such as brochures, menus and so on.

Posting: Results can be reworked into collages, reviews, graphs, essays (or not) and posted in the classroom, on hallway bulletin boards, on the class blog / website etc.

Printing: Results can be reworked into posters, brochures, cards, school newspapers, student created grammar tests/lessons/booklets etc.

BASIC GUIDELINES FOR EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

1. An experiential task should be clear to both teacher and students.
2. An experiential task should be authentic as possible, a real use or observed use of the target language in a natural and authentic situation. Real English users or discourses are the key..
3. Students should be linguistically, emotionally, mentally and physically prepared to do the experiential task; It should be a natural outgrowth of their schoolwork in a very practical way.
4. Students should be given very clear parameters of what/where/how/when/why for every experiential task. Clearer details = less stress for the students and less chance of issues..

5. The experiential task should have an almost 100% chance of success and while being challenging and should be realistic in scope. Assessing students abilities is key to this working as well as setting realistic goals.
6. The actual pragmatics of the experiential task should be role-played in class before the task is assigned. Peripheral 'polite' language should be included. Ex: If students are to interview an English speaker, strategic language like "Excuse me", "Do you mind if I ask you....?" "Do you have a minute to help me with a school assignment?" etc should be practiced. Also, a calm reaction to a rejection (ex: "thank you anyway") should be practiced.
7. The pride, confidence and sense of completion that the students return with should be honored and affirmed and there should always be time made for sharing the results in order to validate and reinforce the target language.
8. Part of this process should include any related stories, chats about adventures, notations of interesting places or websites or magazines or people as well as personal feelings and reactions to the task.

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS:

Functional/Notional Activities (with some situational objectives)

GREET OTHERS APPROPRIATELY

EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES:

Active- Speaking: *Greet a familiar grocery clerk and note down the whole interaction.*

Active- Writing: *Send an email to a new pen pal greeting them and introducing yourself. CC the teacher.*

Passive- Listening: *At a café sit and have coffee and listen to and note down casual greetings.*

Passive- Reading: *Go to a stationary store and find greeting cards, not down any new greetings*

INVITE OTHERS TO SOCIAL EVENTS

EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES:

Active- Speaking: *Invite a peer to lunch or for coffee and note down all the interaction.*

Active- Writing: *Send an invite to a friend(s) for a simple and casual event. CC the teacher.*

Passive- Listening: *On HULU watch an episode of FRIENDS and note down all the invitation language.*

Passive- Reading: *Read several Facebook pages, note down all the invitations you can find.*

REQUEST (ORDER) FOOD (RESTAURANT)

EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES:

Active- Speaking:

Active- Writing:

Passive- Listening:

Passive- Reading:

GIVE OPINIONS ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES:

Active- Speaking:

Active- Writing:

Passive- Listening:

Passive- Reading:

INSTRUCT OTHERS HOW TO USE A DEVICE

EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES:

Active- Speaking:

Active- Writing:

Passive- Listening:

Passive- Reading:

GIVE COMPLIMENTS CLOTHING

EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES:

Active- Speaking:

Active- Writing:

Passive- Listening:

Passive- Reading:

Structural/Form (Grammar) Activities

COUNT/ NON-COUNT NOUNS (context: Food items)

EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES:

Active- Speaking: Go to a grocery store with a shopping list (see below) and ask where all items are.

Active- Writing: Plan out and write a real shopping list with 10+ specific items, both c & nc and use it

Passive- Listening: Go to youtube and find a grocery store ad or short and note down all c/nc nouns used.

Passive- Reading: Get a flyer from a local market and circle all the count nouns, 'square' all the NC nouns.

PAST TENSE (SIMPLE) (context: leisure activities) EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES:

Active- Speaking: Tell a friend 5 things you did last weekend. Ask about their past weekend.

Active- Writing: Write on the class blog page about your past weekend, noting TV, movies etc. you saw.

Passive- Listening: Call a friend and ask them what they did last weekend, note all PT answers.

Passive- Reading: Read a review of a past concert or other event and underline all the PT sentences.

WILL/GOING TO – context?

EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES:

Active- Speaking:

Active- Writing:

Passive- Listening:

Passive- Reading:

PRESENT PERFECT – context?

EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES:

Active- Speaking:

Active- Writing:

Passive- Listening:

Passive- Reading:

ADJECTIVE CLAUSES – context?

EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES:

Active- Speaking:

Active- Writing:

Passive- Listening:

Passive- Reading:

WHAT ABOUT WHEN LIVING ABROAD...?

It is mostly all do-able. Some advice: Know your area, know where fluent English speakers 'hang out' (cafes, restaurants, English-centered bookstores or shops, hotels, tourist centers or kiosks, landmarks and so on. If teaching in a university or school, try to use other higher-level students in the school or staff or teachers, not ideal but possible. Use the internet a lot, get to know Facebook, Livejournal, Youtube, Hulu.com and for listening sites like NPR.org and BBC.com and Voice of America. Know what the English newspapers are in your country and about other English resources, clubs, magazines and so on. Ship a ton of realia back from the USA: brochures, maps etc!

Conclusion!