

The background of the cover is an abstract painting. It features a dark green top section, a central area with vertical blue and green brushstrokes, and a bottom section with diagonal green and blue lines. The overall style is expressive and textured.

THE IMAGE

IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Edited by Kieran Donaghy and Daniel Xerri

Preface by Gunther Kress

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Throughout the history of education, communication has been at the centre of the experience, regardless of subject matter. We can't learn (or teach) what we can't communicate and, increasingly, that communication is being done through visual media.

Stephen Apkon

We must teach communication comprehensively in all its forms. We live and work in a visually sophisticated world, so we must be sophisticated in using all the forms of communication, not just the written word.

George Lucas

This book is dedicated to all critical and creative
image users and makers in ELT.

Contents

Preface – Making meaning: from <i>teaching language to designing environments for learning in the contemporary world</i>	ix
Gunther Kress	
1. The image in ELT: an introduction	1
Kieran Donaghy & Daniel Xerri	
2. Image makers: the new language learners of the 21st century	13
Anna Whitcher	
3. A history of video in ELT	23
Ben Goldstein	
4. The power of video	33
Antonia Clare	
5. The power of image nation: how to teach a visual generation	43
Magdalena Wasilewska	
6. Using Pinterest to promote genuine communication and enhance personalised learning	51
Andreia Zakime	
7. Teaching visual literacy through memes in the language classroom	59
Elena Domínguez Romero & Jelena Bobkina	
8. Colors in images: developing color vocabulary and meanings in the EFL classroom	71
Candy Fresacher	
9. Learner-sourced visuals for deeper text engagement and conceptual comprehension	79
Tyson Seburn	
10. Images on canvas: art, thinking and creativity in ELT	89
Chrysa Papalazarou	
11. Looking back at ekphrastic writing: museum education tasks in the language classroom	105
Sylvia Karastathi	
12. Peace art: words and images interwoven	117
Magdalena Brzezinska	
13. The teaching artist in language learning: how to create an Artists in Schools Project	129
Emma Louise Pratt	

14. The picture and the story	145
Paul Dummett	
15. Learning by design: language learning through digital games	155
Paul Driver	
16. Using graphic novels and comics with ELT learners	165
Samantha Lewis	
17. Cartoons and comics: communicating with visuals	179
Jean Theuma	
18. Pictures that tell the truth: deconstructing the teaching/learning space	189
Valéria Benévolo França	
About the contributors	197

Preface

Making meaning: from *teaching language to designing environments for learning in the contemporary world*

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The social world, and with it the world of meaning is, by a now pretty well settled view, fundamentally different to that world as imagined (or actual) some three or four decades ago. All the papers in this volume reflect that sense: an unease that our frames, our theories and tools, are no longer adequate to the shapes and the requirements of the contemporary world of meaning. The semiotic world has changed, yet our theories remain – by and large, uneasily – those we had and which seemed usefully adequate “then”. The semiotic world is a mirror, even if not perfect, of a social world in which former boundaries have blurred, weakened or disappeared entirely, with consequent effects on “language”. One major aspect of this are the phenomena captured under the label of *globalization*: with its all-embracing effects in relation to language, language learning and language teaching.

The effects of these social and semiotic changes are apparent everywhere, though nowhere more insistently so than in subjects to do with representation and communication, and hence with Applied Linguistics, in all its various manifestations (the Teaching of English being one), very much in the foreground. Here the “blurring” or “disappearance” of boundaries finds its clearest expression in relation to the *means for making and communicating meaning*. Where before ‘one’ could and did talk and write relatively dismissively about “the extra-linguistic” or “the para-linguistic”, these phenomena have moved into the centre of representational and communicational attention. Language – whether as speech or as writing – is now most usually one part only of compositions comprising a number of entirely different means for making meaning. Speech occurs jointly with ensembles of gesture, posture, gaze, movement. Writing occurs in compositions with image, colour, in the specific arrangements of layout. Frequently neither speech nor writing are central: they are partial expressions of the overall

meaning of such composition. In very many instances attention to speech or writing provides a partial account only of the overall meaning of the communicational ensemble.

If speech or writing are now means for the *partial* expression of meaning, several unavoidable questions arise for the teacher of a language for those who are not familiar with that language, nor with its social environments of use. The first question may be “if writing is *partial* here – in this ensemble of resources for making meaning, for communication – *then in what ways is it partial?*” The second question might be: “In what social environments do speech or writing tend to have what kind of role?” And if the question is posed – as in this volume – in relation to English Language Teaching, the third utterly essential question is “in what ways are the uses, the forms and degrees of partiality, similar to or different from the social uses of the learner’s first (or other) language(s) in differing social environments?”

The absolutely taken-for-granted presence of a multiplicity of resources for making meaning – of “modes” in multimodal approaches – makes all teaching into the task of *designing* semiotically apt environments for learning: “apt” in terms of the requirements and understandings of learners, and apt in relation to that which is being communicated. Putting it differently: the *designs* for learning have to be apt for both *curriculum* – the matter taught – and *pedagogy* – the social relations in environments of teaching and learning. In the case of the teacher of a “foreign language”, her or his task now is hugely more difficult *and* hugely more rewarding in contemporary environments.

The papers in this volume admirably illustrate the range of issues that arise. The task for both practitioners/teachers and for theorists is to produce frames, apt theories, and apt tools for an understanding of these issues in the present unstable and hugely complex world.

1. The image in ELT: an introduction

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The vast majority of language teachers use images in their classroom. In today's increasingly visual world, it is difficult to imagine the language classroom without coursebook images, photographs, paintings, cartoons, picture books, comics, flashcards, wallcharts, YouTube videos, films, student-created artwork and media, and so on. However, despite the ubiquity of images in language teaching, we need to ask whether images are being approached merely as an aid or support, or as a significant component of communicating in a foreign language, and as a means of fostering students' communicative competence and creativity. In order to answer this question, we need to examine how images have been approached in resource books and coursebooks.

IMAGE RESOURCE BOOKS

In his 1966 seminal study *The Visual Element in Language Teaching*, Pit Corder made the distinction between "talking about images" (merely describing images) and "talking with images" (responding personally to images). The influence of this work on the use of images in language education has been immense. Since this seminal book, there have been a number of practical resource books, such as Alan Maley et al.'s *The Mind's Eye* (1980), Andrew Wright's *Pictures for Language Learners* (1990), David A. Hill's *Visual Impact* (1990), Ben Goldstein's *Working with Images* (2009), Jamie Keddie's *Images* (2009), and Peter Grundy et al.'s *English Through Art* (2009). These books promote the critical and creative use of still images in the language classroom, and encourage students to interpret images and analyse their reaction to them.

Perhaps the most influential video methodology book for teachers is Cooper et al.'s *Video* (1991). This ground-breaking book was the first to establish the principle of active watching: that rather than just watching a video passively and answering listening comprehension questions,

students should play a much more active viewing role. Students were involved in information gap tasks and engaged with the video on a much more meaningful level. Subsequently, a number of guides such as Susan Stempleski and Barry Tomalin's *Film* (2001), and Jane Sherman's *Using Authentic Video in the Language Classroom* (2003) contained practical suggestions for activities built upon the principle of active viewing. More recently, Ben Goldstein and Paul Driver's *Language Learning with Digital Video* (2014), Jamie Keddie's *Bringing Online Video into the Classroom* (2014), and Kieran Donaghy's *Film in Action* (2015) have focused not just on activities to exploit existing video content available on video-sharing sites such as YouTube and Vimeo, but also on making and using learner-generated videos and short films.

However, despite the fact that there are many resource books that promote the critical and creative usage of both still and moving images, resource books sell very few copies and it can take a long time before the activities proposed in them are adopted by authors of the much better selling coursebooks. For better or worse, ELT coursebooks have a huge influence on teachers' methodology. As Peter Viney (2017) recounts,

I angered a group of teachers in Japan by stating that *Headway* had had a far greater influence on what happens in the ELT classroom than the entire collected works of Stephen Krashen. In practical terms, coursebooks are the filter through which theory reaches the classroom. It's a thick filter with an inbuilt delay system, but the good ideas trickle through eventually.

To better understand the role of images in the language classroom, it is necessary to examine how they are used in coursebooks.

IMAGES IN COURSEBOOKS

When considering the use of still images in coursebooks, one is struck by the fact that the power of images to stimulate ideas, discussion and creativity is still currently underexploited in the majority of them. According to well-known coursebook writer Ben Goldstein (2009),

With the advent of large-scale ELT publishing, images were used not only as visual reinforcement, but in order to make the finished product more attractive and hence more marketable. However, although texts are largely taken

from 'authentic' sources to reflect the real-life language that the books promote, the images are still largely made up of archive photos. Such images not only lack originality, but more often than not project and promote an affluent and aspirational lifestyle to learners. For this reason ELT materials, however, contemporary they are in topic and outlook, often appear to have a superficial, colour-supplement 'look' to them. Teachers and learners tend not to be presented with images that they would encounter in the real world, but rather a safe cleaned-up version. (p. 4)

In addition to this sanitised use of images in coursebooks, there is the criticism that images are still largely used as aids and for decoration. In a recent study of the usage of images in three intermediate ELT coursebooks for young adults and adults, David A. Hill (2013) found that over half of photos and drawings were used only for decoration:

It seems to be that having over 50 per cent of the pictures in a given coursebook used for purely decorative purposes is a great waste of effort on the part of the publisher and a great waste of opportunity for the language learner and teacher. (p. 163)

Of course, upon examining an ELT coursebook, one is also struck by the dominance of monomodal texts over the type of multimodal texts that students are engaging with on a daily basis outside the classroom.

However, despite the fact that the majority of coursebooks still use images largely for support and decoration, and monomodal texts are generally dominant, recently there has been a clear trend towards using images to stimulate ideas and discussion. In an increasing number of coursebooks, such as *Life* (National Geographic Learning), *Eyes Open/Uncover* (Cambridge University Press), *Keynote* (National Geographic Learning), and *The Big Picture* (Richmond), at the start of each unit large high-impact non-stock images are being used as a springboard to help establish the topic, activate schemata and get students talking.

Having looked at how images are used in ELT coursebooks, it is now necessary to explore how videos are used as more and more coursebooks are integrating video. When we look at how video is used, we discover that it is still largely regarded as glorified listening. Video is used as a way of doing listening comprehension tasks but with the support of moving

images to help with non-verbal communication. It is still largely exploited for comprehension-based tasks such as multiple-choice questions and language-based tasks such as gap-fills. However, an increasing number of coursebooks are exploiting video not just for language or comprehension-based activities, but also for more communicative and creative tasks in which students are encouraged to interpret and analyse what they see. Furthermore, in some coursebooks, such as *Eyes Open/Uncover* (Cambridge University Press), students are even asked to create their own videos. In the same way that the still image is beginning to play a more dominant role, so too has video become more integral to classroom practice and has begun to play a more communicative and creative role.

Nonetheless, despite the fact that there has been a gradual shift towards a more critical and creative use of both still and moving images in ELT coursebooks and the ELT classroom, images are still not being fully exploited as multimodal texts, and there is little focus on *multiliteracies pedagogy* as well as little effort to develop learners' *visual literacy*.

MULTILITERACIES PEDAGOGY

The term 'multiliteracies' was coined in the mid 1990s by the New London Group, a group of scholars who argue that literacy pedagogy should be linked to the rapidly changing social, cultural and technological environment. They argue that for a long period, the book was the dominant medium of communication. However, with the challenge of a technologically evolving landscape and the ascendance of the image, particularly the moving image, the screen has taken that place. According to Gunther Kress (2003), a prominent member of the group, "The former constellation of *medium of book* and *mode of writing* is giving way, and in many domains has already given way, to the new constellation of *medium of screen* and *mode of image*" (p. 9). However, this change does not spell the death of the written word. As Kress (2003) states, "Writing is too useful and valuable a mode of representation and communication – never mind the enormous weight of cultural investment in this technology" (p. 10).

In *Literacy in the New Media Age*, Kress (2003) offers a new theory of literacy where he argues that our previous dependence on linguistic theories to define literacy is now obsolete and deficient, and that we must combine language-based theory with semiotics (the study of signs and symbols and how they are used) and other visual theories, to provide an appropriate meaning to the term 'literacy' in the twenty-first century. As Carey Jewitt (2008) points out, "there is a need to approach literacy

practices as an inter-textual web of contexts and technology, rather than isolated sets of skills and competences” (p. 47). She believes that “what is needed is an educational framework that recognises and describes the new forms of text that children meet every day in order to secure the place of multimodal and visual texts within the curriculum” (p. 56).

To do this the New London Group called for a pedagogy of multiliteracies where students would learn to ‘read’ (analyse and interpret) and ‘write’ (create) multimodal texts. Within the framework of multiliteracies pedagogy, visual literacy is one of the key literacies.

VISUAL LITERACY

John Debes (1969) coined the term ‘visual literacy’ and offered the following definition:

Visual Literacy refers to a group of vision-competencies a human being can develop by seeing and at the same time having and integrating other sensory experiences. The development of these competencies is fundamental to normal human learning. When developed, they enable a visually literate person to discriminate and interpret the visible actions, objects, symbols, natural or man-made, that he encounters in his environment. Through the creative use of these competencies, he is able to communicate with others. Through the appreciative use of these competencies, he is able to comprehend and enjoy the masterworks of visual communication. (p. 26)

A more contemporary and perhaps useful definition states that,

In the context of human, intentional visual communication, visual literacy refers to a group of largely acquired abilities i.e. the abilities to understand (read), and to use (write) images, as well as to think and learn in terms of images. (Avgerinou, 2001, p. 26)

The importance of visual literacy in education is widely acknowledged. It is generally agreed that education needs to develop learners’ skills and ability to interpret images and to communicate visually. In schools there is a gradual move away from a reliance on print as the primary medium of dissemination and instruction, and instead towards visual media and the screen. In addition, there is an increasing recognition that visual literacy

needs to be integrated into curricula. This is reflected by the fact that in the English language curricula of a number of countries – for example, Canada, Australia and Singapore – two new skills, *viewing* and *visually representing* have been added to the traditional skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

According to Deborah Begoray (2001), the Canadian common curriculum framework states that,

Viewing is an active process of attending to and comprehending visual media, such as television, advertising images, films, diagrams, symbols, photographs, videos, drama, drawings, sculpture, and paintings.

Representing enables students to communicate information and ideas through a variety of media. (p. 202)

Viewing therefore requires learners to construct meaning by interpreting the parts (images, symbols, conventions, contexts) that are related to a visual text, and to understand not only “what” a text says, but “how” the text works. Here are some of the questions the Canadian common curriculum framework states effective viewers would ask themselves:

- What is the text representing?
- How is the text constructed?
- What assumptions, interests, beliefs, biases and values are portrayed by the text?
- What is the purpose of the text?
- To whom is the text directed? Who does the text exclude?
- What is my reaction to the text? What causes this reaction?
- What personal connections and associations can I make with this text?

Representing enables students to communicate their ideas visually using a variety of media and formats, including diagrams, charts, infographics, illustrations, slide shows, concept maps, photographs, images or symbols, storyboards, memes, posters and videos. Representing often allows students to make sense of their learning and to demonstrate their understanding.

Undoubtedly, these two new skills of viewing and representing will be integrated into national curricula throughout the world in the near

future. However, for the moment, at least, very little attention has been paid to them in ELT syllabus design. Indeed, multimodality and visual literacy have been largely ignored in ELT. As Kress (2000) points out, “Nearly every text that I look at uses two modes of communication: (a) language as writing and (b) image. Yet TESOL professionals continue to act as though language fully represented the meanings they wish to encode and communicate” (p. 337). Similarly, Greek academic Sylvia Karastathi (2016) states that,

Talks in TESOL conferences, address the use of iPads, films, digital storytelling, interactive whiteboards, GoogleMaps and so many other digital media. It is indeed exciting the way ICT has been embraced by the ELT community, as a useful tool that promotes engagement and new learning opportunities. But, although much attention has been given to digital tools which produce mainly visual media, visual literacy is largely ignored in TESOL conferences, often subsumed under the focus on digital literacies, revealing the overall misinterpretation of its changing role in the ELT field.

This misinterpretation of the changing and increasingly important role of visual literacy in ELT highlights the need for teachers to receive training in both visual literacy and media production. According to Karastathi (2016), “Aspects of visual literacy training need to be included in the syllabus of pre-service and in-service teacher training courses if we want to empower teachers in an era of multimodal communication and enable better collaboration with their students.”

Unless teachers receive specific training in visual literacy and media production, it will be difficult for them to teach these vital skills to their students in a world where they are expected to interpret and present complex visual ideas using a variety of media. As Karastathi (2016) argues,

If it is true then that our world is full of powerful visual images that continually bombard our students, it is important to teach them to resist the passivity, apathy and numbness they might feel toward the visual, and instead help them analyze the rhetorical techniques and meaning making mechanisms in operation in visual texts – that is, to make them active viewers. The fact that the nature

of contemporary communication has changed into a multimodal one, would lead us to rethink the construct of communicative competence.

Despite the excellent work being done by many teachers with images, there is an urgent need for ELT to finally come to terms with both multiliteracies pedagogy and visual literacy if we are to meet the needs of our students to communicate effectively in a world where communication is increasingly multimodal in nature. To do this, we need to increase the presence of multimodal texts in the ELT curriculum, incorporate specific visual literacy and media production training into pre-service and in-service teacher training courses, and extend specific visual literacy and media production strategies aimed at students.

THE IMAGE CONFERENCE

The Image Conference was set up to explore the possibilities that film, video, images and video games offer to both language teachers and language learners. In a world where we are saturated with visual stimulation due to the fact that the visual image is taking over, the rationale behind The Image Conference is that there is a need for the ability to interpret, analyse and create images to become an integral part of literacy.

The aim of The Image Conference is to put images at the centre of the language learning agenda and offer guidance on using images critically and creatively, and to promote visual literacy in language education. The Image Conference brings together leading experts and practitioners in the use of images in language learning so that they may share their experiences, insights and know-how. It provides participants with an excellent opportunity to enhance their competence in the innovative and creative use of images.

The first edition of the Image Conference was held at Universitat Autònoma Barcelona with the support of the IATEFL Learning Technologies Special Interest Group. Subsequent editions were held in Brasilia, Brazil; Córdoba, Spain; and Munich, Germany. The fifth edition of the conference was held in collaboration with the ELT Council in Valletta, Malta, in October 2017.

BOOK OVERVIEW

This book brings together a selection of papers based on sessions at the five editions of the Image Conference organized so far. All of the

papers in this book urge teachers to use images critically and creatively, and encourage students to resist the passivity they might feel towards images. Every single contribution is meant to help both teachers and students to become more active viewers and more visually literate.

The first group of papers explores the use and production of film in the language classroom. Whitcher uses her analysis of a short film as a springboard for a discussion of the potential of filmmaking for language learners. Goldstein provides a history of video in ELT and considers what role it will play in the future. Clare examines why video is such an engaging language learning tool.

In the next group of papers different authors investigate how images sourced from social media can be used to enhance language learning. Wasilewska starts by providing an overview of the needs of language learners forming part of the visual generation before considering the classroom use of applications like Instagram and Pinterest. The latter is also the focus of Zakime's paper, which examines how a tool like Pinterest can be harnessed for the purpose of developing students' visual literacy. Domínguez Romero and Bobkina illustrate how visual literacy can be taught via the memes that are regularly posted on social media.

The book's next two papers consider other sources of images in the language classroom. Fresacher takes a look at how product packaging, advertisements and other image sources can be used to develop students' colour vocabulary and their understanding of the different meanings of colour. Seburn makes a case for the use of learner-sourced images in the classroom as a means of deepening textual engagement and conceptual comprehension.

The next group of papers examines how the images in artworks can be exploited not only for language learning but also for the development of visual literacy. Papalazarou shows how exposing students to paintings can serve to structure their thinking and enhance their writing skills. Similarly, Karastathi discusses the classroom application of ekphrastic writing, which consists of the act of writing about visual works of art such as the ones found in museums. Writing prose and poetry in response to peace-related artworks constitutes the focus of Brzezinska's paper. Given the importance of visual arts as a means of enriching human communication, Pratt describes how to create an Artists in Schools project.

The book's last group of papers is concerned to varying degrees with the storytelling capacity of images. Dummett highlights the connection that exists between images and stories, a connection that helps to

make language learning more engaging. Narratives play an important role in many digital games, these being what Driver evaluates in his paper. Lewis explores how graphic novels and comics can be used with language learners while Theuma elaborates on how to exploit the visual communication contained within cartoons and comics. Finally, Benévolo França explains how the act of deconstructing pictures of teaching and learning spaces enables us to glimpse the truth about the movements, voices and interaction of the people that occupied them.

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2. Image makers: the new language learners of the 21st century

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This paper includes a description and an analysis of a short film called *A Visual Manifesto for Language Teaching* (<https://goo.gl/uhvWpx>), which was presented at The Image Conference in Córdoba, Spain, in November 2014, as well as a reflection on how filmmaking can be a vehicle for positive change in the language classroom and beyond. The purpose of the film is to show that by encouraging actual image making and filmmaking in the classroom setting, students will have a unique opportunity to practice the skills they are acquiring from their own personal usage of image-making devices, as well as learn that through collaboration they can actually create something bigger than themselves.

INTRODUCTION

In the late summer of 2014, Kieran Donaghy, another ELT writer and film enthusiast, and I started throwing around an idea for a short film. A lot of what we had been experiencing in our own work and in our daily lives compelled us to create something that combined words with images that could stand on its own and say what we felt to be true. We thought that through a film that highlighted the struggle some of us have with the overwhelming amount of information that exists out there today and that is often constantly at our fingertips, we could start the conversation of how we can get our students to act more deliberately and how we can begin to bridge the gap between popular culture and classroom teaching. We hoped that by seeing this barrage of images in a different light, one that allows us to retake control of the information that is out there and manage their impact, we could start encouraging change in our approaches in the language classroom.

As many of us are seeing in education today, and not just in language teaching, there is still a divide between what our students and children are already comfortable with regarding digital media and what they are encouraged to use in the classroom. Some of this has stemmed from improper use or overuse of media without a specific purpose, so we felt

that by addressing the issue head on – the fact that we are not being deliberate enough in our usage of certain image-based tools and the processes involved – we could encourage a more open dialogue about how to develop solutions that work for students and teachers. Through the film’s narrative and the careful selection of images and video clips, this “visual manifesto” intends to guide the viewer through the process of what happens when you look more critically at images and how engaging in that active process with others often helps create an even better result.

There is so much information we have to navigate daily that we are all starting to realize the desperate need to take measures to reduce it and manage it better. In the film, we emphasize the need to pause, reflect, and think about how to be more deliberate instead of just reacting to today’s media overload. We thought that perhaps it is less about removing ourselves entirely from the onslaught of images and information than it is to just be more aware and selective. In making this film, we hoped that people would see how the impact of images can be turned around so that it becomes a part of what students and teachers can create and better manage as a team.

IMAGES AND TEXT WORKING TOGETHER

When Kieran and I thought about how we wanted to make this film, we decided that our message would have to be conveyed not just through words and images but also through the pace and rhythm of the film itself. After coming up with a narrative, it became clear that there were definite sections that formed a particular flow in what we were trying to say.

We selected the images that conveyed what seemed to best represent our ideas and then matched them up with the cadence of the narrative. We divided the narrative into sections (or segments) based on the flow of what we were trying to say – laying out the general idea of images and how they play a role in our lives on a daily basis in every aspect, both positive and negative. Our focus became not just what we were seeing around us but *how* we were seeing it, and we chose images based on how true they were to what they made us feel. Indeed, the impact of what we are seeing creates who we are and how we respond to what’s around us.

In the film, you will see that we started slowly with images that contained more serenity and then moved to ones that might invoke more emotion or even pain. We wondered which images were a better reflection of self and which ones were meant to elicit feeling in others. If the images were more unusual or took place in unknown locations,

didn't they still have some sense of timelessness or commonality? Just as we can find connections in the words we speak, we were finding connections and common ground in the images we were drawn to and selecting.

When watching this film, it's important to reflect both on the words and the narrative simultaneously in order to get the full impact of the film's message. I will take you through the film now and dissect its five segments, highlighting the questions that helped us think more deeply about the impact of images in our lives today.

THE FILM AND ANALYSIS

A Visual Manifesto for Language Teaching

[Segment 1]

Images. They create our world.

They inhabit our space.

They reflect what's in our mind's eye
and are at the core of what we believe in.

What we hope for.

The beauty we see in others, in ourselves.

The hope we find, even in difficult moments.

Images are an intimate part of our world,
and they are everywhere.

[Segment 2]

But how do we reflect on them now,
with so many at once?

Are they losing their impact?

Do we really understand what we're seeing?

Or is it lost in the bombardment?

What do we need to do to make it...stop?

[Segment 3]

We can no longer be passive.

We have to be more discerning, more selective, more collaborative.

We have to recognize the stories, on the surface and underneath, and
retell them in our own way, or tell our own stories.

[Segment 4]

We have to slow down,

stop,
reflect,
think about what we're seeing,
why it's there,
how it affects us,
what it does to us emotionally
and why.

[Segment 5]

When we are able to do this, we see beneath the surface to what is really there.

And only then do we become the real message makers, the critical thinkers, and the true problem solvers, who manifest the dreams of tomorrow.

Images in daily life

Segment 1 [00:00-00:39]

To help us think about how images affect our daily life, we asked ourselves these questions:

- What kinds of images do we see every day?
- Do we look for serenity? How do we handle more painful images?
- Do we look for images that reflect ourselves or are we looking for something different, something outside ourselves?
- Where do we search images beyond what we see in front of us?
- Which ones give us a different perspective?
- How do we view them? (e.g., straight on, from above, through a screen)
- Do we prefer viewing images slowly or quickly?

After watching the first segment, think about how the images relate to the questions above.

From fast to faster

Segment 2 [00:39-00:58]

In recent years, what has become increasingly obvious to us and to our students is the pace at which these images are now coming at us and through a variety of formats and channels. We can no longer process

them at a measured rate. As Stephen Apkon (2013) says in his book *The Age of the Image*, “Moving images increasingly occupy our public spaces and add to the ever-expanding body of visual data we are steeped in” (p. 33).

Images have taken on a much greater role in our everyday lives than they used to since it is not just the quantity we are seeing but the incredible variety. There’s an immediacy to everything that was not there before. It is exciting and intimidating at the same time. But how do we prevent this image overload from overwhelming us? How do we better manage the various media we have available to us so readily? How are we able to decipher the messages when there’s so much stimulation at once?

The idea behind Segment 2 is to show the impact of the huge number of images through a fast-paced sequence, going from a variety of still images showing types of devices to a barrage of screens in fast-moving footage. We wanted to mimic how speed builds exponentially even before we realize it. When you watch this segment, notice how the music builds and gets faster and how everyone’s focus has turned to the screens.

We asked ourselves these questions:

- How do we share images with others?
- Are we more likely to use words or images to convey an idea?
- What is the difference between using a still image and a moving image when we are expressing an idea?
- How does the pace of what we’re seeing affect the way we feel?
- Do we feel we have control over the speed of the images we see in our lives?

Active versus passive viewing

Segment 3 [00:58-01:21]

The image in this segment of a student watching something passively is meant to represent something that is a behavior that is evolving into something different today. We are now becoming more actively engaged in our relationship with images, so the scene is followed by students working together, looking more closely at what they’re creating, and putting their ideas together. By using footage of students in action, we see how they are working together, often more deliberately and carefully – not just receiving the information, but processing it, analyzing it, changing it into something meaningful for them.

In this segment, we begin to see film as a process and we thought about these questions:

- What is the difference between a passive and an active viewer?
- How does filmmaking encourage people to work more collaboratively?
- What role does the teacher play in active viewing?
- Since filmmaking isn't just about using a camera, what other types of materials can we use when coming up with ideas for a film?
- What makes a great story?

Think about it...more deeply

Segment 4: [01:21-01:37]

Indeed, deeper thought and more active critical thinking is what we really need to be supporting – this idea that we are working on critical life skills by engaging in the filmmaking process. We are teaching and partaking in a collaborative process, a process that depends on us working together, problem solving, and finding a way to create something that conveys the messages we are trying to form and the stories we are trying to tell.

In this segment, we considered these questions:

- What elements of the process of filmmaking encourage critical thinking?
- How can being more thoughtful and deliberate in the process change what we are creating?
- What steps can we take to stop and reflect?
- How can filmmaking promote more critical thinking skills?

Collaboration forms the message

Segment 5 [01:37-02:02]

It is then, when we are in a flow of working together on something with each person or team in charge of an aspect of film, something they've created, that deeper understanding can occur. There is also a true commitment to the task at hand simply because it's not a task anymore but something that is communicating a message. Our stories can be made more real, not just with the written word, but with a series of visuals that communicate even more of what we really want to say.

We asked ourselves these questions in the final segment:

- How do we see the filmmaking process as collaborative?
- How can working together make something greater than what we create on our own?
- How do our messages become clearer through the combination of words and images?
- How can film be a more effective medium of communication?

FILMMAKING IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

A Visual Manifesto for Language Teaching was made in order to start a conversation, to get people thinking about filmmaking as a viable process in the language classroom. We wanted to ease fears and get teachers to think about ways of connecting with their students by being open to filmmaking and even consider starting with some simple film projects in their own classrooms.

Filmmaking is no longer as prohibitive as it once was when expensive equipment was required and often a crew to actually run that equipment properly. While some of the scenes in our film might seem intimidating with the equipment the students are using, there are many instances where you can see how students manage with minimal equipment (e.g., mobile phones) or even no technical equipment at all, as with the paper storyboarding. With today's easy access to basic digital cameras and mobile devices, which often allow you to edit film on the spot, students can take the filmmaking process into their own hands.

As a teacher, you can keep your first introduction to filmmaking very simple by following some basic steps. Keep films short and simple with just a few basic guidelines. Make the requirements tight so that students will be able to master some basic film techniques and feel like they have achieved them. Encourage students to work together as a team and give them specific roles, such as scriptwriter, director, storyboarder, camera operator, sound engineer, and video editor. This will give them a taste for what it is really like to make a film since it is all about teamwork. Have regular check-ins to mark their progress so the project stays on course. And finally, set a deadline for when their film needs to be ready as this will help with their time management skills.

BECOMING MORE AWARE AND THOUGHTFUL

What seems to help students think more deeply about what they are creating is to have them look more closely as to why they have chosen

certain images over others, why they sometimes use video and other times just photos, what influences them to post one thing and not another, and why some images require captions while others can stand on their own and speak for themselves. This is at the heart of what we need to be asking them so that they can be more deliberate in their choices and figure out how to make their selection process more explicit and thoughtful. In this way, they can become more aware of what kind of messages they are sending out into the world and better predict the types of reactions they might receive.

Are students motivated to do this? Absolutely. As Kieran Donaghy (2015) says in his book *Film in Action*,

One of the main benefits of using film in language teaching is that it is highly motivating and relates to the learners' lives. Learners engage with moving images constantly outside of the classroom, are knowledgeable about them, and enjoy watching them. (p. 18)

Motivation is clearly an incentive for using film in the classroom, but furthermore, it is the actual filmmaking process that is even more motivating because students are creating something that is their own and that they can potentially share with the world.

If we can encourage this deliberate thinking before acting by using filmmaking in our classrooms and subsequently create lessons and projects that integrate the skills students are acquiring and often quickly mastering in their free time, then we have a recipe for academic success and achievement. If we look at the actual process of filmmaking, which involves a very deliberate and often meticulous process, we can help students to see how their world of images can be even more effective and thought-provoking than what they intended. By guiding them through the steps, we can help them become better storytellers and more successful communicators.

OUR STUDENTS HAVE THE ANSWERS...WE JUST NEED TO CATCH UP

We are all facing a world in which we need to be able to communicate with each other using all kinds of media. Literacy now extends beyond just the traditional written word; it now includes all types of digital input with images and video at the forefront. Ben Goldstein and Paul Driver

(2015) summarize the direction we are moving towards in *Language Learning with Digital Video*:

it may well be that video is becoming the preferred medium for entertainment and information presentation and the chief cultural resource for many young people, and this is, of course, having a growing impact on teaching environments as well. Such developments offer huge potential for teachers wanting to work with moving images. (p. 5)

Indeed, schools and teachers may find that they will start to rely less on print as the primary medium of dissemination and instruction and instead, move towards visual media and the screen. Instruction can then emphasize creative production in which students and teachers take advantage of the emergence of new digital tools and the increased access to affordable filming and editing equipment. Furthermore, the roles in filmmaking will promote skills they can explore and build upon, and through this collaborative process, they can learn skills such as good decision-making, efficient problem solving, and effective negotiating, all of which are highly valued in the 21st century workplace. Our role as teachers can be to guide this process and come up with ideas that will help inspire topics and projects that encourage the use of the target language. Much of what students will be researching as they work together to produce a short film will involve sharing ideas using the target language, which means they will already be successfully communicating in English.

If we can effectively integrate the skills this new generation is acquiring naturally just through their regular usage of certain tools and devices, we will be able to expand the opportunities for learning in the classroom. It's about going beyond what the device actually produces and to what the student learns during the creative act. By observing this process more closely, we can practice those skills to an even greater extent and help students be more prepared for what awaits them in their future jobs, in which embracing change and being flexible will be key skills to success.

The deliberate process of film may be one of the factors in helping us build more community in our classrooms, connect us with our students, and help them interpret their own lives, thus cultivating stronger more

effective communicators, storytellers, and image makers. In this digital age, learning to be comfortable with this type of interdependency is key. It starts with a spark, an idea, a shared connection, all of which can ultimately become a story, a message, a manifesto.

