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Higher Language Proficiency = Professional Success

The Art of Teaching to Higher Levels: Plan → Execute → Assess

Bella Cohen



What's Involved

- Expectation of Comprehension of the Author's/
Speaker's Intent
 - Text Type
 - Text Mode
- Expectation of Comprehension of Authentic Texts/
Passages that Contain Level-Appropriate Linguistic
Features
 - Vocabulary/Grammar
 - Discourse
 - Sociolinguistic implications
 - Sociocultural implications
 - Pragmatics



What's Involved (cont.)

- Expectation of Comprehension of Texts Containing Extra-Linguistic Factors (Super-Authenticity) – Learner Perspective

Reading	Listening
Smudged/Faded/Poor photo copy	Garbled/Flawed recording
Illegible	Fast delivery
Long	Long
Elaborate/Technical	Elaborate/Technical
Unfamiliar	Unfamiliar
Illogical/Incoherent/Uneducated/ Illiterate	Illogical/Incoherent/Uneducated/ Illiterate
Intimate/Informal/Vulgar	Intimate/Informal/Vulgar
Non-Standard	Non-Standard
Emotional/Agitated	Emotional/Agitated



Preparing Texts for Use

Text analysis at higher levels:

- Identifying linguistic issues in texts (“rainbowing”) – teaching moments
- Processing linguistic issues in texts
 - Bottom up
 - Top down (globally)



“Rainbowing” the text

- [-----] = Locations (Vocab 1)
- [-----] = Descriptions (Vocab 2)
- [-----] = Grammar
- [-----] = Acronyms
- [-----] = People / Organizations
- [-----] = Run-On Sentence
- [-----] = Edit/Correct Misinformation
- [-----] = other...



General Text Analysis

- Analyze the text as argument (What is the author trying to persuade the audience to believe or do?)
- Analyze the structure (What comes first? What comes after? How is it built?)
- Analyze the text as a product (What are the “selling points of the text?”)
- Analyze the text as the product of the author's mind (Who was the author? When and where did she/he live?)
- Analyze the text as communication (How effective is the text in communicating the main idea?)
- Analyze the text in a social context (Whom does this text serve best?)
- Analyze the text from a psychological viewpoint (What are the possible psychological motivations of the author)
- Analyze the text from some certain specific point of view or belief (How might this text read differently through the eyes of a certain type of reader?)



Analyze Text As a Work Of Art

- Clarity (How clear is the writing? Is it easy to understand or is it confusing and mysterious, and did the author intend it that way or not?)
- Grandeur (How strong, educated, mature and vigorous is the language? Why? Give examples from the text.)
- Beauty (Is this text a pleasure to read? Or, does the author use any annoying or ugly words and expressions where they are not appropriate?)
- Speed (Does the writing in the text flow along easily, making it easy to read, or does it drag?)
- Character (how realistic or believable are the characters in the text?)
- Truth (How true are the facts used in the text?)
- Gravity (How much does this text MATTER?)



Analyze Text From Personal Viewpoint

- **Reader's view of the world** (How much does it agree or clash with your view of the world, and what you consider right and wrong?)
- **Why (why not) did the reader enjoy the text** (Would you like to read other texts by this author on different topics?)



Engaging Students In:

- Problem solving (analysis, synthesis, evaluation)
- Predicting, making inferences, hypothesizing
- Using background knowledge (schemata) for correct interpretation of input
- Identifying abstract content and ideas
- Sorting out multiple meanings
- Determining the credibility of authors/speakers
- Looking for inconsistencies, gaps in arguments
- Determining appropriateness of textual or rhetorical organization
- Identifying/Comparing different styles, registers
- Differentiating between subjective and objective information
- Both extensive and intensive reading/listening



"Perfect" Text

The New York Times Monday, June 8, 2015

Overconsumption Is a Grave Threat to Humanity

Fred Pearce, a freelance author and journalist based in London, is the environment consultant for New Scientist magazine and author of "[The Coming Population Crash](#): And Our Planet's Surprising Future" and, most recently, "[The New Wild](#): Why Invasive Species Will Be Nature's Salvation."

Updated June 8, 2015, 6:46 AM

We are **defusing the population bomb** that **Paul Ehrlich** warned about. Or, rather, the women of the poor world are doing so. The average woman today, worldwide, has [2.5 children](#), half as many as her grandmother. And the fertility rate continues to fall.

There is some more population growth to come, but if Africa **follows the trend** to small families seen everywhere else, we can expect "**peak population**" sometime later this century. We are not, as Ehrlich suggested, "**doomed**" by **exponential population growth**.

We have to radically change how we produce what we consume. But we've done it before.

Ehrlich was right, however, **to point out that humanity's impact on the planet is a combination of three elements**: our numbers, our consumption patterns and how we produce what we consume. So, because massive poverty and **unmet demand** for basic goods is a widespread problem in much of the poor world today, we still face a "**consumption bomb**" — our growing demands for both consumer goods and life necessities are **responsible for runaway climate change** and the **depletion of soils**, water and other **essential planetary life-support systems**

But there is hope. And our big **opportunity to curb our impact** lies in the third element of Ehrlich's equation. We have to radically change how we produce what we consume. We have done this before. What Ehrlich failed to see in the 1970's was **the power of the green revolution** that came from the development of **high-yielding** crop varieties. **World food production doubled** in a generation.

We know what is needed for the 21st century: **low-carbon energy, recycling of everything from metals to water and fixing the massive inefficiencies in food production.** We can do many of these things not just a bit better, but better by **an order of magnitude**. Technology is key. So **saving the world depends not on** persuading poor women in distant countries to have fewer babies. They are already doing that. **The challenge is to fix capitalism by encouraging innovation in the technologies that can deliver a liveable world.**



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“Imperfect” Recording

“American 489...”

“I need a declared emergency with our low fuel situation. We are not sure if it’s a fuel leak or what, but we need to get, get on the ground right away, please.....”





Managing Super-Authenticity

- Establishing Usability of Super-Authentic Texts
 - Use a 5-point scale, from perfect to unusable.

E.g., Garbled?

Clear	Partially	Moderately	Heavily	Incomprehensible
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- At the lower levels, select from the “Partially” or “Moderately” columns
- Your selection should not contain more than 2-3 super-authenticity factors, particularly if used for diagnostic purposes
- Estimation of super-authenticity factors should involve more than one native speaker.



Proficiency and Performance

Symbiotic relationship through text analysis

- Authentic materials
- Problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Developing strategies
- Processing extended discourse
- Cultural knowledge
- Contextualization
- Exposure to pragmatics...