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Modernizing the Integrated Approach: A Dynamic Teaching Method Using Podcasts and Multimedia Content

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University of San Francisco

**Modernizing the Integrated Approach:
A Dynamic Teaching Method Using Podcasts and Multimedia Content**

A Field Project Proposal Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education
International and Multicultural Education Department

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Second Language

By
Justin Tyler Hughes
May 2016

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A Dynamic Teaching Method Using Podcasts and Multimedia Content**

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MASTER OF ARTS

in

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Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this field project has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

Approved:

Professor Luz Navarrette García

Date

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ABSTRACT

There is an influx of international students who come to the United States to pursue a higher education and actualize their dreams. With diversified knowledge in a wide range of fields, international experience, and cultural backgrounds they are driven by motivation and personal aspirations of excellence in this pursuit. However, they often struggle with the academic skills necessary to achieve their goals and fulfill their potential in this new environment.

This project explores ways to create a curriculum in which multimedia and technology such as streaming video, podcasts, and online articles are utilized effectively in order to develop academic skills for adult international students, specifically those with the goal of attending an American university. Through this integrated approach that combines all of the essential language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing), students will build confidence and thus become empowered and individualized learners. They will be able to attain mastery of an essential academic skill set that will assist them in attaining their goals in many different realms.

This project engages various learning types and activate students' interest by creating a flexible and individualized curriculum in which students can draw upon their own interests in order to solidify not only academic writing and reading skills similar to those used in a university but also argumentative abilities, critical thinking skills, and content-based knowledge. Moreover, students will be deeply engaged because the content is modern and relevant and the approach is dynamic.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

America is considered the land of opportunity, largely because of the quality and innovative educational institutions and the ability to excel in these environments and in society at large. Correspondingly, the objective of many immigrants and second language learners in California and the United States is to pursue higher education, thereby increasing academic and professional opportunities in the technologically developed and increasingly international and diversified modern society of today (Altbach & Knight, 2011). Indeed, higher education is the key to maximizing individual potential and moving up vertically in society, especially for international students, immigrants, and newcomers.

North America has a reputation for innovation in the context of educational internationalization, which provides benefits to not only individuals but also enriches the respective countries, cultures, and institutions (Altbach & Knight, 2011). Moreover, various prestigious American universities have formed partnerships and alliances with universities, institutes, and companies in other countries such as South Korea, China, and other parts of the world; in fact, it is projected that the trend toward internationalization in education will be a “central force” in higher education in the future (Altbach & Knight, 2011).

In order to achieve success in higher education, a mastery of academic skills, critical thinking, and argumentative abilities must be attained to a high degree. The most effective way to implement a curriculum with the intent of developing these skills is to

activate various forms of intelligence and learning styles through a “pluralizing” approach that activates the unique skills, capabilities, and interests of individual students (Gardner, 2011). The prevalence of digital content, such as videos and podcasts, that are available and spanning a wide range of topics, creates new and exciting opportunities to master these essential skills in a way that will lead to success and achievement.

Traditionally established curriculums for international students often don't fully take advantage of the myriad of benefits that technology offers academically as well as in terms of engaging learners. International students from a wide variety of backgrounds want to develop the skills to express themselves in their specific fields of expertise and interest, yet most approaches fall short of achieving this (Altbach & Knight, 2011).

As it stands, mastering these skills can be a challenging undertaking for international students, immigrants, newcomers, and English as a second language learners, especially considering the rigid and standardized nature of most typical methodologies. Indeed, there is a monopolistic business-driven model that has dominated the standardized testing industry in the United States and abroad, which causes a sterile and dehumanizing learning environment that can create obstacles, especially for abstract and creative thinkers, many of whom lack interest or are driven solely by weak extrinsic motivation based on the sole superficial purpose of passing an exam (Garrison, 2009). In fact, extrinsic motivation has been categorized as “corrosive” and antithetical to creativity, critical thinking, and valuable learning. Kohn (2000) states “it's also reasonably clear that intrinsic motivation is more desirable and more potent over the long haul. No amount of extrinsic motivation to do something can compensate for an absence of genuine enthusiasm” (p. 14).

Unfortunately, current methods related to teaching essential academic skills can be too standardized, irrelevant and uninteresting to students; this can not only intimidate but also bore learners, many of whom fail to reach their full potential in language acquisition because of their discomfort with archaic pedagogy. It has also been argued that standardized testing and educational methodologies fail to objectively assess the vast reservoirs of intelligence and creativity that students are capable of, thus robbing them of their full potential. Kohn (2000) states “standardized tests can't measure initiative, creativity, imagination, conceptual thinking, curiosity, effort, irony, judgment, commitment, nuance, good will, ethical reflection, or a host of other valuable dispositions and attributes. What they can measure and count are isolated skills, specific facts and functions, the least interesting and least significant aspects of learning” (p. 11).

According to a recent article, standardized testing has become more ubiquitous than ever before in America and its detrimental effects on learners and the education system in general is widespread. McNeil (2002) states:

“Standardized testing has swelled and mutated, like a creature in one of those old horror movies, to the point that it now threatens to swallow our schools whole. Of course, on the late, late show no one ever insists that the monster is really doing us a favor by making its victims more ‘accountable.’ In real life, plenty of people need to be convinced that these tests do not provide an objective measure of learning or a useful inducement to improve teaching, that they are not only unnecessary but highly dangerous” (p. 1).

Indeed, the standardized testing model is corporate and capitalistic by design, often focused primarily on profit-driven motives rather than the valid and objective

assessment of student performance. Of course, this could be unfair to students who lack the financial resources to afford quality education and therefore are deprived of its potential benefits. In addition, there is a growing field of research in educational psychology regarding the negative effects of test anxiety (McNeil, 2002).

Similarly, central English language teaching methodologies employed in foreign countries rely on rote memorization and lack authenticity and realistic content, resulting in high levels of anxiety and low levels of motivation. For instance, research has shown that Chinese students often do not differentiate between memorization and understanding in the context of traditional pedagogical approaches in their native country, which rely heavily on repetition, audio-lingual exercises, and grammar drilling. As a result, they show higher levels of anxiety regarding individual expression; they are often too shy and reluctant to participate in American graduate schools or internationalized education classes due to lack of self-confidence regarding natural use of English language (Wen, Wong, Martin, 2005). It is clear that curriculums that are constrained by this outdated, overly structured and inauthentic approach are apt to increase pressure and raise the affective filter of international students, resulting in an increase in anxiety and a decrease in intrinsic motivation to learn and excel.

Moreover, in many curriculums, students aren't challenged to think critically or question the status quo. In some cases, ethnocentric assumptions and stereotypes go unquestioned (Hinkel, 2001). This has become an issue of great controversy in the educational system, especially in the context of diverse and multicultural classes, in addition to internationalized education.

Indeed, many of the pedagogical methodologies and materials employed are outmoded, irrelevant, and uninteresting to intellectually stimulated learners in our modern globalized society. Clearly, a fresh new approach is needed in this day in age.

Outdated and overly structured pedagogical approaches have a multitude of negative effects on the learner and educational system as a whole. For instance, humanizing pedagogical research has shown that students in diverse classes have not been valued for their own identities, opinions, and cultures, and instead have been subjected to a “one-size fits all” approach that is alienating to entire populations (Bartolome, 1994). The vast potential of creativity, individuality, and multiple intelligences of learners go largely unrecognized in these stifling constraints. Moreover, the tendency to follow curriculums based upon dated methodologies and standardization has resulted in inversely proportional high levels of anxiety and low levels of intrinsic motivation, or genuine passion. Conversely, extrinsic motivation, or the relatively superficial incentive to learn solely in order to achieve a specific aim such as passing a test, can lead to low levels of interest and relevancy in the learner. Consequently, learners can easily fall into a state of apathy or abandonment entirely, never reaching their full potential due not to their own failure, but the flawed design and uninspiring nature of the curriculum itself. This is clearly a problem that demands careful consideration, attention, and innovative solutions for the future.

Purpose of the Project

In order to mirror the innovation of the movement towards internationalization in education, progress must be made regarding new teaching methodologies that are fresh and effective. By using a variety of multimedia content strategically in the curriculum, a

variety of objectives may be achieved in order to improve the effectiveness of the lessons; students will be able to produce natural language in a way that is modern, realistic and engaging, they will be able develop and hone their academic skills in an environment unhindered by anxiety, and as a result, self-confidence and motivation will increase because of their intrinsic interest in the material.

The intent of this project is to utilize multimedia and technology (streaming video, podcasts, articles, and other online content) to create an effective and engaging teaching methodology that activates an array of major learning types while increasing academic skills, honing critical thinking and argumentative abilities, and setting the context for realistic communicative skills and collaboration. Students will develop the skills to express and support their point of view in a way that will build self-confidence, promote critical thinking and individualism, and increase motivation, all while developing key skills necessary to succeed in an academic environment.