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3. A history of video in ELT

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The use of video in language teaching has undergone enormous changes since the media was first used in the 1980s. This paper traces that development focusing on the kinds of material and the different methodological approaches employed during this time. In tracing this journey, the article focuses on different trends in the use of video and, in particular, the narrowing gap between video exploitation and video creation tasks. It also looks to the future in an attempt to understand what role video may have in the coming years and whether it will be of greater significance within the classroom or outside it.

INTRODUCTION

When I started teaching in 1990, video was just starting to be used and it thus played a largely superfluous role in the language classroom. Clearly, this was due to the lack of facilities available at the time. I recall that there was just one “video room” in the first institution in which I worked and teachers took it in turns to use it. Friday afternoon rapidly became the preferred time to do this as teachers associated using video with watching television: it was, above all, a leisure activity. Very often whole films (or parts of them) were shown and a minimum number of tasks were presented to the students. It seemed to be a time for both teachers and students to switch off.

In the next three decades, we have seen how the role of video has changed radically. This transformation has gone hand in hand with a greater emphasis on the image, what can be termed “the visual turn”. In the same way that the still image no longer plays the supportive or subservient role that it once did, so too video has become much more integral to classroom practice.

METHODOLOGY

The first methodological handbook on video that I came across when researching the topic was a series of essays called *Video Applications in English Language Teaching* (1983). In great part, these essays reveal the limited perspectives that teacher educators had of what was for them a

recent innovation. For example, in the opening essay, Frances MacKnight (1983) writes: "Video can literally provide the complete picture: listening comprehension reinforced by watching comprehension... the main linguistic benefit is considered to be the presentation of chunks of authentic language within a whole context" (p. 2).

This quotation emphasizes the role of video as perceived at that time. For many educators, video was indeed regarded as glorified audio. It was a way of "doing listening comprehension tasks" but with the aid of the image to help with non-vocal communication such as body language. The emphasis was on using video as a way to showcase conversations, providing a model for students' own output. However, Jane Willis' (1983) article in this collection, entitled '101 Ways to Use Video', took a far broader view. Importantly, she moved away from seeing video as merely providing a model dialogue for students, seeing it both "as a source of information" in its own right and as a "stimulus" (p. 45) for other activities such as debate and discussion.

This approach was borne out in other more practical published guides that subsequently emerged on the market. For example, the teachers' methodology handbook *Video* (1991) promoted a number of tasks in which "active viewing" was seen as the key.

Cooper et al. (1991) established the idea that a student should not just watch a video passively and answer comprehension questions but take a more active role in the viewing experience. This largely meant that students were engaged in information gap tasks, which demanded a greater level of engagement and interaction with the video material. For example, the tasks in *Video* often oblige the teacher to divide the class into groups with some students, for example, reading the script and others looking at the screen in silent mode and then coming together to piece together the scene.

The key element here was interacting with the interface, which, in those days, was limited to the remote control. This could be used to show and remove subtitles, freeze frame an image, slow down and fast forward the action and so on. Over 25 years later, many of the tasks in *Video* still work well and generate a lot of language. It was also the first book (that, at least, I am aware of) which focused on purely visual elements. For example, it included a task called 'Count the Cuts' in which students had to count the number of times the camera angle shifts. Activities such as these also revealed the benefits of multiple viewing. Students may be focused on language or image or both but each time they watch for a different purpose and each time pick up something new.

PUBLISHED MATERIALS FOR STUDENTS

Comedy sketches

The first video material, specifically made for students, that I used in class was the *Grapevine* (1989-1992) series written by Peter and Karen Viney. It was typical of the kinds of comedy videos that publishers produced at the time. Each short video clip was a separate sketch or vignette with no continuing story, the idea being that they were short enough to be used in class. One interesting aspect about these videos was how professionally produced they were. Director Bob Spiers had worked on BBC comedy series such as *Fawlty Towers* and *Dad's Army* and professional actors were chosen to work on it, as well. This is indicative of how at the time ELT video was perceived as professionally produced light entertainment, entirely removed from the rest of the material being used in class.

Today, the videos themselves seem rather archaic but in terms of methodology, series like *Grapevine* made a number of key advances. Firstly, they established a recognized way to structure the exploitation of video. This was achieved by dividing activities into three key stages: 'before you watch', 'while you watch', and 'after you watch'. This way of sequencing video has survived to the present day and is only now starting to be challenged by ELT practitioners.

This sequence echoed the way that reading texts were commonly exploited in communicative approach materials. The Before stage activates schema and/or provides lexical input to provide the learners with an idea of what they are about to see. The While stage focuses the learner on comprehension or language-based tasks and the After stage is the productive part where learners respond affectively to the material, reflecting on it or discussing it in some way.

In terms of exploitation, series like *Grapevine* were innovative in the sense that they did not only exploit the video materials for language-based tasks such as gap-fills but also for skills practice. In the vital 'After you watch' stage, many tasks were introduced which allowed a much more creative response. For example, students might see the whole video divided into a mixture of storyboarded scenes and their job would be to put the scenes into a correct order and narrate or write a summary of what they had seen.

Well-made and well exploited as the videos were, the material itself was not, to my mind at least, anything you would have wanted to watch outside class. It was designed purely for the language classroom and as

publishers and teachers became aware of more contemporary genres, this comedy-sketch format was dropped.

News and documentaries

Perhaps for this reason, it wasn't long before ELT publishers started to incorporate "authentic" video into their materials. The term "authentic" is, of course, highly problematic but by featuring news reports or short documentaries from media organizations such as the BBC, Reuters or CNN, publishers believed that they could gain a more authentic response from learners. Certainly, in terms of marketing, the "authentic" nature of these clips gave the language courses credibility and introduced the real world into the classroom. It also gave learners a sense of achievement that they could understand news bulletins or documentaries which would have been originally watched by the general public.

To overcome the issue of language level, face-to-camera footage was avoided and voice-overs were often re-recorded to make them accessible to basic level learners, as well as allowing the transcripts to include targeted vocabulary. Such materials thus developed the "semi-authentic" label. Interest value, of course, varied enormously, depending on the news or documentary in question. However, the fact that this was "real-world" material was seen as a major benefit by all.

Such tie-ins still exist today, for example videos from media organizations such as Discovery Education or National Geographic now provide ELT materials with important USPs and grant the material a certain cachet. The chosen clips are now often longer and featured within the student book pages rather than being seen as an add-on, separated from the flow of the lesson. Video has thus shifted from being a supplementary element to an integral part of a course. This is important because in many markets, teachers are now obliged to use it. Much of this contemporary news-based material is also very visually appealing (rather than just "talking heads") making it possible to move away from purely comprehension-based tasks.

Vox-pops

On the subject of "talking heads", perhaps the longest surviving and most popular video genre in ELT materials is the vox pop. They were introduced in the late 1990s and are still present in contemporary materials. These mini interviews with "real people" on any number of topics are often popular with students because they can easily relate to the person in question. The great advantage of this genre is that the clips are short

and the level is often kept basic so that the people on camera represent attainable role models. From the publishers' point of view, the format is appropriate for all ages and is inexpensive to produce.

Curiously, in recent times, vox pops have also become more relevant as a genre because of the increasing popularity of online face-to-camera video blogs. Indeed, it is not difficult to conceive tweaking the ELT vox pop genre by changing conventional role models into "cool" vloggers who might appear on YouTube.

Cultural issues

One aspect that is important to highlight in the evolution of published ELT materials is the cultural context. The first videos to be produced by publishers were very much about the English-speaking world and included aspects of target culture. Indeed, in the first English language learning video course – the BBC's *Follow Me* – the sketches were in RP and the contexts exclusively British. However, in keeping with changes in the whole industry, international contexts are now the norm. For example, in a coursebook unit about animals, a video about renting pets in Japan is probably as commonly found today as a clip on the most popular dog breeds in Britain.

Current trends

Video, once only exploited for language or comprehension-based activities, is now used for many different kinds of tasks. Firstly, the **visual** dimension of video is now focused on to a far greater extent than in the past. This does not mean just playing a video with the sound off and getting students to describe what they see but taking advantage of new video genres that include little or no accompanying text. Such films are excellent for basic level learners and can be used to do simple activities based around recalling visual images, such as memory tests¹. A benefit of focusing on "the visual" is that different students will respond in class and not just the ones who simply "understand" the script or voice-over.

Secondly, video is now starting to be used as a **stimulus** to other tasks rather than an end in itself. It is more possible these days to find video being exploited at the start of the lesson to activate schema and engage learners rather than as the culmination of other tasks. Still images

¹ Such changes have been promoted by websites such as Kieran Donaghy's Film English, which features many short films that have great visual impact and, at times, little text. The site includes ready-to-use lesson plans for teachers based on these clips (<http://film-english.com>).

are also being used in this way with many coursebooks featuring large high-impact images at the start of each unit to establish topic and get students talking.

Thirdly, the **before, during and after you watch structure** is now being challenged by some practitioners in the field. For example, Jamie Keddie's (2017) technique of 'Videotelling' turns the conventional structure on its head by extending the 'Before' part of the class a good deal. In this stage, Keddie works on developing students' hypothesizing skills and creative thinking over a long period. The interactive storytelling that goes on in this part of the class builds up extraordinary levels of expectation and the video part of the lesson – which may last no more than a minute or two – represents the students' reward. This is a reversal of the conventional structure in which the 'After viewing' (not the 'Before') stage took up the most time in class.

Fourthly, in common with other media, the exploitation of video is currently moving away from working on purely lower order thinking skills – such as description – and is now encouraging learners to interpret what they view. Encouraging a more **critical response** is something that can be done at even basic levels. For example, after a video from YouTube is shown, students can then read and evaluate online comments to develop a more critical interpretation; they can then answer these comments and/or add their own.

Finally, we are also seeing a move towards video being used as a **resource** in which the focus is on information and the language agenda is secondary or non-existent. In a variety of online contexts, such as in webinars or MOOCs, video is used primarily to transmit content.

FROM EXPLOITATION TO CREATION

Genre and structure

The popularity and proliferation of handheld digital devices now enables students to provide their own input much more easily and to share it online. This means that video exploitation tasks and video creation ones can be linked much more than before. For example, students could look at a video blogger on YouTube doing a video tutorial or how-to video. They could then make their own version, bearing in mind not just the language used but also the way that the video is structured. Taking a genre analysis approach is particularly beneficial when it comes to video creation and is often overlooked. One great advantage is that students

are better able to make a video “their own” if they are aware of structure, especially if they want to deconstruct, remix or subvert a particular genre. In a recent project that I was involved in called ‘Students in the Director’s Chair’ (<https://goo.gl/bJ78hZ>), we found that students’ own success at creating these videos depended a good deal on their knowledge of generic structure rather than purely technical or linguistic knowledge.

This whole issue of genre is relevant because there are so many new video genres out there in the digital world. Online video-blogs (vlogs) found in video sharing platforms such as YouTube come in the form of how-tos, video game walkthroughs, challenges, tours, react videos, unwrapping/unboxing clips, pranks, “haul” (shopping) videos and so on. The generic structure of these clips is vital to how they are understood by the viewing public and determines, to a large extent, how we interact with them.

A “flipped” scenario

This new emphasis on video creation raises questions as to where this is best exploited – in or outside the classroom space. Although motivating, video creation can be incredibly time-consuming in class and be very difficult for teachers to monitor. For this reason, increasingly more teachers are beginning to set video creation projects to be carried out as homework. This is in line with the “flipped” approach to exploiting video.

The flipped approach refers to the fact that video work – be that exploitation or creation – is set to be done at home by students. This saves time in class and enhances the face-to-face classroom – making for a more engaging and interactive learning environment. Such an approach also encourages teachers to generate more language use from their work with video. All too often, students produce engaging video projects but the language tasks end once the product is complete. It is important that this video work does not remain in isolation but that the challenge is raised either by getting students to feed back on the video making process, presenting their work formally in class or performing a part of it in front of others.

LOOKING FORWARD – MOVING AWAY FROM THE MECHANICAL

In this brief history, we have seen how video has moved from being a vehicle for light entertainment to becoming an intrinsic part of the language classroom. As teachers and learners become more familiar with video material, the exploitation should become less mechanical and

more creative. Furthermore, video is becoming more than just a tool to engage students and bring the real world into the classroom – there is increased expectation that video will be put into the hands of learners, thus giving them more responsibility for their own learning.

The role of digital tools is vital in the evolution of video use in the language classroom. By way of example, let's consider by far the most popular online video genre of all – the music video. Traditionally, music videos were exploited by gap fill tasks that focused on the comprehension of particular lyrics. The Lyrics Training website (<https://goo.gl/lhd9Jo>), however, makes such a classic classroom task rather superfluous. This tool (designed for self-study) allows learners to complete the gaps themselves while watching the video. These gaps and the speed with which the lyrics appear on screen change according to the difficulty level you choose – an important customizable feature. Importantly, if you get the lyrics right, the video continues; if not, the video stops. This makes for a highly motivating viewing experience. However, the point is that students can do this kind of mechanical task much more efficiently themselves at home or wherever there is an internet connection. This fact has interesting implications for the exploitation of music videos in class.

From the pedagogical point of view, it therefore makes sense for teachers to set this gap-fill type task for homework. Once this mechanical part is over, students in class could discuss the meaning of the lyrics or they could analyse the relationship between the video and the text. Students could even evaluate the video and discuss how they would remake it and why.

Lyrics Training is just one example of the kinds of digital tools that are available to learners and that teachers have to be aware of when designing ways to exploit classroom video in the future. We cannot simply rely on the classic tasks of yesteryear. The fact that these digital tools exist means that a lot of the mechanical work (which algorithms can test so well) can be left up to the students to do at home, thus freeing up the classroom space for more generative speaking tasks. One conclusion then is that tech like this best serves us *outside* the class, rather than within it, to enhance the face-to-face experience.

This paper has taken an historical perspective to analyse the changing role of video in our language learning classrooms. However, considering the amount of time we spend looking at screens in our daily lives, and bearing in mind the above flipped model, it may well be that video use will, little by little, disappear from these classrooms. That is not

to say that its influence will vanish – on the contrary, video will be an increasingly important element in language learning – but it may well be that its influence will have more effect beyond the classroom walls than within them.

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4. The power of video

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Video has the power to engage, inform and entertain learners; many teachers now regularly use video in their classes. This paper will look at why video is such a useful tool in the language teaching classroom.

A VIDEO REVOLUTION?

Video is one of the most transformative technologies of the past decade. Video is literally changing how we are entertained, how we communicate, how we share and also how we learn. As a learning tool, it's hugely powerful. Video can engage, inform and entertain our learners, and it can communicate messages simply and very efficiently, often in just two or three minutes. In this paper, I want to examine why video has such power.

We're in the middle of what has been called 'a video revolution'. Video is everywhere. Over recent years, YouTube has become the second most popular site on the internet, beaten only by Google. The statistics are staggering. Three hundred hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute, and almost five billion videos are watched every day. That's a lot of funny cat videos.

Video is changing us, and it's changing the way we learn. You know this already, of course, if you've ever searched YouTube to find a video showing you how to fix something, how to cook a recipe, or just to see how something is done. I've been watching how my own children learn. Here are a couple of things I've noticed.

- Video before books. Whereas when I was younger I would go to a bookshelf to learn something, dragging out a heavy, dusty, old encyclopedia, my kids go straight to the internet. Wikipedia and YouTube. I've watched them use YouTube to learn to play the guitar, and to play the ukulele. They've taught themselves how to build worlds in Minecraft, rap in Spanish, do tricks on skateboards, and perform complex mathematical operations. They've learnt how to survive on Everest, build ping-pong tables, solve the Rubik's cube and cook curries. The options are endless, and for the most part,

they are self-directed. Nobody is telling them where to go or what to watch.

- Video is a social activity. They share their ideas. Almost as soon as my son, aged 8, learned how to access YouTube and watch origami videos, he also worked out how to host his own YouTube channel, where he could make and share his own videos. He moved intuitively and seamlessly from content consumer to content creator. One of the things that this generation enjoys doing is making and watching videos. When they get together, they make films. They film each other playing football, and live-stream it on Facebook. They make music videos. They make videos of themselves larking about, playing the guitar, and walking down the street. They film their parents making cups of tea. They film the dog. Nothing is sacred. You might ask, “How much learning is going on?” It’s a good question. But think about the creativity that’s involved. Think about the skills they are developing for making and editing videos: speeding them up, slowing them down, and adding music or subtitles. These are all skills that are likely to be useful in the future. As the video production business gets bigger and bigger, these skills are often a requirement for other jobs too.

In a recent conversation with my eldest son, we were watching an expert pizza maker in Italy, tossing doughy pizza bases casually above his head, before delicately landing them in soft piles of flour. When I commented that I’d love to learn how to do that, that perhaps I would sign up for a course, he stared at me incredulously. “Mum,” he said, “you’re so old fashioned! You do not need to go on a course to learn how to toss a pizza. Just look on YouTube.” How long will it be before kids say the same thing to their parents about learning a language?

VIDEO IN EDUCATION

Video is changing the way we learn things. In terms of learning, video content is emerging as one of the best forms of education. Research shows that the use of video as a teaching tool increases the efficiency of learning (Ljubojevic et al., 2014). We learn more quickly, more deeply and more memorably. It also improves the quality of experience, so it impacts on motivation. Video has the power to positively influence both affective and also cognitive attitudes. This seems to be true for all ages, for all kinds of subjects, for different kinds of people.

At pre-school, children learning literacy and numeracy skills by watching *Sesame Street* go on to do better at school, go further in terms of their education, and get better grades when they leave high school (Anderson et al., 2001).

Video is taking off in universities, with more and more universities using course-casting software to live-stream lectures, and record them for their students. Students can then access the videos at home, watch them, re-watch them, pause, rewind. If that option had been available when I was at university, I might never have got out of bed!

We have organisations like the Khan Academy, founded by Salman Khan. The Kahn Academy is a non-profit organization offering “a free, world-class education for anyone, anywhere”. They have over 2,400 micro lectures in the form of YouTube videos about maths and other subjects – physics, finance, engineering, psychology, etc.

It's not just children watching videos for learning. Adults watch too. We watch TED talks and lectures, 'how to...' videos, and training webinars. Scott Thornbury's talk *Seven Ways of Looking at Grammar*, uploaded to YouTube by The New School, has had more than 213,000 views, and the numbers keep going up. There are also a plethora of new YouTube channels appearing all the time to help people learn English.

When we talk about video being one of the best forms of education, we need to be careful. I'm not suggesting that video should replace teachers and schools. Nor do I think that sitting children in front of screens will solve our education problems. What I'm advocating is the judicious use of video. As with any other technology, video can be used to supplement what we, as teachers, do. Not to replace it, but to recognise and exploit video as a fantastic tool.

VIDEO AS A LANGUAGE LEARNING TOOL

Let's focus on some of the elements that help make video so effective as a language learning tool.

1. CULTURE

Socio-linguistic context

When we watch a video, we are immersed in a rich cultural picture. We don't just learn about the language, but we learn about how the language is used. Video gives us a cultural, socio-linguistic context for the language. Video is hugely valuable as a source of cultural input. Video

teaches us about the world – it opens our minds to other cultures. So we're learning a lot more than just language.

Access to English speaking culture

We should bear in mind that many students are learning English in order to have access to English speaking culture – films, songs, books, etc. This is part of their main motivation, so by using video as part of the language learning process, we're helping to give them access to that.

2. EMOTIONS

Engaging the emotions

One of the greatest strengths of video is its ability to communicate with viewers on an emotional as well as a cognitive level. We feel, therefore we learn. Video engages the emotions, and this is critical for learning. If you don't care about something, you're not likely to learn much about it. As soon as you feel something (empathy, sadness, happiness, humour) you start to care, you start to feel passionate about it. And this turns on the learning switch – the amygdala, in the brain. It means that the learning you do will be more memorable, more durable.

Impact on cognition

In education, we see that emotion and cognition are very closely interrelated. The aspects of cognition that we use when we're learning something – attention, memory, etc. are all profoundly affected by emotion.

So this ability to reach learners' emotions means that video can have a positive effect on both motivation and affective learning. These are not only important learning components on their own, but they play an important role in creating the right conditions for greater cognitive learning to take place.

3. COGNITION

Left vs. right hemisphere

Much of language cognition is thought to take place in the left hemisphere of the brain, which deals in logical, analytical modes. The area of the brain that is responsible for both spoken and written language is the Wernicke's Area in the left hemisphere. However, figurative use of language and the

emotional expression of language are processed in the right hemisphere. Also, music and movement stimulate the right hemisphere more than spoken words do. What happens when you watch a video is that you activate both sides of the brain – activating both systems, the logical and the emotional. More areas of the brain firing up results in better learning.

Traditional teaching practices have often emphasised the logical, analytical left hemisphere, leaving the right hemisphere underexploited, and thereby ignoring its potential for deep, durable learning. Exploiting video in language learning education helps to redress this imbalance.

Active vs. passive learning

There is a pervasive belief, increasingly being challenged by research, that viewing is a passive activity, in which viewers are only superficially reactive to the information that they are watching. According to this model, over time, watching can actually be considered to hamper academic achievement. However, recent studies oppose this idea, supporting the theory that viewing is in fact an active process, in which learners are engaged in “an ongoing and highly interconnected process of monitoring and comprehending” and “a complex, cognitive activity that develops and matures with the child’s development to promote learning” (Marshall, 2002, p. 7).

We can conclude that watching video, especially in another language, and especially if you’re watching with subtitles, whilst it may appear to be behaviourally passive, is a deeply cognitive activity. Also, we have a much better chance of remembering something that we watch on video than something that we read or listen to.

4. LANGUAGE

Authenticity

If we look at authenticity from a research point of view, we know that engagement with linguistically rich, emotive input leads to language acquisition (Mishan, 2005). Exposed to this type of authentic input, learners are likely to pick up on all kinds of language, which you might not even focus on, and this will help to build up their language knowledge.

New language vs. language reinforcement

Interestingly, when teachers use video in the classroom, it’s often to focus on new language. They might use a piece of video material to highlight

elements of new language, for example a particular verb tense or phrasal verbs. This is likely to be useful. However, perhaps of even more value to the learner is the reinforcement of the language they already know. Hearing and understanding bits of language that are familiar to them. Hearing how the language is spoken in real life. This enables the learner to consolidate language, perhaps to focus on another aspect of its use – the intonation, pronunciation. This type of reinforcement is often missing when we focus on moving through a syllabus, working on new bits of language in every lesson.

Tolerance of ambiguity

When we're watching a video, we're increasing our learners' ability to tolerate language that they don't understand, by keeping them engaged with visual messages and cues, even when they can't comprehend all the words they hear. This increased tolerance of ambiguity is an important language learning trait, which helps learners to cope with language experiences that take place in real time (Douglas Brown, 2000, p. 120).

5. ENGAGEMENT

Primed for learning

A young child's brain literally absorbs all the information available to it. It's what makes children such good learners. As we get older, however, we tend to filter the information that we're exposed to, and unfortunately, a lot of the time, we stop paying attention to stuff that we don't think is important. We switch off, and our brain goes into cruise mode, making it hard to learn. When you watch a video, the brain is stimulated and excitatory neurons wake up. We are literally primed for learning.

Discussion

Video has the ability to really spark discussion in the classroom. Having engaged with a video, learners are likely to have an opinion on what they've watched, whether they agree or disagree, whether they enjoyed it or not, what they think about the characters, the setting, etc. As video is so rich in ideas and context, learners can also be encouraged to go beyond the information given, through critical thinking and analysis.

Also, learner achievement is directly connected to the level of engagement that learners feel with their peers, and video sharing is a good way to influence this. Sharing and enjoying videos as part of the learning process can be really motivating.

6. AGENCY

Intention

In some situations, watching and listening can be a passive activity (in one ear and out of the other). The learner here is paying little, or no, attention to the information they receive. Alternatively, it can be a rich, active, intense experience that leads to serious learning. The difference relates to the intention that the learner has when they are watching. And this is where the teacher comes in, by carefully selecting appropriate material and tasks for our learners, and making sure that the intention is clear, and learners are actively involved in the work they are doing.

Ownership through creating videos

We want our learners to develop a sense of agency, a sense of not just participating, being engaged but encouraging them to take ownership of their learning so it is meaningful for them. As teachers, we often seem to struggle with this. There are times when it can be difficult to loosen control and let the learners take the reins. One way can be to get our learners to actively create their own videos. It might be that you can use the input video as a model for the kind of task you would like your learners to do. Many online videos lend themselves well to this kind of project, for example, 'how to...' videos, recipe videos, and 50 people and 1 question videos. If we get our learners to actively create their own videos, we help them to feel a sense of ownership and control over their learning, which is so important.

7. LITERACY

Media literacy

The transformation of our culture from the Industrial Age to the Information Age requires a new kind of literacy, coupled with new ways of learning. No longer is it good enough to teach our learners just to read and write. Today's learners need to be literate in their understanding, interpretation and creation of visual media.

Media literacy is a 21st century approach to education [that] provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages in a variety of forms... [It] builds an understanding of the role of media in society, as well as

essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy. (Thoman & Jolls, 2005, p. 190)

Visual literacy

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. What about a video? In the era of digital images and social networks, there are opportunities for learners to intensively create, view, download and share an unlimited number of visuals, including video material. It is important then that we teach our learners to become not just textually literate, but also visually and media literate. In this information age, we need to train our language learners in visual communication skills to comprehend and evaluate multimedia messages and enable them to access the rise of visual culture on the internet, much of which is in English. In fact, in 1982 UNESCO declared that “The school and the family share the responsibility of preparing the young person for living in a world of powerful images, words and sounds.”

8. CHANGE

Human connection

Video allows us to connect with people, and with their stories. We learn from other people; their skills, their experiences. This is what makes video such a transformational medium for learning. Great learning hinges on human connection. With video you can tell a story in a very powerful way; in a way that will literally transport people, in a way that will generate empathy.

Empathy

Roman Krznaric (2014) defines empathy as, “the art of stepping imaginatively into the shoes of another person, understanding their feelings and perspectives, and using that understanding to guide your actions” (p. x).

When we watch an evocative video, it changes the way we think, and may even change the way we behave. People who watch a video about a young boy suffering from cancer, or a homeless person are more likely to donate money to charity having watched the video. We can use stories to break down bias, to foster inclusiveness and to encourage prosocial behavior. They can have a huge effect on us and on our behaviour. Video can be a very effective way to introduce issues, perhaps difficult issues

in the classroom, so they can be discussed. But also, through the use of video, we might actually open people's minds to different possibilities, and encourage them to act in a more inclusive way.

Aspiration

The opportunity to teach is the opportunity to lead. The classroom is, fundamentally, a space where aspirations and dreams should be developed, encouraged and cultivated. Too often nowadays language education falls prey to standardized testing and exam preparation. Video can be used to cultivate a sense of the possible.

CONCLUSION

It's time for change. It's time to reconsider the methodology of our language lessons. Video has turned the world into a massive, always-on classroom. We have this dynamic and powerful tool for communication, but I believe video still has huge unleashed potential in the field of language learning. We must be careful not to let the power of video pass us by.

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5. The power of image nation: how to teach a visual generation

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The following paper is entirely devoted to the new generation of students that we teach nowadays, who seem to be totally different from the ones that we used to teach in the past. The development of technology, mobile phones in particular, has made students perceive reality in an absolutely different way. Nowadays, images dominate the world of information. This new generation of students thinks in pictures and communicates through pictures. We, as teachers, have to learn this new language of communication and become aware of the fact that pictures in coursebooks are not enough to make lessons attractive. Students carry their mobile phones wherever they go. Each mobile phone contains hundreds of photos and we can, and even should, use them in our lessons effectively. What is more, the applications that our students use on a daily basis, Pinterest and Instagram, to name but two, prove useful. At the beginning, I would like to sketch a quick profile of this new generation to help teachers understand them better and then to present a number of activities that can make our lessons more attractive and fully engaging.

IMAGE NATION

The job of a teacher nowadays is undergoing a tremendous shift as we have to deal with a generation that we have never taught before – the image nation. In order to teach them successfully we have to equip ourselves with proper tools and use our imagination (image + nation = imagination). Visual language is indeed changing the world and our students are experiencing this change, as well.

Timothy Gangwer (2009), a pioneer in the field of visual learning, describes this challenge in the following words:

It is hard to ignore that the generation of children now moving through our educational system is by far the most visually stimulated generation that system has ever had to teach... this generation of children needs to be taught the

way they learn best – with visual stimulation accompanied by active learning strategies. (p. 1)

There seem to be a lot of names describing the students that we teach at present. I'm certain you have heard the most popular ones, like Generation Z, Digital Natives, Generation Like, Selfie Generation, and IGen, to mention but a few. They are described as the first tribe of true digital natives or screenagers (Sparks & Honey, 2014).

An average teenager has a few hundred photos in his/her mobile phone and is constantly online. What is even more significant, our students carry their phones everywhere and they take selfies, belfies and many other types of photos. In sum, we all truly live in the IMAGE AGE! Does this have any immediate implications for our language classrooms? The answer is that it does indeed.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

What does it mean for us teachers? It indicates that we have to become teachers with a vision and choose such activities that intensify and facilitate the process of learning. Our role is to prepare students for the world they will live and work in – the visual world. TV commercials, billboards, leaflets, brochures, Facebook ads, emoticons – images simply surround us. We have to start implementing those sources into the classroom curriculum as a coursebook itself has never been enough. As Gangwer (2009) underlines, our students think in pictures, see in pictures and communicate in pictures.

Let's take a look at emoticons, for example. Students use them in everyday communication, adding them to text messages or even replacing words with them. It is the language that we adults have to learn and accept. My students are always pleased and helpful when they are asked about new technology. On the one hand, they explain willingly and feel appreciated. On the other hand, as a teacher, I show a completely different face, not the one of a teacher who knows answers to all questions. With technology at our fingertips and global access to everything, we need to bear in mind that being in possession of knowledge is not enough; what makes a difference is how effectively we use it.

SPARKING STUDENTS' INTEREST

It seems that the first and foremost aspect is the choice of pictures. For years, pictures have had a decorative or simply descriptive role in coursebooks. Often, the pictures that were included in coursebooks

did not trigger emotions or stimulate conversation. It is no longer the case. The books are slowly changing and so should we. When choosing photos to be used in class we should be selective. Photos should provoke a discussion. They should intrigue, move, and make students laugh. They should surprise students and be complicated, not obvious. Only when interest is sparked, can we start working with students. There are plenty of websites where you can find pictures that catch the eye, for example www.explainthisimage.com. You can show a photo and ask what has happened or let the student imagine the whole scene before and after the photo was taken. If the picture is selected carefully, students will simply want to talk, even if they only have a basic knowledge of vocabulary. They can also use grammar and expressions like: I'm not sure but I think... / Perhaps... / It seems to me..., etc.

MOBILE PHONES

One tool that cannot be ignored are our students' mobile phones. We all know that most of them would not be able to live without them even for a second. Why not use this knowledge and adjust our lessons in such a way that they can use their phones effectively?

The number of photos our students have on their phones probably ranges from 100 to even 800 hundred. Just ask your students! This means that teachers don't have to look for colorful photos in magazines any longer. On the contrary, we should find a way to use them effectively.

Below, I would like to present a few practical activities that I use with my students and which are of great benefit for their English language learning.

To start off – any level

Ask your students to take out their mobile phones and find three photos they took in the summer. Now students get into pairs and while looking at each other's mobile phones have to ask at least three questions concerning the pictures that they have just selected. The questions should be detailed (e.g., Where was it taken? Who is in the photos? Why are you laughing?) as they are meant to stimulate extended discussion. Students talk in turns until they have finished. This exercise can be used as a warm up or a filler and engages teenage students a lot more than writing a story about their last holiday. Talking about personal images stimulates the brain and guarantees student involvement.

Less tense about tenses – elementary/pre-intermediate

One of the most difficult tenses for my teenage students is no doubt the present perfect. Here is one way we can make its core use a lot clearer to them. Ask your students to take out their mobile phones and find a picture of a smiling/crying person (variation: some find a man, some a woman while others a baby). Now tell your students to: a) show the picture to your partner, and b) tell him/her what has happened as a result of which the person is smiling/ crying. You can do the same trick to practise the present continuous – just ask your students to find a few photos that show people doing some activities and then they share the photos with a partner, telling him or her what is going on. The process of looking for pictures and then sharing them with a friend with a clear language aim leads to a lot of genuine fun during the lesson. It is also a non-mainstream, truly engaging way to practise troublesome grammar structures.

Close-ups – any level

Sometimes what the picture shows is not as important as what it does *not* show. Ask your students to take out their mobile phones, go to Google Images and find several close-ups (variation: students take their own close-up photos as homework and bring them to the next lesson). Now they have to work in pairs, look at each other's close-ups in turn, and try to guess what it can/may/might/can't be. As you see, it's a perfect opportunity for students to practise modal verbs. You can go even further and modify the task by asking students to take close-ups of specific objects, linked to a given unit in the coursebook. After they have done the guessing, students need to describe the object that they have identified in as much detail as they can. Using a mobile phone, instead of just looking at a printed picture in the book, boosts students' involvement and makes them try a lot harder. In such activities, the language is authentic and natural, not contrived at all

Blurry vision, super vision – any level

Nothing is more annoying than getting home from a trip or a social event and realizing that most of your photos have turned out blurry. The good news is that we can put such photos to a very good use during our lessons. Students can use such pictures to tell each other the story of what was happening while the photo was taken (past continuous/past simple) and why it is blurry; the other student in the pair can ask detailed questions about the picture (Hockly & Dudeney, 2014).

