



Incorporating Cartoons into Teaching

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Abstract

Rationale

This paper and presentation give an original definition of ICT as a means to incorporate cartoons into teaching English as a foreign language. The main aim of the presentation is to offer a fresher innovative look to the current methodologies in using cartoons in the TEFL classroom and share good teaching practices.

The presentation will focus on some ICT based language teaching techniques, namely the use of multi-level cartoon sequences from Longman 'Look Ahead' series, which have been extensively incorporated into the author's teaching practice in Intensive English Language Programmes at the Language Centre of Sultan Qaboos University in Oman.

Background

There is a popular argument that 'this cartoons thing' (or video in general) is merely entertainment with no significant classroom value. We believe that ideally every English lesson must be memorable; a fun clip can trigger not only the learners' personal experience and emotion but also allow this image to be closely associated with a particular grammar phenomenon in the future. Moreover, a teacher can always refer to the episode as a self- or peer-correction tool.

Cartoons are by no means a child-only prerogative. Let us illustrate this with the following facts. According to Nielsen Media Research quoted in 'New York Times', reruns of "Family Guy" on the Cartoon Network in 2005 drew more 18- to 34-year-old viewers than "The Late Show" on CBS. Besides, "The Daily Show" on Comedy Central in the US averages a nightly audience of about 1.3 million viewers in total, roughly two-thirds of whom are between 18 and 49.

SQU experience

Every TEFL classroom in SQU is equipped with an LCD projector, a cable and Wi-Fi Internet access. In this ICT-friendly environment cartoons can be used as an effective presentation tool. For example, to introduce a concept of expressing wishes and regrets. During the presentation an example of a short cartoon sequence to illustrate this methodological idea will be demonstrated.

Practical Implications

If a good cartoons series is not available (like the adaptation from 'LOOK AHEAD' series used by the author, or the world-renowned 'Muzzy in Gondoland', or 'Wallace and Gromit'), Internet is the right place for search. Today World Wide Web offers numerous opportunities to explore teaching materials and incorporate them into the classroom paradigm. One of the recommended places is certainly YouTube. Just by typing in search preferences you may find easy-to-use videos and cartoons. It is important that YouTube materials are short in length and are easy to play or download. And with the



right ICT platform and the proper methodological focus your English language teaching and learning will turn into a wishful and unregrettable experience.

ⁱ The permission for the use of the cartoons originating from the video from 'Look Ahead!' series by Hopkins and Potter was granted by Pearson Education LTD. This permission is for world, non-exclusive rights in the English language for one use only.

ⁱⁱ *Glassman, M.* Cable Shows are Stealing Male Viewers from Broadcast TV // New York Times. May 9th, 2005.