Furthermore, they will be able to activate knowledge in their own individualized realms of expertise and interest, thus creating an engaging content model that is not only relevant for the modern learner in the internet age, but also flexible and current. Students will have the ability to follow and subscribe to various video and podcast feeds as part of this project; consequently, there is an opportunity for self-reflection, self-study, and intrinsically motivated continuous learning.

The activities and lessons compiled in this field research project draw from video, audio, podcasts, online content, and other forms of multimedia. The content is authentic, modern, and engaging; moreover, it can be customized based upon the interests or learning needs of each individual student, thereby increasing intrinsic motivation in the

learner. Students will develop real-world skills that are useful in an academic environment, such as determining the relationship from similar or contrasting viewpoints and stating an opinion logically and articulately, with support.

A myriad of subjects such as technology, politics, architecture, art, music, history, science, psychology, and technology can be drawn upon in order to maximize relevance and cover a broad range of topics that will stimulate engagement for students of diverse backgrounds and interests, all by using the power and ubiquity of technology and the internet. Students will draw from various sources of information, identify key points, and choose sources of online content and determining logical relationships between ideas.

Students will need to identify the main idea major points from each source and understand how to consider the relationship of different sources of information and understand if there are conflicting or contradictory points of view. Finally, they will need to compile a clear and concise summary of various viewpoints, ultimately distilling their own opinion on a controversial topic that is sure to stimulate interest. This is especially important in the modern internet era, where the veracity of information is often unclear and it is necessary to view everything with a critical eye.

This integrated skills approach can be applied to both written and spoken work, all of which will be uploaded to a centralized server and accessed by not only the instructor but also other classmates for purposes of analysis and discussion. Consequently, learner engagement will increase and students' motivation will increase because various learning styles will be activated in an authentic and engaging way (Lopez & Schroeder, 2008). Moreover, the use of podcasts and video stimulates learners'

listening skills in a way that can be highly personalized and enjoyable (Zeynel, Tekdal, 2006).

In doing so, students will develop the academic skills of accuracy, cohesion, and syntax in the context of compiling their own academic work. In addition, the finished product can be in audio, video, or written form, thereby increasing the opportunity to work within the context of technology and activate various learning styles.

Therefore, it is clear that a new approach that incorporates technology, modern learners' varied interests and technological aptitude, and critical academic thinking skills while activating the various learning types is extremely useful. Without question, technology is ubiquitous in modern society; consequently, it only makes sense to utilize this in educational and pedagogical practice in order to stimulate interest, increase engagement, and maximize relevance and effectiveness (Lopez & Schroeder, 2008).

Ultimately, learners should be able to use these skills to excel in an academic or professional environment, pass a proficiency or certification examination, and master the critical communicative skills vital to be a self-actualized, engaged and empowered member of the modern internationalized society.

Theoretical Framework

The project utilizes and draws upon diverse pedagogical methodologies and theories, centrally Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as proposed by Savignon, Widdowson, and Ellis (Savignon, 1997), Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, and Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences.

According to CLT theory, meaningful and authentic use of language will contribute to higher levels of intrinsic motivation and genuine interest, thereby enhancing

real skills in second language acquisition. Savignon (1997) explains that there are various characteristics of communicative language instruction:

1. Instructions should be based on communicative competence and not merely focus on grammar or linguistic competence;
2. Attempts by language learners to communicate with each other are encouraged in the period of learning, through negotiation and interaction;
3. Teaching materials are determined by content, function, and meaning;
4. Communication, meaningfulness, and contextualization are the three primary principles, which are inextricably intertwined;
5. Teaching methods are supposed to maintain language learners' study interests;
6. The overarching essence of the theory is to help language learners speak the target language authentically (p. 1-2)

Utilizing relevant and authentic material such as podcasts and streaming video both stimulates the learner's interest and increases motivation using methods and material that are completely real, engaging, and authentic. In addition, it creates an environment in which essential listening and summarizing skills can be developed and honed in an integrated approach that can be both communicative and collaborative.

Furthermore, learners should be empowered to think as individuals, come up with their own opinions, and challenge conventional points of view in a global context (Phillipson, 1997). Utilizing podcasts and other forms of high-tech popular culture is one way of empowering students, increasing learning capabilities, and breaking free from stifling and outdated pedagogical norms. Interestingly, Bausell, S.B. (2006) claims that "participants in these digital literacies have, in many ways, embarked on a critical

journey through which they concomitantly revise their relationship with the traditional, objective, and omnipotent sources of knowledge and power.”

Motivation is one of the central driving forces of student learning, according to Krashen’s affective filter hypothesis (Krashen, 1985). Drawing from realistic and authentic sources and effectively utilizing technology is an excellent way to decrease learner anxiety and increase intrinsic motivation, creating the type of learning environment in which they can develop self-confidence, thrive, and actualize their full potential. This is closely related to task-based learning and teaching, which emphasizes the effectiveness of utilizing a structured plan to provide the context for authentic and meaningful language use (Ellis, 2003).

Modern teaching approaches tap into Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences, and this has been proven effective in many learning environments. Gardner (2011) states that the individual aptitudes and characteristics of each student should be valued and recognized and respected: “It is of the utmost importance that we recognize and nurture all of the varied human intelligences, and all of the combinations of intelligences. We are all so different largely because we all have different combinations of intelligences. If we recognize this, I think we will have at least a better chance of dealing appropriately with the many problems that we face in the world,” (p. 24).

Essentially, this project incorporates the central aspects of these theories in order to create an educational model that is innovative, dynamic, and relevant. This authentic and exciting approach activates intrinsic motivation in learners in student-centered methodology that encourages continuous development, reflection, and improvement. Consequently, learners are more stimulated and engaged to excel due to

their interest in the subject matter which is authentic, contemporary, and real in an educational environment that is modern, natural, and conducive to low anxiety and overall self-affirmation.

Significance of the Project

This project has the capacity to be of great value to any international student interested in developing authentic listening, speaking, and writing skills in a realistic and authentic communicative context. In particular, international students in the United States who have the objective of succeeding academically and ultimately entering an American university will find this project useful. It is specifically aimed at adult learners (typically high school graduates or university graduates) who are interested in pursuing higher education and are seeking to develop skills conducive to academic excellence and self-actualization. Basically, students who are driven to enhance their academic English skills in a modern, innovative, and engaging way will also find this effective. They will be able understand and use English in authentically in a communicative and collaborative way that empowers them as individuals and respects their multiple intelligences as well as individual cultures, values, and opinions.

Finally, students who want to develop lexical resources for their specific fields of interest and expertise will benefit greatly from this model that draws upon humanizing pedagogy and innovative methodologies.

Critical thinking, collaborative skills, creativity and synthesis are emphasized and honed in this approach, which significantly improves on outdated pedagogical approaches that have been shown to result in high levels of anxiety and correspondingly low levels of interest and overall achievement. Essential skills are developed through the

activation of the interest, passion, intelligence, and creativity of learners in a modern approach geared towards valuable and continuous intellectual improvement, knowledge acquisition, and reflection. The unique identities and interests of individual learners are valued; thus, they have the capability to achieve their specific goals and actualize their full potential.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Various references and sources were used in the formation of this project. Methods in which technology can be used to stimulate the underlying neurological and emotional aspects of the human mind to increase academic and critical thinking skills are central to this project. Furthermore, with the widespread prevalence of technology and the convenience and instantaneous nature of podcasts and streaming video, this methodology is modern and relevant in the internet information age. By drawing upon various subject matter and viewpoints and encouraging students to contribute their own unique viewpoints, intrinsic motivation is activated in the learner, and this genuine incentive to excel can lead to outstanding results. Moreover, this can be seen as a type of humanizing pedagogy that empowers the learner and enhances the learning environment for the instructor and students.

Innovative models must be developed and implemented in order to provide a more holistic approach to education that is more flexible, relevant and empowering for the modern learner. The widespread pervasiveness and monopolistic nature of standardized testing has had a detrimental effect on not only students but also teaching methodologies, which have had the tendency to become rigid and dehumanizing. This approach has been criticized as not necessarily being the most accurate measure of learners' cognitive and analytical skills, especially because it can fail to take into consideration learners' unique characteristics, beliefs, opinions, and intelligences. It is the aim of this project to create a new educational model that empowers students,

embraces uniqueness and creativity, and creates the context for collaboration and multicultural cooperation.

Upon review of relevant literature, three themes emerged: the main topics include adaptation and innovation in the knowledge era, the impact of intrinsic motivation, and alternative approaches and humanizing pedagogy.

Adaptation and Innovation in the Knowledge Era

Within the context of what has been referred to as the knowledge era, a vast body of research has shown the benefits of effectively using technology in education (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007).