Connections rule – pre-intermediate +

Working in groups of five, students select a different picture each – a person, a place, an animal, etc. Once each group member has chosen a photo, they have to make a connection between all the five photos by weaving them into a story. Again, this is a welcome break from coursebook routines, as well as a natural context for listening closely to one another while building the story together. It is similar to the story cubes game.

Find it!: photo treasure hunt – elementary+

The weather outside is nice and you don't know what to do with your students? Just get out of the classroom and ask your students to use one mobile phone per pair. Their task is to take a picture of...

- something small and green
- something white in the shape of a rectangle
- something with three colors
- something big and red

Students try to find appropriate objects to photograph (the time limit is 5-10 minutes, depending on the number of things that you have assigned). The pair that will take all the required photos first wins. With younger students, you can use this scenario to practise shapes and colours. With older ones, such an activity can be yet another break from the classroom routine (Hockly & Dudeney, 2014).

Holiday itinerary – pre-intermediate+

Write three holiday destinations on the board, for example, London – Paris – Barcelona. Ask your students to choose a holiday destination and stand in a line in front of it. Tell them that each group wants to get to their destination but they have to plan it very carefully. It's a three-day city break and their task is to prepare and check the prices of: a flight, accommodation, food, and entertainment. Using the internet, they have to find the necessary information within 30 minutes. They have to write the whole itinerary but they are on a tight budget so they have to be selective. The cheapest option wins. During their presentation, they have to show photos of their hotel/hostel room (e.g., from www.booking.com) as well as pictures of the monuments or places they intend to visit while sightseeing.

PINTEREST

I belong to the generation that had to look for pictures in colorful magazines and papers. With an application such as Pinterest, you have access to millions of photos within a second. But can we use it effectively in the classroom? Of course, we can. It can be applied to introduce the topic or to stimulate students' discussion about a certain issue.

Compare and contrast – pre-intermediate+

Imagine that you are covering a topic like sport. Divide your students in pairs and ask them to open Pinterest and look for the phrase 'extreme sports'. On mobile phones, pictures appear in pairs, one next to another. It is a perfect example of the compare and contrast activity that features in the FCE or CAE exams. Students compare the pictures and say which sport is more appealing to them. It can be done with any other topic, as well.

An evening out – pre-intermediate+

Divide your students into groups of three. Ask them to search Pinterest using the word 'films'. They will see a selection of films to choose from. Tell them that their task is to look at the first four photos and imagine that they have to spend a Friday evening out and have to decide which film they want to see and why. They have to agree on only one. Films, of course, are of various genres so it will be quite challenging to reach a compromise. Students are likely to use various grammar structures and a wide range of vocabulary trying to convince each other to opt for their choice of film.

MEMES

Memes are perfect for a short warm up or a filler. We frequently notice funny pictures with comments while browsing the internet. Why not apply it in the class? Some of the best ones involve animals! You can simply take an existing meme and delete or cover the words and ask students to show their creativity and write their own texts. Students will surprise you without a doubt.

INSTAGRAM

Another application that can save you time and bring some fun to the class is Instagram. Millions of people use it by posting photos and adding hashtags. Among those millions of users are our students. Let's imagine

that you are covering the topic of food. Thanks to Instagram students can also develop culturally. If they write #breakfast, there will appear over 5 million breakfast pictures from all over the world. Students can discuss the similarities and differences between them, comparing how and what people eat all over the world. They can also take a photo of their own breakfast and describe it using hashtags and vocabulary from the lesson. You can modify it by giving students a blank slip of paper with hashtags and space only. Students have to complete it with their favorite food and adjectives describing them. For example:

#..... #..... #..... #.....
#scrambledeggs #delicious #freshlysqueezedjuice #toastwithjam
#crunchyapple

Later, you put all of them on the board and students have to guess who eats what.

CONCLUSION

Nowadays coursebooks, the board and the teacher might not be enough to satisfy the needs of our students. As Mauchline (2015) underlines, sound and image is where it all begins. It is logical that we should exploit vision as a motivator of learners, captivator of their attention, and generator of language (Mauchline, 2015). Jones (2013) argues that "The power of an image often doesn't lie in the image itself, but in its ability to trigger images and stories in the minds of our students and create a need and a desire to communicate." This is something I firmly believe in and it forms the basis of my blog on teaching teenagers through images and videos: www.visualteaching.blogspot.com.

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6. Using Pinterest to promote genuine communication and enhance personalised learning

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This paper discusses the importance of providing students with opportunities to develop visual literacy. It describes a tool that can be used to facilitate the access to still and moving images selected by students. The paper explains the rationale for the approach chosen and offers a detailed account of how a project was carried out with a group of twenty learners at a language centre in São Paulo, Brazil.

21ST CENTURY LITERACY

Although apparently easy to define, the concept of literacy has proven to be complex and dynamic. The notion of what it means to be literate may vary according to the cultural context you are inserted in, your personal experience, and your values.

Looking back on history, we can identify different instances of the need for literacy: pre-historic literacy may be defined as the ability to decode script, glyphs and numeracy devices that were mainly used to manage agricultural production. The development and sophistication of the Latin alphabet in the Western post-classical era marked a shift in society, as the written word became more present in both public and private life. Knowing the alphabet meant being able to read inscriptions in monuments, decoding the public calendar and being able to read laws. As the language systems developed, it became very difficult to afford to be illiterate. These two examples, albeit limited, reveal that being literate was intrinsically connected to having the necessary knowledge to function well in a specific society and to communicate effectively.

Nowadays, literacy is still attached to the idea of effective communication. However, the expansion and fast-paced development of communication systems and structures have caused us to broaden the concept of literacy so that it encompasses not only the act of decoding and transmitting signs of communication, but also assessing how these affect the environment and society around them. According to UNESCO's

(2005) report *Literacy for Life*, being literate comprises not only acquiring basic cognitive abilities, but also being able to apply these skills “to contribute to socio-economic development, to developing the capacity for social awareness and critical reflection as a basis for personal and social change” (p. 147).

Although numerous authors and educational institutions have attempted to list and define 21st century learning based on the notion of literacy described above, we must bear in mind that helping students develop literacies requires more than going over a list of allegedly needed skills. Teachers need to be able to identify the needs and interests of students in order to provide them with opportunities for the development of these new literacies.

VISUAL LITERACY

Postmodern society has witnessed an increase in the importance given to the visual. In order to communicate effectively, one should be able to read images in a meaningful way and interpret, create and select images to convey a range of different meanings. Bamford (2003) defines the necessary set of skills that compose the notion of visual literacy: the ability to visualise internally, read and interpret visual images; the ability to examine the impact that images have on society; and being aware of the manipulative uses and ideological implications of images. Although we start developing these abilities as part of our lives, the overwhelming exposure to visual content and growing dependence on non-textual information has made it mandatory for us not only to be visually literate, but consciously aware of the visual culture that we are inserted in.

To become more aware of the different meanings conveyed by images, Bamford (2003) suggests an approach that combines understanding the *syntax* and the *semantics* of an image. Thus, visual literacy includes:

Syntax	Semantics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying the graphic composition; • describing shapes, colours, shadows, lines; • identifying viewer's perspective and position of objects; • describing the relation between text and image; • inferring the intention of graphic choices (colours, emphasis, shadows, lights). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding the relation between the image and the external world; • identifying the underlying assumptions, values and ideas that influence the interpretation of an image; • identifying the cultural bias that influences the interpretation of an image; • being aware of how the image relates to issues and cultural values to gain meaning.

In the ELT classroom, exploring the syntax and semantics of images in an isolated way and combining the study of both is an invaluable way to generate a language-rich environment that favours the development of different language skills and systems. If we consider Bloom et al.'s (1956) categorization of thinking skills and take into account the development of Lower Order Thinking skills (LOTS) and Higher Order Thinking skills (HOTS) and the thinking acts that they entail, we could say that Bamford's (2003) suggestion of image analysis may also foster the development of such thinking skills. The chart below illustrates questions that might trigger the analysis of an image as per Bamford's (2003) framework:

Syntactical analysis	Semantic analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are the elements of the image arranged? • What is the most important element? Why? • How was the camera placed? • How does this influence the way we see the elements that compose the image? • What does the colour palette say about this image? Why were these hues chosen? What do they communicate? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who created the image? • Who is the intended audience of the image? • In what context was it created? • In what context do we see this image? • Has anything been omitted, altered or included? • What does this image say about our culture? • What are the underlying values and assumptions present in this image?

Needless to say, choosing a random image and simply posing questions for students to answer will not help them develop visual literacy. On the contrary, it might be demotivating and seen as one more classroom activity. In the next section, we will discuss how social media and social networking sites can help teachers make the work on images more collaborative and meaningful to students.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND GLOBAL NETWORK

We cannot ignore the fact that the ubiquity of cameras, mobile devices and social media has changed the relationship we have with visual culture and how we experience it. We need to acknowledge that images are produced and circulated in immeasurable quantities and the viewing space, which was once limited to spaces such as art galleries, museums and cinemas, has been expanded and is now dominated by an image-producing society. In the classroom, however, the main source of images still largely consists of coursebooks, and these cannot compete with the allure of more current, meaningful and updated images that can be found online. Moreover, coursebook images “not only lack originality, but more often than not project and promote an affluent and aspirational lifestyle to learners” (Goldstein, 2008, p. 12).

Social media trends and statistics change very rapidly, but a recent Pew Research Centre report (2015) shows that social media platforms

that rely on the sharing of images as core activity, namely Instagram, Pinterest and Snapchat, have doubled the number of users while other platforms have remained flat. The same report has also shown that 92% of the population between 13 and 21 years of age consider themselves avid users of social media – meaning that they actively use at least two Social Networking Sites (SNSs) for one hour every day.

In the classroom, we might take advantage of these image-rich environments and the relative ease with which visual content can be accessed to bridge the gap between the classroom and the real world. Social media and other technological tools might also help the teacher to favour learner-generated content. According to Bristor and Drake (1994), the use of student-generated imagery can contribute to the development of visual literacy and the ability to understand, interpret and evaluate visual messages. Finally, using learner-generated content is undoubtedly an efficient way to increase learners' motivation and engagement, which in turn enhances learning.

USING PINTEREST AS A CLASSROOM TOOL

Due to its visual nature, Pinterest has been widely used in design and architecture to aid projects and research in these fields. The main feature of this SNS is that users can bookmark and save vast quantities of information by 'pinning' an image to a board. The activity of 'pinning' can be done individually or collaboratively – users can invite more people to 'pin' images together and create a communal board.

The decision to use this tool with a group of students at a language centre in Brazil aimed at assessing: (1) whether the use of a SNS would raise students' interest in visual culture; (2) how the use of a SNS impacted on learners' motivation to communicate in English outside the school environment; and (3) whether the use of a SNS impacted on learners' engagement with the course. This group consisted of 20 B2 (CEFR) level students aged between 13-20. They had been studying together for approximately four years and were keen users of SNSs. A survey was carried out to investigate students' willingness to use a SNS as an integral part of their English course – all students agreed to test the tool. This survey also revealed that a 'Bring Your Own Device' policy could also be adopted.

Tasks and activities

Several activity types and tasks were facilitated by this tool in the course of four months. In this section, I will describe the procedures, rationale

and objectives of three of them. The QR codes will take you to an example board for two of the activities.

Activity 1

Procedures:

Learners browse through different user boards using the Pinterest app or web browser, describing, comparing and contrasting the types of images displayed. Then, learners speculate on what the images chosen reveal about the user.

Rationale:

This activity allows students to familiarize themselves with the tool, as they do not need to actively use it for generating any content. Describing, comparing and contrasting the images allow students to practice image-related vocabulary.

Possible linguistic outcome:

Lexis to describe personality traits;

Expressing modality (certainty, possibility, ability);

Using the present perfect to describe experiences.

Activity 2



Procedures:

Learners access a board and pin images related to the lesson objective (in the example, “Talking about hazardous jobs”) at home, prior to the lesson.

Rationale:

Asking students to carry out an investigation before the lesson increases exposure to language that is likely to be used in the classroom; also, using learner-generated material might help the teacher address students’ needs, rather than work with pre-selected lexis.

Possible linguistic outcome:

Lexis to describe jobs;

Chunks and collocations to describe activities related to jobs and occupations.

Activity 3



Procedures:

Learners access a board and select images to answer an essay question. After pinning the images, learners can use the comment section to discuss why the images have been chosen. The comment section can also be used by learners to list arguments in favour or against the initiatives shown in the images.

Rationale:

This activity allows students to go beyond choosing literal images. Learners can opt for trying to represent a more abstract concept or idea and evaluate the assumptions made by their peers for the choices made. The comment section can be used for clarification and discussion. The arguments made by learners can later be used in their opinion-led essays.

Possible linguistic outcome:

Development of productive skills.

Based on students' participation and feedback, there is enough evidence to state that the use of a SNS instilled motivation in learners and considerably increased communication in English in an out-of-school setting. Both their written and oral production signalled that exposure to authentic material through social media affected their language positively. Students also reported that, because images had a central role in the performance of tasks and activities, they needed to try to decode, understand or interpret why certain images had been chosen. However, although the experience was successful in the project's context, security

concerns need to be considered when using an online platform with students.

Conclusions

Encouraging students to consciously navigate the world of visual communication and identifying opportunities for language development is vital to help them thrive in the world of 21st century literacies. Technology can be a convenient way of accessing information, as “it is possible to see the whole world, either literally using programs such as Google Earth that have mapped the entire planet, or metaphorically, give the limitless and constantly updated information available with a few clicks” (Mirzoeff, 2015, p. 34). However, it should not be a hindrance – any tool, app, website or piece of technology used to foster learning should be a means to an end, not the end itself. Ensuring a focus on the learning outcomes is key to the successful adoption of SNSs and social media in the classroom.

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7. Teaching visual literacy through memes in the language classroom

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The paradigm shift that occurred in the digital era (Bearne, 2003) towards the predominance of multimodal texts (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Kress, 2003; Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996) has affected the role of the reader (Kress, 2010; Serafini, 2012), who is currently expected to approach texts from a multimodal/tripartite framework (Serafini, 2014). With a focus on the teaching of visual literacy through memes in the language classroom, this paper seeks to share the workshop pedagogical proposal that we launched in one of our Master's courses for EFL/ESL secondary school teachers at the Complutense University of Madrid (Spain) during the first term of the academic year 2016-2017. Our aim was twofold: (i) share our meme-based visual proposal; and (ii) give value to the teaching plans developed by our Master's students while assessing the implementation results of both the workshop and the lesson plans at secondary and tertiary education levels.

INTRODUCTION

The textual or 'paradigm' shift (Bearne, 2003) towards the predominance of multimodality has been described by a good number of researchers (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). The role of the new learner needs to be that of a 'viewer-learner', which requires the acquisition of alternative skills such as summarizing and interpreting visual images and design elements, inferring and asking questions. The latest developments in EFL/ESL teaching point, in fact, to a curriculum "in which language, culture, and literature are taught as a continuum" (Modern Languages Association, 2007). Multimodal texts – combining written words with visual images, sound effects, music, or complex graphic design (Kress, 2003; Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996) – are the key to this continuum by amounting to an indispensable part of students' lives, dominating their reading preferences today.

Nevertheless, monomodal texts still monopolize contemporary language classroom in many contexts around the world (Pauwels, 2008; Serafini, 2012). There exists an impressive distance between the texts that students read at school and those texts they read at home. As an obvious consequence of this, many educators have claimed the need to increase the presence of multimodal texts in the language curriculum, as well as to elaborate on specific strategies aimed at training students to succeed in the age of technologies (Anstey & Bull, 2006; Burmark, 2002).

In light of events, it is our intention to raise awareness of the need to treat EFL/ESL language learners as viewer learners who need to acquire visual literacies enabling them to face the multimodal texts that facilitate their actual acquisition of language as a continuum. To this end, we designed an inclusive multimodal framework for the implementation of memes as part of the workshop on visual literacy that we planned for one of our Master's courses targeted at the training of EFL/ESL secondary school teachers at the Complutense University in Madrid.

The idea was to enhance visual literacy through the implementation of meme-based warmers to promote speaking with the ultimate goal to facilitate the acquisition of all of the linguistic skills, productive and receptive: writing, speaking, reading and listening. Memes were selected for their ability to create multiple opportunities to develop visual and critical skills in the language classroom since they are virally-transmitted cultural artefacts with socially shared norms and values (Shifman, 2014) that can be defined as "socially recognized types of communicative actions" (Orlikowski & Yates, 1994, p. 541). According to Shifman (2014), "While seemingly trivial and mundane artifacts", memes are multimodal texts that "reflect deep social and cultural structures" (p. 15).

The following lines will offer an overview of previous research on visual literacy and its implementation in the EFL/ESL classroom. Our visual literacy-meme workshop will then be introduced. This will precede one example of our students' meme-based teaching plans, as developed to meet the requirements of the workshop in question. Results achieved for both higher (meme/visual workshop) and secondary education (meme/visual students' teaching plans) will be finally analyzed and some general conclusions will be drawn.

VIEWER LEARNERS

Today's students live in a visually rich world where they permanently encounter and create meaning and knowledge through images. Visual literacy has become an essential learning skill in the 21st century by

generating multimodal meanings that include written text, visual images and design elements from a variety of perspectives. For this reason, “it’s no longer enough to be able to read and write. Our students must learn to process both words and pictures. They must be able to move gracefully and fluently between text and images, between literal and figurative worlds” (Burmark, 2002, p. 5).

Quite surprisingly, though, most academic settings still underestimate the need to prepare students to approach images critically and effectively. Hardly any attention is paid to the development of students’ visual literacy (Metros, 2008; Pauwels, 2008), even if this skill has been an object of study since the late 1960s, when John Debes (1969) described the term as a group of vision-competencies a human being can develop by seeing and at the same time having and integrating other sensory experiences. In the 1990s, definitions of visual literacy highlighted the importance of image interpretation (Considine & Haley, 1992; Wileman, 1993) and gave priority to the ability to find meaning in imagery, which “involves a set of skills ranging from simple identification...to complex interpretation at contextual, metaphoric, and philosophical levels” (Yenawine, 1997, p. 845).

Visual literacy was then reconceptualized as a social practice as much as an individual, cognitively-based ability or set of competencies. At the dawn of the new millennium, Sturken and Cartwright (2001) asserted that meanings were “produced not in the heads of the viewers so much as through a process of negotiation among individuals within a particular culture, and between individuals and the artefacts, images, and texts created by themselves and others” (p. 4). Meanwhile, Rose (2001) proposed a critical visual methodology, informed by critical theories and cultural studies, that was founded on

an approach that thinks about the visual in terms of the cultural significance, social practices and power relations in which it is embedded; and that means thinking about the power relations that produce, are articulated through, and can be challenged by, ways of seeing and imaging. (p. 3)

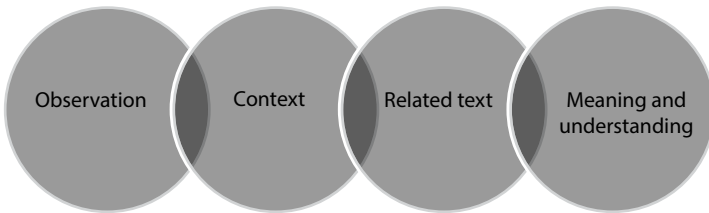
The focus shifted, then, to the importance of visual media in contemporary culture, particularly as a communication tool. Metros (2008) defined visual literacy as “the ability to encode and interpret visual messages and also to be able to encode and compose meaningful visual communications” (p. 103). This would include the ability “to visualize internally, communicate visually, and read and interpret visual images”

(Bamford, 2003). Mitchell (2008), at the same time, defended the idea of visual literacy as “connoisseurship: rich, highly cultivated, and trained experiences and techniques of visual observation” (pp. 13-14).

Against expectations, however, appropriate use and production of images in academic work proves to be a challenge for many students nowadays (Hattwig et al., 2013). Recent research on learners’ use of visual materials in higher education has proved an initially unexpected need for student visual literacy development: “students’ visual competencies are not always aligned with faculty expectations or academic demands” (Hattwig et al., 2013, p. 64). Interestingly, they “tend to exhibit less comfort and skill with observing, interpreting, analyzing and discussing visual information than they do with textual information, and do so with less specificity” (Green, 2006).

This brings back the need to create a critical viewing framework for the development of visual literacy skills in line with Hattwig et al. (2012), who identify the ability to interpret and analyse the meaning of visual media as one of the basic standards that a visually-literate learner should have. This ability is meant to help them to understand how image production is influenced by cultural values and social constructs:

Figure 1: Image Interpretation and Analysis (based on Hattwig et al., 2012)



As shown in Figure 1, a visually literate student should first develop the skills of observation in order to, then, be able to identify information relevant to any image. The second step involves the ability to situate the image in its cultural, social, and historical context. Historical and cultural factors may be of vital importance to understand the meaning of an image. The third step refers to the students’ need to “identify various pictorial, graphic, and design components of visual materials, and examine any related visuals and text” (Hattwig et al., 2012, p. 18). They need to learn how to observe the details that can be missed at a glance. The fourth step is intended to help students to validate their

interpretation and analysis of images according to the visual materials discussed in the preceding steps (relevant information, historical and social context, aesthetic conventions, etc.).

In the case of memes, the following questions could be asked to students for each of the steps.

Step 1: Observation

- Look at the meme. What is your first impression? What do you notice first? What seems to stand out for you?
- What is foregrounded? What is included in the background?
- What are the dominant colors? What effect do colors have on you as a reader? How is white, or negative space used?
- Is the image symmetrical? Or rather, is there a section (top-bottom, left-right) dominating the image? How does this contribute to the meaning of the image?
- What is the artist trying to get you to look at through leading lines, colors, contrast, gestures, and lighting?
- How are size and scale used? What is large? Why are certain elements larger than others? How does this contribute to the meaning of the image?

Step 2: Context

- Consider the general context of the meme.
- Who might be the target audience of this meme?
- What might be the purpose of this meme?
- What background knowledge might be necessary to understand the meme?

Step 3: Related text

- What are the visual and textual contents of the meme?
- Where is the text located on the page? What fonts are used?
- How do text and illustration(s) connect?
- What do you think of the format of the images and their location in the meme?
- Where is the text situated? Is it within the image? Is it rather separated by borders or white space?

Step 4: Meaning and understanding

- How is humour created? Is there wordplay or incongruity between the message and the image?
- What is your overall impression of the meme? What do you think is being criticized?
- Do you agree with this representation of the social phenomenon in question?
- Analyze the relations between the aspects that you notice, what they mean, and the implications that they might have.

A VISUAL LITERACY-BASED WORKSHOP

The four-week workshop involved 20 students of the Master's in the training of foreign/second language teachers at the Complutense University of Madrid, all of them aged between 22 and 30. Our ultimate goal was to enhance the students' understanding of the key role that visual literacy plays in the acquisition of English as a foreign/second language within an instructional setting. As previously explained, the texts selected for classroom implementation were memes.

Week 1

Introducing memes:

Towards a model for the implementation of visual literacy through memes in the EFL/ESL classroom through the analysis of a series of sample activities developed by the teacher.

Week 2

Division of the class into five groups of four students. Each group was asked to choose a set of memes on one topic of their choice and invited to develop a set of activities to be implemented with their high school students.

Weeks 3 & 4

Each group worked to lead a microteaching session based on the activities that they had developed. Their presentations were followed by group discussion and teacher's feedback.

Week 4

At the end of the last session the Master's students were administered a questionnaire aimed at: evaluating their response to the use of visual

literacy through memes as a language teaching tool; and assessing the usefulness of the workshop. The students were invited to implement and test the usefulness of their revised teaching plans with their secondary school students.

STUDENTS' SAMPLE OF PEDAGOGICAL PROPOSAL

The listening activity described in this section was first developed by one of our Master's students and then implemented at an Official School of Languages of the Community of Madrid in ppt format (<https://goo.gl/21JvZm>) with 33 C1 level students aged between 20 and 45 and divided into two groups. While the first group (research) used memes as part of a 20-minute meme-based warm-up listening activity, the second group (control) just worked on the listening activity. Bottom-up and top-down listening strategies were thus opposed.

1. Students observe this meme (<https://goo.gl/d0cUco>) in order to describe the most eye-catching elements and identify the setting of the picture. The next image (<https://goo.gl/kl63e1>) is then presented. Students compare and discuss the two images. Incongruencies between the image and the text of the meme are analyzed.
2. A selection of photos of Syrian refugees is presented to the students. The relation between the photos and the meme is discussed. Students comment on the irony of the written text of the meme and the way it is created.
3. The political phenomenon of Brexit is discussed. Students are asked to identify the meme's creator point of view on Brexit prior to sharing their personal opinions on the issue.
4. A selection of British Brexit memes (e.g., <https://goo.gl/NRSuki>; <https://goo.gl/qbVksW>) is offered to the students. They are asked to discuss the way Brexit is treated in England.
5. Students watch a short video (<https://goo.gl/olWznU>) of a collection of Brexit memes and make a list of the most important ideas reflected in these memes.
6. A selection of Brexit memes featuring Donald Trump as a central character is presented (e.g., <https://goo.gl/TGYe0l>; <https://goo.gl/W7Eyy2>). The relation between Brexit and some nationalist leaders, such as Donald Trump or Marine Le Pen is discussed.

The listening activity is based on Alexander Betts' TED talk *Why Brexit Happened – And What to Do Next* (<https://goo.gl/18VikM>). The students in the two groups are asked to watch a six-minute excerpt twice and answer the following questions:

1. Why are people talking about the UK becoming “a little England” or “a 1950s nostalgia theme park”? What are they referring to?
2. What does Brexit represent for all of us?
3. What are the major factors that made people in the UK vote for leaving the EU?
4. Brexit is about globalization. Explain how these two phenomena (Brexit and globalization) are related.
5. How is the rise in popularity of politicians such as Donald Trump in the United States, Viktor Orbán in Hungary, or Marine Le Pen in France related to Brexit?

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Higher education visual/meme workshop

The workshop experience was highly positive. Our Master's students understood and supported the importance of visual literacy through memes as a useful tool for the English classroom. All the students involved in the workshop (100%) agreed on the need to enhance visual literacy in the language classroom and a vast majority of them (95%) pointed to the suitability of memes as a genre to meet secondary school students' motivational needs.

Our Master's students also gave positive feedback on the usefulness of this workshop and appreciated having been given the opportunity to develop and implement a model for the teaching of visual literacy through memes in the EFL/ESL classroom. According to most of the participants (92%), memes could be useful to first catch the students' attention and, then, consolidate content information while reinforcing and integrating all of the skills.

Secondary education visual/meme teaching plan

The research group performed clearly better than the control group in questions 1, 4 and 5, with 64.7% and 41.2% correct answers for question 1; 76.5% correct answers against 58.8% for question 4, and 35.3% against 11.8% for question 5, respectively. The research group also performed

slightly better in question 3 – What are the major factors that made people in the UK vote for leaving the EU? – with 82.4% correct answers against the 76.5% correct answers provided by the control group. Nevertheless, the enhancement of visual literacy through memes as a preliminary warming-up listening activity focusing on speaking did not work in the case of question 2 – What does Brexit represent for all of us? – where the control group performed slightly better than the research group doing the meme-based listening activity. It is interesting to note, though, that 90% of students from the control group provided a short concise answer to this question (“how divided our society is”, “the division of the society”). Meanwhile, about 60% of students from the research group gave more expanded responses, commenting on the nature and reasons for this division (“the voters split depending on many factors, such as age, education, class and geography. The voting patterns show us the reason of people’s decision on voting for leave or remain”). This leads to the conclusion that the control group performed better in terms of providing more quality comprehension-based answers. Previous background knowledge was key in facilitating these answers.

CONCLUSION

The benefits of integrating multimodal texts in the EFL/ESL classroom in order to ensure a holistic acquisition of the language are evident. On this basis, the present study has tried to raise teachers’ awareness of the need to consider language learners as viewer learners in need of visual literacies beyond conventional linguistic skills. To this end, an inclusive multimodal framework for the implementation of memes in the language classroom was designed and implemented with our Master’s students. One of our students’ teaching proposals, randomly focused on listening in this particular case, was tested at an Official School of Languages of the Community of Madrid. The idea was to prove that the enhancement of visual literacy contributes to the positive development of language skills. Results were highly positive in demonstrating the benefits of visual literacy in the acquisition of listening. Despite the obvious need for further research, preliminary results are rather optimistic in supporting the integration of visual literacy in the EFL/ESL curriculum.

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8. Colors in images: developing color vocabulary and meanings in the EFL classroom

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Introducing color vocabulary and meaning into the EFL classroom will help students to not only increase their vocabulary, but understand the various meanings of the colors that surround them, including idiomatic use of these words. First steps in understanding the meanings behind the colors come with analyzing packaging, advertisements, TV spots and film clips. These analyses will help students understand how colors in these media affect the audience. This can help students better interpret their world and see how businesses might be using colors for persuasion purposes. In addition, activities exploring the international implications of the various colors, including how they are used in other countries, help our students have greater global understanding.

INTRODUCTION

Images can be used in so many ways in the classroom that whether using a picture or a video the potential for an interesting class where students are motivated to learn increases exponentially. Just as we know that adding visuals to an advertisement attracts 80% more readers, that sales are increased by over 50% when colors are used, and that colors help people retain ad content from 55% to 80% (see 3M study as cited in Mills, 2000), we know they help us communicate with our students as well. Improving students' vocabulary, then, and understanding of the various colors they see in their lives, can be first steps in analyzing how images or videos affect us.

The lesson ideas that are presented here are ones that I usually do in a two-hour class period. But if one adds homework in the form of articles or information-seeking on the internet, the lessons can expand to a two/three-class lesson plan. My classes are usually students with B1, B2 English levels but the ideas can be adapted for other levels.

COLOR NAMES

The first part of the lesson deals with increasing the amount of vocabulary just in terms of colors that the student knows. The basic colors of blue, yellow, green and red are often no problem for our students. Adjectives that are used to describe the colors further can also be added so that the student is aware of these descriptors such as “light” blue or “dark” red which can change a color. More difficult might be something like lime green or neon yellow. I have the class write down as many colors as they know in English. We start with about ten as a guideline, but many students come up with more. I do not allow for the adjectives “light” or “dark” to be used in their list, but if they come up with olive green that would be fine.

Once the students have had enough time to write down as many colors as they can, I go around the room asking each student to read one of the colors on their list, one that has not been mentioned before. It requires the class to remember which colors have been mentioned and which have not. We go around the room until no student has any more colors to add and that last person “wins” the competition. I usually have some kind of prize for the winner. One can also have one of the students writing down or recording all the colors so that we have a final list for the class. Students are eager to show their knowledge and as the teacher, you are the judge about whether their color is really an acceptable one.

Another extension of this is to ask them to put the following colors in order from light to dark: honey, hazelnut, buttermilk, ivory, camel, tan, champagne, beige, and cream. This can also lead to debate about which color is lighter, but any differences of opinion can be settled by accessing the internet on their mobile phones or computers.

In addition, one can look up what color names have been used in various areas to distinguish between different shades or hues of colors. Lipsticks, for example, may be called: after glow, apricot toast, berry sexy, betrayal, blaze, bridal party, caress or champagne. Have students decide how “red” or “pink” these shades might be and come up with some different names for their favorite cosmetics. For the males in the classroom, there is another possibility. Paint names (for painting indoor walls) have a new tradition and there has been a change from a “normal” paint name to “the manly name”. Examples range from: Fairytale Green to Me Money, Butterscotch to Beer Time, Cloud Nine to Iced Vodka, and Classic Liberty Red to Rent on my Truck. (See this website for further examples: <https://goo.gl/Fqeqz7>). If you can get some, Crayola crayons also have interesting names for some of their up to 120 colors, including

some of my favorites: burnt sienna, razzle-dazzle berry, jungle green or orchid. See this website if you are interested in learning more about Crayola's range of colors: <https://goo.gl/xLbn4s>).

From these basics we then do a fill-in of the poem 'Coloured' taken from the English coursebook *English Elements 2* (Callus & Roth, 2000, p. 21).

Read the following poem. Fill in the gaps of the second part of the poem with the colors shown below:

green, red, pink, grey, white (2x), yellow, blue

Coloured

Dear white Fella

Couple things you should know –

When I born, I black

When I grow up, I black

When I go in the sun, I black

When I scared, I black

When I sick, I black

And when I die – I still black

You _____ Fella,

When you born, you _____

When you grow up, you _____

When you go in the sun, you _____

When you cold, you _____

When you scared, you _____

When you sick, you _____

And when you die – you _____

And you have the cheek

To call me coloured?

This poem was written by an unknown author in the Australian Aboriginal dialect.

Answers (in order): white, pink, white, red, blue, yellow, green, gray.

This is a good time to talk about idiomatic use of colors. Most of my students do not know that in English we often use the word “yellow” to indicate fear, actually in a negative way. I give my students a worksheet and some can be found at these webpages (<https://goo.gl/jRKUeV>; <https://goo.gl/qDIZUq>).

COLOR MEANINGS

Once everyone has thought about the various colors they know, the next step is for students to realize that they are influenced by different colors. In pairs they should discuss with a partner their favorite and least favorite colors and why they like or dislike the colors. This should then be discussed with the full class. Is your favorite color one that you like to wear, or like to have in your house, or one you like to see every day?

The next step is to discuss what the basic colors mean: Do colors like white, black, green, blue, brown, yellow, orange, red or pink have meanings for the students? Are these cultural meanings that might change if they lived somewhere else? Assign each color to a group of students to come up with as many different “meanings” for their color as they can. Have them present in class. Each member should talk about some aspect of the color/s that was the focus of their group.

