

## Authenticity and Memory



Time flies and we have the countdown to the celebration of Christmas and it is the festive period in which all the shops are decorated with colourful and flashing bulbs, and attractive figures like Santa Claus and fairies. People are queuing up, hoping to take photos with Santa Claus living in a cosy and comfy house in a shopping center. All these authentic products and symbols have built up the festive atmosphere, which has touched most of the citizens at the end of every year. This has shown that authenticity can be a way to consolidate the memory process of each of the learners and it is the effective means for learners to brush up their English competence.

According to a famous linguist Jack Richards, authentic materials refer to the use of texts, photographs, video selections, and other daily necessities that are not originally prepared for teaching. However, teachers can use them to bring in more fun and meaning to real life. This can improve the communication between students and teachers. It is believed that authentic materials can motivate students to learn more effectively.

We believe in the power and effectiveness of authentic materials because they are so close to the daily experiences of the students who will be more interested in understanding them better. Students will be more motivated to use the language strongly for expressing their feelings with the authentic materials. The content of the materials may not matter very much, but they have already stimulated the students to use the language for understanding the practical environment. This has been the foundation for our school to use the authentic environment to encourage the students to learn English in their daily life. Some examples are related to the establishment of the Nature Education Trail in which the students will be exposed to different English words like fish pond, flowers, marble path, butterfly house and Chinese herbs corner. Through daily encounters with the environment, the students will understand the meaning of different English words and this can facilitate their understanding of the English world.

Memory is also part of our authentic world. With the accumulation of experiences in the authentic world, people will have ample opportunities to retain more sentence patterns and vocabularies for communicative purpose. That is the reason why it is our aspiration to encourage our students to learn from the rich experience of Tung Wah Chairman, Sze Wing Hang, Ivan, School Founder, the Gaw's family and School Supervisor, Mr Sunny Tan. The students will know how people use the language for interactions in the business world. As well, the students will also be motivated to know how their schoolmates use the target language to express their feelings with different scenarios and lifestyles in Hong Kong life. This will be one of the sections in our Islander.

Authentic materials are even more relevant to students. If they are to function in a foreign society, they will have to get accustomed to all the trivial reading items that they will encounter every day. So if the students actually need to be able to communicate and interact socially in the target language environment, authentic materials seem an essential preparation for their task. Being able to cope with an English train timetable, to tell if they have the right ticket, to know which notices are important and addressed to them and which are not, all these are vital to their communicative purpose.