According to the article “Complexity Leadership Theory: Shifting Leadership from the Industrial Age to the Knowledge Era,” we are currently living in what can be deemed as a knowledge-based economy, which sets the stage for new ideas and innovations. Specifically, in this technological and globalized world, there is a need for new methods of leadership that embrace creativity and adaptability (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007).

In particular, the myriad benefits of using technology in the context of education are described in the work of Caine (2011). This research describes the potential of an innovative and "outstanding kind of education, one compatible with a world deeply steeped in technology, innovation, academic excellence, global communication and cultural diversity” (p. 7). This is in contrast to archaic methods of teaching that are irrelevant and ineffective in the context of modern society; in fact, outdated methods can even be detrimental to learners, resulting in apathy and low levels of achievement. Specifically, this article focuses on “videotech” and how it is a powerful

worldwide force that can provide new and more dynamic approaches to education. In other words, this new technology can be used to generate true engagement in the learner by activating creativity, curiosity, and the imagination. Furthermore, it has the capacity to transform teaching into a more “exciting, meaningful, and coherent” process that is ultimately more valuable and enriching as a whole (p. 2).

Interestingly, psychological and neurological evidence supports these claims. According to research, the pervasive use of technology can actually change the neurology of learners, specifically the way the learner perceives, interprets, and processes information (Caine, 2011).

Further empirical evidence and studies have proven the effectiveness of using video and recording as a part of educational curriculums. For example, according to Parson (2009), the use of lecture podcasts and recorded video to complement psychology courses at Aston University in the United Kingdom were conducive to student learning, understanding, knowledge retention, and overall motivation in the course. That is, students who used recorded audio and video content were more engaged and performed better academically. Additionally, podcasts could be used for in depth analysis, revision, and reflection. According to this study, there is a great potential for audio podcasts and video to exist as a “standard practice” in seamless integration with traditional teaching approaches.

The ubiquity and prevalence of digital media in today’s society is emphasized in Breuer and Bente’s research (2010) as well as its significant influence on modern learners. In fact, the consumption of multimedia such as streaming video and audio has become even more pervasive and common than reading for many modern students,

whom he refers to as “digital natives,” belonging to the first generation that has grown up immersed in the high-tech environment of the internet age. Likewise, traditional instructor-led teaching and testing methods have become a “historical artifacts” that can be traced back to the advent of the printing press and in many ways have become obsolete and irrelevant to modern learners (p. 9).

Interestingly, research has shown that modern students in today’s society will spend 5,000 hours of their lives reading; in contrast, they will spend 10,000 hours playing video games and 20,000 hours watching TV according recent projections (Breuer & Bente, 2010). Therefore, taking into consideration these significant figures, it makes sense that educators draw upon the advantages that technology in the form of audio podcasts and streaming video offers in order to appeal to students in a method that reflects the environment of the modern technological age, resulting in an approach that is more relevant and engaging.

Indeed, creating a dynamic approach can be facilitated by the effective use of podcasts, streaming video, and other multimedia content, all of which can increase genuine intrinsic motivation and decrease anxiety in learners. Moreover, it is natural for them and thus creates a comfortable environment. In other words, learners can become agents of their own learning and self-actualization, and in effect they can maximize their potential in the learning environment.

Inherently, internet-based digital content is virtually limitless, and thus the capacity to discover new information instantaneously is infinite. Consequently, learners have the ability to be more empowered in any learning environment, as well as reflect on and find out new information for themselves. In fact, the extent of what can be learned is

not restricted by the curriculum or a specific instructor. “I don't want my son to be limited to learning only what his teacher already knows!” stated John Couch, Vice President of Education at Apple, Inc. (Caine, 2011, p. 36). In other words, innovative, flexible, and adaptable teaching approaches can lead to higher levels of relevance, meaning, and empowerment.

Moreover, utilization of this type of project and the associated methodologies can lead to the development of essential skills that are absolutely crucial for success in modern society. For instance, according to a 2007 report by the National Center on Education and the Economy:

Strong skills in English, mathematics, technology, and science, as well as literature, history, and the arts will be essential for many; beyond this, candidates will have to be comfortable with ideas and abstractions, be good at analysis and synthesis, creative and innovative, self-disciplined and well organized, able to learn very quickly and work well as a member of a team and have the flexibility to adapt quickly to frequent changes in the labor market as the shifts in the economy become ever faster and more dramatic. (Caine, 2011, p. 22).

In other words, analytical thinking, creativity and innovation are essential skills that can be presented in a way that is realistic, authentic, and relevant to success in the context of the constantly changing society and rapid technological development of the modern world. Modern learners must have the abilities to think logically and critically as individuals, as well as understand and be able to synthesize various viewpoints. Moreover, Bartolome (1994) supports this idea, explaining how strategic teaching techniques can empower students by enabling powerful self-expression, as well

as providing the context to develop essential skills such as making predictions, generating hypotheses, summarizing, and working collaboratively.

Caine (2011) goes on to describe some characteristics of effective teaching methodologies ideal for the modern era and on into the future: “Education must shift to include teaching that develops higher order capacities by including the following:

- Skills must be continuously developed and refined in the course of pursuing personally relevant goals.
- Logical thinking and problem solving needs to be applied daily in pursuit of real-world outcomes.
- High quality real-world knowledge is called for a continuously demonstrated.
- Intuition and creativity are valued and explored as a way of life.
- Flexibility and adaptability are practiced and seen as essential.
- The role of emotions and ethics are studied, applied, and understood.
- Maintaining relationships both at home and with individuals from different worlds is valued and practiced.
- Learners are being prepared for technologies that have not yet been developed and for solving problems we have never before encountered.” (p. 43).

To reflect the digital landscape of the knowledge era and in order to develop these essential skills, more innovative teaching methods are clearly needed. Nevertheless, many school systems struggle with effective implementation of technology and adaptation of modern teaching methodologies that depend on creativity, innovation, and collaboration. Indeed, outdated pedagogical methods and approaches are no longer relevant or effective in achieving these goals in the modern information

age. Specifically, obsession with rote memorization of facts for tests is superficial and to a large extent ineffective.

Instead, learning that is more dynamic and student-centered inherently has a more “natural flow” for the modern learner (Caine, 2011). Interestingly, Caine makes the point that teaching with technology is an “entirely different art” from traditional teacher-centered approaches that can lead to greater student freedom and interest (p. 21). This can have a much more profound impact and value for learners in the context of modern society. The goal of education, Caine (2011) argues, “must be to help students acquire a way of thinking and perceiving and acting that provides an ongoing platform for being able to adapt to a changing world.” (p. 37) Essentially, teaching approaches and policies must be adaptive to modern society in order to empower learners and best prepare them for the future.

The Impact of Intrinsic Motivation

According to modern neurological research, cognition is emotional; that is, decision-making and thought processes have emotional underpinnings (Bechara & Damasio, 2005). Therefore, people are usually more “willing and able to master material about which they are passionate or in which they have a genuine personal interest” (Caine, 2011, p. 15). Indeed, true engagement leads to overall better results and greater effectiveness.

This is supported by Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis, in which it is proposed that learning environments that are most positive and effective for students are those in which anxiety is eliminated or significantly diminished for learners (Krashen, 1981). The best way of achieving this in the context of second language instruction is to

provide comprehensible input that can be interpreted in a realistic and communicative context (Krashen, 1981). Interestingly, Krashen makes the point that learning is a subconscious process; thus, natural approaches that emphasize content rather than repetition or explicit syntax are ideal for language acquisition (Krashen, 1981).

He further explains that a non-technical way to describe this is “picking up” a language, or learning it by feel or intuition. For instance, Krashen’s concept of “*i + 1*” is based on the concept that learners acquire a language most effectively if the content is comprehensible, yet slightly beyond their level, thus enabling the capacity for improvement and development of competence.

This dynamic approach has been successfully implemented not only in the California educational system, but also in various international contexts. Krashen goes on to develop that students with high levels of intrinsic motivation usually do better and are more successful in achieving their objectives. In other words, learners who have a true passion for the subject and genuine interest and engagement have more incentive to excel, and their academic performance and results reflects this. In contrast, students who are carried by extrinsic motivation to pass a standardized test, for instance, usually have poorer learning outcomes and less overall enjoyment and benefit from the educational process (Krashen, 1981).

Similarly, according to McQuillan (2006), “When teaching in the target language (TL), language should be:

- Comprehensible
- Culturally relevant and accurate
- A way to provide a connection with target culture” (p. 4).

Podcasts are a great way to achieve these objectives. The natural, relaxed, and even spontaneous rhythm of human speech within podcasts is not only informative but also engaging to listen to for many listeners. For instance, when listening to podcasts or watching videos, students often feel relaxed, at ease, and in a natural state of “flow” in which they forget they are listening or reading in a second language (McQuillan, 2006). In addition, McQuillan (2006) states that “The iPod makes it possible to deliver large quantities of comprehensible language to students in an efficient and convenient manner” (p. 6). This natural learning process is very low anxiety, and especially because the information is modern, relevant, and can be individualized for each learner, the learners are engrossed in the topic and driven by intrinsic motivation to excel.