COLORS IN ADVERTISING

In advertising, according to the article ‘Any Colour You Like So Long as it’s Orange’ (2003), the following colors have the following meanings. See if your students come up with similar answers. Orange, the happening hue; red for power and sex; pink for innocence, femininity and fragility; yellow for a young, fun color; green for money, nature, jealousy and luck; brown for solidity, neutrality and straightforwardness; purple for leadership; and blue, as the world’s favorite color, for coolness, calmness and authority.

Armed with these color “codes”, have the class discuss favorite logos of brands they know: Coca Cola, Pepsi, Adidas, Nike, H&M or Gucci. Does the color in the brand logo influence the student to feel something about the product? One could also discuss the change of the McDonald’s colors. From logos one can proceed to magazine ads. Either have students bring in one page advertisements from various magazines or newspapers (since now newspaper ads are often in color) and discuss why the colors used might have been chosen, or bring in some yourself. One can also give the students a black and white copy of an ad that appeared in color and ask them to write a paragraph for homework discussing what colors

they think this ad would have in it and why. Here it is not really important if they choose the right colors but if the supporting arguments work.

COLORS IN PACKAGING

Another way colors are used in advertising is in packaging. Again, here students can take something out of their bags and discuss what the colors of the packaging mean and talk about why they bought that product and if the color had something to do with the purchase. Students usually have bottled water and it is usually in either blue or green plastic bottles. Why those colors? There are plenty of other ways the colors of the products manipulate us into buying. It could be the little touch of green somewhere that makes us think the product is “fresh”. Or it could be that the container – a glass jar of compote – could remind us of our grandmother’s way of preserving fruits. Sometimes the expensive looking packaging leads to expensive prices. Have students discuss perfume packaging as one good example of this. However, also tea can be quite inexpensive or have gold lettering and interestingly patterned packaging that suddenly makes the tea jump from €6 a kilo to €36 a kilo. Besides colors, though, there are also other images that influence our choices when it comes to packaging. In terms of “characters” there is Mr. Clean, Aunt Jemima, the Jolly Green Giant, Chef Boyardee, and certainly some that are also part of your countries’ supply of “people” helping shoppers make their choices. These icons can be googled in case they are not familiar to your students. With children’s food packaging these cartoon characters become even more important and cereals meant for children have Shrek, Barbie, Nemo, and many other characters children know from films and TV on the packaging just asking children to buy their box. Discuss whether your students have also bought products because of “who” was on the package or remember in their younger years wanting their parents to buy one cereal or another.

COLORS IN FILM CLIPS

TV commercials or other short clips also give our students the possibility to look at how their general impressions of what is going on on-screen can be manipulated by the use of color. Take either a TV spot (good because they are short) or a short film sequence and have students discuss the colors of clothing, decorations, and products that were used and why those colors might have been chosen. Why that color of car? Why those colors for clothing? Why certain wall or furnishing colors? Could other

color choices have worked better? They should discuss and write down their ideas in essay form. Remind them that these types of decisions are important pre-production facts that need to be discussed by directors, producers, costume designers and the like. The colors will not only influence our perception of what is happening in the film, but also our emotional reaction to it. As product placement in films has become an important financial consideration, these color questions may also have become that much more important.

PSYCHOLOGY OF COLORS

Smith and Taylor (2004) talk about the psychology of color use in their book. They quote Russia's Pedagogical Institute and say that most people can feel colors. There is a belief that bio-introscopy means the skin has seeing power and that colors such as red, green and dark blue are "sticky". While this might seem to be extreme, the US Color Research Institute found that the colors of the walls of offices make people sleepy, excited or healthy. Police in the UK have tried out pink for prison cells to influence their prisoners and it has been found that while red increases blood pressure, blue reduces it. Of course all of this is important for our own health and welfare, but business uses this knowledge, then, to manipulate us into choosing one product over the other.

One test was done on how the package color of coffee affected people's perceptions of the taste of the coffee. When the same coffee was used in four cups of coffee that were put next to packaging in the colors dark brown, red, blue and yellow, participants in the study found that if the packaging was dark the coffee tasted too strong, red was just right, but when the coffee was next to blue or yellow the coffee itself tasted weak or mild. Have your students perform such a test with products of their choice to see if they get similar results. With the Nespresso coffee machines and capsules it is an easy matter to try out and then report back on the results.

Interestingly enough, another test was done with colors in the packaging of washing detergents. Depending on the color of the packaging, people decided that the detergent was either very good or not. One test was done in 1964, and another test was done in 1982; opposite results were achieved. Probably this is why many washing detergents use the colors red, blue, green and yellow in their packaging, as well as in their predominately white powders. Have your students find out what detergents their parents and people in their neighborhoods use and whether any people chose their product because of the colors of the

detergent or packaging. See if your students can reproduce the results of either the first test, or the second one. The first test: largely yellow pack: too strong, ruined clothes; largely blue: did not work, clothes looked dirty still; blue and yellow pack was wonderful. In the second test: yellow box was too mild; blue was good all-round product; red was good for stained clothing.

Having students do this kind of work not only helps their English but helps them understand how advertising can manipulate them – from something so simple as using colors. It is important for our students to understand the media they see and how to interpret what they are seeing in order to better assess the “truth” of the messages they are receiving. Since colors are everywhere we look – and indeed especially in social media, webpages, TV, magazines, billboards, and all around us – it is necessary to help our students think about why these particular colors have been chosen. This awareness should alleviate any type of persuasion that might occur.

THE CULTURAL MEANINGS OF COLORS

Another aspect of colors would be their cultural significance. We also want to be sure that our students perform well in a global world and colors do not have the same significance in every culture. If you do not have a diversity of students in your classroom, students can explore the world of color significance by checking out various websites on the subject. Students could be divided into color groups or continent groups with the assignment of finding out all they can about the significance of a certain color in various countries or by looking at all the colors in one region and then presenting their information in some colorful way. They might make their own three-minute video about the color/region. One such website that could be of help is: <https://goo.gl/9ktrq7>.

There are plenty of stories where global advertising has gone wrong because companies did not consider the implications of different colors in different countries. One such story involves a company that brought green hats as merchandising presents for people in China. They did not know that if a man wears a green hat in China it means his wife has been cheating on him. Another American company tried to sell pastel colored toilet paper to the Asian market without success. Only when they tried bright colors did their sales pick up. Pepsi lost its dominant market share to Coca-Cola in South East Asia when it changed the colors of its vending machines and coolers from a darker blue to a light “ice” blue which represents death and mourning in that area. UPS usually has

brown trucks for deliveries, but in Spain they had to be repainted because people thought they were hearses. There were also problems in Germany when the drivers of UPS showed up in brown uniforms since this color was associated with a difficult time in the past. Students might also look for more stories about marketing that has gone wrong. Often, though, this has to do with language difficulties so those are also interesting global mistakes for students to discover. Interesting webpages for this are: <https://goo.gl/LNBoLO> or <https://goo.gl/ZMVbBX> or <https://goo.gl/GHCAMj>.

CONCLUSION

According to Mills (2000), colors are dramatic in improving comprehension and retention as well as stimulating an emotional response in viewers. So why not use more color in the classroom and have your students learn more about this powerful factor that we use in so many areas of our lives? While it still may be debated about how “real” colors are – whether they are “attached” to an object or represent our perception of that color – humans have three receptors for color that allow us to see hundreds of shades and mixtures of the basics: blue, green, and red. Help your students find out more about this interesting subject while at the same time helping them increase their color vocabulary. Of course, the word color – or colour – has the same significance no matter how you spell it.

Writing a paper that consists of only black-and-white letters when talking about how important colors are is ironic. More ironic might be listening to a podcast on colors, but you can have your students do this as well by checking out <https://goo.gl/GOJQh2> and listening to ‘Rippin the Rainbow a New One’, ‘The Perfect Yellow’ or ‘Why is the Sky Blue’. However you do it, introducing your students to color vocabulary and meaning is sure to brighten everyone’s day.

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9. Learner-sourced visuals for deeper text engagement and conceptual comprehension

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Despite best intentions, visuals are often an underutilized, cursory or completely absent aspect to reading skills lessons in language learning classrooms, most noticeably at higher levels. As teachers, we often rely on those provided with the texts or laboriously source them ourselves. However, is their use in either case effective for language learning or comprehending author meaning? Further to this, is it our responsibility to find the perfect image or can learners themselves benefit from doing so? This paper aims to differentiate two uses of visuals for texts (decoration-based and utility-based) and provide a pedagogical rationale for giving learners the opportunity to source them for their own and their fellow classmates' benefit.

INTRODUCTION

From simple flash cards at beginner levels to graphs representing data collected in academic articles, information presented in any text can be represented visually to the reader's benefit. They can bring recognition to a reader in ways that text alone sometimes does not. Graphical representations may come in the form of photographs, charts, timelines, cartoons, or even video. While materials writers themselves or their publishers may include these graphic representations, many times, particularly once texts became longer than just a few paragraphs, these items tend to be relegated to loose situational set-up, decoration, or at most minimal, nothing, leaving the reader with only text-text-text. It is in these cases that readers are left to decipher meaning simply through words, which as texts become more complex, may be more confusing than not for an L2 reader. In these contexts, a well-chosen visual that illuminates text concepts creates a multi-modal approach to reading whereby the visual fills in gaps, improving overall comprehension and establishing a better ability to work with the text for different tasks.

As language teachers, when visual elements are absent from our chosen texts, we may feel it is our role to provide these for our learners. We scour Google Images, freely available photo collections (e.g., ELTpics), and our own photos, or even resort to our (minimal) drawing talent, to include the ideal image for the topic of our chosen texts. We consider how that image may best provide a deeper insight into what the author means. We reconsider it, discard it, and start the process over again. In our most example-setting moments, we find images that provide us with the licence to use for educational purposes. We carefully embed these images into our texts before photocopying them or keep them as a separate resource to use within the lesson. It can be a lengthy and laborious process in our already tight planning schedule. In best case scenarios, our carefully selected visuals play an impactful role within our reading-focussed lessons; in many situations despite our intentions, our learners hardly notice them, passing them by as they focus more on the words they are reading.

In this paper, I aim to demonstrate the ways in which strong visuals can be used to help our learners improve their understanding of text concepts beyond the flash-card style recognition by exploring specific examples that represent individual vocabulary, larger expressions, and broader concepts in higher level texts. In order to do this, I differentiate two uses for visual elements with texts, 'decoration-based' and 'utility-based'. For this purpose, I interchangeably use 'graphical representations' and 'visuals' for the broadest category. I then argue that learners themselves can more aptly benefit from sourcing these themselves for both pedagogical and practical reasons.

PEDAGOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR VISUALS

A key question to ask when considering which visuals impact meaning, which I will repeatedly return to throughout this paper, is:

Does the content of this visual improve understanding better than if the visual were not included?

At first it may seem like a good visual shows a situational context for a reader, that it provides a brief glimpse into the background of a topic. Consider Figure 1.

Figure 1: Walking a Pet



We can imagine this visual appearing in a coursebook at any level, where the text topic concerns leisure activities, in this case, walking a pet. While we may use such an image to activate learner schema on the topic (such as predicting content or vocabulary that may appear in the text), beyond this pre-reading task, learners may not be explicitly instructed to use this again after reading has begun. A trap that we can fall into when selecting visuals for reading, however, is assuming that the content of the visual adds to understanding more than when the visual is not included. For this reason, establishing the difference between decorative use and utility for language learning is important, as their pedagogical value may differ by level.

Decoration-based visuals

When a visual is primarily used to break up the monotony of text only, it can be described as having a decorative purpose. This can be seen throughout many learner activity worksheets, some coursebook materials, and quite often in popular sources like magazines and newspapers. The accompanying visual can be graphical in nature, like added colour, boxes, or symbols for design; other times it may be a photograph of the individuals being interviewed or discussed in the text itself. The latter is not necessarily more connected to comprehension or serve a different purpose than attractive bullet points. These types both

play a role in creating material that draws attention to the text itself so that it is not perceived too boringly by the target audience. We can then suggest that in response to the key question to consider, the answer is 'no'. While these types of visuals may add interest, their purpose is not to support language learning or more precisely, text comprehension. As teachers, building our ability to recognise this distinction and raising our learners' awareness to it can have a positive impact on their experiences with higher level texts. But first, to understand the pedagogical use of graphical representations in higher level texts, it may be effective to contrast this with those at lower levels.

At lower levels, matching techniques are often the default use of visuals, which play out in the form of one image equals one word. Imagine at an A1 level, learners are exposed to basic vocabulary within a particular context, like walking a pet as in Figure 1. Target language may include 'dog', 'sidewalk', 'flowers' or even 'leash'. In this way, we can imagine scenarios where even more simplified versions of these vocabulary items appear as cartoonish characterizations than the authentic situation in Figure 1. This vocabulary may be pre-taught through translation in L1 before learners are expected to identify it within the appropriate image (or in the case of Figure 1, area of the image). Alternatively, the target language may be elicited while learners look at the image, which leads to teachers then filling in the gaps in knowledge by writing out the words on the board. You can likely imagine the follow-up text or two that shows simple sentences as gap-fills for this newly acquired vocabulary from matching. While the utility of this image is present, it primarily functions as a glorified flashcard, perhaps necessarily so at this level.

Consider, however, the way in which this image may be used as we examine a higher level text (for clarity, I'll mean those at B2+). There is a text that follows this image in a coursebook or a teacher gives it to learners while reading. In either case, we need to return to the initial key question: *Does the content of this visual improve understanding better than if the visual were not included?* As we could see from lower-level use, the answer is yes. But as we move beyond the matching technique towards more conceptual text understanding, the answer to this question can become mired in false assumptions on the teacher's part.

What we must aim to pedagogically consider for these more conceptual goals is whether or not the aid of the visual we choose does more to illuminate individual words, phrases, and ideas than what a flashcard or dictionary might do—quite often not as simple as it may seem. Unlike how a lower-level learner requires visuals to be able to identify new

language, I suggest that for higher level texts, continued use of visuals for matching words with pictures equates with a more decoration-based purpose than not. To exemplify, consider the following text:

Excerpt A

On July 15, Lou and I literally stopped to smell the flowers. We'd been walking around the neighbourhood for about 30 minutes, going from sidewalk to sidewalk. Lou usually runs ahead of me on these walks. Sometimes she even pulls me with her leash because she is in a rush to carry on. At one point, however, her pace had slowed. When I caught up to her, I saw that she was particularly interested in some yellow sunflowers. They were poking through a metal frame fence that surrounded a front garden. We stood peacefully there for several minutes.

While not a very high level text, it does include some complex lexical items (e.g., *caught up to*, *particularly*, cohesive devices, etc.) and grammatical structures (e.g., reduced relative clauses, adverb clauses, past tense discourses, etc.). If we add in Figure 1 for this text as a supplement for comprehension, a few directions for its use arise.

This could be used to illustrate particular vocabulary items as necessarily done at a lower level (e.g., *sidewalk*, *leash*, *sunflowers*, *metal frame fence*, etc.). This usage for a higher level learner, however, does not add very much value considering the level of content vocabulary included is likely already known or easily guessed from context. For this reason, while at lower levels this use may be more pedagogical, at higher levels, it becomes reduced to a more decorative position. Thus, a utility-based purpose becomes more needed for its effective use.

Utility-based purpose

Keeping the key question for visual selection in mind, for other more complex lexical items (e.g., *caught up to*, *particularly*, *carry on*, etc.), learners can use Figure 1 as a context to construct meaning. It shows a dog on a leash that is no longer walking, so given this, learners can imagine what came prior to it through the text (e.g., *Sometimes she even pulls me with her leash because she is in a rush to carry on.../...she was particularly interested in some yellow sunflowers*) and thus, meaning of phrases and clauses become easier to understand by contrasting them to the image. More importantly, certain ideas presented through

lexical items can be effectively illuminated with a carefully selected visual like this when seeing only text or even using a dictionary may not. When discussing critical reading pedagogy, Hedge (2000) notes that readers must look more deeply at the language involved in the text—to scrutinize it—in order to fully understand how an author uses it for meaning, beyond what a dictionary may suggest alone (p. 199). It is this scrutiny that involves deeper engagement with the text itself.

Notice the term *literally* in the first sentence in conjunction with *stopped to smell the flowers*. For a learner, at first reading, the meaning of *literally* may seem simple, but upon further probing, there is more than meets the eye. In order to fully grasp the author's meaning here, a learner also has to have an understanding of the expression *stop to smell the roses* and recognise the author's play on words. Stronger utility of this visual might include a process like the following:

- Teacher gives the first sentence from the text to learners: *On July 15, Lou and I literally stopped to smell the flowers.*
- Teacher shows Figure 1 to everyone.
- Teacher asks: *Who is Lou?* <the dog>
- Teacher asks: *What were they doing?* <going for a walk around the neighbourhood>
- Teacher asks: *What happened?* <they stopped to smell the flowers>
- Teacher asks: *Is this expression, 'stopped to smell the flowers', used commonly in specific situations, not simply like in this image?* <if none is elicited, teacher explains the idiomatic meaning>
- Teacher asks: *In this text, why does the author say 'literally' before it?* <to express that they not only mean the idiomatic expression, but they also really did stop their walk and smelled the flowers>
- Teacher asks: *So what does 'literally' mean?* <that an action really did happen as it is explained>
- Learners read the rest of the text and use the visual in a similar fashion in small groups or pairs to discover meaning.

How does this visual then go beyond mere matching technique in illustrating meaning for specific individual words? Some lexical items and concepts simply cannot be understood through a matching technique alone. *Literally* is a fine example here. How does one represent its meaning visually as easily as a content word, like *leash*? Without the combination of visual context (the act of stopping a walk to smell the flowers) and the knowledge of the expression from which the text is manipulating

(‘you have to sometimes stop to smell the roses’), the inclusion of the word *literally* makes little sense. It could easily be confused with a more colloquial meaning like ‘really’ without conveying the true meaning of the author. In this regard, Figure 1 has a utility beyond that of a flashcard, beyond that of decoration. Situationally, it helps define the author’s meaning in conjunction with the text. One might then contrast its meaning with ‘figuratively’ or ‘metaphorically’ at even higher levels and include extra examples of how *literally* shows this difference.

Utility-based visuals help learners construct meaning of not only individual words, but also broader text concepts that do not appear within dictionaries alone. Take the following excerpt from *Academic Reading Circles* (Seburn, 2016, p. 24):

Excerpt B

Attempting to improve Jarvis Street “as a cultural corridor with an emphasis on its historical significance,” Toronto approved new sidewalks, trees, and curbside bicycle lanes. City cyclists declared victory even though the lanes themselves included mere painted borders and chevrons. Legally sharing the road between motorists and cyclists was in fact short-lived. Despite protests, just 18 months later, a new City council led by Mayor Rob “war on the car” Ford, passed a vote by a very close margin to remove the bike lanes to the sum of \$272,000 (a \$186,000 difference above the cost of installation).

Here, there are a variety of graphical representations that may prove useful to help learners more deeply understand meaning of both individual words (e.g., *chevrons*, *short-lived*, *protests*, etc.), but also concepts—by this I mean ideas implied by the author outside individual words (e.g., the emotion on the part of cyclists at the reversal of the bike lanes decision after only a short period, the poor financial decision-making, etc.). Figure 2 (<https://goo.gl/VwPXaf>) may provide a solid example.

In this image, a reader can see the street in question, the bicycle lanes discussed, the action cyclists took to protest the decision to remove these lanes, and even a poster expressing the emotion cyclists felt about these bicycle lanes. For a more decorative purpose for this level of text (as described above), it could be used to explain a number of individual words, yet it becomes more effective if incorporated for its conceptual utility. One such concept includes the inefficacy of the bicycle lane

construction itself. The author of the text implies this within the line: *City cyclists declared victory even though the lanes themselves included mere painted borders and chevrons*. Using Figure 2 in conjunction with the text itself can encourage learners to consider the tone and implied meaning behind this statement (i.e., a negative commentary about bike lane efficacy) by seeing what the bicycle lanes look like rather than simply reading about them. It drives the narrative that the author intends further throughout this excerpt and most likely in other areas of the text not included in this excerpt, too.

Using just these two example excerpts and accompanying visuals for individual words and text concepts for author meaning provides a glimpse into the reach that utility-based visuals have in complementing texts to improve learner comprehension.

TEACHER VS LEARNER-SOURCED UTILITY-BASED VISUALS

Keeping these considerations in mind as a teacher who selects visuals is an important step towards helping learners attain deeper comprehension, but fostering a sense of autonomy is equally if not more important at higher levels. Learner-centred approaches to classroom and activity design have been much discussed within ELT contexts. They can take many forms, and their involvement can “ensure that the purposes of classroom activities [are] well understood” (Hedge, 2000, p. 34). Telling learners what to do is necessary, but letting them experience its rationale improves investment in the activity itself. Hedge (2000) goes on to note that giving learners more responsibility for their own learning results from having strategies taught and practiced that can help them to plan, implement, and monitor their independent learning when doing so (p. 35). In this regard, Clarke (1989) delves deeper by arguing that giving agency to learners in the design and execution of classroom materials shifts their roles from passive participant to “collaborator”, “problem solver”, “knower”, and “evaluator” (p. 135); this promotes their engagement and ownership of their language learning environment. In this way, giving learners the opportunity to identify key concepts in texts and source visuals themselves to help explore these concepts more engages them in the activity itself, creates opportunities for criticality, and ultimately improves their understanding of the author meaning (not to mention a whole set of digital and information literacy skills development opportunities). As teachers, we can likely all think of times where we learn much from the process than simply the product.

It may be unrealistic to expect that our learners will always search for

visuals to help them outside the classroom environment, but the search for and/or creation of visuals does occur frequently enough within academic environments. Many research papers include, even require, graphical representations of data discussed to improve understandability for the reader. It is the audience that provides the motivation. Similarly, tasking learners to source visuals themselves fosters accountability when they are doing so with a fellow reader's comprehension in mind. It can be argued that when one needs to teach something to others, one tries harder to learn it more thoroughly themselves. Incorporating this motivation in preparation for a group discussion of the text creates a strong motivation for investment into this process. A small sample segment of reading activity to encourage this may include:

Teachers give a common text to every learner at the end of one class. For homework, learners are tasked with not only reading it, but identifying important individual words (like *literally*, from Excerpt A) or concepts (like *the inefficacy of bike lane construction*, from Excerpt B) that may be key to widening group comprehension. In addition, each learner becomes responsible for sourcing or creating a graphical representation for it through methods they are familiar (e.g., Google searches, Excel charts, drawing, etc.). In the next class, as groups discuss the text itself, each learner shows the visual they have selected, explains how it is connected to the text, and discusses how it has helped them understand that word or concept more fully. In this way, learners are not only involved in their own learning, but also in the co-construction of text comprehension by helping others understand better through visuals.

Of course this takes modelling, practice, and effort, but reminding them of the question that began this chapter—*Does the content of this visual improve understanding better than if the visual were not included?*—is essential. Over time, learners will not only be able to address this question more adequately, but in doing so, their comprehension and engagement with texts can increasingly be noticed through their responses to comprehension questions and use of text concepts in their writing.

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10. Images on canvas: art, thinking and creativity in ELT

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This paper draws on my experience with paintings in my sixth grade primary school classroom. The approach involves exposing students to paintings, relating them to topics, structuring students' thinking, and encouraging note-taking and journal writing. It discusses the benefits in terms of the students' attitude towards learning, community building, language, and creative thinking development. The paper also offers two relevant suggestions in the form of lesson proposals.

INTRODUCTION

Arts are a central part of the human experience. Paintings, as a form of art, constitute the mode of creative expression through which ideas and emotions about our world are woven in an aesthetic visual language. As such they have the potential to enable students to understand better and reflect on the world they live in. In this paper I will be discussing the value of using paintings in English language teaching and learning as a means of promoting students' creative thinking around social topics. The paper consists of three parts. First, I will refer briefly to the context within which I have been using paintings in the classroom. Then, I will reflect on the learning design process I follow when working with paintings. This part will be supported by examples based on my experience of using paintings with sixth grade primary school students (twelve years old) in a state school in Greece. Finally, I will offer two lesson proposals on the topics of refugees and peace through the use of paintings.

USING PAINTINGS: A RATIONALE

Teaching English in the state primary sector in Greece entails working with mixed-ability groups of 20 to 25 students. The sixth grade groups that are my focus in this paper are mixed-ability and belong to a pre-intermediate language level, equivalent to the CEFR A2- level. Children are also provided with private foreign language tuition at home or in language institutes alongside state school instruction. At school, they

are taught English for 3 hours per week and each class lasts 45 minutes. The state school syllabus is a coursebook driven one yet English in the Greek state primary school is not taught explicitly to the test; this has important implications for teaching and learning.

The national curriculum for the teaching of foreign languages in general, and English in particular, is based on a cross-thematic approach to teaching and learning. One of the overall aims of the curriculum is that the students do not acquire fragmented knowledge, but instead learn how to live and act in a constantly changing multilingual and multicultural context. The curriculum also highlights aspects that foster learner autonomy like “the development of the learner’s personality, awareness of self, emotional stability and dialectic capability while it promotes the spirit of cooperation in a democratic environment” (Sifakis et al., 2006, p. 138). With reference to learning, it is meant to be learning-centred and learner-centred; language learners are seen “as creators and developers of discourse and not as consumers of knowledge” (Sifakis et al., 2006, p. 138). Apart from enabling learner autonomy, such a framework also makes space for teacher autonomy and creativity. Moreover, it has informed my practice of using paintings in my English classroom.

THE DESIGN PROCESS

When using paintings in the classroom, the following learning design principles structure my thinking and approach:

- Lesson topics are preferably linked to the curriculum, are student-initiated or suggested by coursebook work.
- Topics are linked to forms of art, or vice versa.
- Student writing is important in the approach we pursue.
- Student tasks are designed to help creative thinking.

CHOOSING A TOPIC

Topics like bullying, disability, human rights, racism and xenophobia, refugees, war and peace never feature as such in the titles of our coursebooks. There may be, however, something we encounter in the book that can be linked to these issues. A special International Day, a bullying awareness week, a recycling campaign in our school, a schoolmate in the autism spectrum, the refugee influx in the country, the refugee camp in our city have also provided good incentives to deal with these issues. The opportunities are many. It is a matter of spotting the occasion.

THE EVOCATIVE POWERS OF ART

Once the occasion is spotted, some research follows on a work of art that can be linked with this topic. It is important to approach values and global issues through paintings and art in general. Art has been critical for the whole process of humanizing societies and nurtures an ideal of harmony between reason and senses, a perception of wholeness. Art means values, values about home and family, work and play, humans and the environment, war and peace, rejection and acceptance. When students are exposed to paintings related to social topics, we give them the opportunity to see how the aesthetic component of art embraces the component of social awareness. We show them how art can express these durable human values and concerns and we sensitize them to the fact that values shape all human efforts; this can hopefully affect their personal value choices. Another thing is that quite a significant number of students have the opportunity to get in touch with art only through the school environment. While they are exposed to an overwhelming amount of visual input through the internet, online gaming and the media, the way they interact with them and the images and messages they receive often promote unthoughtful moods and attitudes. Parameters that affect artwork choice for my young students are how effectively it can be related to the topic, the emotional impact it can have on them, and its aesthetic value. I also aim as much as possible for cultural diversity.

FROM NOTE-TAKING TO JOURNAL WRITING

Working with paintings means that there are no “right” or “wrong” answers. Students will observe, think, come up with many ideas, share them, and listen to their classmates’ ideas. What I mainly explain to them is the importance of note-taking and journal writing as the means to document, reflect on and assess our lessons with paintings. It is the notes taken in class that will aid their memory of what happened in the lesson and guide them during homework study. Note-taking is an activity of a highly personal nature. When students offer their ideas, I help with the language they may need to express them, model correct language, and use the board to make their ideas visible, but the way they keep their notes is their own personal, creative way of organizing their thoughts. Here are two examples of students’ notes when working with Keith Haring’s painting *Best Buddies* (<https://goo.gl/27P7C3>) attached to the topic of friendship.

Figure 1: Notes on Best Buddies (1)

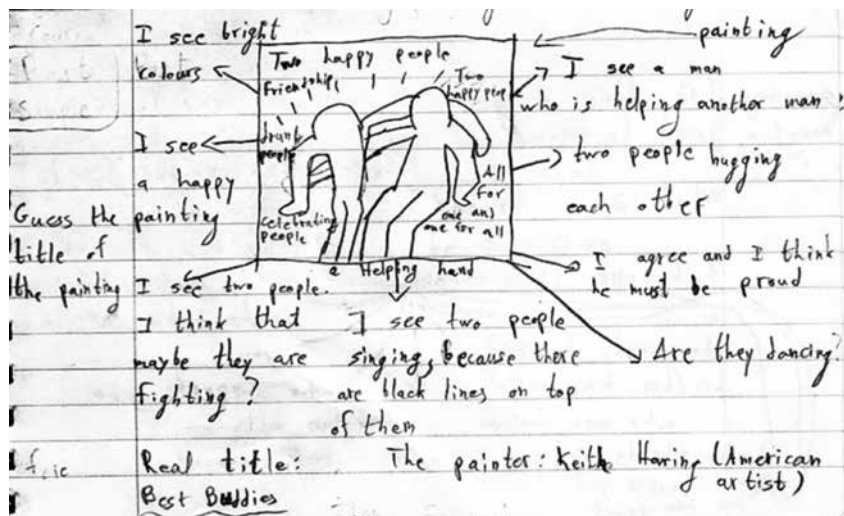
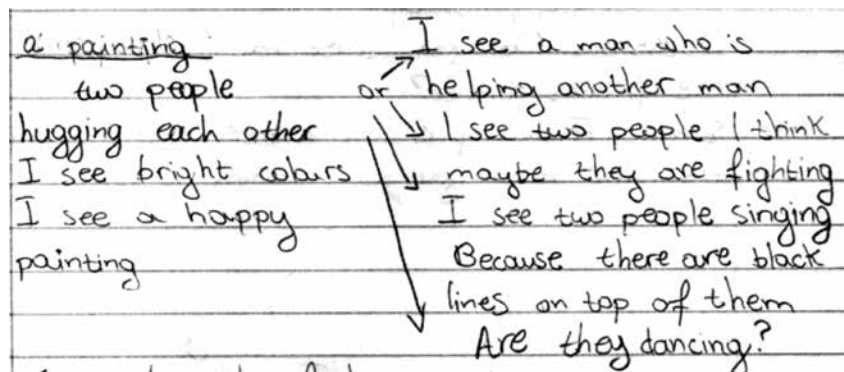


Figure 2: Notes on Best Buddies (2)



Journal writing involves reconstructing classroom experience. When introducing journal writing to a new group of students, the general guideline is that they can describe what we did in the lesson, express further opinions, feelings or ideas, write if they liked it or not and why. Students reflect on the lesson we had, use the language that emerged out of their needs to express their ideas, and if possible expand on the ideas shared. Figure 3 shows a student's response to the painting *At School* (<https://goo.gl/3KJqSk>) by Jean Marc Cote (1901) or Villemard (1910).

Figure 3: Student's Response to At School

of how the people believed the school will be in the future. They thought that there will be no books and the students will be unhappy and brain washed. I don't want to be my school like this because we are humans with thoughts and feelings and each one of us has his own personality.

Both note-taking and journal writing help students become more attentive and concentrated, their commitment levels grow, and they become more actively involved. Active involvement interacts with motivation and responsibility. This is the sort of responsibility that comes out of their belonging in the classroom community; they build their learning experience on their own ideas and by listening to each other's ideas.

Figure 4: Student's Journal Reflecting Classroom Sharing of Ideas

Then we looked again and we shared our ideas. Harris thought it is a painting with small mirrors and I added that every mirror correspond to one human and reflects all the good things. Chris believed the painting is about purity. Kestis thought is about peace and freedom because it has circles instead of triangles.

STRUCTURING STUDENTS' THINKING

There are two frameworks which are supportive towards providing a structure for students' thinking and can foster the development of their creative thinking skills: the Visual Thinking Strategies (Husen, 1999) and the Visible Thinking approach (Ritchhart, Church, & Morrison, 2011).

What makes you say that?

The Visual Thinking Strategies approach (www.vtshome.org) involves asking students two questions:

- What's going on in this painting?
- What do you see that makes you say that?

This first question offers possibilities for diverse responses and interpretations. The second question asks them to support their ideas with evidence from what they see. They will have to search for details that justify their answers. Figures 5 and 6 show an example of an activity involving Cyril E. Power's painting *The Tube Train* (<https://goo.gl/0tDWMs>). The activity was associated with the topic of urban life. Apart from note taking, we also used sticky notes to post our ideas on the classroom wall.

Figure 5: Activity Involving *The Tube Train* (1)



Figure 6: Activity Involving *The Tube Train* (2)



The students' answers to the *What's going on?* prompt fell in two groups: a) the rather obvious remark that there were people sitting on a train or on the metro; and b) their thoughts and impressions about these people; they noticed that the people looked angry and sad. By asking the question *What do you see that makes you say that?* they began to observe more carefully and to search for details to support their responses. For the first case their responses were: "I can see handles at the ceiling. I see the place has a circular shape. I see they are holding and reading newspapers and people often read newspaper at the metro." For the second case their responses were: "I see that they aren't smiling. They are only interested in themselves. They don't care about what's going on around them".

