

## Chapter Six

### Who creates the Materials Available to EFL/ESL Teachers?

Materials used in EFL/ESL classrooms are created by four groups of people: publishing companies, government agencies, curriculum development teams at the school level, and classroom teachers. If you teach in a private language school, you might be using commercial materials such as EFL/ESL texts, audiotapes, a disk with accompanying workbooks, videotapes with worksheets for students, and computer programs.

### What Are the Advantages and Disadvantages of Commercial Materials?

There are some disadvantages associated with using commercial materials, especially if the teacher can't select the text to be used. **First**, there is the possible problem of ideological conflict in teaching beliefs. Texts are usually based on the author's or publisher's ideas about teaching. For example, some text writers believe students should memorize words grammar rules before they practice speaking, writing, or reading. **Second**, when the teachers blindly follow the assigned texts, they might be trivializing the experience for students. And if we teachers accept our role as simply taking students step-by step through a technician...and the level at which we are engaged in teaching is reduced to very superficial one. **finally**, commercially made textbooks are prepared for wide audience that is culturally diverse and geographically dissimilar.

### What are Authentic Materials? What Types Are Available?

**Authentic Materials:** Basically, authentic materials include anything that is used to communicate. To give you an idea of the scope of what I mean, here is a partial list of some authentic materials EFL/ESL teachers have used.

#### 1. **Authentic Listening** / Viewing Materials

Silent films TV, commercials, quiz shows, cartoon news comedy shows, dramas, movies and soap operas; radio news dramas and ads, professionally short stories and novels; pop, rock, country, film, and children's songs, home videos; professionally videotaped travel logs, documentaries, and sales pitches.

## 2. Authentic Visual Materials

Slides; photographs; paintings; sketches; drawings by children; stick-figure drawings; wordless street signs; silhouettes; calendar pictures; pictures from travel, news, and popular magazines; ink blots; postcard pictures, wordless picture books; stamps; X-rays.

## 3. Authentic Printed Materials

Newspaper articles, cartoons, advertisements, movie advertisements, astrology columns, sports reports, obituary columns, and advice columns; travel magazines, science math, and history books; short stories; novels; books of photographs; lyrics to popular, rock. Folk, and children's songs; restaurant menus, street signs; postcards; currency; cereal boxes, candy wrappers; tourist information brochures and tourist guidebooks; university catalogues; department store catalogue, telephone books; world, city, and relief maps; calendars, TV guides: driver's licenses; comic books. Greeting cards; business cards, bank checks and deposit forms, grocery coupons; hotel registration forms; pins with messages bus, plane, train, taxi, and jitney schedules; teletext subtitles for the hearing impaired.

## 4. Realia Used in EFL/ESL Classrooms

Dolls, puppets, currency, key rings, scissors, folded paper, toothpaste, toothbrushes, combs, stuffed and toy animals wall clocks, balloons, walkie-talkies, candles, fly swatters string, thread, chewing gum, glue, rulers, tacks, paper clips rubber bands, trains, aprons, plastic forks and spoons dishes, glasses, bowls, umbrellas, wallets, purses, balls phones, fishing reels, furniture, people, cars, bus collections, play money, stones, plants, sand, clay, ink, sticks jars, coffee cans, chalk, credit cards, hats Halloween masks, mannequins.

## What Are the Disadvantages and Advantages of Using Authentic Materials and Media?

One disadvantage is that it takes time and effort to locate authentic materials. It also difficult to make authentic materials and media comprehensible to the students. Also, some students will not accept authentic materials and media as being a valuable learning source.

Nevertheless, there are reasons to use authentic materials because they can "reinforce for students the direct relation between the language classroom and the outside world". In addition, they offer a way to contextualize language learning. When lessons are centered on comprehending a repair manual, a menu, a tv., weather report, a documentary, students tend to focus more on content and meaning than on language. This offers students a valuable source of language input, since they can be exposed to more than just the language presented by the teacher and the text.

## How Do EFL/ESL Teachers Use Authentic Materials and Media?

Some teachers use authentic materials to get beyond the limitations of a text. They begin with an idea in a text and, based on their understanding of students' needs and interests, locate authentic materials, as well as create additional activities that make use of them.

## What Kinds of Technology Do EFL/ESL Teachers Use?

Technology: is scientific and industrial know-how or expertise.

The transportation system.

The communication system (telephone).

The agricultural system.

Other systems that provide people with the means to live.