Independent research has supported this concept. For instance, a recent graduate study carried out in Turkey showed that in contrast to traditional and rigid grammar-translation methodologies, the use of podcasts and authentic content led to a significant increase in intrinsic motivation to learn English and interest in the associated culture (Süleyman & Cabaroglu, 2014). This relates to Noam Chomsky’s Theory of Universal Grammar, in which it is posited that humans have the unique inherent capacity to understand order linguistically, especially when naturally exposed to authentic use of language (Chomsky, 1972). The researchers in the graduate study concluded that “using mobile appliances such as iPods and mp3 players for repetitive listening of meaningful input motivates learners, which in turn enhances performance and hence improves beliefs and perceptions” (p. 3).

Also, according to Gardner’s research, individuals are complex and have a unique combination of multiple intelligences. Taking this into consideration can create

empowerment for learners and more effective teaching strategies (Gardner, 2011). Indeed, students should not be limited to one restrictive and limited modality of instruction. On the contrary, activation of various types of intelligence can lead to greater engagement, value, and results.

One of the crucial aspects of this project is the fact that students are encouraged to express their own unique identities and pursue their own passions and interests in a way that is stimulating, inspiring, and conducive to autonomous self-mastery and long-term success.

Alternative Approaches and Humanizing Pedagogy

Student-centered learning is a central concept of this project. In other words, students should be valued as individuals and feel as though their unique identities and opinions are validated in the learning process. This is a more modern and innovative approach to education than more traditional methods that form over content and focus on the authority of the teacher.

Krashen (1981) identifies severe deficiencies with pedagogical approaches based on behaviorist psychology, such as audio-lingual and drilling exercises. These outdated approaches can be dull, tedious, and lack true authenticity and value for the learners; this can result in lack of interest and apathy. Furthermore, higher levels of anxiety, or what Krashen refers to as a raising of the affective filter, can occur as a consequence.

Similarly, Caine (2011) claims that “the obsession with results on standardized tests has forced a massive move towards standardized instruction” and this is something that all too common; it can be detrimental in all aspects of the teaching learning process, resulting in higher levels of anxiety, less motivation, and in worse cases total indifference

and apathy that result in alienation and abandonment (p. 32). Caine describes traditional “transmission” and direct teaching methods to be “memes” that are rampant and propagated unquestioningly, with many negative consequences and associations. Strikingly, Caine (2011) even points out the similarity of appearance between public schools and public prisons, a fact that underlines the grim reality of what is considered by many to be a “tightly controlled” authoritative environment that suppresses creativity, stifles individuality, and is not conducive to valuable learning. Clearly, positive change is necessary.

On the other hand, modern approaches can go against this rigid status quo, empowering students as unique individuals that are agents of their own self-actualization and intellectual, expressive, and creative mastery. Ideally, learning should be a naturally fluid and dynamic process that is empowering and touches upon the unique creativity and intelligence contained within each individual. Caine (2011) argues for a “more dynamic and less prescriptive approach to learning and teaching” that includes the following aspects:

- Hierarchy between students and teachers is flattened as everyone respectfully exchanges ideas and information, with teachers becoming the facilitators of excellence.
- Students become more creative and ready to explore and experiment with their own ideas, with teachers preserving some boundaries as they integrate high standards into student-generated products.
- Learning becomes more complex, with a focus on questions that require uniquely organized research and demonstration of higher level thinking skills rather than

the mere gathering of facts and information for written or verbal summaries or reports. (p. 21).

Likewise, humanizing pedagogy is a modern methodology that focuses on empowering students and respecting them as unique individuals. According to Bartolome (1994) of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, humanizing pedagogy can equalize the power dynamic in the classroom and as a result provide more agency for the students to fulfill their own potential. This is especially important considering the importance of diversity, internationalism, and global cooperation in modern society.

In her study, she stressed the importance of teachers to understand the students culturally, politically, and individually, as opposed to using a simplistic “one-size fits all” methodology that can be ineffective and alienating for certain students and “subordinated” populations (she specifically identifies Mexican Americans, Native Americans, African Americans and Puerto Ricans, although this concept can be expanded in the context of other diverse student populations) (p. 175). For instance, Bartolome (1994) pointed out that unequal power structures in society are reproduced in classrooms, which can result in discrimination, a dehumanizing and oppressive environment and consequently lower levels of academic achievement (Bartolome, 1994).

In contrast, humanizing pedagogy can be a method to equalize the power dynamic and create a more natural and positive learning environment. As a result, students can become “active participants in their own learning” (p. 190). She describes a methodology in which students are empowered, moving from object to subject position. In addition, she explains that the classroom can create the conditions for

“positive social change” if students are respected as individuals and are given the opportunity to learn from each other collaboratively, drawing from their own collective knowledge and unique experiences. Consequently, they are engaged in the learning process because their interest is activated; they feel more valued in the educational context and of course, this can have the advantageous effects of increasing intrinsic motivation and decreasing anxiety.

In essence, all of these aspects can be pivotal in the creation of a better, more just and positive learning environment and can bring about better results in the context of academic success in the long run. Humanizing pedagogical methodology respects not only individual critical thinking but also collective communicative competence and collaboration.

Similarly, effective educators should take into account the characteristics of what makes humans great, as described in *Educating for human greatness*:

- *Identity* - Help students learn who they are as individuals with unlimited potential, develop their unique talents and gifts to realize self-worth, and develop a strong desire to be contributors to family, school, and community.
- *Inquiry* - Stimulate curiosity; awaken a sense of wonder and appreciation for nature and humankind. Help students develop the power to ask important questions.
- *Interaction* - Promote courtesy, caring, communication, and cooperation.
- *Initiative* - Foster self-directed learning, willpower, and self-evaluation.
- *Imagination* - Nurture creativity in all of its many forms.

- *Intuition* - Help students learn how to feel and recognize truth with their hearts as well as with their minds; develop spirituality and humility.
- *Integrity* - Develop honesty, character, morality, and responsibility for self (Stoddard & Dalman-Jones, 2001, p. 9).

Thus, the objective of education is to help fulfill the true potential of each individual, thereby benefiting the greater society. High academic standards can be achieved while attaining a higher purpose and activating a higher level of thinking (Caine, 2011). Likewise, with the foundational methodology of humanizing pedagogy and student-centered learning, students are able to actualize their full potential, reflect, and ask powerful and important questions. They are encouraged to collaborate and analyze the content and their learning process critically.

Indeed, recent research has shown that collaborative development has been proven by academic research to lead to transformative learning (Alik, Nicolaides, Dzubiniski, 2015). That is, this approach has considerably greater value and genuine impact on learners.

Summary

Among the methods, theories, and concepts that have been drawn from in the forms of articles, academic research, and other publications to support this project, three major themes have arisen: adaptation and innovation in the knowledge era, the impact of intrinsic motivation, and alternative approaches and humanizing pedagogy.

First of all, in this day in age, teaching approaches must be dynamic and adaptable. The average modern learner spends far more time accessing digital content in the form of streaming audio and video than reading. Taking this into consideration,

digital media can be used as a tremendously effective tool to enhance curriculums. Furthermore, it can stimulate learner engagement and create the possibility for self-refinement, reflection, and discovery. As was shown in this review of the literature, this has been proven to be successful in various higher educational contexts.

Next, the role of intrinsic motivation is absolutely crucial. If students are driven by genuine interest and engagement, their academic performance and results will reflect this. Therefore, a positive learning environment must be created in which the affective filter is lowered; consequently, learners feel little to no anxiety. This can be achieved through authentic content that stimulates curiosity and interest in the learner, culminating in genuine passion for knowledge and enrichment.

Finally, students should be empowered, independent agents of their own learning. Strategic student-centered teaching methods in which students' input is valued and collaborative contexts are provided are more valuable, impacting, and conducive to positive learning environments. Moreover, rigid power relations of traditional hierarchies are replaced with an inclusive environment in which equality, individuality, and diversity are respected. In addition, essential skills necessary for success in modern society can be developed.

In conclusion, by using innovative and dynamic teaching strategies, positive learning environments can be created in which students are engaged and empowered as agents of their own mastery and self-actualization.

CHAPTER III

THE PROJECT AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

Brief Description of the Project

This project is based upon an integrated skills approach focusing on the synthesis of listening and speaking skills in a dynamic and authentic methodology. The core idea of this project can be applied to a virtually limitless range of topics and material due to the nature of podcasts and streaming videos, which are regularly and continuously updated and cover a myriad of topics and interests. Moreover, this project is designed to encourage deeper self-study and self-reflection, which further empowers the learner.