The "What makes you say that?" approach is also included in the Visible Thinking programme. Visible Thinking (www.visiblethinkingpz.org) and the affiliated Artful Thinking programme (www.pzartfulthinking.org) offer a wide array of steps to follow or sets of questions to ask. In this case they are called thinking routines pointing to the need for systematic and repetitive use in the classroom in order to bear fruit. These are some examples of routines that work well with paintings.

See-think-wonder

This routine fosters careful observation, description, thinking, wondering, and the asking of questions. It stimulates interest and curiosity. See below for a student's responses to the routine used with *Blue Butterflies Tongue* (<https://goo.gl/dDCsrX>), a painting by Steven Coventry, an Australian

artist with Asperger's Syndrome. The painting was the starting point in dealing with the topic of autism.

Figure 7: Student's Responses to *Blue Butterflies Tongue*

see

I see a tornado carrying along many shells.
 A tornado from above.
 A spiral shape that looks like a snake or a whirl.
 A big, shiny snake flying in a blue bright sky.

think

It is a strange painting.
 The painting will drag me in a strange world.
 It is a strange but beautiful painting.
 It symbolizes that we are different.

wonder

What is it?
 If you fall into it where will it end?
 What was the artist thinking when he painted it?
 What does it really show?
 Why are the colours only blue and yellow?

Looking ten times two

In this routine students observe and think about words or phrases to describe what they see. It encourages pushing beyond obvious descriptions. Figure 8 is an example of how the routine worked through the use of a circle map to document ideas. The artwork was *Refugees* (<https://goo.gl/Me2og5>) by Hanane Kai, a Lebanese illustrator and graphic designer.

Figure 8: Routine Involving *Refugees*



Step inside: perceive-believe-care about

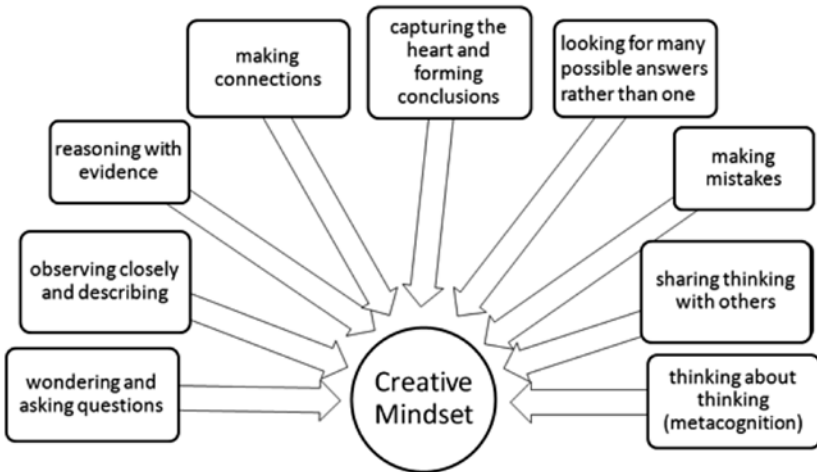
In this routine students step inside a character in a painting and from this perspective say what they perceive, believe, and care about. The focus is on perspective appreciation, emotional response, creative understanding, deeper awareness, and stimulation of empathy.

Beginning-middle-end

In this routine students imagine the painting as the beginning, middle or end of a story. They observe, make predictions, and develop their storytelling skills.

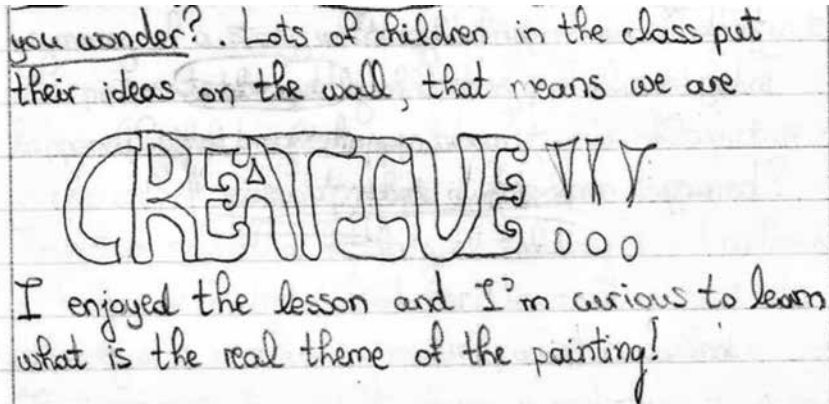
The repeated engagement of students with these procedures when working with paintings helps them “enact thinking-dispositional behaviour” (Tishman & Palmer, 2007, p. 4), such as curiosity, concern for truth and understanding, and a creative mindset. They are not just being skilled but they are also alert to thinking and learning opportunities and eager to take them (Visible Thinking).

Figure 9: Visible Thinking and Creativity (Papalazarou, 2015)



Using paintings, and other artful learning stimuli, making them relevant to specific content, and providing a structure for students’ thinking to occur can be instrumental in developing thinking dispositions that support thoughtful learning, and in nurturing a creative mindset. Figure 10 shows how students’ view of creativity as a flow of ideas while they quest after meaning is reflected in their writing.

Figure 10: View of Creativity



LESSON PROPOSALS

Refugees

Painting: *The Walking of the Many* by David Kumcieng (<https://goo.gl/1JF30P>)

This is a painting by a 15-year-old Sudanese refugee at the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya. The painting shows men, women, and children walking in a line. They are carrying their possessions in boxes, sacks, and suitcases. In the foreground of the painting, two vultures are leaning over what looks like the skeleton of a dead person.

Language: Refugee related vocabulary

Age: 12 years old

Level: A2-

Time: 120 minutes

Skills: observing, speaking, note-taking, listening, writing

Step 1: Ask students to brainstorm around these questions to activate personal schemata:

- Do you walk?
- Do you like walking?
- How long do you walk every day?
- Where do you usually go?
- Do you like drawing?
- What do you usually draw?

Step 2: Show the painting and ask:

- What do you see?
- What do you think about it?
- What does it make you wonder?

Students can work individually, in pairs or in small groups. Go round the class and monitor their progress. Help with the language they need if necessary. Allow 10-15 minutes and get feedback.

Step 3: Ask them how this painting is different from the ones they usually make. Tell them this is a painting by a 15-year-old boy from South Sudan who is a refugee in Kenya. Write on the board: *refugees*. Explain they are people who are forced to leave their country because of persecution, war, or violence.

Step 4: Write *South Sudan* on the board. Ask students if they know where it is. Explain that it is in northeastern Africa. If possible, show a map of Sudan and South Sudan. Write on the board: *civil war*. Explain that this is the kind of war where people in the same country fight between themselves. In this case, after the civil war (1983-2005) Sudan split in two countries: Sudan and South Sudan.

Step 5: Ask students to imagine how the country might be like. Get feedback. Then, add information if needed, like: poor, rural country, farms, villages, rivers, streams, savannas, desert, wild animals.

Step 6: Show the painting again. Ask students to step inside, imagine they are one of the people who are walking and from this perspective reflect on these questions:

- What do you perceive/understand?
- What might you believe?
- What might you care about?

Students work individually. Go round the class and monitor their progress. Help with the language they need if necessary. Allow 10-15 minutes and get feedback.

Step 7: Write *Beginning-End* on the board as headings for two different columns. Tell students to think on the following prompt:

- This painting is the beginning of a story. What is the rest of the story?

Involve the whole class in a discussion. Help students structure their writing by prompting thinking on questions like:

- Why did they have to leave?
- What problems did they face in their journey? (walk through the desert, extreme heat, no water/food, diseases, dangerous wild animals, enemy soldiers)
- Where did they want to go? (a safe place, neighbouring country, a refugee camp)
- What did they hope for?
- What happened in the end?

Write key words and phrases of the plenary discussion on the board, in the “Beginning” column.

Step 8: Move on with the second prompt.

- This painting is the end of a story. What was the story?

Useful questions to prompt their thinking:

- Where did they use to live?
- What kind of things did they use to do? (simple life, tend cows, goats and sheep, hunt, collect water from the river)
- Did they use to have friends and family?
- Did they use to work or go to school?
- Why did they flee from?

Write key words and phrases of the plenary discussion on the board in the “End” column.

Step 9: Students start writing their stories in pairs or small groups by drawing on their notes and the classroom discussion. While writing go round the class, monitor their progress and provide help and guidance

where needed. They can start writing in class and finish their stories at home.

Follow up: journal writing, story writing.

Peace

Painting: *Child with Dove* by Pablo Picasso (<https://goo.gl/0oLF39>)

Child with Dove is one of Picasso's earliest works. It shows a child gently holding a dove closely to the chest and standing beside a colourful ball. The background is simple with mild colours.

Language: peace related vocabulary

Age: 12 years old

Level: A2-

Time: 60 minutes

Skills: observing, speaking, note taking, expressing ideas verbally and visually, presenting, writing an acrostic poem

Step 1: Tell students that they are going to:

- Look carefully at a painting for one minute
- Make a list of up to ten words or phrases about what they saw
- Share them in class
- Repeat the activity (i.e., look again/add more words or phrases/ share)

Use a circle map or a brainstorming diagram to document their ideas.

Step 2: Depending on the ideas the students come up with, here is a list of questions to prompt their thinking:

- Is it a boy or a girl? What makes you say that?
- Why is he/she holding a dove?
- How do you think the dove got into her/his hands?
- Is she/he happy? What makes you say that?
- What colours can you see in the painting?
- How does the painting make you feel?

Reveal the title and the painter's name. Elicit that this is a painting about peace.

Step 3: Work a bit on the symbols in the painting. Explain that a symbol is something that stands for or suggests something else. Ask them what they think children symbolize. Then repeat the same with dove.

Step 4: Write on the board: *Colour-Symbol-Image*. Ask students to choose a colour, a symbol, and an image that they feel represents the idea of peace. They also have to justify their choices.

The activity works well when students are in small groups. Ideas can rush in and members of the group can contribute in diverse ways. It is also very apt to use it with the topic of peace since students engage in cooperative work and have hands-on experience of how to handle different opinions and resolve conflicts, this being a concept at the heart of the idea of peace.

Step 5: Use the student-made output as a teaching input. Students present their work. The rest of the class asks questions.

Follow up: journal writing, writing sentences starting with "Peace is..."; writing an acrostic poem about peace.

A LOOK AHEAD

Paintings, as all forms of art, have the power to unlock the doors to students' creative learning. They can evoke a holistic, emotional response, prompt thinking skills development, promote meaningful communication of thoughts and ideas about the world students live in, and strengthen the sense of classroom community. Working with paintings means providing students with time to observe, think, respond, listen to, negotiate new responses and ideas, ask questions, associate, seek and make meaning. Students also need time to get acquainted with a mode of work that brings to the fore the importance of note-taking and journal writing as the bridge between spoken and written language, and as a form of alternative assessment that helps them and the teacher continuously assess and reflect on the teaching-learning cycle. Within coursebook driven contexts, like the one I work in, time is limited and consequently attempts of such a nature remain somewhat in the periphery. It would therefore be of great interest to see artwork, and other visual learning

stimuli, move to the centre of my teaching practice as a means of systematically differentiating with the curriculum in terms of content, process and product. Such an approach could also examine how and to what extent students can be more involved in the planning and decision-making process, and the implications with regard to learner autonomy.

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11. Looking back at ekphrastic writing: museum education tasks in the language classroom

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This paper looks back to earlier traditions of writing about images, namely ekphrastic writing; an ancient tradition, alive and powerful well before the era of mechanical reproduction of images, which is revived today in museum education programmes. While the conversation about images in ELT is mainly driven by looking forward to the opportunities offered by digital technologies, this paper will argue that looking back allows us to assess how our relation and response to images have been shaped by the ways they are made so easily available to us today, and what effect this availability has on the workings of our language. After introducing key resources for creative writing tasks sourced from major museums, this paper will subsequently outline the history and currency of the notion of ekphrasis, before suggesting two classroom applications of ekphrastic writing that could help sensitise advanced students to different modes of visual perception, promoting at the same time specificity, clarity and imagination in linguistic production.

LEARNING LANGUAGES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

In contrast to the print and oral texts that used to dominate the educational contexts of the past, the dominance of visual culture in the 21st century has brought students in daily contact with numerous image-texts. In reaction to this change in modality, the concept of literacy has expanded beyond the three Rs (reading, writing and arithmetic), and indeed beyond print, to include the digital, the visual and the multimodal (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). Educational systems are starting to address these new literacy needs, including visual literacy, and acknowledge that students need skills to talk about, evaluate and interpret images and digital texts (see for example the Singaporean *English Language Syllabus*, 2010, and a discussion of curriculum changes in Karastathi, 2016). Therefore, as more voices are stressing the importance of addressing visual literacy and multimodality in the language classroom (Britsch, 2009; Donaghy,

2015; Kress, 2000), we need concrete suggestions for cultivating the 21st century skill of 'viewing', defined by Begoray (2001) as "an active process of attending to and comprehending visual media such as television, advertising images, films, diagrams, symbols, photographs, videos, drama, drawings, sculpture, and paintings" (p. 202).

In this paper I will be arguing for the benefits of incorporating paintings in writing lessons, and propose practical ways to do so through the practice of ekphrastic writing. I will suggest two activities targeted at upper-intermediate and advanced writers in the second part of this paper. The use of visual texts in writing lessons usually seems to wane somewhere at intermediate level, as the process of description is considered a lower order thinking skill, while higher levels are asked mainly to work on argumentation or describe graphs for data. The activities proposed, although they can work in isolation, are best seen in a framework where visual literacy is integrated as an aspect of the curriculum.

MULTIMODAL PROJECTS IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

As the approach to images in the ELT classroom is beginning to change in view of multiliteracies pedagogy, teachers are moving beyond the occasional use of images in the classroom, in the form of a visual aid or support to enhance the practice of language skills and systems, towards a more organic integration of visual and multimodal thinking with language development. Claymation projects (Hepple et al. 2014), advertisement analysis workshops (Hobbs et al., 2014), and student photographic exhibitions to accompany writing projects (Stein, 2000) are good examples of the increasing inclusion of multimodal thinking and skills in language classrooms. Such classroom studies indicate the need for more empirical evidence on the inclusion of multimodality. Yi (2014) reviews a decade of empirical research on multimodal literacy practices in learning and teaching English, and finds that "there is a lack of explicit discussion about benefits and challenges of new kinds of literacy practices (e.g., multimodal literacies) and demands required for multilingual readers and writers in second or foreign language contexts" (p.158).

The section that follows introduces language educators to key museum resources that can become the basis for 'writing with images' lessons.

MUSEUM EDUCATION TASKS AND RESOURCES

Being an object-based discipline, museology has actively interrogated the status of the museum object, which has changed drastically in the last 20 years. There is now an acknowledgement “that objects have a shifting and ambiguous relationship to meaning”, with their significance being open to different interpretations (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p. 3). The complex relationship of objects to meaning, is further complicated when it comes to talking about meaning in exhibitions – where a group of objects is combined with words and images (Karp & Lavine, 2012).

These multiple processes of interpretation and the range of their starting points have allowed for the visitor to emerge as an active creator of meaning in museums and galleries (Wright, 1997). This emphasis on the visitor, combined with the demand for a deeper and more rounded engagement, and the offer of more possibilities for mental interaction, have introduced creative writing as a form of engagement with museum collections. The need to hear different voices on objects, apart from the curatorial voice, and to relate objects in the collections to the personal experiences of the visitors are emerging as valuable outcomes that can be shared through writing (Noy, 2015; Sabeti, 2016).

The introduction of creative writing in museums and galleries’ educational agendas has recently produced a variety of programmes that seek to open the collection to the multiple interpretative perspectives of different interpretative communities. Table 1 includes some selected examples.

Table 1: Examples of Creative Writing at Museums and Galleries

Creative Writing Project at the Victoria & Albert Museum, UK	http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/c/creative-writing-introduction/	This is an extensive creative writing workshop that takes the student through a variety of stages, such as looking, imagining, feeling and reflecting. The website is accompanied by tasks, writing exercises and resources that can be adapted for the language classroom.
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Table 1: Examples of Creative Writing at Museums and Galleries (continued)

<p>The National Gallery, UK Articulate Project</p>	<p>https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/articulate/</p>	<p>Secondary school students from the London area worked closely with authors, poets, scriptwriters and journalists to develop “their writing skills, exploring the variety of ways that images can be used to encourage different styles of writing” (Dodd & Jones, 2009, p. 1).</p>
<p>The National Gallery, UK Podcasts</p>	<p>https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/podcasts/</p>	<p>The monthly podcasts include interviews and picture descriptions and interpretations that can be used as sources for creating listening activities and pictureless viewing.</p>
<p>The Metropolitan Museum, New York</p>	<p>http://www.metmuseum.org/learn/educators/lesson-plans</p>	<p>The museum’s educational resources offer lesson plans to help educators integrate art into their classrooms.</p>

These projects and resources have invited into the museum and gallery types of imaginative writing that were for a long time excised from the space of scholarship and safe-keeping that the museum was solely perceived to be in the past. These valuable resources could be of great use to us, language educators, who do not need to “re-invent the wheel” and create visual literacy tasks, but we can adapt the already existing museum resources and texts by foregrounding the language learning elements and creating language awareness activities, in the spirit of content and language integrated learning (Lyster, 2007).

EKPHRASIS

In the following sections, this paper will turn to the discourse on ekphrasis, as a type of creative writing practised extensively in museum settings, and propose that an ancient rhetorical technique can have something to do with 21st century viewing skills.

Contemporary readers are accustomed to the wide availability of images and their easy accessibility in either online sources or in cheap reproductions. Contemporary authors' descriptions take account of that 'easy visibility', previously absent in earlier visual cultures, where description had been to an extent a replacement of the image, and was performed in the absence of the image. Baxandall (1985) indicated Heinrich Wölfflin's descriptions as the first in art history to be directed to an image present in the text. He declares that "we now assume the presence and availability of the object, and this has great consequences for the workings of our language" (Baxandall, 1985, p.8). This practice of ekphrasis and ekphrastic writing has been at the centre of critical attention for the last twenty years in the fields of word and image studies, as writing and reading are pressed and challenged by the visual (Karastathi, 2015).

The concept of ekphrasis is far from new; it is rather an ancient rhetorical practice. Ekphrases were extended descriptions of people, landscapes, battles, places and objects. One of the most famous examples of ekphrasis is found in Rhapsody 18 of the Homeric *Iliad*, which stops the action of the battle to describe the shield of Achilles. Ekphrases in antiquity were elementary rhetorical exercises (*progymnasmata*), training the rhetorician in bringing a subject before the audience's eyes. In aiming at "making the listener 'see' the subject in their mind's eye", the practice of ekphrasis is closely associated with *enargeia*, oral discourse and the impact of immediacy on the listener (Webb, 2009, p. 2).

Ekphrases are part of a rich oral rhetorical tradition that gradually transformed into a written genre. In later periods the term acquires a more restricted meaning that specifies the description of artworks, and subsequently an even more restricted meaning of the poem about a painting. Nowadays there has been a shift towards a more open definition of the term as "the verbal representation of visual representation" (Heffernan, 1993, p. 3). There are multiple examples throughout the literary corpus (e.g., in the poetry of Keats and Auden, and in the fiction of DeLillo and Byatt) that mostly focus on envoicing, giving a voice to the silent image; but as critics have argued "ekphrasis offers a means of re-vision" (Bergman Loizeaux, 2008, p. 108). Indeed, as I have argued elsewhere (Karastathi, 2015), "ekphrasis...is worth our attention as it stages a re-vision of modes of participation and apprehension of the visual; it also provides a space for collective contemplation between author/narrator and reader" (p. 93).

AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF VIEWING

So, we are confronted with an archaeology of viewing skills that long before us has posed questions on the nature of seeing. One of the worries generated by our media and image saturated world is expressed in *A Visual Manifesto for Language Teaching* by Whitcher and Donaghy (2014): “We have to slow down, stop, reflect, think about what we’re seeing, why it’s there, how it affects us, what it does to us emotionally and why.” Indeed, there is a need for de-acceleration of the constant visual input we receive and the chance to reflect and take in what we see. Ekphrasis and this process of detailed description de-accelerates viewing and provides a space for reflection and understanding.

I would like to illustrate my point, not by citing a famous poetic or prose ekphrasis, but through an example from an 18th century avid letter writer, Lady Anna Riggs Miller, an English aristocrat, who in her 1777 *Letters from Italy* offers unique descriptive accounts of her museum visits, which function as replacement descriptions, a distinctive feature of earlier travel writing. Upon seeing *The School of Athens* (Raphael, 1510-1511, Vatican), Miller provides a full account to her pen friend back in England:

In the fifth saloon are some of his [Raphael’s] esteemed paintings. *The School of Athens* is a picture remarkable for its invention, grouping, perspective and colouring. It represents a place decorated with fine architecture. About the centre appear Plato and Aristotle, who seem engaged in philosophical discussions, surrounded by their disciples. (p. 214)

Miller’s ekphrasis continues for another page, enumerating the figures in the painting and her own reaction.

Today such writing is redundant. Instead of offering a detailed description, contemporary museum goers are more likely to share an image of themselves in front of *The School of Athens* via their smartphone. The available technology allows this immediacy of sharing experiences, but at the same time sets a habit of effortless viewing, that equates seeing and digital recording with viewing. In our contemporary relations with images immediate apprehension – being in front of the image – is often considered enough. But digital devices are actually poor vehicles for reflection, and they equate all digital images on the same perceptual mode. We tend to adopt the same viewing strategies of glancing and

swiping for images of art, gossip column photographs, news images and Instagram uploads.

If we want to develop our own and our students' viewing skills, strategies and tools for differentiating our viewing experiences are needed. In order to hone our viewing abilities, we need first of all to observe carefully, to inspect, notice, visualise in our mind's eye, analyse compositional relations, think about detail and ground; and then perhaps subsequently to write a detailed description of our observations. This ekphrastic writing often comprises an intuitive interpretation and reflection of our viewing experience, a quality unique to writing that is not easily captured through digital recording.

EKPHRASTIC WRITING ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: The museum of the mind

Background and rationale

In the first activity, inspired by the writing of the 18th century letter writer, who worked so hard in writing to make her correspondent see what she experienced, I aim to make the language work by making the image unavailable.

The resources used are designed by museum educators and interpreters, who want to make their collections accessible to blind or partially sighted visitors. In the collection 'Art Beyond Sight', teachers will find a verbal description database which aims at orienting a listener to a work of art (<https://goo.gl/B4XUP6>). These verbal descriptions familiarise students with the process of visualisation and promote listening for detail. The following is presented as a listening sequence but it could work as a reading one since the transcript is also provided.

Procedure

Stage 1

- Briefing students: You have just started working for the Access programme of a major museum. Your task is to provide access to famous pieces from the collection for people with limited vision through verbal descriptions.
- Listen to (or read) a sample of an experienced colleague's work (use any example from the database that suits the class' visual interests).
- Try to imagine the work in your mind's eye (a good variation is to draw as you listen).

- Class feedback collecting
 - o impressions and feelings: e.g., Was it easy to follow? How did you feel while listening?
 - o basic characteristics of the art work: e.g., genre, subject, composition, colour
- Listen again: What are the main sections the description is organised in?

Organisation of verbal descriptions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open with artist nationality, title, date, mediums, dimensions and collection or owner. This is the same information available to all viewers and it places the work in a historical context.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin by stating the explicit subject of the work; what is represented.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next describe the composition and give an overall impression of the work; give a snapshot of composition or form, colour scheme or mood.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicate the location of objects (e.g., on the right-hand side of the painting).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the general idea, the description should be particularised; focus on important and vivid details.

Stage 2

After the students have experienced and analysed the model description, they will perform the task themselves. Students are either assigned or they are asked to choose an art image to verbally describe to their classmates. They describe it as if they were describing it to someone who has lost their sight, and they want to help them create an image in their mind's eye.

Students at home:

- Listen to more resources from the museums' access programme to consolidate the verbal description techniques;
- Prepare their descriptions of their selected image in writing and rehearse reading it.

Students in class:

- Perform their visual descriptions, and respond to group questions;
- Share the image with the group, and discuss the differences between the actual image and the image created in their mind's eye.

Outcomes

This detailed description of the image that starts from a physical description to address compositional elements and vivid details eventually ventures to an interpretation. What I have observed from the process of imageless listening and subsequent ekphrastic writing by my students is that they start appreciating the skills required for a vivid, well-organised description, and the tremendous power their linguistic choices have in conjuring mental worlds. Students expressed that they worked a lot on finding the right words so as not to misguide the listener, and that they revised their initial misconception that descriptive writing is indeed simple.

Activity 2: Ekphrastic short story

Background and rationale

This activity is inspired by the 2011 National Portrait Gallery exhibition *Imagined Lives: Portraits of Unknown People*, and the accompanying collection of short stories (Banville et al., 2012). Using a variety of genres, such as fictional letters, diaries, mini-biographies and memoirs, authors created vivid stories that sought to imagine what the lives of these unknown sitters might have been like. In this creative writing sequence students are guided to produce an ekphrastic short story that imaginatively extends the story of a canvas. The teacher could use short story collections such as *Imagined Lives* (2012) or stories such as A. S. Byatt's (1998) 'Christ in the House of Martha and Mary' or Rose Tremain's (2006) 'The Death of an Advocate'.

Procedure

Stage 1

- Students look at the source painting in detail and perform a guided viewing activity (analysing theme, composition, mood, colour).
- Students read one of the short stories based on a famous painting suggested above.
- Class discussion of short story: When does the story start? Why has the author chosen this moment/location? Whose point of view do

we get? How does the story develop? Why has the author made these choices for extension? Does the story change your initial view of the painting?

Stage 2

- Student briefing: Tate Gallery (or any other gallery with a good sample of its collection online) is organising a writing competition for aspiring authors. They seek short stories inspired by its collection for a new publication.
- Select a painting from the gallery's collection (Tip: a narrative painting can be helpful for this task).
- Use the painting and its characters as the basis on which to build a short story. Your story can start or finish the moment the characters 'arrive' on the canvas or when they 'walk off' the canvas.
- Submit your story along with the painting that inspired it.
- Students' reading group, where the students and teacher share their short stories with subsequent discussion on process, challenges and reflection on the writing process.

Outcomes

This creative writing activity allows students complete imaginative freedom to extend the canvas and communicate their own meanings. They become aware of the time element in narratives and the possibilities for creating character voices and mingling descriptive elements with narrative progress. My students have reported that they find the anchoring to a particular painting context and the preceding analysis of an example helpful in launching their own creative writing practice.

CONCLUSION

If it is true then that our world is full of powerful visual images that continually bombard our students, it is important to teach them to resist the passivity, apathy, and numbness they might feel toward the visual, and instead to teach them to analyze the rhetorical techniques and meaning making tools used by visual texts – in other words to make them active viewers. The ancient rhetorical technique of ekphrasis and visual description asks us to slow down, look closely, reflect and take ownership of the image through writing. It is an empowering, creative practice providing an entry point to viewing and writing about images. As we are teaching in the face of new challenges and with expanded curricular

goals in mind, we have at our disposal, tools, resources and ideas sourced from institutions, such as museums and galleries, that we can adapt for our classroom in order to enable our learners to navigate better through the increasing complexities of multimodal communication.

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12. Peace art: words and images interwoven

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But think of the glory of the choice! That makes a man a man.

John Steinbeck, *East of Eden*

This paper is based on a workshop originally designed for teenagers and focused on the notion of peace and its renditions in images and art. The workshop combines the use of visuals and literature to trigger discussion and creation. First, peace symbols are examined. Then, we look closely at several peace-related artworks and decide what emotions they evoke. Digging in deeper, students assume the hypothetical characteristics of a chosen character and write an interpretation of one of Banksy's murals from the assumed perspective. Then, the bar is unnoticeably raised – writing prose is followed by creating poetry, i.e., acrostics forming the word “peace”. The session is wrapped up by a modified compare-and-contrast activity. For the purpose of the task, striking photos of Aleppo, Syria, before and during the war are shown. Students are left with images that make them reflect and ponder on what happens when peace is forsaken.

INTRODUCTION

In our troubled world, concern about peace is justified. Peacetime cannot be taken for granted anywhere, not even in the European Union, “set up with the aim of ending the frequent and bloody wars between neighbors, which culminated in the Second World War” (European Union, 2017), whose motto is “United in Diversity”.

Despite the horrors of the two World Wars and other violent conflicts, human beings do not seem to have learned the lesson that “an eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind”. The esteemed author of this maxim, Mahatma Mohandas Gandhi, gave us the worthy advice that “if we are to teach real peace in this world, and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with the children”. Morrison (2009) supports this view and states that “It is the task of peace educators to help instill values in our students that create the conditions

for individuals' understanding one another across so much that divides us" (p. 92). A similar view is also expressed by Standish (2015), who claims that "schools are a critical component of confronting complex social problems and looking to build peace because education systems occupy an ideal environment to impart transformative cultural values and effect change" (p. 28).

To my relief, it is not only adults and educators who understand the importance of instilling those values. Despite any possible evidence to the contrary, teenagers, even in First World countries, do care about peace and see the hazards to which it is exposed. I was fortunate to see it when taking part in an Empower Peace conference in Boston last summer, where 120 young female leaders from all over the world, seemingly divided by their cultures and religions, collaborated amicably to strengthen peace and safety. They could have been adversaries, but they *chose* to be partners.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF PEACE EDUCATION

The list of scholars who believe that one of the most vital missions of education is establishing peace is impressive. It includes such names as John Dewey and Maria Montessori (both of them believers in world citizenship); Herbert Read (who holds the opinion that human beings must be predisposed for peace by the appropriate kind of education); Paulo Freire (his praxis and conscientization); Johan Galtung (his negative and positive peace); Elise Boulding (her idea of peace as a daily process); or Ian Harris (who advocates the theory that education about nonviolence can help counter a culture of violence, present in virtually all the aspects of our life). Even though peace education seems to have become recognized as a specific discipline no earlier than in the 20th century, in fact it can be traced back to the very beginnings of civilization as we know it and to the founders of the world's major religions, most of whom encouraged peace and harmony.

If we agree that one of the missions of education is indeed promoting peace, is EFL teaching well equipped and suitable for providing such instruction? I strongly believe this is the case, and EFL, especially when viewed as CLIL, is a perfect vehicle of peace education. Not only can it make use of the numerous existing English resources, but it can also reach both primary and secondary EFL teaching goals, making students practise new vocabulary, grammar and literary forms and at the same time instilling the fundamental value of peace in young minds. Moreover, "The flexibility and creativity of young people can be an incentive to

create an atmosphere where learning about peace (cognitive, affective, and action oriented) becomes a collective responsibility of all; teachers and students alike” (van Houten, 2011, p. 265).

Having established the theoretical basis for EFL peace education, let us now proceed to the practical application of that knowledge in the form of a workshop that combines art and literature to stimulate teenagers’ creativity.

BRAINSTORMING IDEAS

The teacher introduces the participants to the workshop by asking the question: “What image comes to your mind when you think about peace?” Students may answer the posed question as a group, or a general discussion may be preceded by a think-pair-share activity. The instructor should encourage students to “paint” images with their words. That will allow learners to revise describing and using adjectives. The activity may be enhanced by supplying students with a selection of art materials, magazines, paper, etc., and asking the learners to create a painting, drawing or collage (individually or in pairs) that would illustrate a wiki entry on peace. Then, a discussion similar to the one delineated above should follow. The creators should describe and explain the artwork they created.

Following the activity, the teacher asks students: “If you were to draw a peace symbol right now, what would it be?” Students may draw the selected symbol, or they may just explain what it is. Some of the most frequent images and representations include a dove, an olive branch, the peace sign, an extended open hand, a hand with flowers, Yin-Yang and the V sign.

There follow additional questions: “Which of these images do you view as universal? Are there any that are culture-specific? Which ones? And why?” Here, the responses may vary across cultures.

CLOSE-LOOKING AND OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

(observation and group discussion)

Eirene by Cephisodotus

After the introductory stage, the participants are asked to study a copy of the ancient sculpture of Eirene by Cephisodotus the Elder (ca. 370 B.C.E.). Initially, the name of the person portrayed, the meaning of the woman’s name, and the fact that Eirene was one of the Horae and personified peace are not revealed.

To stimulate close-looking, the teacher asks the three typical open-ended inquiry questions:

1. What do you see?
2. What do you notice?
3. What makes you say that?

Following the students' responses, the question whether the sculpture is appealing as a symbol of peace is asked. Typically, the answer is "no" due to the fact that contemporary teen culture no longer recognizes Horae or ascribes them with any specific meaning. Sometimes, however, learners make connections between maternity, serenity and peace. Commonly, teenage students declare that the sculpture does not evoke any strong emotions in them.

Banksy's murals

The instructor now announces that three other works of art, more contemporary ones, will be shown, and asks students to decide whether the artworks are more attention-grabbing and thought-provoking and whether they trigger any emotions. The artworks presented are three of Banksy's murals: *Soldiers Painting Peace Sign* (London, recreated in 2007), *Dove of Peace* (Bethlehem, 2005) and *(Rage the) Flower Thrower* (Jerusalem, 2003).

The teacher asks students the following questions:

1. Look at Banksy's murals. What can you see?
2. Do you notice any peace symbols that we listed at the beginning? Are they used differently than you would expect?
3. What, if anything, makes Banksy's murals striking and effective? Are they more convincing than the sculpture? What's the reason?
4. Does the location of the artworks matter? Does it add meaning to the murals?

The peace sign, the dove and the hand with a bunch of flowers are readily recognized. The learners comment on how the images are remarkable and unexpected.

Note: It is important not to influence students' observations in any way, e.g., by providing them with the commonly used mural titles too early, as certain interpretations can be lost. One of my students, for example, actually viewed the soldiers painting the peace sign as whitening the sign out.

