Teaching Colloquial Language to Achieve Higher Levels

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Principles

- Prepares for life beyond the classroom
- Colloquial language is not "incorrect;" it is real language in the right circumstances
- Must teach when using it is/isn't appropriate
- Must teach social parameters, conversational strategies: When, what, cultural rules
- Don't overdo
- Don't sanitize. If too "raw," don't use
- Focus on common, most frequently used features
- Experimentation is helpful, but can become annoying

Definitions, Features

- Registers (In English: Static, Formal, Consultative, Casual, Intimate)*

- Pronunciation (reductions, contractions, accents, speech impediments, etc.)

- Delivery (halting/confident, slow/fast, etc.)

- Ellipsis (shortcuts, surface ungrammaticality, etc.)

- Hesitation markers

- Euphamisms

- Acronyms

- Idioms, clichés

- Colloquialism, Slang

* Source: Montano-Harmon, M. R. "Developing English for Academic Purposes" California State University, Fullerton

Resource Selection Considerations

- Author's Intent
- Level Appropriateness
- Super-Authenticity

*Author's Intent**

Text Mode	Enumerative 0+	Orientational 1	Orientational 1+	Instructive 2	Instructive 2+	Evaluative 3	Evaluative 3+	Projective 4	NOTE: Mixed Text Mode
	(Lists, isolated words and phrases, cognates, numbers, names, street signs, etc.)	Simple, loosely connected discourse to communicate main ideas; simple short or compact sentences, everyday vocab	Orientational with a "twist"	Factual, simple discourse; familiar context, predicatable sequence, topic-specific, simple general vocabulary, complex sentences, cultural details; information packing, ascription tags. Author is still anonymous but begins to appear through shaping.	Instructive with a "twist"	Increasingly complex discourse, unfamiliar topics; both factual and abstract content, present and support hyotheses and opinions; read between the lines, infer; suasion. Author is present through personal views.	Evaluative with a "twist"	Unpredictable turns of thought, read beyond the lines, all styles and forms; author shows virtuosity with the language. Authour's presence and individualistic style is highly pronounced.	If the higher than base level of the text/cut is "core" to the author's intent, do not select for use at the base level!
Select One →									

* Lowe, P. (2000). James Child's text modes & their derivatives: A compilation of descriptions. Washington, DC: National Cryptologic School.

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Level Appropriateness

	0+	1	1+	2	2+	3	3+	4
Vocabulary	Basic Survival Level	Everyday, Survival Level (Concrete, simple generic usage of vocabulary, mostly nouns, adjectives and simple verbs	Everyday Survival Level (plus often more descriptors, adjectives, adverbs)	Topic-Specific Vocabulary (broad range across FLO topics, "liberal" use of adjectives and adverbs)	Topic-Specific Vocabulary (plus a few less frequent and/or abstract items)	Vocabulary in All Speech (concrete and abstract, incl. technical discussions in the listener's professional field)	Vocabulary in All Speech (including occasional low-frequency abstract items and concepts)	Vocabulary in All Speech (social, professional, technical, tailored discourse; synonym level)
Select One >								
Grammar	No, or minimal grammar to deal with. Occasional oblique forms treated as "closed repertoire"	Sentence-level grammar, basic constructions; present tense; subject, verb, object	More complex sentences, occasional temporal shifts, basic cohesive features (e.g., pronouns, verb inflections)	All tenses, common endings (noun, verbal, adjectival where they apply); possessive constructions, verbal moods (e.g., imperative), etc.	Some complex constructions related to expressing opinions and hypotheses	All usually occuring grammar forms, including complex ones; incl. constructions related to expressing hypotheses and supporting opinions (e.g., conditional, subjunctive)	Some unusually complex structures	High level/low frequency grammar forms used to express with individual style and sophistication
Select One >								
Culture	No shared culture assumed	No shared culture assumed	Rare cultural references that are similar to own culture	Some shared target language culture is assumed	Moderated shared target culture is assumed	Much target language culture background is shared	Nearly all target language cultural references are assumed shared	Target language culture is assumed shared

Super-Authenticity

LC: Garbled/ Flawed Recording? **RC: Smudged/Faded /Poor photo copy?**	Clear, not flawed	Partially	Moderately	Heavily	Incomprehensible
Select One ⟶					
LC: Fast Delivery? **R: Illegible?**	Below average or average speed Legibly printed, hand-written	Slightly faster than average Some parts illegible	Moderately faster than average Half illegible	Extremely fast Most of the text illegible	Exaggerated/ Unnatural Entire text is illegible
Select One ⟶					
Long?	Less than 120 seconds Less than 500 words	120 seconds or more 500 words or more			
Select One ⟶					
Elaborate/ Technical?	Not elaborate or technical	Partially	Moderately	Heavily	Level-inappropriate
Select One ⟶					
Unfamiliar?	Not unfamiliar	Partially	Moderately	Heavily	Level-inappropriate
Select One ⟶					
Illogical/ Incoherent/ Uneducated/ Illiterate?	Not illogical/ incoherent/ uneducated/ illiterate	Partially	Moderately	Heavily	Incomprehensible
Select One ⟶					
Intimate/ Informal/ Vulgar?	Not intimate/ informal/ vulgar	Partially	Moderately	Heavily	Exaggerated/ Unnatural
Select One ⟶					
Non-Standard ? **(Dialects, Regionalisms, Street Language, etc.)**	Standard	Partially	Moderately	Heavily	Level-inappropriate
Select One ⟶					
Emotional/ Agitated?	No detectable emotions	Partially	Moderately	Heavily	Exaggerated/ Unnatural
Select One ⟶					

Sample Lessons

- "Presidential Speech" – Level 1
- "Hacker" – Level 2
- "Interview With a Protester" – Level 2+
- "Modern Day Warfare" – Level 3