Five sample lesson plans are included for the purpose of this University of San Francisco School of Education final project. The lessons are intended for upper intermediate to advanced level learners of English as a foreign language (CEF C1 and C2, Cambridge CAE and CPE, TOEFL iBT 75 and above), specifically learners studying in the United States with the objective of gaining acceptance to a graduate program or passing a proficiency examination for certification. All of these are based upon real lessons that have been used in advanced speaking and listening classes, and draw from aforementioned current approaches and methodologies.

These five lessons are all derived from online content available at www.ted.com. TED (Technology, Education, and Design) is an excellent non-profit organization featuring streaming videos and podcasts from experts in a wide variety of fields. The international language school for which I currently work encourages the use of this material; indeed, it has several benefits. First of all, the material is up-to-date,

interesting, and relevant. It also encompasses a broad range of subject matter and topics. In addition, the speakers come from many different backgrounds and are from diverse nationalities and cultures, which adds the richness and authenticity of multicultural diversity. Furthermore, the design of TED is excellent, intuitive, and convenient; the site is attractive and easy to use and also available as a smartphone App, with notifications for new updates. Moreover, it is possible to stream or download videos or podcasts, as well as display not only transcripts but also subtitles in many different languages. Transcripts have exact time delineations and markers, which make them very easy to reference for learners and instructors. Optionally, as extra support, instructors can assign a specific video or podcast for self-study or homework, so students can come prepared to analyze and discuss it the next day. Finally, a vast majority of the talks are concise, running around 10 minutes or less. This is the perfect duration of time to be the centerpiece of a lesson, and can create the contextual framework for various communicative tasks and activities.

Development of the Project

This project is the culmination of ideas and concepts gained through international travel, professional experience, and academic advancement.

Upon graduation from San Francisco State University with a bachelor's degree in journalism and after having volunteered for many years as a teacher's aide in English as a second language classes at City College of San Francisco, I decided to leave the Bay Area and take on an adventure in a different country in which I could explore another culture in immersion and put into practice my skills as an instructor.

I completed a professional development program and one-year teaching contract at American University Alumni (AUA), a well-known and respected cross-cultural community center specializing in Thai and English language education in the center of Chiang Mai, Thailand. This was an amazing experience and a very formative time early in my career in education. As I was acquiring a deep and genuine respect for the people and culture of the Kingdom of Thailand and Southeast Asia, I developed a foundational knowledge of teaching methodology. Specifically, I learned the value of a dynamic student-centered teaching approach with sound theoretical backing. During the professional development program and throughout the course of this work experience, I was able to gain significant self-confidence as an instructor capable of teaching a wide variety of students from many ages and backgrounds. The learning environment was natural and engaging, in contrast to the passive learning style of traditional grammar-based instruction and the rote repetition and memorization indicative of lectures; while the curriculums and materials had sound fundamental basis in grammatical and academic substance, use of authentic material and focus on real communicative competence was the ultimate objective.

Afterwards, when I returned to my native Bay Area, I was able to apply these skills and methods to various international schools and programs in San Francisco, California. In particular, I gained a special expertise in instructing courses based on high-level advanced academic skills, especially for students who had high aspirations of graduate school, or further professional certification and progress.

However, the strict and rigid nature of standardized testing and courses deteriorated the authentic communicative approach and methodology I had discovered

and honed in the American University Alumni professional development program in Chiang Mai. The student-centered focus on individual opinion and expression changed to a more monotonous and repetitive approach that can seem cold and impersonal. It was clear to myself and my coworkers that overly formulaic nature of standardized education can result in lower, weaker forms of extrinsic motivation in contrast to genuine interest and engagement indicative of intrinsic motivation; as a result, this could easily dull the dynamic of the learning environment, which can take on a dimension of dehumanization and apathy, undeniably taking a toll not only on the students but also instructors. Notwithstanding, the academic skill set and logical critical thinking skills are valuable for the success of advanced students with academic and professional aspirations.

Thus, I set out to create my own curriculum based upon the substance of academic skills and approaches, while simultaneously drawing from current, relevant, and engaging material that is authentic and high interest for learners. Over the past several years, I have implemented this idea, enhancing and refining it. Using technology such as laptops, interactive whiteboards, and stereos as well as modern dynamic multimedia, I have been able to modernize the essential academic skill set in a way that is engaging for learners.

Additionally, my graduate work in the University of San Francisco School of Education has further strengthened my methodologies regarding effective instruction and opened my eyes to new ideas and techniques, especially in a modern multicultural context. Various modern models and theories support this project, centrally Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as proposed by Savignon, Widdowson, and Ellis (Savignon, 1997), Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, and Gardner's theory of

Multiple Intelligences; moreover, several recent studies about the effectiveness of using podcasts and technology as a part of the curriculum support this concept (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007; Caine, 2011; Parson, 2009; Süleyman & Cabaroglu, 2014).

The Project

Overview and Organization

The project is broken down into three consecutive stages, all of which are cumulative and focus on honing specific skills of listening for main ideas and specific details and functions, summarizing, and synthesizing information through discussion and independent speaking:

Stage	Skills	Additional objectives
Stage 1) – Preliminary stage	Students will practice the skills of making predictions and speculations.	Schema and background knowledge will be activated, stimulating interest and engagement in learners. New or relevant vocabulary will be established and defined.
Stage 2) – Listening Comprehension Questions	Students will focus on a series of questions based upon key ideas in the video. Listening comprehension questions will be based on the main idea (gist), main points, details, function, purpose, and inferences.	Students can develop the academic skill of taking notes and writing in shorthand abbreviations in order to record and recall important information, similar to in a university or other academic environment.
Stage 3) - Discussion	With the topic of the video or podcast having been established, students will be able to synthesize the information holistically and naturally. They will discuss their opinions, providing specific reasons, details, and examples.	Techniques of cohesion will be developed, such as transition expressions, parallel structure, linking words, etc. Strategies for fluency and development of ideas are a focus. In the approach of humanizing pedagogy, students' individuality, uniqueness, and creativity will be embraced. They will be encouraged to express themselves while working collaboratively
Extensions and Expansions	Students can work on academic skills of summarizing in written or spoken form. Relevant articles or further research on the given topic can be conducted at this point.	The capacity for individual refinement, reflection, and self-mastery is available.

First, the title and accompanying photograph of the podcast or streaming video is presented. Based solely on this limited information, learners are given the chance to make a prediction or speculate about the nature of the content. Schema and background knowledge of the topic is activated, also as a way to generate interest and spark intrinsic motivation. Moreover, any new vocabulary or American idiomatic phrases or phrasal verbs can be elicited and defined during this stage in order to increase understanding of the target material. This preliminary task is a brief introduction and should last no longer than five minutes.

Next, a list of listening comprehension questions is presented. Usually this list is limited to five or ten questions. The function and purpose of comprehension questions are diverse, covering a range of listening skills. For instance, there may be questions on the gist (main idea), specific detail questions, inference questions, organization, or overall tone or attitude questions. That is, a vast range of academic listening skills can be honed and developed effectively.

The podcast or streaming video is then played, and students focus on the comprehension questions. Students are taught transition expressions and other cohesive devices, which they can use in order to maximize their understanding of the content and organization of the topic. They are encouraged to take shorthand, abbreviated notes, which is an academic skill in and of itself that can lead to greater accuracy and precision, especially in catching details. Those who need additional support are welcome to follow subtitles or transcripts.

Afterwards, academic summarizing skills can be practiced as students collaboratively compare answers regarding the comprehension questions, and then check

with the class. Comprehension questions are discussed as a group, the source material is referred to again if necessary, and the main points are written on the board.

Finally, discussion topics related to the specific topic are presented. In a collaborative and communicative manner, students are able to discuss, compare and contrast their individual opinions on the topic. Advanced grammar points may be targeted and by certain questions, such as unreal conditionals and grammar of speculation. Moreover, overall comprehension of the topic as well as genuine interest and engagement generated through the progression of the project create a richer context for a communicative discussion. This can also be a smooth segue into a more open discussion, communicative practice, or conversational skills.

In addition, alternative approaches can be used to expand this activity. For instance, as an extension to this activity, students may choose a video or podcast based upon their field or interests. Subsequently, they can write a one paragraph summary. Afterwards, they can give a short presentation to the class summarizing the main points, lasting one or two minutes; they are encouraged to use transition expressions and cohesive devices and briefly cover the gist and most interesting points. Finally, the other students in the class must come up with at least three original questions to ask the presenter regarding this topic.

Similarly, to affirm the creativity and interests of each individual student, they may be encouraged to create their own talk or presentation based upon a list of prompts or their own ideas. Students can use visuals or videos similar to speakers in the model videos, using cohesive devices and useful phrases. This can be especially interesting in a diverse classroom with students of different backgrounds.