ME, THE PROTAGONIST

(role-playing; writing; sharing; an individual activity)

In this activity, the teacher still focuses on Banksy's murals. He/she asks students to choose their favorite mural and follow the procedure described below:

1. Assume the point of view of the character that appealed to you the most. ("You are the character.")
2. What do you feel? Why are you doing what you're doing? Write it down to make others understand.
 - a. (an alternative to point 2) Address all the senses: What can you see? What can you feel? What can you smell? What can you taste?
 - b. (another alternative to point 2) What has happened right before the moment depicted? What will happen a moment later?
3. Share your description with your partner.

An activity of this type is justified by Moss (2009), who says that in-class writing is particularly useful, since "the act of composing texts, unlike speaking, generates a verbal artifact, students have a means of reviewing and analyzing what they've written" (p. 32). That is not the only advantage: "writing even short texts...can lead us to unexpected places – new ways of understanding experience, new ways of understanding ourselves" (Moss, 2009, pp. 31-32). This understanding, in turn, leads us to empathy and empowers us in our attempts to promote peace.

Examples of student writing

"I'm a soldier. I'm fighting with terrorists. When I'm painting, I feel free. I don't want to fight with other people but if I must, I do this."

"I'm a dove. I'm wearing a bullet-proof vest because someone is aiming at me. I'm holding an olive twig. I'm flying to the sky. I'm scared, but I am a strong dove."

"I'm a rebel who wants peace. I'm throwing flowers to other people who want the same things as me."

ACROSTICS

(poetry writing)

According to Morrison (2009), "Poetry asks questions about the deepest issues related to the human condition. Peace education does the same" (p. 92). She claims that

If we believe that poetry can touch the heart of the human condition, can engage the listener, writer, reader in dialogue, can help us with the spiritual transformation and vital imaging necessary, we conclude that poetry is a form of peace pedagogy. (Morrison, 2009, p. 95)

Therein, Morrison (2009) also states that “poets must give us their (and ours to claim) imagination, the images of peace, to replace those of disaster and war, in order to foster hope for a better world” (p. 94). This is what we want our students to do now.

The instructor explains that now the perspective changes: the student is no longer the character. They become a journalist, writer and poet in one. They have just interviewed the character that the student previously impersonated and the experience was so powerful that they decided to write an acrostic – a poem for peace.

Students are given handouts with the letters forming the word PEACE typed triple-spaced, preferably in color, on the left-hand side of the page. They are asked to write their acrostics so that their word choices emphasize the concept of peace.

As poetry writing is quite daring in itself, especially when done in class, less advanced groups or shy students may be told to use just one peace-related word for each line. Another way to simplify the activity is to explain to the learners that the given PEACE letters do not need to be the first ones in a word/sentence, although they should appear near the beginning of a sentence.

The created acrostics are then shared with the group. They can also become very powerful if displayed alongside mural photos and the outcomes of “Me, the Protagonist” activity.

Figure 1: A Display of Student-created Peace Poetry and Prose



Examples of student writing

1.

Power

Emotions

Acceptance

Charity

Empathy

2.

People want the same things

Each one wants peace

Achieve peace

Create a better world

The **E**arth doesn't want wars, don't do it!

3.

People want to be free.

Extermination is bad.

A war is the worst thing in the world.

Crying, pain is a thing against peace.

Empathy is what we need!

4.

People want to stop the war.

The **E**arth wants peace more and more.

The **A**pppearance of the world will be better.

Can you sign a peace letter?

Exchange a war for truce, and any problem will not matter.

Acrostics of the Image Conference participants

1.

Perseverance

Endurance

Ambition

Can

End wars.

2.

For a moment **P**retend it's not up to people
Everywhere else.
Anyone can Act
Can start a wave
to **E**levate humanity.

3.

People in their
Early years
Are all
Carefree and love
Everyone

4.

Put your shield down.
Eyes and ears and mind and hearts open to
Accept love. We forgive you
Come together
Each of you, please take a flower.

5.

Peace is in the heart's contentment
Envoy destroys contentment
Acceptance of the other is best
Charity is total self-giving
Everybody can find peace and contentment with all others

6.

What helps create a **P**eaceful
Environment?
Avoiding animosity at all costs
Being **C**ourteous whatever the situation
and **E**ducation for all.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

(oral or written activity; pair work)

The teacher explains that now students are going to see what happens when peace is forsaken: the contrast between peace and the lack of it.

Images of Aleppo, Syria, before and during the war (e.g., the ones displayed in Molloy, 2016) are shown. The instructor chooses two photos of the same place – as it used to look and as it looks now – and asks students to compare and contrast the pictures. The photos should be carefully selected. They ought to contain quite a lot of details (not just rubble), while drastic and overly graphic images should be avoided. Of course, it is at the teacher's discretion to make a sensible choice with regard to the presented photographs.

If the activity is done orally, oftentimes the reactions of students are quite strong and emotional. At first, learners usually compare the most superficial aspects of the images, but then they focus on what is implied: the drastic contrast between war and peace.

ROUND-UP

The workshop needs to be carefully closed by the teacher, so that the young participants are left with mental nourishment and given an opportunity not only to review the work they have done, but also to reconsider their view on the importance of peace and their own potential to keep/restore it. According to Morrison (2009), "Good peace pedagogy must...evoke our imagination toward the deepest possibilities for human existence" (p. 94). It is extremely important not to leave the teenage students feeling helpless and powerless.

At the end, the teacher asks students whether the workshop was meaningful to them in any way. If so, then why and how? He/she asks the learners to share one thing they have discovered or rediscovered. Then, they are asked to mention which particular activity (if any) they appreciated the most. Naturally, answers will vary. Some students focus on the topic; others pay attention to technicalities and say how important it was for them to look closely at images for a relatively long time rather than just briefly scan them. Other participants describe how they discovered poetry, which they did not use to appreciate before, or how surprising it was for them that they were actually able to create their own poem. There are no wrong or preferred answers or reactions and each one should be appreciated.

CONCLUSION

Peace is indispensable for any civilization to develop and flourish. We, teachers, shapers of future generations, are obliged, more than others, to make every possible effort to empower our students to preserve harmony and promote reconciliation in this scarred world. As the author

of *Peace Begins in the Classroom* maintains, “peace is a desirable state for society as a whole, [and]...humanistic educational goals, approached in a holistic setting, offer a path to the realisation of such a state” (Finch, 2004, p. 219). But are these goals realistic? Are they realistic in an EFL classroom? And can art be used for this purpose?

In my experience, introducing workshops such as the one described above (or, indeed, initiating whole projects focusing on promoting peace and conflict resolution; especially ones where art, literature and their interpretation become vehicles for transmitting powerful messages) can and should become an integral part of EFL education. I believe that artworks and literature are powerful ‘teaching aids’, whose impact is particularly strong when they synergistically interweave, stimulating student creativity and making learners discover their own untapped potential.

Even if the task of eradicating violence and oppression through EFL teaching seems too daring, it is worth pursuing anyway. It is true, as the saying goes, that we cannot change the whole world, but we can change the world for one person – our student, through facilitating their interaction with peace art, inspiring them to create such art, and making them reflect on their creative output.

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13. The teaching artist in language learning: how to create an Artists in Schools project

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The visual arts are some of the longest surviving examples of people reaching out and communicating. It is a vehicle to communicate joy and notions of beauty, to present challenges and politics. It is used to pose questions. It is used by survivors, the traumatized, the broken and the disenfranchised, to make sense of things. It is a solace, a medium for change, and a medium for learning, especially when integrated across a curriculum.

CURRICULUM INTEGRATION AND THE ARTS

Dewey (1902) stated that within the curriculum, the arts can serve to return ideas to their contexts instead of being “torn away from their original place in experience and rearranged with reference to some general principle” (p. 6).

Syllabi and learning systems

The discussion around facts returning to a context and being considered in relation to other parts, as well as the student’s world, has been going on for quite some time. The western concept of classical subjects and syllabi, as developed by ancient Greeks among others, has taken precedence over many other indigenous knowledge and learning systems (Mangan & Ritchie, 2004) through sheer force of numbers. By the classical subjects, I refer to the classification of subjects such as math, natural science, language, society, etc.

In my native Aotearoa-New Zealand, *matauranga Māori*, that is New Zealand Māori knowledge and learning systems, the interconnectedness of elements and ideas was always acknowledged. However, the priorities to the New Zealand colonial government-led learning system meant these ancient learning systems went largely ignored, at state level, for over a century. Gladly, that is changing. Over the last forty years, alternative education systems have developed in New Zealand with state funding that embrace these traditions.

Learner centredness

Integrated curriculums not only acknowledge the interconnectedness of ideas, but also that students don't come to the classroom with empty heads. Integration also refers to drawing from what is happening outside the classroom, what prior knowledge students bring with them, and uses that as the starting point for extension, sufficiently scaffolded or supported by the teacher.

This scaffolding is the sophisticated artistry of teachers' work—work that is far more nuanced, intuitive and skillful than mere telling. It requires that teachers know when to intervene and when to hold back. It also requires an innate sense of just how to intervene. The best response might be a well-placed question or a statement that conveys curiosity. There is still a place, of course, for direct teaching. However, within parameters, there are frequent opportunities for students' agency, with freedom to experiment and initiate. (Fraser, 2013, p. 21)

Teaching artistry

In the quote above, Fraser (2013) could easily be describing an artist interacting with their work. The process of an artist parallels that of the artistry of the effective teacher and learner as it parallels any creative act. Exposure to the arts, and particularly to artists, help unlock ways of seeing that can enhance a teacher's practice as much as a learner's. Observation, critique and reflection are part of an artist's everyday life. The muscles used to see things differently are well toned and limber. It's almost a default state of being.

As indicated by Fowler (1996), an understanding and experience of the arts:

- opens, quickens and enlivens our senses;
- breaks through the binary to see the analog. Arts require abstract reasoning. They help us think straight, know the right questions to ask, and discover the real problems and solutions, because artistic endeavours have to navigate ambiguity;
- develops aesthetic value and taste, attention and care to standards and quality; there is economic value in this;
- provides many tools to communicate;

- gives access to the stored wisdom of history. Access to the cultural heritage of the human family and cross-cultural understanding;
- helps us to conceptualise.

THE (R)EVOLUTION OF THE TEACHING ARTIST

So who are these teacher-artists? Teaching artists, artist educators, community artists, activist artists, citizen artists, participatory artists, and social practice artists are among some of the nametags. But where does this type of arts practice stem from? From social upheaval.

The fifties, sixties and seventies saw people discussing and testing the boundaries between art and life more than ever before. Two world wars and later war in Korea and Vietnam created an environment, above all in the United States, for questioning faith, humanity, morality, and the point of anything. New York and the West Coast were melting pots of ideas and enjoyed a certain amount of freedom and wealth to test things out.

This isn't to say it was never discussed or explored earlier, but this was an era when it was documented heavily and pushed to the limit conceptually and physically. Linda Montano and Tehching Hsieh were two artists at the forefront of this. Montano handcuffed herself to another artist for three days; she lived for four days with two other artists, calling all they did during that time art; she declared her house a museum, with advertised tours. Tehching Hsieh performed a series of one-year pieces in New York in which his life was labeled as art, with certain prescribed limitations or "frames." He spent one whole year in a cage inside his studio, during which time he spoke to no one and no one spoke to him. The following year he punched a time clock every hour. The year after that he vowed to stay outdoors without ever going inside (Burnham & Durland, 1998).

Nuts, I know. I see you shaking your head. Art can be infamously bemusing. But this was the time to push and challenge definitions. This groundwork created an environment that spread across disciplines and ultimately influences how and what we are teaching today.

There was something in the air that night...

The flow on effect of challenging art and life distinctions and the classification of objects, ideas or academic subjects, touched my working place in the nineties. I was working in a museum in New Zealand where there had been a definite policy shift towards participatory action in the development of exhibition programmes and events that surrounded the museum collection. Communities were invited to participate in

the conceptual development of an exhibition. The curator, traditionally the 'expert', took a facilitative role to draw out the storytelling from the community. Essentially the integrated negotiation of learning and sharing knowledge was taking place. Sounds like learner-centredness, right?

HOW DO WE INVOLVE ARTISTS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING?

If you ask me what it is we do apart from making "art", we connect, we problem solve, we build bridges, build confidence. – Erica Duthie, teaching artist and artist activist, Tape Art, New Zealand

In 2016, I proposed to spend a week as an artist in a local school in Seville, Spain, running some projects with video and making my work in a temporary studio. The theme was to research aspects of a flood that overtook the city in 1961 and its consequences for the population, the environment and urban development. Groups were given specific areas to focus on and find out about that included recording an oral history of someone who lived through the flood. Video was considered the best way to work given the time and lack of resources. My work – a multimedia work on canvas would be my own response to the subject matter.

I was going to be working with teachers and older young learners. While in art making, the image, shall we say the object, is often the focus. For many participatory artists, or teaching artists, the important part of their work is not to be found in the product, but in the spaces in between; the discourse and dialogue that develops, the change of attitude, or actions, and the learning for everyone involved (Raven, 1987). I wanted to explore how I could blend my practice as a visual artist, with task-based learning and language learning.

Figure 1: Classroom-Turned-Studio



We only had a week and the daily schedule looked like this:

*Morning
Assembly*

*Short summary from yesterday's activities
Problem solving, questions
Activating knowledge,
creating interest, presentation of next video task*

*Group work
and Studio
Time*

*Video task and research with teachers
Emma in the studio making work, available for visits*

*Artist and
Students*

*Artist checks in with students about needs and issues
with their tasks*

Midday Assembly Viewing videos and reporting in on research development

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>Set up, introductions and setting the schedule and tasks in place.</p> <p>Video task to report on what they had found out.</p> <p>Group work and studio time.</p> <p>Artist available.</p> <p>Midday assembly.</p>	<p>Assembly and feedback – giving feedback about speaking to the camera, language used and video craft.</p> <p>Group work- and studio time.</p> <p>Artist available.</p> <p>Midday assembly.</p>	<p>Assembly and video task setting.</p> <p>Walking tour and photography of affected parts of the city (now and then).</p> <p>Video task.</p> <p>Artist available.</p> <p>Midday assembly.</p>	<p>Assembly.</p> <p>Group work and studio time.</p> <p>Artist available.</p> <p>Midday assembly.</p>	<p>Presentations of the video work, research and art work</p>

The following is the task for the walking tour. It concluded with ideas and some scaffolding for language and accompanied a video:

An artist finds a story to tell where others see nothing.
 Imagine. /ĩ-măj'ín/

Today as you walk about, I want you to imagine the streets that you see and the places you go visit, are flooded. Imagine you have to get through a metre of water that is flowing past you. It's dirty and unsanitary. Imagine you are a father trying to get home. You don't know if your family is safe.

Look up at the buildings, imagine it is 1961 and there are people there. See the people in the windows, asking for help. They can't get out to get food. They have no drinking water (*agua potable*). They are on the roofs (*azoteas*) trying to wave at the helicopters for help.

Imagine people who are unwell and need a doctor – how do they get help? Imagine the people of the ground floor (*un bajo*) who have had their homes flooded. Imagine all the things they have lost. Possibly their home too will be too damaged to live in when the water finally goes.

Imagine the churches full of water. Old treasures being ruined.

Imagine having to live for many years in a camp with basic conditions, or temporary buildings waiting for a home.

Imagine being separated from your neighbours whom you have known all your life in the communal corrals (*corrales de vecinos*). Your building is badly built and the first to be ruined in a flood. You are now in a refugee camp. You might be there for years. The few things you have are ruined. Maybe you managed to save a couple of treasures from the rising water.

Your task: In your groups, make a short video. Here are five ideas, one for each group. Organise yourselves. Who is talking, who is filming.

1. By the river, tell me something about the history of the river – where does it start? Where does it finish? How has it changed? The river has been changed a lot by human intervention. What impact has that had on the wetlands and flora and fauna?

2. 'Interview' a 'survivor' who has lost their home and is waiting in a camp for a new home. Ask them how they feel, ask them what they did when they saw the water enter their home. How did they get food? Did they help their neighbours or be helped? Where could they wash? Go to the toilet? Could they use the draining (*drenaje*) systems? Did they have electricity?

3. Interview some classmates and answer these questions:

- Imagine that you were trapped by the floods in your home. What did you do?
- Imagine that someone was sick in your building, but you are surrounded by deep water. What did you do?
- Finish these sentences: "I imagine it must have been... (Fun? Boring? Entertaining? A bit different? Stressful?) for parents/ children/old people/ because..."

4. Show me the line where the water got to, tell me how you think it was like. Describe what you think the streets would have been like when the water went down finally.

Figure 2: A Student Finishing a Video



Figure 3: A Study Made During My Residency at the School



The experience highlighted the obvious complexity of organizing these types of projects, but also the exciting possibilities of spontaneity, emergent learning and language. However, within a few hours of the weeklong project, I became aware of one thing: I had assumed everyone had got it. I hadn't accurately assessed the situation and a lot more support, or scaffolding, needed to have been created around concepts.

Drawing from this experience and further subsequent research, what follows is an outline of how to successfully create an Artists in Schools project.

ARTISTS IN SCHOOLS

There are four suggested types of artist/teacher partnership (Cheung, 2004; Oddie, 1998):

1. **Supply-led:** the artist/arts organization offers a service or product to schools
2. **Demand-led:** the school calls for a specific service or product with a proposed budget, for example, to produce a play or an exhibition
3. **Overlapping agendas of interests:** school and arts organization negotiate from their respective standpoints
4. **Dynamic dialogue:** the relationship between both parties is open-ended and there is a process involving discovery and risk-taking.

An art residency can be designed to take as little or as long as you want, depending on the project design and outcome. It can consist of an artist coming and doing projects with learners, or simply an artist setting up a temporary studio with agreed open studio times.

An artist setting up a temporary studio at the school has lots of possibilities. You can organize a combination of workshops and talk time with the artist, as well as scheduled in time for the artist just to 'be' – to actually make their work. This is called 'aquarium time'. Students can come and observe what the artist is doing without disturbing them.

This silent observation of making has a lot of value. The teacher can build in questions or tasks for learners to think about while observing. Giving learners time to think and formulate is important. It results in fertile feedback time later, with lots of emerging language, observations and ideas.

I'm not arty. I can't draw. I don't understand art. Demystify art making for the stakeholders.

Teachers who haven't had an arts background often lack confidence. There is this idea that being arty is innate. I argue that just as we all learn languages, we can learn new language forms and the techniques that go with producing them. Art making is just another language. There are ways to get around this sense of insecurity.

Toolkit

Create a teaching toolkit accompanying the project that can give teachers

and learners the scaffolding in which to explore language through salient questions and truly creativity-inducing approaches.

Be pragmatic and aim to demystify

Giving everyone brushes and oil paint may cause people to feel like 'artists' but struggle with techniques that are learned over a number of years. There are many artists that use the simplest of materials. Public tape-artists Erica Duthie and Struan Ashby use mediums that are free of cultural loading. Erica and her partner Struan create temporary work in public spaces with a common material – coloured tape. They argue that when they do a workshop, there is no Leonardo da Vinci to emulate. Art is in the hands of everyone and beautiful things can be made with the humblest of materials.

Figure 4: Public Tape-artists Erica Duthie and Struan Ashby



Figure 5: Tape Art's Collaboration with the Public



Figure 6 shows how outlines of people are created from live models from the public. Many conversations with people take place as the work unfolds.

Figure 6: Dubai 2016



Workshop it and test it

Get the teaching artist to develop a rapport first with the teachers and other school staff through a workshop. In this way the teachers gain an understanding of the artist's work and process and can prepare effectively. With Artists in Schools, the style is often co-teaching – the language teacher designing and providing the language and task-based learning, and scaffolding in and around what the artist wants to do. Together with the artist, look at aims, concepts, intentions, assessments and outcomes. This leads to conceptual bridges and scaffolding for the institution, the participating teachers and learners. It is a great professional development opportunity for teachers.

Just because you get it, doesn't mean they will: communicate clearly and know your community.

Where an artist in residence project will take place, as I've mentioned, it's important for teaching artists to know what the language teacher needs are in terms of training, orientation and support. But there is wider communication needed. You don't want to have what happened to me – people walking by and wondering who you are and what you're doing there. Everyone in the building should know. Everyone should have a chance to participate.

And everyone should know **how** to participate. In my experience, I assumed that students would make the time to come by and talk to me as I worked. With each day, one, two, then three would pass by. It really was a slow build. You can't assume the students know what to do with an artist or what they're doing. This act, of being able to come and talk to an artist, to have questions to ask, in itself, needed more scaffolding.

The teaching-artist team also needs to know the institutional needs in terms of communications, logistics and legalities. Does the artist need police clearance? Are the materials or artworks insured? What are the artist's needs in terms of space, access and storage, and timetable? Where can they go to access a toilet or to make a cup of tea?

Then there is the issue of fees. If an artist can be paid for their time, so much the better. Funding from a local arts council may be possible, as an Artist in Schools programme (think art, community, learning, and participation) ticks the boxes of a lot of arts and communities funding criteria.

A project owned by all participants

Make sure everyone knows what is to be done and who is doing it. In my experience, when I set up my project, I felt like I was pushing the whole

cart alone. I realized that it was due to a lack of understanding on the part of the participating language teachers and the school in general, of their role in the project. This was my fault. The school had never had an artist come in to the school and didn't know how to react. It was my job in that case, as the more knowledgeable one, to set up the scaffolding (that word again) so that everyone understood their part and felt ownership of the project.

Psychological preparation is necessary. Artists in Schools projects involve new modes of integration, instructional strategies and approaches. This requires joint planning, close monitoring, and good collaboration between school and artist. Expect the first time you do this, to take up some time.

What are your beliefs and objectives?

On reflecting on the outcomes of an Artists in Schools programme in Hong Kong, Cheung (2004) notes, "Working with multiple art forms encouraged greater motivation and joy of learning" (p. 5). Here are two examples from a performance-based Artists in Schools programme:

The aims of the project were that students could i) learn to care for and love one another through exploring the theme; ii) develop creativity and imagination through writing the script, song lyrics and dance steps; iii) enjoy the learning process with self-confidence and better communication skills and iv) reflect if dance and drama would be welcome as part of the formal curriculum. (Cheung, 2004, p. 3)

The aims of producing a musical specifically were that students could i) apply digital techniques in prop and costume design; ii) gain skills in making digital images and select an interesting area to contribute actively to the musical; iii) realize the close link between technology, arts and culture and their daily life and iv) appreciate the contributions made by individual and teamwork. (Cheung, 2004, p. 2)

It's important to agree on assessment and methodology. Are you assessing process or a product? Both? Mutual understanding of an approach is important. Get this clearly established and agreed, especially for young learners. In my experience, the school had decided on a

cumulative assessment that consisted in a presentation and written essay (huh?!). This had a massive effect on motivation towards completing other creative tasks I set during the week, as the learners didn't see them as part of the 'assessment', thus defeating the purpose.

What kind of artist?

In the experience of teaching artist Erica Duthie, it's best to try first with artists who work in public, especially if they aren't already experienced teaching artists. I know, from my own experience, that having people watching me as I work is a major distraction. It's something I need to become used to if I want to make work publicly. Public artists are used to that and to articulating their processes and ideas. A great painter who works in isolation and shows exclusively in dealer galleries, may not be accustomed to making their work accessible to the 'uninitiated', or articulating their ideas and working with people around.

Your local arts council may have a list of local artists, or check if you have an international artist residency programme in your town or nearby. Artist residencies often stipulate some sort of "community arts participation" as part of the agreement with the resident artist or artists, so your school programme could be very welcome.

This brings up the question of working with local artists who don't necessarily speak English. Is that a problem? Take the CLIL approach. Focus on the artist as "content and concept" producer, while the language teachers focus on the language. Erica Duthie has worked in public spaces all over the world and has found many, many ways to communicate!

Don't hide your light under a bushel

Finally, organise a culmination day. It could either be an exhibition, performance, viewing, or premiere to celebrate what's been achieved. The entire school population – even families, faculty and school administrators – can join together to experience this presentation of the final product. You've worked hard on it. Celebrate!

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14. The picture and the story

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This paper highlights the link between images and stories, both important tools in engaging learners on an emotional level. Images may be used in various ways to stimulate learning – to teach vocabulary, to discover new things about the world, to stimulate debate – but arguably their most common, and useful, role is to support discourse, whether written or spoken, and to make that discourse more memorable by providing a visual link to it in the mind of the learner. The paper will also argue that the discourse itself is more memorable when it takes the form of a narrative, but that the skills needed to understand or tell a story, components of what has been called ‘narrative intelligence’, are not to be taken for granted, but are something to be learned and practised. The last section of the paper offers some practical ideas for doing this.

BACKGROUND

I became properly interested in the use of images in teaching about when I read Zull’s *The Art of Changing the Brain* (and later on *From Brain to Mind*). Zull is a trained biologist and biochemist who has applied his knowledge of the physical workings of the brain to the study of how we learn and how we can teach more effectively. In the book, Zull puts great emphasis on the role of visualization in memory – how our minds and memories work principally in images – claiming that vision and visualization account for over 50% of our brains’ activity.

I read the book in 2010, around the same time that I started working with National Geographic, and so it seemed natural to use the opportunity to exploit images – and in particular powerful and memorable images – to enhance learning. We authors were given access to the whole National Geographic photographic archive and we decided that we would try to use photos in much the same way that *National Geographic Magazine* has done so successfully for so long, by grabbing the attention of the viewer and drawing them into the story behind the image. So rather than a specific topic or language point being the starting point for each unit and spread of the book, the image became the springboard and the focus was the narrative that informed each picture.

And so it was that I also became increasingly interested in the use of stories in teaching. Why is that we all love a good story? Why in so many contexts – when we socialise, when we listen to a lecture, when we read a newspaper – does the narrative element resonate with us so strongly? And how could these two things, picture and story, be combined to make learning more memorable?

WHAT STORIES PROVIDE

Cognitive research suggests that storytelling is popular across all cultures because it provides a context or framework in which we can more easily interpret human experience. As Bruner (1991) puts it, “we organize our experience and our memory of human happenings mainly in the form of narrative” (p. 4). Even if the narrative transports us to ‘another world’, as it often does (Gerrig, 1993), we, the audience inevitably, bring our own life experiences to bear on the interpretation of events and human actions.

Stories are also often about the human condition and the conflicts we face – with others, with society, with nature and within ourselves. As such, they demand our emotional engagement, because they help us to identify our own feelings and to empathize with the feelings of others (Singer, 2004). The more I teach and the more I learn myself, the more I become convinced that emotional engagement is the key to memory, to deeper processing and thereby to more lasting learning.

Lastly, stories are a key resource in the early development of language (Johnston, 2008). This is something we all know from our own childhood or parenting experiences: a well-turned phrase, a rhyme, a piece of moral advice, or a funny response – these things stay with us. In summary, stories provide the following elements that help us to make sense of the world and of new information:

1. **A social context.** Whether it is an entirely familiar one situated in our own culture or a less familiar one from another culture, such contexts will generally contain elements (e.g., familial relationships, work situations) that all of us can relate to.
2. **Practical examples.** Public speakers or lecturers, when explaining complex concepts, often use stories as a vehicle for making abstract ideas more concrete and immediately understandable. An example I remember quite clearly was a physicist trying to explain the Higgs boson particle when it was first identified. He used an analogy of Mrs Thatcher (Higgs boson) walking through a crowded

room of admirers (other particles) who were all drawn nearer to her. A strange, perhaps, but definitely memorable analogy.

3. **A structure or schema.** Narratives follow a recognisable structure that we feel comfortable with and that helps us to make sense of events. At its most basic, this structure is a straightforward chronological beginning, middle and end, but of course there are many other permutations.
4. **Integration of the new with what has already been learned.** Research in New Zealand (Elley, 1989) showed that through listening to stories primary school children made average vocabulary gains of 15% without any pre-teaching or teacher explanation of unknown words.
5. **Recognition of the brain's multi-tasking abilities.** One interesting thing about the way we process stories is our ability to simultaneously absorb detail and see the wider picture (in ELT terms to understand both gist and detail). This is in contrast to a camera that can focus in on an individual object or take a 'landscape' photo, but not both at the same time.

I will refer to these points later in the paper when I present various activities using picture and story that exploit each of these benefits.

NARRATIVE INTELLIGENCE

Educational research has also in recent years stressed the importance of what is called 'narrative intelligence' for both learner and teacher. Narrative intelligence (NI) at its simplest level is the ability to tell and understand a story. In certain cultures, particularly those that have used storytelling as a way to affirm their own culture when faced with domination by another (external) culture, narrative intelligence is extremely high. In western societies, which have very often *been* the dominant external culture, its importance has diminished and its benefits have to a large extent been ignored in mainstream education. This has been to our detriment because the components that make up NI contain many more widely useful cognitive abilities, namely:

- the ability to organize, sequence and show connections between events;
- the ability to prioritize events;
- the ability to understand and convey a central idea or theme;

- the ability to recognize the different perspectives of those experiencing an event;
- the ability to understand character and human emotion.

Almost immediately you can see how each of these abilities or skills might relate to teaching: planning a lesson and presenting information logically and sequentially; prioritizing what needs to be learned; having clear and coherent aims; accommodating different learning styles; and, last but not least, understanding the feelings and motivations of a particular group of learners.

The notion that teachers with a high level of NI make for more effective language teachers was backed up in a piece of research conducted among a group of 80 Iranian teachers and their 673 students (Pishghadam et al., 2011). The teachers, who were from a variety of backgrounds – some had majored in TEFL, others were English Literature graduates, others graduates in English Translation – were measured for their NI levels and it was found that those with a high level were more ‘successful’ teachers. (Success in this case was measured in terms of both learners’ progress – both real and as perceived by the student – and learners’ enjoyment of a particular teacher’s lessons.) The research also pointed out that among the subcomponents of NI, the most effective skill for teaching was the ability to plan and organize events into a coherent whole. The study concluded: “To recruit qualified instructors, language schools can incorporate narrative performance as one of the criteria of selecting effective instructors” (Pishghadam et al., 2011, p. 187).

I don’t want to get into the details or merits of specific teacher recruitment policies, but this confirmed something I had thought for some time: for a skill which we so admire in others and which so compels us to listen to others, why does the development of narrative skills not feature more prominently in teaching and learning syllabuses?

PICTURE AND STORY

So I have developed various activities that a) ally picture and story to make learning more memorable, and b) exploit one of the universal elements of stories or help to cultivate one of the cognitive abilities that are part of narrative intelligence. These activities are transferable: that is to say, you can use them with other texts and images.

Re-telling from different perspectives (and understanding social context)

Students read a story told from a neutral perspective and then are asked to re-tell the story from the viewpoint of one of the characters in it. This helps them to empathize more with the characters in the story and to see 'the bigger picture'. At the same time, it is an excellent way to activate the language used in the story and make it more memorable. These are the steps of the lesson.

- a) Look at the photo (<https://goo.gl/RiAFXT>) and answer these questions: What can you see in the photo? How do you feel about this person's situation? Is this something you see much in your country? What is people's reaction generally?
- b) Listen to/read the story and note down the main events.
- c) Work in groups of three. Cover the text. Then retell the story from the perspective of: A. John Byrne B. The 18-year old youth C. A member of the emergency services
- d) Now answer these questions: Do you feel any differently about the characters in the story now? How? What action (if any) do you think should be taken in light of this incident?
- e) Compare your answers to what actually happened (Byrne was given a 'Compassionate Citizen Award' and the youth was sentenced to 4 months in prison.)

John Byrne, a 38-year-old homeless man who had lived on the streets of Dublin for the best part of 22 years, was sitting on O'Connell Bridge, which straddles the River Liffey in the centre of Dublin. O'Connell Bridge is a main thoroughfare into the centre of Dublin and Byrne used to sit there and beg quite often. Beside him was his companion, a rabbit named Barney. As he sat there, an 18-year-old youth passed by, picked up the rabbit and tossed it over the bridge into the river below. Without hesitation, Byrne jumped into the freezing cold water after it. He managed to grab the rabbit and then hold onto a ledge under the bridge to prevent them both from being swept down the river by the current. One of the hundreds of onlookers called the emergency services to help get Byrne back to land, but it was a good 40 minutes before help arrived. In the meantime, Byrne gave Barney the kiss of life and managed to save the rabbit from dying.

Taking in both gist and detail

Students hear a descriptive part of a story and are asked to draw or note down the images (visualization). They are then asked about the wider context. The idea is to show that gist does not necessarily come before detail, as the teaching canon would have it. It also helps learners to discover what a useful tool visualization can be in aiding memory. I usually use the opening paragraphs of the novel *Utz* by Bruce Chatwin (1988), but for copyright reasons, here I have used a much-adapted version. These are the steps of the lesson.

- a) Tell the students this is a story about a collector. Ask them to look at the picture (<https://goo.gl/EaUdGF>) and describe what it is the person collects. Discuss the things people collect.
- b) Tell the students to take a piece of paper and to draw or note in words the most striking images in the story they are about to hear.
- c) Read the story. Then ask them who drew the following: stamping feet, a bunch of flowers, shutters opening, birds flying, etc. so that collectively you rebuild the picture of the scene.
- d) Then ask about gist. What was the occasion? Who attended the funeral? Discuss what makes this seem a particularly sad occasion.

Early in the morning on February 28th 1976, Henrik Fischer was standing alone outside the dark grey church waiting for the wedding car and his bride to arrive. He stamped his feet to keep warm. In his hand, he held a small bunch of tired-looking flowers, which he had bought the day before. He watched the street slowly coming to life. Across the street a woman threw open the shutters of her fourth floor apartment, causing the birds on the window to fly off. Another woman was sweeping wet snow from in front of her shop. And now and then a large piece of melting snow would slip from the roof of a building and fall crashing to the street below.

After a little while a man with greasy grey hair and a dark overcoat approached him. A drop of water hung from the end of his nose.

'Is this St Martin Luther Church?' the man asked.

'Yes,' said Fischer.

The man disappeared and then a few minutes later pulled open the huge carved wooden doors of the church from the inside. Without saying a word he then stepped through a low doorway, bumping his head on the frame as he went. A few moments later Fischer heard the first notes of Mendelssohn's wedding march coming from the giant steel pipes of the organ above.

Integrating the new with what has already been learnt

The idea here is to integrate new vocabulary into a story without pre-teaching it. The meaning should be clear from the context and the story should be engaging enough for students to want to know the meaning.

- a) Focus the students' attention on the photo of Daniel Kish (<https://goo.gl/hNpt1l>) and tell them they are going to hear the true story of this man's life. Don't draw attention to his blindness. They may guess this for themselves, but at this point should not comment.
- b) Read the story aloud twice, the second time stressing the words in bold in the text.
- c) Go through the story once more and try to elicit the missing words from the students.
- d) Mime the new words and elicit them one more time, this time writing the words on the board.
- e) Finally, ask the students to re-tell the story to each other using the words on the board.

*This is the story of a man who **overcame** a physical problem in an amazing way. Daniel Kish was **blind** from the age of one. But he learned to see by using his **tongue** and his **ears**. From a young age Daniel made a **click** (make the sound here) with his **tongue** as he walked. Then he listened for an **echo**. If the **echo** was loud, he knew something was near to him. If the **echo** was not loud, he knew the object was far away. Daniel is now very good at doing this. He can **click** his **tongue** two or three times every second. He can even ride a bicycle – something that is impossible for most **blind** people. **Bats**, which only fly at night, do the same thing, because it helps them to find their way in the dark. For this reason, people call Daniel “the real **Batman**”.*

Organizing and giving a clear structure to events

It is a rule of good news reporting that the writer must give as much of the key information in the opening paragraph as possible. Subsequent paragraphs can give more detail, but the reader should be able to find the answers to 'the five W's and the H' (who, what, where, when, why and how) as quickly as possible. This rule of thumb encourages the students to think about structure and organisation when creating their own news stories.

- a) Explain the idea of the 5 W's and the H to the students.
- b) Focus their attention on the photo (<https://goo.gl/59dWCm>) and ask them to make these questions about what they see, e.g., “Who is this man?”

- c) Hear their questions in open class and ask them to speculate on the answers before they read the news article.
- d) Ask the students to read the article. Were the questions answered in the first paragraph or later?
- e) Give the students other pictures from newspapers or news magazines and get them to write a story that also answers the 5 W's and the H as quickly as possible for the reader.

In his latest artwork created for the Moscow Foto Biennale in 2012, Chinese artist Liu Bolin blends into a background of a newsagent's magazine display. When his assistants finished painting him in, he seemed to have disappeared.

Pictures like these have made Bolin internationally famous and earned him the title 'The Invisible Man', which is somewhat ironic because in his native China, Bolin is largely unknown. He started making such pieces as a statement on behalf of his fellow artists about how ignored they felt by the government and society. Bolin loves the challenge of 'disappearing' into any surroundings, whether it's a magazine display, a cinema, a building site or a national monument.

No trick photography or photo-shopping is used and each image is carefully planned out. First, before entering the scene, he tells the photographer how he would like the picture to look. Then he asks his assistant to paint him in, a process that can take up to ten hours while he stands completely still.

OTHER ACTIVITIES FOR COLLABORATIVE STORY-TELLING BASED ON IMAGES

Organising or sequencing a narrative for dramatic effect

Find a photo that shows a dramatic moment in a story – e.g., someone falling into the water. Collaboratively build the story from this point, asking what had happened to get to this point and what happened next. (This activity is great for narrative tenses.)

Understanding human character and emotion

Find a picture of someone looking thoughtful or pensive in an everyday situation, e.g., lost in thought on a train or at the bus stop. Elicit what the person is thinking about and build a story from there. You could do the same with a picture of someone smiling to themselves.

Understanding social context

Ask the students to work in pairs and complete the text with a name and place anywhere in the world. Then ask them to draw or describe the place, the setting for the story, and to write two lines saying what the person did next.

_____ has lived in _____ all her life. Her house is just 10 minutes away from her elderly and frail parents. Then one day, on her 47th birthday, she receives an email from an old friend, asking her to go and join him at his new internet company in California.

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15. Learning by design: language learning through digital games

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In recent years there has been a great deal of interest in the use of digital games in language teaching and broad agreement among researchers and practitioners that good games can be powerful learning tools. However, in the field of ELT much of this interest has been focused on using only peripheral aspects of games, such as digital badges and leaderboards or the *gamifying* of traditional language teaching materials and procedures. In this paper I take an alternative stance, viewing digital games as interactive systems. Each section guides the reader through the core mechanics of an archetypal game, describing and discussing how it can be used to develop key language skills.

INTRODUCTION

ELT trends come and go, especially technological trends. Commercially, they often burn brightly for a year and then fade into relative obscurity without ever seeing their potential fully explored or fulfilled. They get consumed by an industry that is, perhaps, a little too eager to move on to the next big thing. Digital games are no exception to this, and while there have been plenty of tentative steps towards their application to language teaching, these have often involved stripping them of what I consider to be their core affordances by, for example:

- Using games as rewards (if you get the answers right you can play this game)
- Focusing on the language in game walkthroughs (reading/following written instructions on how to complete a game)
- Talking about games (e.g., comparing likes/dislikes)
- Using static screenshots from games (look at this image from a game, describe it, predict what's going to happen next, etc.)
- Using games as other media (watch this trailer for a game/video review, etc.)
- Gamification (appropriating certain elements associated with

games such as points, badges, leaderboards and rewards and applying them to non-game activities).

Nevertheless, these are still positive steps, as they mean that games are no longer being ignored by educators or dismissed as a mere frivolous distraction from the “serious business” of learning. It also signals that we have moved on from the over-simplistic arguments surrounding issues such as video game violence, addiction, and sexism that are so often propagated by the media.

LEAPS AND BOUNDS

Digital game studies is now a thriving but relatively young discipline. The first substantial academic studies began to coalesce into a recognisable research field in the early 1980s, some 30 years after the first video games were created. By the mid-seventies, video games had successfully transitioned from a niche hobby for the laboratory computer scientist to a mainstream form of mass entertainment. Since then, the pace of research has accelerated to match the growing diversity, popularity and cultural impact of digital games and digital media in general. We now see audiences, once content with more passive forms of entertainment, becoming increasingly dissatisfied with their spectator status, preferring instead to play a more active role as participants.

BREAKING NEW GROUND

As the field of study has grown, it has diversified considerably. As language teachers, we can now draw on this research to explore digital games through a wide variety of lenses and apply the lessons learned to our own contexts. We could, for example, choose to focus on how digital games create and sustain motivation, how they scaffold and situate learning, how they generate cognitive flow, or how they provide feedback. As virtual environments, video games are also the most spatial and multimodal form of media, affording movement through meticulously designed spaces. This spatial aspect of digital games provides new opportunities to investigate learning-space design. Lessons drawn from this can help us to rethink how we plan brick-and-mortar educational spaces or to improve the experience of online and blended learning.

These are just a few examples of the many, many lenses through which digital games can be viewed. There is such a wealth of new territory for us to explore and we are just getting started.

There is, however, one critical issue regarding the pedagogic application of digital games that I would like to deal with before proceeding any further.

BREAKING THE HERMETIC SEAL

Games are typically played within certain boundaries. Chess and monopoly are played on boards, tennis on a court, and football on a pitch. Similarly, digital games are typically played within the boundaries of digital spaces. Huizinga (1949) describes this physical or symbolic *membrane* between games and everyday life as the “magic circle”:

All play moves and has its being within a play-ground marked off beforehand either materially or ideally, deliberately or as a matter of course... All are temporary worlds within the ordinary world, dedicated to the performance of an act apart. (p. 10)

This idea of digital games somehow existing in a separate space from the ordinary world is problematic, as it raises the issue of *learning transfer*. For games to be considered beneficial as more than just extrinsic motivators or design templates for more traditional classroom materials, it must be possible for the skills and knowledge acquired within the games to be applied in the real world. This is, of course, an issue that affects all content designed for learning, but it has become a particular focus of attention for critics of digital game-based learning. Game design is unfamiliar territory for most publishers of ELT materials and it is perhaps for this reason that many of the games they currently produce rely on tried-and-tested gap-fill mechanics, word games, or quizzes that mimic the kinds of tasks required of learners in standardised tests. These game types produce easily quantifiable scores that can be presented as evidence of learning. While this is perfectly fine, it does not solve the problem of learning transfer. While learners may demonstrably improve their scores in the grammar and vocabulary tests these games train them for, this does not mean that they will be capable of actively producing the new language they have learned in more authentic, communicative social contexts. This approach also rarely produces a compelling game or a positive response from learners.

PROCEDURAL LEARNING

It is my belief and experience that the most powerful aspect of learning in digital games is not to be found in the explicit outcome. It is not in the scores, points, badges, or number of correct answers. Games are interactive systems, and in a well-designed game it is the *process* of playing that is a powerful tool for learning. It is for this reason that I have chosen to focus my attention on the procedural aspect of playing games. By this I mean how the actual *process* of playing a game can benefit language learners and overcome the problem of learning transfer. In order to illustrate this I will describe and discuss five games that I have used with my own students. None of these games were designed specifically with language learners in mind and each was selected in response to the needs of a particular group of students, in the same way I might have chosen an authentic film clip, article or podcast.

Game 1: *Phonopath*

(Applied digital learning)

The first game we will look at is *Phonopath*, a free, web-based project created in 2012 by Kevin Regamey. As you may have guessed from the name, this game is all about sound. I used *Phonopath* with a group of Portuguese university students who were taking a degree course in communication and multimedia. Their course had an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) module and when I discovered *Phonopath* it seemed like an ideal way to help them develop the language skills and vocabulary they needed to communicate within this specific domain, while simultaneously helping them to improve their multimedia expertise.

The game is quite challenging to describe and, to my knowledge, is unique in its design. In fact, most of the game isn't even played within its own boundaries. In order to proceed through *Phonopath* you need to solve a puzzle hidden within an audio file that you download from the game's website. Once you have acquired the file, you need to work out what to do in order to decode the hidden message, which provides you with the password you need to move on to the next level. As this could be quite a time-consuming process, after solving the first level together in class my students played much of the game in their own time with the goal of being the first person to crack a specific level. The only "reward" for this was that they would earn the right to explain (in English) and demonstrate how they had achieved this in the following class.

Many of the puzzles require you to manipulate the audio. In one of the early stages the sound is played backwards, requiring you to reverse it in order to understand what is being said (in English). As the game itself provides no tools for this, you are forced to explore whether the software you already have installed on your device can achieve it, or search for tools online and teach yourself how to use them by trial and error, reading or watching tutorials or asking for help on forums. As the puzzles increase in complexity you soon find yourself dealing with pitch shifting, audio filters, the manipulation of sound spectrograms and the application of music theory. In *Phonopath* the gameplay essentially resides *outside* of the game interface (shattering Huizinga's concept of a "magic circle"). Through playing a video game in English, my students found themselves learning how to use a wide variety of digital multimedia tools across multiple platforms to solve each stage. When class time was allocated to work on a particular audio file they would work collaboratively in small teams, pooling their resources, sharing their devices and communicating in English throughout.

Phonopath is, as one might expect, very popular with sound designers and other audio professionals. For my ESP multimedia students it provided a motivating, challenging and engaging vehicle to improve their English through listening (to the game's audio recordings and YouTube software tutorials), reading (through instructions and guides found online), writing (as they posted questions on domain-specific forums) and speaking (to each other during team sessions and to the whole class when presenting their solutions). In addition to this they were developing learner autonomy and valuable, highly transferrable digital skills that would be useful to them in their future careers.

Phonopath is a quintessential example of how a digital game can serve as an immersive introduction into a specific field of knowledge. The remaining games will similarly be explored through the lens of procedure, focusing specifically on how the actual *mechanics* of the game (in simple terms, how the game creates and structures opportunities for interaction) facilitate the development of language skills, including reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. These games intertwine exploration, narrative and specific language skills, not as add-ons, tests, or rewards, but as an integral part of their gameplay.

Game 2: *Lifeline*

(Reading as a game mechanic)

Lifeline is a simple mobile text-based game by 3-minute Studios (2015) that can be played on both iOS and Android devices, including smartwatches. The plot revolves around the main character, Taylor, an astronaut trying to survive on an alien planet following a spaceship crash. In order to survive, he (or she – Taylor’s gender is not specified) requires the player’s guidance and moral support in what is, essentially, a form of choose-your-own-adventure experience. The game interface relies on your phone’s notification system, so it isn’t even necessary to unlock your device in order to play. You receive, what appears to be, text messages and then make binary decisions based on the options you are provided with.

Lifeline has no images, and very little sound. It is entirely driven by written dialogue. The story also takes place in real time, so if, for example, you advise Taylor to explore something in the distance, an hour may pass before you receive the next message saying that the character has arrived. I demonstrated the game to my students in class and then asked them to download and play the game as a reading assignment (at the time the game was free as part of a special promotion. It currently costs £1.99 on the UK app store). At the beginning of each class we discussed Taylor’s progress in small groups, comparing and contrasting the decisions taken and the resulting consequences.

One of the main reasons I chose this game was because many of the students in this particular B2-level group did not enjoy reading or reported that they found the assigned course book texts either too dull or too challenging. I thought that they might find *Lifeline* more compelling as it requires a more active form of reading. While the texts are quite short, they are tied to making meaningful decisions. The main character in the story is quite sarcastic, and while this can be annoying at times, my students reported that they soon began to care about Taylor’s welfare. Some of them cared so much in fact, that they reported feelings of guilt when Taylor perished due to following their bad advice. This emotional engagement with the character helped to reduce their affective filter.

Although the language in the game’s messages was at least as challenging as the course book texts, their brevity made them more manageable. Instead of reading a large, complex text in a single sitting, they were dealing with shorter chunks of language multiple times throughout each day.

There are several critical moments during the game in which the players have insufficient information to confidently make the right choice. They can either take a (risky) guess or, as I had hoped, search online for guidance. In one such scenario Taylor asks whether the amount of radiation he/she is registering on a Geiger counter is safe. This led several of my students to search for scientific articles online, which they skimmed, scanned and interpreted in order to make an informed decision. In addition to this, it was interesting that students reported using a dictionary far more frequently while playing the game than they would typically have done to read a traditional, non-interactive text. Their explanation for this was, that because they cared about Taylor's welfare, they didn't want to give the character the wrong advice by misunderstanding the language contained in the messages.

Traditional interactive fiction games in which players have to respond to the game through writing text commands often require a considerable amount of time, patience, and linguistic flexibility by the player in order to make any progress. This is due to the limitations of the *text parser* (the software used to interpret text input). In my experience, this can lead to students feeling extremely frustrated, as they make repeated failed attempts to input commands that the game understands, even when these are written in perfectly correct and appropriate English. Games such as *Lifeline* overcome this problem by presenting the player with binary choices. Although this form of interaction may appear somewhat simplistic, it means that players can focus on understanding what they read without a text parser acting as a barrier to becoming immersed in the unfolding storyline. In addition, while many of the commands in traditional text parser-based IF games are typically mundane (e.g., "go north", "open wallet"), the choices presented in *Lifeline* are more likely to have an immediate, meaningful impact on the story.

Game 3: *Her Story*

(Listening as a game mechanic)

Her Story is a detective game that relies on listening to and interpreting the evidence provided by a suspect in a fictional murder case. This is achieved by searching through a large database of videos of the suspect being interviewed by the police.

Complicated games are best avoided as your learners are likely to waste a large amount of time grappling with the rules or interface. One of *Her Story's* greatest strengths is just how easy it is to play. If you know

how to use a search engine, then you are ready to start. If you search for a particular word that you hear in one of the interviews that you think might be a clue, you can type it into the search box and any other video snippets that contain that same word will appear. You can then watch those clips in any order you like, as you try to make sense of all the evidence.

In some ways *Her Story* resembles a Gothic mystery novel. But as you play in the role of the detective, you get to decide how the plot takes shape through (initially) guesswork and then later more targeted research. The narrative is non-linear, revealing itself to each player in a different sequence. As such, the players become the co-authors of the story. This helps to foster autonomy while developing their critical thinking skills and ability to synthesise information.

If the game is played without stopping, it is likely to take several hours. With my students, we played the game in small doses over a two-week period, mostly in 10 to 15 minute sessions. The class was divided into four teams of detectives and in each round a different group would suggest a search term. The whole class would then watch the collection of video clips containing that particular term (usually 3 or 4 clips of approximately 30 seconds each) and take notes of any clues they thought might be pertinent to solving the crime.

At the end of the two-week period, based on their notes, each group would present their case, describing who they thought had committed the crime, how it was done, and what the motive was.

While it is difficult to quantify if or by how much each individual learner had improved their listening skills (this was in no way an academic study), they clearly found these intensive listening sessions highly engaging. While the crime story may have been fictional, the authenticity and level of control the students had over which content to listen to, which leads to follow, and how to parse and present all the information were very real. Many of the students bought the game to play in their own time in order to explore different routes through the story.

Game 4: Elegy for a Dead World

(Writing as a game mechanic)

Elegy for a Dead World is a game about writing fiction. By the end of a play session your students will have written an original, illustrated story that can be shared online, saved as a document or printed out as a paper book. You play the role of a fearless explorer, travelling to distant worlds

as a kind of intergalactic *xenoarchaeologist*. Your job is to investigate a series of beautiful-but-lifeless worlds and try to piece together the story of their former inhabitants. What kind of culture and technology did they have? What gods did they worship? How did they live? How did they communicate? What do those magnificent sculptures symbolise? What caused the population to leave or perish?

As you move through the landscape the game cues you with writing prompts, asking you to describe and reflect upon what you have discovered. From desiccated shores, abandoned libraries, crumbling architecture and icy tundra, you piece together the final days of lost civilisations.

Elegy is a great game for overcoming several barriers that students (and even professional authors) often encounter when trying to begin a new piece of writing, namely the dreaded “blank page syndrome” (when you open a new document and then your mind immediately goes blank). It supports learners in several ways:

- Learners can browse through and read other players’ works, selecting the most recent or most popular stories for each of the worlds. This is a great source of chunks of language that directly relate to the worlds the students are about to explore.
- In a task-based learning cycle the authentic texts also help to introduce the subject and assist learners in understanding what they need to do and what the expected outcome will be.
- The game provides an in-built platform for sharing the final stories. The fact that there is an audience of other players around the world who might choose to read their work not only adds authenticity to the task but also helps to create and sustain motivation.

The writing prompts that appear at intervals in the game further scaffold the writing process. As a teacher playing this with a whole class (perhaps by projecting the game onto a large screen), you can control the level of prompt, from short sentence stems to more elaborate and poetic triggers. Alternatively, perhaps for higher levels, you can opt to remove all prompts, encouraging students to draw upon the images in the games and their own imaginations.

CONCLUSION

Digital games offer huge unexplored potential as tools for language learning, but to use them effectively we need to understand them better

as the social, interactive, procedural, aesthetic, multimodal and cultural artefacts that they are.

As teachers and learners ourselves, we also need to play games in order to explore and reflect on how they embody good learning principles and how these might be better exploited. We need to learn from the way games contextualise learning and provide just-in-time feedback. We need to understand the role of play in generating creativity, improving motivation and lowering the affective filter.

Developing game literacy is fundamental to understanding how we can maximize the use of digital games in and out of the language classroom. Many of the key concepts that have been identified as 21st century skills can be found in the games I have discussed, including critical thinking, decision-making, research skills, creativity, media production skills, and the ability to synthesize information from different sources.

My intention here has been to shine a light on a strong form of game-based learning in which the core mechanics of each example have been identified and applied to train particular language skills. We can learn important lessons from how digital games teach players to play, and how they scaffold learning and adapt for mixed ability. To transcend current trends and unlock the secrets entangled in the blended concepts of game, play and learning, we need to develop an empowering practice of critical play.

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16. Using graphic novels and comics with ELT learners

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Our teenage learners are growing up in a visual-driven world in which they are constantly surrounded by images, even in the literary world where there is a growing presence of graphic novels. Not only are graphic novels being adopted into mainstream education to help lower-literacy learners engage with reading, but they are also gaining popularity in the ELT world. Graphic novel formats offer ELT learners diverse opportunities to develop their language skills, as well as their creativity and visual literacy and make otherwise linguistically-challenging literature far more accessible. My objective in this paper is to give an overview of the main characteristics of this literary format, followed by an array of engaging ideas and activities that can be exploited with teenage learners. The suggested activities are generic such that they can be used with any graphic novel story and with learners of various ages, levels and learning contexts.

INTRODUCTION

As any teacher of teenagers knows using engaging visual materials is an effective way to motivate them. Up until a few years ago, my love of comics didn't stretch further beyond the antics of Dennis the Menace and Minnie the Minx in my weekly childhood instalment of *The Beano*. However, rediscovering them years later, along with graphic novels, I rapidly saw their incredible potential for ELT learners, offering something different from the usual selection of classroom activities. I have since used them with my teenage learners to work on a diverse range of activities including skills, language and pronunciation, to incorporate technology into learning, and to encourage imagination and creativity. I would like to begin by outlining some of the features of graphic novels and comics and then follow with a description of activities and ideas that illustrate how they can be exploited. Finally, I would like to suggest online resources and materials that can be used with learners.

WHAT ARE GRAPHIC NOVELS?

Graphic novels are complete stories or books that are told in comic-strip format. They often consist of stand-alone stories and can deal with a variety of themes. They have been growing in popularity for a number of years, particularly among teenagers, and in mainstream education they have been used successfully to encourage low-literacy or a-literacy learners to engage with reading. Upon initially exploring the use of graphic novels with my learners, I expected to find mostly superhero comic books or Japanese manga. To my surprise I discovered a wide selection of stories including classics such as Dickens's novels or Shakespeare's plays, contemporary literature such as the *Percy Jackson* series and other well-known favourites such as *The Hobbit*. There are stories such as *Persepolis*, which have been written originally as graphic novels, and even graphic novels specifically written as language-learner literature such as those included in the Cambridge *Interactive* coursebooks (see Appendix 1). Classical Comics (<https://goo.gl/hEbaS8>) offers stories in various degrees of text difficulty, thus making certain linguistically challenging literature far more accessible to our language learners (see Appendix 2). Thus, the graphic novel version of *Romeo and Juliet* cannot only be read in the original text, but also in up-to-date English (plain text) and in simplified English (quick text).

FEATURES OF GRAPHIC NOVELS AND COMICS

Unlike prose, the stories in graphic novels are told through the visuals and text. There is something aesthetically pleasing about the colour and images that immediately attracts our attention and draws us into the story. Once teenage learners pick up a graphic novel, it can be a challenge getting them to look up from the page. As well as providing an initial *hook*, the visuals contain contextual clues that instantly give ELT learners information about the story and the characters. Such information helps lower-level learners follow a story more easily than written narratives, particularly ones with a heavy load of unknown lexis. By automatically understanding some of the story, reading becomes less daunting and more appealing. Image-rich texts also help the reader remember the events of the story more easily and provide an excellent basis to develop visual literacy. It's worthwhile pointing out some of their specific features to learners so that they can refer to them when discussing the stories they have read or while planning and writing their own (see Figure 1). Here are some of the main ones:

Panels

Each panel depicts one piece of action through the image and text. There can be a varying number of panels on any one page and each panel may differ in shape, although they are frequently rectangular. Generally speaking, the bigger the panel, the more significant the action is and a close-up image within a panel emphasises the importance of that particular part of the story.

Balloons

Both speech and thought balloons are written in informal, direct speech thus allowing learners to focus on some of the main characteristics of spoken language such as ellipsis, vague language or hesitation. The shape of the balloon indicates whether the words are being spoken (solid line), shouted (jagged line) or whispered (dotted line).

Captions

The text in the rectangular boxes within a panel narrates the story and provides useful background information. They often relate something that has happened before this point in the story and provide time references within the story. In contrast to the direct speech used in balloons, the language used in captions may include narrative past tenses.

Sound words

Onomatopoeic words such as *Pow! Splash! or Boom!* are a common feature of comic stories. Generally speaking, these sound words differ between languages, but can form the basis of some fun activities as learners compare them.

Motion lines

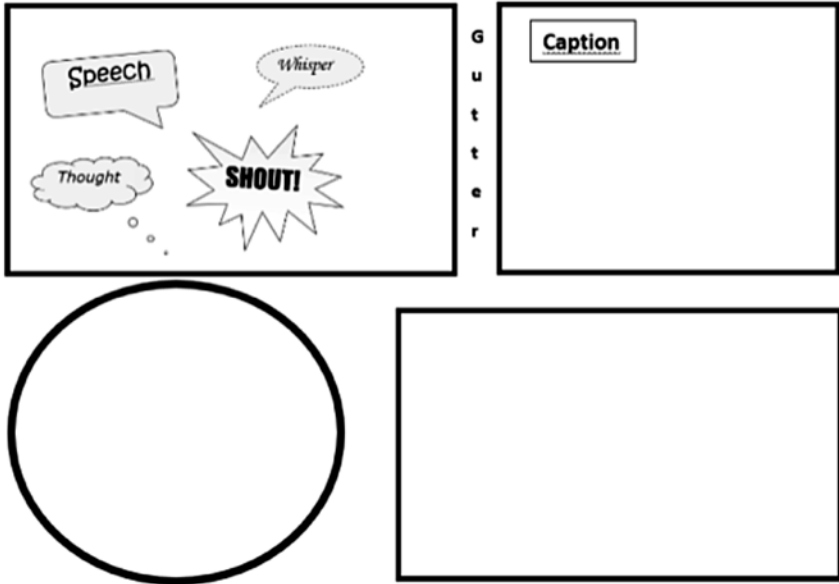
These small lines within an image convey movement, smell or heat depending on the context. They tend to be used in a similar way across cultures so learners don't usually find them difficult to interpret.

Gutters

These are the spaces between the panels. We can develop learners' creativity and imagination by getting them to imagine what happens between one panel and the next. Likewise, learners can create extra panels between the existing ones. In the same way our imagination

takes us beyond the words of a narrative text, it can also take us beyond the images in a graphic novel.

Figure 1: Comic Panels and Features



USING GRAPHIC NOVELS AS A LEARNING RESOURCE

Just as we often use a short clip from a film or TV programme in class, so too can we use an extract from a graphic novel. There is no need to use the complete story. A short extract can offer enough scope to develop a wide range of activities that can be used with different levels, age groups and mixed-ability groups. Similarly, the same activity type can be used with different stories. Graphic novels lend themselves to learner-centred activities, task-based learning and project work. They can inspire learners to tap into their own creativity and imagination. Activities can be carried out over a series of lessons, making them an ideal basis for a summer course or theme-intensive course, or simply provide a motivating thread throughout the normal academic year. Last, but not least, they are a great way to incorporate technology through the use of online comic builders and other webtools.

ACTIVITIES WITH LEARNERS

Activities can roughly be divided into three groups to exploit stories before, while and after reading.

Prediction

The key before reading any kind of text is to prepare learners by activating their prediction skills and schemata. The visuals in a graphic novel are an obvious place to start and can be exploited in a range of ways.

Visuals only, no text

- Give the first panel only and learners predict what the story is about.
- Give several panels from the beginning of the story. Learners describe what they can see, identify who the main characters are, predict what they can about the characters and predict what the story is about.
- Give several panels from the story in the wrong order. Learners look at the panels, put them in order and predict the story.
- Reveal parts of a key image from the story slowly until the learners get the full picture and then they make their predictions about the story.
- Give all the panels without the text, students listen and follow the story. This activity exploits the fact that many graphic novel stories are recorded.
- Learners take turns to describe one of the panels to a peer who listens and identifies the panel they are describing from a selection. If some panels in a story are quite similar, this can be a useful exercise to help learners focus on the similarities and differences between images.

Text only, no visuals

- Give a few key words from the text and learners predict what kind of story it is and what happens.
- Make a word cloud using the text from the captions and balloons. The words that appear more frequently in the story will be bigger in the word cloud. Learners use the cloud to make predictions about the story and characters.
- Introduce the main themes from the story and learners write questions they would like answering upon reading the story.

- If the graphic novel is an adaptation of a familiar story, elicit what students already know about it.

The teacher can give different prediction tasks to different groups of learners, so that while one group predicts the story by looking at the text, another predicts the story from the images. This can help cater for mixed-ability groups as well as making the prediction stage more varied and interesting.

Reading activities

Once learners have made predictions about the content of the story they will want to read it to confirm or compare their predictions. Here is a selection of activities for learners to carry out while they read.

- Read the complete story and confirm or compare predictions.
- Give learners all the panels cut up. They read and put them in the correct order.
- Give each learner a different panel. They describe their panel to their peers without showing anyone their image and then all get into order before revealing their panels to each other and confirming their order.
- Separate the text from the visuals and learners match them.
- Give learners a mixed-up list of the events in the story. They read the story and order the events.
- Give learners an incorrect summary or some incorrect facts about the story. They read the story and correct the information.
- Give learners the story with a few panels missing. They read it and identify what information is missing.
- Learners read the story and answer comprehension questions set by the teacher. Alternatively, learners read the story and write comprehension questions for their peers.
- Learners read the story. Then, they look at the story without the text and retell it in their own words using the visuals as a prompt.

LANGUAGE IN THE STORIES

Once learners are familiar with the story, there are several areas of language that can be focused on. It is particularly useful to look at the language typically used in graphic novels so that learners can replicate it in their own stories. Examples of this language include spoken language, discourse markers, reference words and questions.

Spoken language

Learners can focus on the different features of spoken English such as hesitation (*Er, um...*), exclamations (*Hang on! You're joking!*), ellipsis (*You ready?*), and sound words (*Hiss! Thwack! or Squelch!*). As these onomatopoeic words do not automatically transfer from one language to another, learners can try translating the sound words in English to equivalents in their language. Learners can also focus on the characters' emotions and how they are portrayed through the language they use when they speak.

Discourse markers

Time references in the captions help the reader understand the timescale of the story. Getting learners to identify references in the story, e.g., *A few days later, Then or After that*, can help them plan captions in their own stories and give their stories a clear sense of time.

Reference words

Reference pronouns appear frequently in speech balloons. As the spoken text is not typically dense and is supported by the visuals, it provides an ideal context to focus on this language and get learners to identify what they refer to in the story.

Questions

Learners can pick out questions and statements in the speech balloons and compare the syntax and structure of the language in both.

FURTHER LANGUAGE EXPLOITATION

Graphic novels lend themselves to focusing on other linguistic areas, such as the language of description, narrative tenses, and reported speech.

Language of description

To describe the visuals, learners need language such as *there is/are, at the top/ bottom/front/back of the picture*, prepositions of place, adjectives and adverbs and language of physical appearance and emotions (e.g., *looks + adjective*).

Simple visual description activities can be made more challenging for higher-level learners by selecting visuals with minimal differences between them. Alternatively, learners describe visuals to a partner who listens and draws before comparing their drawing to the original image.

Language of comparisons

Learners compare two images in the story using language such as *In this picture we can see X, whereas/however/although in this picture there's Y*. Such activities also mirror certain speaking exam tasks where candidates are required to compare two images.

Comparing graphic novels and prose

By comparing the graphic novel and narrative version of the same story learners can see how a narrative compensates for the lack of visuals through its descriptive language. They can analyse how information is given in each version of the same story and how writers need to include extra detail in a narrative text to paint a picture of the same image in the reader's mind. Lower-level language learners can compare how a story is told in a graded reader and in the graphic novel version.

Story-writing language

Graphic novels are an ideal springboard for creative story writing. Once learners are familiar with the graphic novel story, they can retell it as a narrative using past tenses, reported speech and some direct speech taken directly from the speech balloons in order to make their narrative more dynamic. By showing them how to incorporate direct speech with correct punctuation and a range of suitable reporting verbs such as *replied, screamed or whispered*, their stories immediately come to life and a final sprinkle of adjectives and adverbs adds extra depth and colour.

To help learners understand how to use reported speech in their narratives, give examples of the dialogue from the story in reported speech. Learners work out the actual words that were said before comparing it with the speech balloons and then work out how statements, questions and other words are reported in a narrative.

CREATIVE WRITING

As well as focusing on certain areas of language, there are several activities learners can do to improve their story-writing skills.

Beginning stories with impact

The images in the first few panels can be used to help begin a narrative version with impact. Here are some ideas learners can explore. The examples below relate to the beginning of the story *Illegal Copy* from the lower-secondary course *Interactive*.

- Imagine you are one of the characters in the first panel and focus on what you can see, hear, smell and feel, e.g., *Are you in a hot, stuffy room? Is it crowded? Do you feel nervous or scared? What can you hear?* Begin your story by describing these emotions.
- Launch directly into the story with direct speech, using the exact words from the speech balloons in the graphic novel and then add reporting verbs, e.g., *“How does it feel to be Britain’s highest-paid actress when you’re only 20?” shouted one of the journalists.*
- Start with something mysterious to get the reader’s attention, e.g., *As soon as she saw Dan, she knew there would be trouble.*
- Tell the story as if one of the main characters was reminiscing, e.g., *It all started that day at the press conference. I was there to promote my new film and...*
- Start the story with a question, e.g., *Did I ever tell you about the time I was replaced?*
- Use parallelism to give pattern and rhythm, e.g., **Imagine** a room packed with journalists, **imagine** flashing lights everywhere, **imagine** the hottest couple in Hollywood.