These lesson plans are intended to be used with Interactive Whiteboards ideally, with the text appearing digitally and the videos incorporated into the lesson seamlessly. This is also more convenient, efficient, and better for the environment, as it saves paper. However, the content and delivery can be modified based upon the resources available.

Additionally, I would recommend the following streaming videos and podcasts for future variations of this project: *Radiolab*, *NPR*, *BBC News*, *The New York Times*, and *Cosmos* or other material from Neil DeGrasse Tyson, as well as many others.

Specific lesson objectives, methods of assessment, and learner objectives are delineated in detail in the following model lessons. The answer key and rubric for standard of assessment can be found at the end of the project.



A Dynamic ESL Teaching Method Using Multimedia Content

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All images and videos are from TED (www.ted.com)

Model 1 - “How to Make Hard Choices”

Specific Learning Objectives

- Focus on and develop the skills of listening for main ideas, detail, purpose, function, and inferences.
- Predictions / speculation - modals and auxiliaries.
- Synthesizing and summarizing skills.
- Cohesive devices and transitional expressions.
- Interactive communicative skills, discourse management, lexical resources.
- Unreal conditional grammar - second conditional, present unreal conditional. Third conditional - past unreal conditional.
- Advisability in the past - could have, should have, wish

Vocabulary

- Determining vocabulary based on context clues
- Students may use the transcript as a reference to check any new vocabulary and precise definitions

Assessment

- Spoken summarizing skills and independent speaking skills can be assessed in the form of audio recordings that students can create autonomously and submit. It will be assessed based upon an objective rubric.

- Written summarizing skills and independent writing skills can be assessed in the form of paragraph that students can type turn in. It will be assessed based upon an objective rubric.
- Students will also be assessed based upon interactive communicative skills, specifically in stage 3 of the project.

Recommended Activities

- This material can be expanded with an introduction or warm up leading into the topic of hard choices.
- The lesson can be further expanded with a supplemental article based on the topic of hard choices.
- Students can research the biography of this speaker to find interesting or relevant points from her life.

Optional Activities

- To expand communicative skills, stage 3 of the project can be modified. Students write their answers to the questions on a sheet of paper. Groups are selected in pairs. Students exchange their papers. Subsequently, they must conduct an interview regarding what their partner has written, asking for as much detail as possible. This is a great way to set the context for a meaningful and natural conversation or discussion.

Ruth Chang

How to make hard choices

TEDSalon NY2014 · 14:41 · Filmed May 2014



Stage 1- Prediction / Speculation

1. *What do you think this talk will be about? Why?*

Stage 2 - Listening Comprehension Questions

1. *Who is the speaker and what does she do?*
2. *What are some examples of “hard choices” that she gives?*
3. *Why does she talk about different breakfast options?*
4. *What two careers did she consider?*
5. *What career did she finally end up choosing? Why?*
6. *What does she say about her background and childhood?*
7. *Why does she mention an “investment banker and graphic artist”?*
8. *What does she say about salary?*
9. *What does she mean by the phrase “on a par”?*
10. *Why does she say that hard choices are not a “curse”?*

Stage 3 - Discussion Questions

1. *What was her main point?*
2. *Do you agree or disagree with her? Why?*
3. *Have you made any similar “hard choices” in your life? What?*
4. *What hard choices have you made in the past?*
5. *How would your life be different if you had made different choices?*
6. *What hard choices are you facing now?*
7. *How will these choices affect your future?*

Model 2 - “Try Something New For 30 Days”

Specific Learning Objectives

- Focus on and develop the skills of listening for main ideas, detail, purpose, function, and inferences.
- Predictions / speculation - modals and auxiliaries.
- Synthesizing and summarizing skills.
- Cohesive devices and transitional expressions.
- Interactive communicative skills, discourse management, lexical resources.
- Future grammar - Future simple, Future continuous, Future perfect. Future time clauses.
- First conditional - Future real conditional

Vocabulary

- Idiom: *stuck in a rut*
- Phrasal verbs: take up, give up, cut down on
- Determining vocabulary based on context clues
- Students may use the transcript as a reference to check any new vocabulary and precise definitions

Assessment

- Spoken summarizing skills and independent speaking skills can be assessed in the form of audio recordings that students can create autonomously and submit. It will be assessed based upon an objective rubric.
- Written summarizing skills and independent writing skills can be assessed in the form of paragraph that students can turn it in. It will be assessed based upon an objective rubric.
- Students will also be assessed based upon interactive communicative skills, specifically in stage 3 of the project.

Recommended Activities

- This material can be expanded with an introduction or warm up leading into the topic of trying something new.
- The lesson can be further expanded with a supplemental article based on the topic of trying something new.
- Students can research the biography of this speaker to find interesting or relevant points from his life. Specifically, students interested in the IT or tech field can look into his work with Google and tech companies.

Optional Activities

- To expand communicative skills, stage 3 of the project can be modified. Students write their answers to the questions on a sheet of paper. Groups are selected in

pairs. Students exchange their papers. Subsequently, they must conduct an interview regarding what their partner has written, asking for as much detail as possible. This is a great way to set the context for a meaningful and natural conversation or discussion.

Matt Cutts

Try something new for 30 days

TED2011 · 03:27 · Filmed Mar 2011



Stage 1- Prediction / Speculation

1. *What do you think this talk will be about? Why?*
2. *What do you think the idiom “stuck in a rut” means? Have you ever heard it?*

Stage 2 - Listening Comprehension Questions

1. *Who is the speaker and what does he do?*
2. *What does he mean by the “30-day challenge”?*
3. *How did he come up with this idea?*
4. *What does he mean by feeling “stuck in a rut”?*
5. *What habits did he decide to add to his life? Why?*
6. *What creative projects has he taken up?*
7. *What athletic or adventurous interests has he taken up?*
8. *What mountain did he climb?*
9. *What habits did he decide to subtract from his life? Why?*
10. *Why did he choose the time duration of 30 days to try something new?*

Stage 3 - Discussion Questions

1. *What was his main point?*
2. *Do you agree or disagree with him? Why?*
3. *Would you like to try a “30-day challenge”? Why or why not?*
4. *Have you ever tried something like this?*
5. *Do you think 30 days is enough time to try something new?*
6. *If you could add something to benefit your life, what would it be? Why? Name three things.*

7. *If you could subtract something to benefit your life, what would it be? Why? Name three things.*
 8. *How would this affect your life?*
-

Model 3 - “Before Avatar, A Curious Boy”

Specific Learning Objectives

- Focus on and develop the skills of listening for main ideas, detail, purpose, function, and inferences.
- Predictions / speculation - modals and auxiliaries.
- Synthesizing and summarizing skills.
- Cohesive devices and transitional expressions.
- Interactive communicative skills, discourse management, lexical resources.
- Future grammar - Future simple, Future continuous, Future perfect. Future time clauses.
- First conditional - Future real conditional

Vocabulary

- Determining vocabulary based on context clues
- Students may use the transcript as a reference to check any new vocabulary and precise definitions

Assessment

- Spoken summarizing skills and independent speaking skills can be assessed in the form of audio recordings that students can create autonomously and submit. It will be assessed based upon an objective rubric.
- Written summarizing skills and independent writing skills can be assessed in the form of paragraph that students can turn it in. It will be assessed based upon an objective rubric.
- Students will also be assessed based upon interactive communicative skills, specifically in stage 3 of the project.

Recommended Activities

- This material can be expanded with an introduction or warm up leading into the topic of trying something new.
- Students can research the biography of this speaker to find interesting or relevant points from his life. Specifically, they may want to focus on his filmography and work.

Optional Activities

- Students may want to focus on James Cameron's films. This can be expanded into a further discussion.
- As an extra activity, students may watch a James Cameron movie and give a short presentation about it to the class. Otherwise they can submit a written summary.
- Students can discuss which James Cameron movies they have seen, which ones are their favorites, and why.

- Students can predict what James Cameron will do in the future (i.e. what kind of films he will make, what kinds of projects he will focus on, what actors he may choose to work with, etc.)