Alternative endings

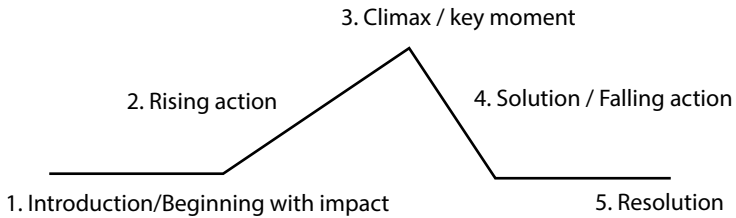
Writing an alternative ending encourages imagination and creativity. Learners can:

- create their own ending before reading the actual ending of the story and present it in either comic or narrative format. Writing their own ending before reading the complete story creates greater anticipation to read the original ending, see how it compares to theirs, and decide which ending is better.
- read the complete original story and change the ending to create a different outcome.
- retell the story from another character’s point of view, e.g., from the baddy’s point of view. This offers an ideal opportunity to try writing a narrative in the first person.

Preparing, creating and sharing creative writing

Learners improve the quality of their own comics or narratives immensely by preparing them first. A basic story mountain helps them prepare an interesting plot (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Story Mountain



If their narrative is the next part of the story, completing a summary chart helps them get a clear idea of the characters, relationships and action in the story so far (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Summary Chart

Character	Relationship with other characters	What happens to them in the story	Extra information

When planning a comic, a panel planner helps plan the content of each panel including information about the characters, action, balloons, captions and sound words and saves time when actually creating the comic (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Panel Planner

Panel	Characters / action	Speech / thought balloons	Captions / sound words
1			
2			
3			

As well as using ready-made templates available online to print and complete, learners can draw their own comics by hand. For those who prefer digital tools, there are several user-friendly online resources including CUP's comic builder (<https://goo.gl/vXVJdi>) or the Make Beliefs Comix comic strip creator (<https://goo.gl/ZWxRDh>).

Learners can share their comics or narratives using a collaborative platform like Padlet (<https://padlet.com>). A variety of formats including audio, video, photos, and pdf or Word documents can be uploaded and shared. Alternatively, learners can write directly onto the wall. They enjoy uploading their own comics and stories and then reading and commenting on their classmates' creations. Learners can also create comic strips based on their favourite jokes. Each learner brings their favourite joke to class, tells their joke and then creates a comic strip of characters telling the joke. These comic strips create a fun joke-corner display that livens up any classroom.

SPEAKING, DRAMA AND PRONUNCIATION

Having read the story, learners can discuss some of its themes. Graphic novels offer teachers an accessible way of approaching more sensitive themes such as ambition, revenge or jealousy with their teenage learners. They can talk about the issues through the context of the story by discussing which characters they sympathise with and why, to what extent they understand a certain character's behaviour, or whether they change their perception of any of the characters as the story developed. This could lead to a more general class discussion or debate based on some of the themes. Learners could also take on the roles of the story's characters and journalists and carry out interviews. The journalists ask the characters why they behave the way they do in the story and the characters explain their reasons.

Graphic novels lend themselves perfectly to acting out the story and developing drama. The dialogue can be used directly from the story and the visuals help imagine the setting. Learners enjoy taking on the roles of the different characters and either acting out the story exactly as it is or embellishing it, changing parts of it, adding to it or creating an alternative ending. If recordings of the stories are available, learners can listen to the pronunciation and mimic the intonation. A fun technique for working on intonation with recorded versions is using shadow reading. This works best with a short extract of a few panels between two characters. Half the class take on the role of one of the characters and the other half the other character. As the recording is played, learners say exactly the same words

as their character at exactly the same time and with exactly the same intonation. Then the extract is repeated two or three times and every time the volume is lowered slightly. The idea is that through mimicking, learners say the dialogue with the same intonation as the characters in the recording.

Acting out their own versions of the story can also lead into more ambitious, film-based projects where learners complete a character analysis of the characters in their story, create their story mountain of the plot, storyboard the film, rehearse and record the scenes, and then finally edit and present it. Careful planning and staging help learners get the most out of longer projects like these, but they are a lot of fun and provide a range of learning opportunities along the way.

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APPENDIX 1

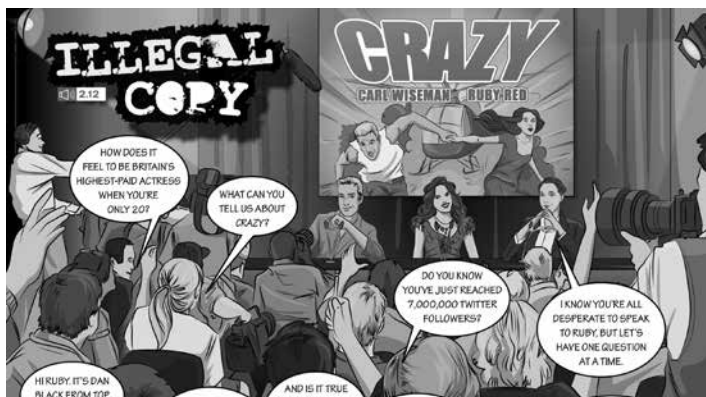


Illustration by Ben Hasler (c/o NB Illustration) from within “Illegal Copy”, in Helen Hadkins, Samantha Lewis, Joanna Budden, *Interactive Level 4 Student’s Book* © Cambridge University Press, reproduced with permission.

APPENDIX 2



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17. Cartoons and comics: communicating with visuals

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Cartoons, comics and graphic novels are a mine of visual information. Unfortunately, many adults have the preconceived belief that comics are mainly for children and that they have no place in adult learning. However, this idea is changing with the wide popularity of films such as *X-Men* and *The Avengers*, making it acceptable for this medium to be used in the EFL classroom. Although limited studies have been carried out into the benefits of using comic art in the EFL classroom, research shows that the visual element of comics, cartoons and graphic novels can be used successfully with native-speaker learners to help motivate reading, explore writing skills and contextualise and clarify language use (Cary, 2004). A similar use of the medium can easily be transferred to EFL, as many of the principles of learning apply to both native and non-native students.

INTRODUCTION

As a young child, the first printed words I was able to read on my own were in the European graphic novel series *Asterix and Obelix* written by Goscinney and Uderzo (1959-2015). The words were “us too!” printed in large bold type, and an image with the two main characters shouting the simple phrase is firmly etched in my memory along with the sound of the words in my head. For the first time in my life, written words on a page had ‘spoken’ to me. Words and visuals in comics complement each other to create a strong element of communication. Printed dialogue in a novel can lack context unless the context is provided by more words. Thus an utterance as simple as “us too!” needs to be encased in descriptions as to who the speakers are, who they are speaking to and why. This background to the action and dialogue involves adding another layer of vocabulary knowledge and reading skills for the learner of English. In comics and cartoons, pictures provide the backdrop to the action and lessen the need for written descriptions.

A SHORT WORD ON USE OF TERMS

Comics, cartoons and graphic novels are sometimes discussed interchangeably, and are mainly done so in this paper. However, for clarification, there are differences in the actual format of these story mediums.

The word 'cartoon' usually refers to a single panel and 'cartoon strip' or 'comic strip' is used to mean a short series of panels, commonly 3 or 4. The term 'panel' refers to a single picture within a comic, cartoon or graphic novel. Cartoons often feature a single joke, a short anecdote or may be part of a longer running series, and are typically found in newspapers or magazines (Cary, 2004). On the other hand, a 'comic book' is a relatively short, magazine-style publication that tells a full story serialised over many issues, so that the story develops and unfolds over time (Kelly, 2014). Like comic books, 'graphic novels' also tell an entire story; however, they are usually stand-alone and therefore often feature more complex storylines as the reader does not have the interruption to their train of thought while waiting for the next instalment to be published (Caufield, 2007).

COMIC BOOKS AS AN ADULT LEARNING TOOL

Increasingly, comics are no longer being seen as primarily a child's medium. This is because many people are being introduced to comics via the film version of this genre (Andrews, 2016). Recent comic book action hero films are targeting teen or adult audiences and are being given high age ratings by the Motion Picture Association of America. Generally, this genre of film receives a 'PG-13' rating, indicating that the material is inappropriate for those under 13 years of age (MPAA, 2010); examples of which are *Doctor Strange* (2017), *Captain America: Civil War* (2016) or *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* (2015). However, there have also been a spate of films based on comic books aimed specifically at a much older audience, such as *Logan* (2017), a film which ties into with the X-Men franchise, or *Deadpool* (2016), which is also set in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, both of which were given an 'R' rating meaning they are for a 'restricted' audience and should be viewed only by those over 17 (MPAA, 2010). To date, *Deadpool* is the second highest grossing 'R' rated film of all time showing the immense popularity of this very adult oriented genre of film (Box Office Mojo, 2017). Unsurprisingly, in parallel with the recent rise in popularity of comic book films, there has also been an increase in the sale of comics, along with an increase in brick-and mortar comic book shops (Andrews, 2016). As a result of

the increase in sales and awareness, even the more obscure comic book heroes are becoming household names and their universes and storylines are becoming common knowledge. As most communicative approach lessons seek to bring the outside world into the classroom, the comic film and book genre as part of everyday life becomes an accepted medium and tool within an adult learning environment.

ENGAGEMENT AND USE OF VISUALS

Two brain-based practices warrant special mention in relation to comics: an emphasis on engaging content and an expanded use of visual material. (Cary, 2004, p. 19)

In recent years, research into learning has been focussed on a drive towards understanding how the brain functions, rather than concentrating on studies of behavioural patterns alone. Sensory receptors are found all over the body and are responsible for transmitting sensory information from the area of stimulation to the brain for processing. Wolfe (2010) states that nearly 70% of the sensory receptors in the body are found in the eye. These sensors send millions of signals to the brain, creating a network of interlocking neurological paths, or memories, that result in 'learning'. In other words, more visual information is received and processed by the brain than that from any of the other senses. In fact, Wolfe (2010) has found that "many studies have shown the facilitating effect of imagery, especially pictures, on learning and memory" (p. 185).

Engagement

Trowler (2010) traces the term 'student engagement' back to Alexander Astin's 1984 work on student involvement. She discusses the three different dimensions of engagement, which are behavioural, emotional and cognitive. In each of these levels, students are engaged when they are invested in their own learning, whether it is by, for example, engaging in behavioural norms such as attendance; enjoying the material as an emotional response; or by seeking out further intellectual challenges related to the learning topic. In other words, students become engaged with lesson material when they are emotionally and intellectually involved with it.

Comics give the opportunity for students to interact with the material at a personal level that may include emotional and intellectual investment resulting in better engagement. Students may react with familiarity and recognition because they already know the material, albeit in their own

language, because many of the more popular comics are available in translation around the world. This creates a link with students' already existing emotional ties to the material. Moreover, students may be intellectually stimulated by the fact that, although there are some comics available specifically for EFL use, most comics are authentic material, created specifically for native speakers and made to appeal to native-speaker contexts. The student is given an insight into the culture within which the comic was written and the background environment of the target readership.

Another way that students interact with the material is through the storylines. Storylines in comics and graphic novels frequently deal with the nature of human character and relationships. Many also feature recognisable storylines: good triumphs over evil, solutions are found to problems and lessons are learned. Sometimes the stories are re-workings of classic stories and well-known myths. Again, the learners' recognition of the storylines means that their language learning is being built on a foundation of concepts that they are already familiar with.

Use of visuals

Wolfe (2010) explains that learning involves three levels: concrete, representational (or symbolic), and abstract. At a concrete level, learning is strongest when students are able to physically interact with or directly experience the real object. This creates a direct network of information in the brain. On the other hand, learning at a representational/symbolic level requires repeated exposure to symbols or representations of the real object. The effectiveness of this level is closely related to the experience of interacting with the real life object or situation. Thus, links are made with existing networks of information in the brain, as opposed to creating new networks of their own. These symbols or representations are often pictures of the object. Lastly, abstract level learning involves exposure to information often in the form of words or numbers and is the weakest level of learning. The stronger networks created at the concrete or representational/symbolic levels are sparked by the words or numbers, allowing the student to understand the abstracts by relating them to real or actual examples and experiences. In light of this explanation, it is easy to surmise that comic book art helps to create a deeper learning experience as the pictures work at a representational level to connect to concrete information networks in the brain. The abstract level of the language featured in the comic can then be linked to the pictures, forming a chain whereby the words can access the concrete concepts that the student is familiar with.

CONSIDERATIONS TO USING COMICS AND CARTOONS IN CLASS

While it is true that visuals enhance and add levels of engagement and learning in class, there are various considerations to using comics, cartoons and graphic novels. By its very nature, a picture is an interpretation of reality. Readers need to learn how to 'read' the images within panels and sequences of panels. The ability to interpret a picture requires that the reader understands the 2 dimensional rendition of a 3 dimensional world. In some cases, the skill required to interpret the picture might be easily transferred from the readers' own background knowledge – a knowledge of what the images refer to in real life aiding an understanding of the picture itself. However, this understanding cannot be taken for granted. In some cases, the visual may contain references outside the reader's experience that make it more difficult to interpret, and subsequently hinder the reader's ability to infer the story's action or background. For example, a student from China may not immediately recognise New York from an image of the Empire State Building.

Figure 1: I Don't Get It



In addition, conventions of comic book and graphic novel art might have to be learned. For some readers this might include basic information such as which direction to follow the panels and what sequence the dialogue should be read in. The reader might also need to be aware of how to identify which character is speaking; what volume the dialogue is spoken at; and the tone of voice being used. Comic book art has its own sense of punctuation and flow, which is communicated visually by the size and shape of font, and the speech bubble layout within the panels.

IN THE CLASSROOM

Comics and cartoons can be exploited in the classroom for a large variety of uses. In general, comics are bound strongly to the culture in which their target audience live. They are often satirical or contain comments on society, or at least are intended to reflect elements of the readers' culture and experiences. This means that the speech patterns and vocabulary used by the characters reflect those common to the target audience. Slang, jargon, and acronyms create a connection with readers who recognise the background culture being portrayed. This specific use of language extends also to the patterns of grammar and syntax used within a cultural group. Learners are exposed to the idiolect through a visual portrayal of the characters and their environment, and are thus able to contextualise the dialogue through its paralinguistic features. This is similar to watching films or T.V. series that give learners insight into the sometimes non-standard but authentic uses of the language that are often missed by EFL text books. However, the advantage of a comic is that it provides the language in a written form, making the language easier to identify and explore than the elusive spoken dialogue of video.

Comics and cartoons are also a great source of topics in the language classroom. Comic strips or cartoons can be used as an introduction to a topic for language work or as a launch pad for discussion or writing. Single-panel or three-panel cartoons in newspapers frequently focus on the latest current affairs and may provide an insightful or controversial take on the news. Superhero comics such as *The Amazing Spider-Man* (Lee & Ditko, 1963-2015) explore what it means to be a hero, or anti-hero, and society's perception of aspects of heroism. In general, comics lend themselves to an exploration of the personalities, environment and situations that the characters find themselves in.

What follows is a selection of classroom activities using comics, cartoons and graphic novels in an adult EFL setting.

WRITING ACTIVITIES

Harnessing creativity

Using visuals and pictures is an effective way of encouraging students to be more creative. Sequences of pictures can be used to create a framework on which to build a story for students who may lack the imagination, or inspiration, to create stories when asked to in class. The task of storytelling then becomes easier. In turn, this allows the student

to focus more on expressing themselves and using language, rather than on struggling to find ideas.

Before class, a comic strip that has between five to seven panels is prepared. Using corrector fluid, the speech bubbles and thought bubbles are whitened out, leaving the comic strip without text. As a warmer, one of the students describes the picture to another who must draw it. Neither student should be able to see what the other is describing or drawing. Afterwards, the student sketch is compared to the original picture. The full set of pictures are given to students in groups who will decide on the order of the pictures and what story they tell. The groups will then write down the story that they have decided on, ignoring the original – the story now belongs to the students and is whatever they want it to be. This can be corrected and monitored in the usual fashion. They could also suggest dialogue for their characters and put that into the speech bubbles on the cartoon panels. Each group might display their comics in class and comment on similarities and differences between stories.

Pay it forward

Many students view writing as a chore or irrelevancy instead of a means of communication. The purpose of this activity is for students to gain a more positive attitude towards writing, and to realise that others will read and respond to their writing. The student is asked to respond to a prompt such as “you might not know this about me but...” by writing one or two sentences in a notebook. Each student is given an A4 sized paper that has been divided into between five and nine blank panels, depending on the size of the class. The student then splits their sentences into the same number of chunks as there are panels and writes each piece into a small section of the panel. Collaboratively, the students create comic strips based on the sentences written by the students themselves. The paper is passed anonymously to another student who must quickly draw the first thing that comes to mind based on the prompt in the first panel. They pass the paper to the person on their left who draws in the next panel. It then moves to another person, and so on. The activity needs to be kept short in order for the class to remain focussed on the language rather than the pictures they are drawing. When finished, the cartoons are hung around the walls to be visited like an art gallery.

SPEAKING

Reorder the story

One of the advantages of comics is that it is a sequence of images that tell a story. Students can explore this by interacting with the sequence. This can be organised in one of two ways:

1. **The teacher** changes or randomises the sequence of panels and students must put the panels into the correct order. They should justify why they put the pictures in that order. This might be carried out with or without text in the speech or thought bubbles; the difference being that the linguistic clues to the sequence may or may not be exploited to help the student to identify the storyline.
2. **The students** change the sequence and explain how this has affected the story, or simply order the panels in a way that seems logical to them. This means that students are not bound by a 'correct' version of the storyline, but may be free to create their own. The students can then be challenged to tell the story or role-play the speech and thought bubbles that accompany the pictures.

Topical cartoons

Cartoons from newspapers are often topical and can easily be used to spark a discussion. Find a set of different cartoons on a particular topic and ask what aspects of the topic are represented by the cartoons. Discuss whether the views represented by the cartoons are something that the students agree with or not and why. With business students these could be political, economy related, or specifically about the business world. In general English classrooms, these could be about current affairs or topics the students are interested in.

READING

Comics are an effective way of getting reluctant readers to start reading. As stated before, the visual element gives more clues as to the meaning and context of the text, which helps the reader to identify and work with language they might be unsure of. The wide spacing out of text through the pages means that it is not so overwhelming. Furthermore, the fact that it may be authentic text is encouraging and makes the student feel that they have achieved a real understanding of the language. All these

factors give the learner the confidence to try more complex and dense texts.

There is a large range of comics available to appeal to all interests, especially on the Internet where many are available to read for free. There are also a number of books of classic literature stories now available as graphic novels. These are useful for introducing students to great works of English literature. These are often faithful to the original storyline, but may be adapted to feature simplified English text for readers who would struggle with the original, as in the case of *Oliver Twist (Graphic Dickens)* (Burningham & Rowlett, 2009). Alternatively, some classic graphic novels are left unabridged, such as *Macbeth: The Graphic Novel* (McDonald et al., 2008) but the visuals provide a form that is more accessible to the student.

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Figure 1 is reproduced with kind permission of Adrian Theuma.

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18. Pictures that tell the truth: deconstructing the teaching/learning space

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As a teacher trainer and developer, one of the things I often do is to sit in on lessons and observe them. A corollary of this is that I often take photos of the teaching/learning spaces I visit. Sometimes the photos are taken before the lesson, sometimes immediately after a lesson. On some occasions, I ask permission to take photos during the lesson. These images capture the raw physicality of the teaching/learning space. They provide us with a glimpse of how bodies move around a given space, within a given time frame. We remember how movement flowed in the class, how voice and speech echoed in the room, and how dialogue and interaction took place. It is at this exact moment that we start to deconstruct the teaching and learning that took place and begin to envisage alternatives. This paper will explore the truths that emerge from photos of teaching/learning spaces.

INTRODUCTION

Quite often, landscape historians rely on aerial photography to find archaeological sites and reconstruct history. These photos show evidence of what was and based on this it is possible to attempt to create the narrative of what happened. In much the same way, teachers can look at photos of their teaching/learning space and try to understand the living processes that took place in that space. The act of deconstructing an image allows us to glimpse into a reality we may have missed in the heat of the teaching moment. It allows us to begin to understand the interactive dynamics between space/learner and teacher. In this manner, we allow ourselves to reflect on our use of teaching/learning spaces and, hopefully this encourages us to devise new images of desirable teaching/learning spaces and interactions.

PICTURES OF TEACHING/LEARNING SPACES: THE EVIDENCE

One of the things that I always notice after a lesson has ended is that the teaching/learning space is never quite the same as it was when the

lesson began. A quick photo of a post-lesson classroom often shows desks and chairs that are no longer organised in a neat and orderly fashion. The room may have been tidied up by the students, but there's always a chair out of place; a desk which isn't aligned with the others; a piece of paper strewn on the floor; a lost biro; a board which is written on; piles of dictionaries or reference books on a side table or drawings handed in as homework.

In fact, this is as it should be. One of the things that we as teachers aim at is to ensure that the teaching/learning experience is a transformative one. We look for evidence of change and transformation in our students' reactions during the lesson and afterwards as well. A photo of the teaching/learning space after a lesson provides evidence of these possible changes and transformations. Yet they also provide evidence of when these changes fail to happen.

The best way to provide an example of this is to refer to a lesson I observed with young teenagers which, to be fair, was taught in a room that was quite small. The students came in groups, huddled together, some arriving late, dragging in backpacks and throwing themselves into the chairs to get on with the work being done. As the lesson progressed, I had this overwhelming sense of a lack of space in class and a lack of dialogue and interaction between teacher and students. I could quite clearly see as an observer that the teacher was unable to conduct any form of monitoring, and this ultimately led to missed learning opportunities.

At the end of the lesson, we had to leave the room as another class was about to take place there, but I managed to take a photo of the room. Just by looking at the empty chairs in the photo, the reason for the lack of integration and collaboration between teacher and students was all too clear. Nonetheless, before showing the photo to the teacher, I did try and see if he was aware of what had happened during the lesson. The teacher knew the lesson had not reached the results he had expected and he generally felt it was due to his lack of ability to discipline the students.

However, on looking at the photo he was shocked to see that the way the students had arranged their desks had prevented him from going around the room. In the heat of the moment of teaching and being observed, he simply did not notice that the students had barricaded themselves from him. This led to the creation of problems, which may not have otherwise arisen, and which upset his teaching process. It led to the need to constantly control the group. The huddled students looked at each other rather than the teacher when he was giving instructions. This meant he had to raise his voice beyond the expected level to gain their

attention. He was also unable to individually monitor their written work during the practice stage, which ultimately impacted on their ability to speak more freely at the end, as they had not fully grasped what was being taught.

By looking at a single photo, the teacher became aware that discipline was not the problem in his class. Indeed, it was an issue of his inability to organise the teaching space so that it was conducive to the creation of a rich learning experience. By looking at the photo, the teacher was able to begin to deconstruct his teaching/learning experience within his working space and this led to a very rewarding reflection with regards to his practice.

OUR TEACHING BODIES AND OUR TEACHING SPACE

One of the things that the photographing of teaching/learning spaces has shown me is how limited our awareness is of the space within which we work. A classroom is a bit like an empty box. We will add a few teaching resources to it, like a board (whiteboard or interactive), desks and chairs, teaching and learning materials (which may come in paper or electronic format), games, toys and flashcards. We then add the most important element in the classroom: the students and their teacher.

When we look again at the photo of our classroom, it is no longer so empty. Yet, no matter how much we have in terms of resources, unless we learn to move, act and react in this learning/teaching space, we will not reach the full potential of this unique combination of objects and people.

At this point, I will bring into this emerging picture the thoughts and words of architects, who deal with space from a completely different perspective, and actors, who also have a meaningful and important relationship with space. This may add a new and exciting dimension to the way we teachers look at our teaching space.

The British architect Colin St John Wilson often remarked upon the importance of an awareness of the space around us. He wrote,

All of our awareness is grounded in forms of spatial experience, and that spatial awareness is not pure, but charged with emotional stress from our first born affinities. It is in fact the first language we ever learned, long before words. (Wilson, 1989)

Looking over several photos of teachers in action in classrooms, it often strikes me how limited our use of the full classroom space is. It almost seems to be an incidental and apologetic use of that space.

We seem to alternate between standing at the front, or moving around the room when monitoring. Teachers like to stand at the front of the classroom, near the board. This is a good spot for teachers, provided we ensure that we stand in a place where at any given moment we have full eye contact with all the students. Yet, when we monitor and walk around, we sometimes see that space as the learners' space and not ours. We tend to see the front of the classroom as "our" space. Sometimes, we invite students to come to the front and write on the board. We turn the control of the teaching/learning space into a "tug of war" with students. Indeed, taking control of space is, as Wilson (1989) highlights, a stressful and emotion-ridden process, from birth to the rest of our lives. We do not see the classroom space as an ally in our work. We do not imagine ourselves as living and breathing organisms inside the classroom space, being able to interact with it and with all those who inhabit it at any given moment. As the Chinese architect Li Xiaodong (as cited in Royal Academy of Arts, 2014) says, "Western architecture develops from perspective, with the building as an object to be looked at from without, while Chinese architecture develops from the idea that the building is something to be experienced from within" (p. 14).

We, as teachers, need to learn to experience our teaching/learning space from within. It is a valuable resource and one we should learn to manipulate with greater confidence and ease. We need to move about the classroom and explore the rest of this space to the full, as actors do.

THE DYNAMICS OF MOVEMENT AND FLOW

One of the things we cannot fully capture in photos of the learning/teaching space is the dynamics of movement. We see static images of people in-between movement. We capture the before and after. Yet, this does not help very much when we come to think about movement itself and the manipulation of space via movement. To this end, we need to go beyond the image and explore, with all our senses, the space itself.

The theatre director and teacher Jacques Lecoq (2009), famous for his work with movement theatre and mime, provides us with many insights into how we can work within the teaching/learning spaces we inhabit. One of the very first things he mentions is the dynamics between movement and stillness. He says that whenever someone moves with

intent and takes hold of a central position within any given space, the natural reaction of those around is to stop and focus on the movement of that person. We will watch that solitary figure moving and then stopping. We will then wait for something to happen and will look intently at the figure.

At that moment, the solitary figure will have every possibility of stimulating diverse forms of reactions. It is also at this moment that reaction generates action. Lecoq (2009) says, "Here is an essential law of theatre which we have already observed: reaction creates action" (p. 74). This is also true of the classroom and our dynamics of movement and interaction. We as teachers may probably remember those moments in which we have remained standing in front of a group of students, silently looking at them and waiting. We use our posture and our stillness to provoke students and change their action in class: from noisy to silent, from jittery to quiet.

Yet we can also consider creating changes in the size of the space we are dealing with. A change in size of the teaching/learning space will automatically change our reactions and actions. Imagine a square classroom, with desks pushed back and about twelve eight-year-olds standing up, holding hands and moving in a circle. We are using the full space of the classroom to interact and move. The moment we opt for larger and exploded learning spaces, we opt for larger movements, more exaggerated gestures and louder voices. The teaching/learning space becomes a great field of opportunities, even within the enclosed walls of a classroom.

However, what happens if we constrict the learning space we offer learners? When we teach young learners, we often do this. Picture a group of children, sitting on a mat in front of the teacher. They move incredibly close to the teacher, who now whispers the next part of the story to surprise them. The teacher has constricted the teaching/learning space to a very small and compact area. Movements become fraught with danger in an attempt to avoid hitting a friend with your feet. Voices lower to a minimum as the intimacy and bond created as the story is told becomes a treasured and glowing moment.

Lecoq (2009) writes, "Actors in a theatre space can also manipulate and use the space to create meaning. Learning the language of space gives the theatre maker an endless number of possibilities" (p. 5). I would argue that the same is true for teachers. If we learn to control the language of space in class, we will be able to bring far richer and more rewarding learning/teaching experiences to our students.

THE CREATIVITY OF AN INTERACTIVE SPACE

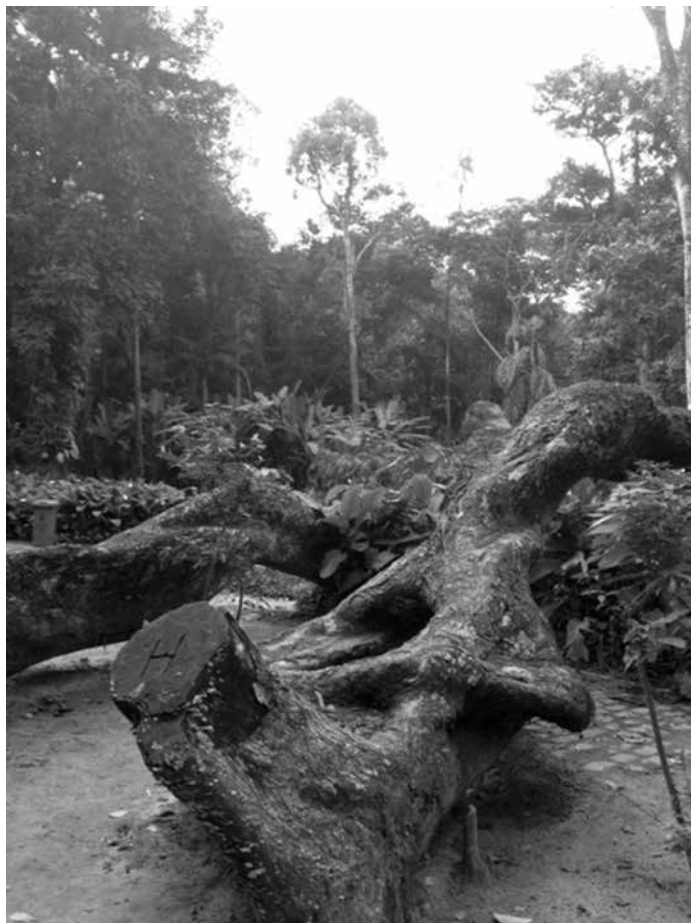
The classroom space should never be limited by its frames of containment. Walls, doors, windows and the floor should always be seen as valuable spaces for the teaching/learning experience to take place. Whenever I walk into a classroom with bare walls I feel a twinge of disappointment. We miss a tremendous opportunity to create an additional interactive space for our learners. Wall displays serve so many purposes, especially those created and designed by the learners themselves. It is the chance to provide students with a wall to scribble their innermost thoughts and ideas. Display walls not only bring additional life into the classroom, but they foster interaction amongst different classes and groups and create a tiny microcosm of society. We love to look at things and react to them. This is a rich teaching/learning opportunity in itself.

Whilst we as teachers always try to keep our classrooms tidy and organised (and there is a good reason for this), there are moments in which a touch of chaos adds a breath of fresh air. So, why not make one of the corners of the classroom a corner of creative jumble. A box with costumes, hats, bits of cloth, objects, books and odd bits and pieces transforms any bare space into a creative space, according to Alexander (2001) of the Complicité Theatre Company. As students sift through the things they want to use, they learn about sharing that space, sharing a thinking process, exploring the space with language, exploring with sentiments and affect, and making the experience memorable and poignant. The box is the same, but the creative possibilities that emerge out of the interaction between space, movement, object and people will be totally different and innovative each time.

What remains to be done is to go back to our photos of teaching/learning spaces and see how we can reconstruct new and creative spaces for ourselves and our students. The photo below of a tree trunk in a park is the image of one of the richest learning spaces I have ever worked in. During a session run by an esteemed colleague, Luke Meddings, a group of us ventured into the local park for a “plein air” afternoon in our Teaching Unplugged course. The change in our learning/teaching space was a challenge to us all and made us confront the reality of what it means to work in an alternative space, one in which you are constantly bombarded by distractors of a natural kind. However, the real threat of these “distractors” meant that we just had to look at each other a bit more, listen to each other a bit more, and work collaboratively in order to complete our task. Who would have imagined that by gathering around a fallen tree trunk in the middle of a park, we would create the

most pedagogically-rewarding teaching/learning space ever. It was a memorable moment and a memorable teaching/learning experience, which showed that all spaces can be equally rewarding, as long as we learn how to occupy the space and move around it.

Figure 1: Tree Trunk



Our use of space is only limited or contained by our own acceptance of our physical reality and our preconceived ideas about what a teaching/learning space should be like. This is directly related to how we as teachers collaboratively construct our working spaces with our students.

The more we look at these spaces, through photos or in reality, the more we will be able to explore richer teaching/learning experiences.

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The Image in English Language Teaching

Edited by Kieran Donaghy and Daniel Xerri

The vast majority of language teachers use images in their classroom. In today's increasingly visual world, it is difficult to imagine the language classroom without coursebook images, photographs, paintings, cartoons, picture books, comics, flashcards, wallcharts, YouTube videos, films, student-created artwork and media, and so on. However, despite the ubiquity of images in language teaching, we need to ask whether images are being approached merely as an aid or support, or as a significant component of communicating in a foreign language, and as a means of fostering students' communicative competence and creativity. All of the papers in this book urge teachers to use images critically and creatively, and encourage students to resist the passivity they might feel towards images. Every single contribution is meant to help both teachers and students become more active viewers and more visually literate.

All the papers in this volume reflect an unease that our frames, our theories and tools, are no longer adequate to the shapes and the requirements of the contemporary world of meaning... The papers in this volume admirably illustrate the range of issues that arise. The task for both practitioners/teachers and for theorists is to produce frames, apt theories, and apt tools for an understanding of these issues in the present unstable and hugely complex world. – Gunther Kress

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