James Cameron

Before Avatar ... a curious boy

TED2010 · 17:08 · Filmed Feb 2010



Stage 1- Prediction / Speculation

1. *Who is the speaker? Why is he famous?*

2. *What do you think this talk will be about?*

Stage 2 - Listening Comprehension Questions

1. *Who is the speaker and what does he do?*
2. *What movies has James Cameron made?*
3. *What kind of books did he like when he was growing up? Why?*
4. *What creative projects did he work on when he was growing up?*
5. *What does he say about Jacques Cousteau? Who was Mr. Cousteau and why was he famous?*
6. *What did Mr. Cameron decide to do at age 15?*
7. *How many hours has he spent underwater?*
8. *What movie did he make that took place underwater?*
9. *What does he say about NASA? What is NASA?*
10. *What does he say about leadership?*

Stage 3 - Discussion Questions

1. *What is his main idea?*
2. *Do you agree with him? Why or why not?*
3. *Have you seen any of James Cameron's movies?*
4. *If so, which one was your favorite? Why?*
5. *What other movies have you seen recently? Would you recommend them? Why or why not?*
6. *Are you interested in scuba diving? Why or why not?*

7. *Are you interested in science fiction? Why or why not?*
 8. *Do you think James Cameron is successful? Explain.*
 9. *What was the most interesting or important message of this talk, in your opinion?*
 10. *If you could meet Mr. Cameron, what questions would you ask him?*
-

Model 4 - “A Park Underneath the Hustle and Bustle of New York City”

Specific Learning Objectives

- Focus on and develop the skills of listening for main ideas, detail, purpose, function, and inferences.
- Predictions / speculation - modals and auxiliaries.
- Synthesizing and summarizing skills.
- Cohesive devices and transitional expressions.
- Interactive communicative skills, discourse management, lexical resources.

Vocabulary

- Idiom - *melting pot*
- Determining vocabulary based on context clues
- Students may use the transcript as a reference to check any new vocabulary and precise definitions
- Supplemental grammar focus on the following topics:
 - Architecture
 - The environment
 - Urban Planning

- Cities

Assessment

- Spoken summarizing skills and independent speaking skills can be assessed in the form of audio recordings that students can create autonomously and submit. It will be assessed based upon an objective rubric.
- Written summarizing skills and independent writing skills can be assessed in the form of paragraph that students can turn it in. It will be assessed based upon an objective rubric.
- Students will also be assessed based upon interactive communicative skills, specifically in stage 3 of the project.

Recommended Activities

- This material can be expanded with an introduction or warm up leading into the topic of urban design
- Students can research the biography of this speaker to find interesting or relevant points from his life.
- Students can research the Highline Park in Manhattan, New York City, and compare and contrast these two parks. They can discuss the advantages and disadvantages of both.

Optional Activities

- Students may want to focus on other urban projects in the U.S. or in their country

- Students can have a discussion on various cities they have visited and their advantages and disadvantages.
- Students can discuss cities they would like to visit in the future and why.

Dan Barasch

A park underneath the hustle and bustle of New York City

TED@NYC · 06:17 · Filmed Jul 2014



Stage 1- Prediction / Speculation

1. *What do you think this talk will be about?*
2. *What does the term “melting pot” mean? Have you ever heard this term?*

Stage 2 - Listening Comprehension Questions

1. *Who is the speaker? What does he do?*
2. *What is his dream?*
3. *Why does he mention his grandmother?*
4. *Where was his grandmother from?*
5. *Where did the speaker work with UNICEF? What did he do?*
6. *What hi-tech job did he take?*
7. *When did he find the project site location?*
8. *When was the site abandoned?*
9. *Where is the site?*
10. *What does he say about New York’s Highline Park?*

Stage 3 - Discussion Questions

1. *What is the speaker’s main point?*
2. *Do you think that this project is a good idea? Why or why not?*
3. *Have you ever been to New York City? Explain.*
4. *Have you ever visited Highline Park?*
5. *What are your favorite parks?*
6. *What parks have you visited in San Francisco?*
7. *Are there parks in your country?*

8. *How are they similar or different from parks in California?*
 9. *Do you think parks and green spaces are important? Why or why not?*
 10. *Are you interested in architecture or urban design? Explain.*
-

Model 5 - “Before I Die I Want To...”

Specific Learning Objectives

- Focus on and develop the skills of listening for main ideas, detail, purpose, function, and inferences.
- Predictions / speculation - modals and auxiliaries.
- Synthesizing and summarizing skills.
- Cohesive devices and transitional expressions.
- Interactive communicative skills, discourse management, lexical resources.

Vocabulary

- Determining vocabulary based on context clues
- Students may use the transcript as a reference to check any new vocabulary and precise definitions

Assessment

- Spoken summarizing skills and independent speaking skills can be assessed in the form of audio recordings that students can create autonomously and submit. It will be assessed based upon an objective rubric.

- Written summarizing skills and independent writing skills can be assessed in the form of paragraph that students can turn it in. It will be assessed based upon an objective rubric.
- Students will also be assessed based upon interactive communicative skills, specifically in stage 3 of the project.

Recommended Activities

- This material can be expanded with an introduction or warm up leading into this topic.
- Students can research the biography of this speaker to find interesting or relevant points from her life.
- Relevant or related articles can be used as supplemental material.

Optional Activities

- To expand communicative skills, stage 3 of the project can be modified. Students write their answers to the questions on a sheet of paper. Groups are selected in pairs. Students exchange their papers. Subsequently, they must conduct an interview regarding what their partner has written, asking for as much detail as possible. This is a great way to set the context for a meaningful and natural conversation or discussion.

Candy Chang

Before I die I want to ...

TEDGlobal 2012 · 06:20 · Filmed Jul 2012



Stage 1- Prediction / Speculation

1. *What do you think this talk will be about?*

Stage 2 - Listening Comprehension Questions

1. *Who is the speaker? What does she do?*
2. *What was her idea?*
3. *Where is she from?*

4. *What does she like about New Orleans?*
5. *What is a problem that New Orleans faces?*
6. *What happened to her in 2009?*
7. *What is the purpose of her project?*
8. *Where has she taken this project?*
9. *According to this speaker, what are the most valuable things in life?*

Stage 3 - Discussion Questions

1. *What is the speaker's main idea?*
2. *Do you agree with her? Why or why not?*
3. *Do you think this project is a good idea? Why or why not?*
4. *What are 5 things you would like to do in your lifetime? Please consider goals related to:*
 - a. *Personal / social / family life*
 - b. *Career*
 - c. *Education / Academics*
 - d. *Hobbies / Interests*
 - e. *Passions*
5. *Why did you choose these goals?*
6. *How will you achieve these goals?*
7. *When will you have reached these goals?*
8. *Will you need help accomplishing this? From who?*
9. *Where will you do this, specifically?*
10. *How will achieving these goals benefit your life? Be specific.*

Answer Key for Listening Comprehension Questions

(For instructor use - answers may vary slightly.

Transcripts available online at TED)

Model 1

1) Who is the speaker and what does she do?

Ms. Chang is a philosopher.

2) What are some examples of “hard choices” that she gives?

Some examples of hard choices that she gives include career choices, lifestyle, whom to marry, and where to live, etc.

3) Why does she talk about different breakfast options?

She mentions breakfast options in order to illustrate that even small things can present a difficult choice with pros and cons.

What two careers did she consider?

She considered becoming a lawyer or a philosopher.

4) What career did she finally end up choosing? Why?

She finally became a philosopher because she is more passionate about this job.

5) What does she say about her background and childhood?

She comes from a very modest immigrant background.

6) Why does she mention an “investment banker and graphic artist”?

These are two career choices, and one is not necessarily better than the other.

7) What does she say about salary?

Salary alone doesn't necessarily mean the best choice when it comes to career, especially when considering passion, creativity, and job satisfaction.

8) *What does she mean by the phrase "on a par"?*

This means that the two choices are in the same "neighborhood" of value, but cannot be objectively compared because they have different kinds of value.

9) *Why does she say that hard choices are not a "curse"?*

She makes the point that difficult decisions define us and provide the opportunity to create a meaningful identity.

Model 2

1) *Who is the speaker and what does he do?*

He is a computer programmer, novelist, and photographer.

2) *What does he mean by the "30-day challenge"?*

He has set a one-month limit to cut down on bad habits and take up new activities.

3) *How did he come up with this idea?*

He felt like he was stuck in a rut with his job.

4) *What does he mean by feeling "stuck in a rut"?*

Being stuck in a rut is a depressing feeling of stagnation or complacency.

5) *What habits did he decide to add to his life? Why?*

He has taken up photography, hiking, cycling, traveling, and writing.

6) *What creative projects has he taken up?*

Photography and writing.

7) *What athletic or adventurous interests has he taken up?*

Cycling and hiking.

8) *What mountain did he climb?*

Mt. Kilimanjaro.

9) *What habits did he decide to subtract from his life? Why?*

He decided to give up sugar and social media among other things.

10) *Why did he choose the time duration of 30 days to try something new?*

Thirty days is enough time to try something new without it feeling overwhelming or becoming too much of a major commitment.

Model 3

Stage 2 - Listening Comprehension Questions

1) *Who is the speaker and what does he do?*

James Cameron is a movie director and oceanic explorer.

2) *What movies has James Cameron made?*

Terminator, Avatar, the Titanic, etc.

3) *What kind of books did he like when he was growing up? Why?*

He liked science fiction books growing up because of the amazing and imaginative ideas, and because it got him interested in innovations.

4) *What creative projects did he work on when he was growing up?*

He spent a lot of time drawing and illustrating.

5) *What does he say about Jacques Cousteau? Who was Mr. Cousteau and why was he famous?*

Mr. Cousteau was a famous diver and oceanic explorer. He was a great inspiration on Mr. Cameron.

6) *What did Mr. Cameron decide to do at age 15?*

He went diving for the first time.

7) *How many hours has he spent underwater?*

He has spent about 3,000 hours underwater

8) *What movie did he make that took place underwater?*

The Abyss.

9) *What does he say about NASA? What is NASA?*

He got involved with NASA and sat on their advisory board, planning space missions.

10) *What does he say about leadership?*

Leadership means that you respect your team, and in turn they respect you.

Model 4

1) *Who is the speaker? What does he do?*

He is an urban planner in New York City.

2) *What is his dream?*

He wants to create a park in the lower east side of Manhattan.

3) *Why does he mention his grandmother?*

She was an Italian immigrant who inspired him although she rarely talked about her history.

4) *Where was his grandmother from?*

Italy

5) *Where did the speaker work with UNICEF? What did he do?*

He worked for UNICEF in Kenya and dealt with local politics.

6) *What hi-tech job did he take?*

He worked for Google.

7) *When did he find the project site location?*

He found the project site location in 2009.

8) *When was the site abandoned?*

The site was abandoned in 1948.

9) *Where is the site?*

The site is in the lower east side of Manhattan.

10) *What does he say about New York's Highline Park?*

It is a beautiful place that has some similarities with his project, which he calls the "Lowline".

Model 5

1) *Who is the speaker? What does she do?*

Ms. Chang has started her own international organization and artistic project.

2) *What was her idea?*

She makes bulletin boards adjacent to abandoned buildings where people can share their hopes and dreams.

3) *Where is she from?*

She is from New Orleans.

4) *What does she like about New Orleans?*

She loves the trees, the atmosphere, and especially the music and parades.

5) *What is a problem that New Orleans faces?*

New Orleans faces problems with abandoned properties and foreclosures.

6) *What happened to her in 2009?*

One of her best friends passed away.

7) *What is the purpose of her project?*

She wants people to appreciate the time they have and their relationships with others.

8) *Where has she taken this project?*

She has taken the project to several countries including Kazakhstan, South Africa, Australia, etc.

9) *According to this speaker, what are the most valuable things in life?*

She says the most valuable things in life are time and relationships with others.

Standard of Assessment – Rubric (*adapted from ETS*)

Score	General Description	Delivery	Language Use	Topic Development
4	The response fulfills the demands of the task, with at most minor lapses in completeness. It is highly intelligible and exhibits sustained, coherent discourse. A response at this level is characterized by all of the following:	Speech is generally clear, fluid, and sustained. It may include minor lapses or minor difficulties with pronunciation or intonation. Pace may vary at times as the speaker attempts to recall information. Overall intelligibility remains high.	The response demonstrates good control of basic and complex grammatical structures that allow for coherent, efficient (automatic) expression of relevant ideas. Contains generally effective word choice. Though some minor (or systematic) errors or imprecise use may be noticeable, they do not require listener effort (or obscure meaning).	The response presents a clear progression of ideas and conveys the relevant information required by the task. It includes appropriate detail, though it may have minor errors or minor omissions.
3	The response addresses the task appropriately, but may fall short of being fully developed. It is generally intelligible and coherent, with some fluidity of expression, though it exhibits some noticeable lapses in the expression of ideas. A response at this level is characterized by at least two of the following:	Speech is generally clear, with some fluidity of expression, but it exhibits minor difficulties with pronunciation, intonation, or pacing and may require some listener effort at times. Overall intelligibility remains good, however.	The response demonstrates fairly automatic and effective use of grammar and vocabulary, and fairly coherent expression of relevant ideas. Response may exhibit some imprecise or inaccurate use of vocabulary or grammatical structures or be somewhat limited in the range of structures used. Such limitations do not seriously interfere with the communication of the message.	The response is sustained and conveys relevant information required by the task. However, it exhibits some incompleteness, inaccuracy, lack of specificity with respect to content, or chopiness in the progression of ideas.
2	The response is connected to the task, though it may be missing some relevant information or contain inaccuracies. It contains some intelligible speech, but at times problems with intelligibility and/or overall coherence may obscure meaning. A response at this level is characterized by at least two of the following:	Speech is clear at times, though it exhibits problems with pronunciation, intonation, or pacing and so may require significant listener effort. Speech may not be sustained at a consistent level throughout. Problems with intelligibility may obscure meaning in places (but not throughout).	The response is limited in the range and control of vocabulary and grammar demonstrated (some complex structures may be used, but typically contain errors). This results in limited or vague expression of relevant ideas and imprecise or inaccurate connections. Automaticity of expression may only be evident at the phrasal level.	The response conveys some relevant information but is clearly incomplete or inaccurate. It is incomplete if it omits key ideas, makes vague reference to key ideas, or demonstrates limited development of important information. An inaccurate response demonstrates misunderstanding of key ideas from the stimulus. Typically, ideas expressed may not be well connected or cohesive so that familiarity with the stimulus is necessary to follow what is being discussed.
1	The response is very limited in content or coherence or is only minimally connected to the task. Speech may be largely unintelligible. A response at this level is characterized by at least two of the following:	Consistent pronunciation and intonation problems cause considerable listener effort and frequently obscure meaning. Delivery is choppy, fragmented, or telegraphic. Speech contains frequent pauses and hesitations.	Range and control of grammar and vocabulary severely limit (or prevent) expression of ideas and connections among ideas. Some very low-level responses may rely on isolated words or short utterances to communicate ideas.	The response fails to provide much relevant content. Ideas that are expressed are often inaccurate, limited to vague utterances, or repetitions (including repetition of prompt).
0	Speaker makes no attempt to respond OR response is unrelated to the topic.			

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

With objectives of actualizing their full potential in the realms of academics, professionalism, and personal enrichment, every year an influx of immigrants and second language learners come to California and the United States. It is anticipated that the trajectory towards greater internationalization, diversity, and modernization will continue into the future, making the pursuit of higher education even more valuable (Altbach & Knight, 2011).

Excelling in higher education and professional environments requires academic skills such as critical thinking, the ability to synthesize information, and argumentative skills to state and support a point of view. Moreover, the ability to communicate effectively within one's field of interest and realm of expertise is a practical skill that many international students find valuable.

However, the continued prevalence of rigid curriculums and outdated methodologies focused on rote memorization and repetition fall short of these aims, resulting in a loss of intrinsic motivation, or genuine interest and enthusiasm and an increase in anxiety, or raising of the affective filter (Kohn, 2000). Likewise, the corrosive effects of standardized testing have been well documented, as it has created a cold and impersonal approach to education that fails to take into consideration the creativity, uniqueness, and dynamism of each individual (Kohn, 2000). Indeed, the standardized testing movement has created a sterile and corporatized pedagogical paradigm that can be deemed exclusionary and dehumanizing (Bartolome, 1994).

As the world is constantly changing, innovative approaches that reflect the needs of modern learners in today's society are clearly needed in the context of multicultural education. Virtually endless opportunities for creative teaching and learning methods are available when enhanced with the contemporary nature and flexibility of online multimedia content. Creativity, collaborative tasks, and truly essential critical thinking skills can be developed in a way that is humanizing, student-centered, and authentic. This is clearly an exciting area that has tremendous potential and implications in the realm of education.

Fortunately, sources of inspiration and innovation in the knowledge age are virtually endless, particularly in the form of streaming video and podcasts. Cutting-edge, expressive, and relevant content is created consistently from a wide range of sources, providing the capacity for a more engaging and humanizing pedagogy that increases intrinsic motivation and genuine passion for knowledge and progression. Learners can focus on subject matter that is authentic and inspiring to them as individuals while developing and mastering real academic and analytical skills. Moreover, they have the ability to think critically and work not only autonomously in self-study and reflection, but also collaboratively in ways that build interactive communicative competence. In fact, they can continuously expand and enrich their knowledge regarding society, thereby becoming even more informed and engaged as international citizens of the world in the process.

Moreover, these approaches can stimulate genuine interest and engagement, thus leading to intrinsic motivation and overall better results. Students can break free from the confines of rigid and outdated materials and focus on real issues and topics that expand

worldviews and stimulate interest. Correspondingly, according to modern neuroscience, cognition is emotional, as proven in Caine's (2011) study - which means that the process of cognition is complex and deeply rooted in psychology and the individual's perception and consciousness. As a result, "people are much more willing and able to master material about which they are passionate or in which they have a genuine personal interest" (Caine, 2011).

Self-reflection, revision, and independent learning and mastery are inherent and valuable qualities of this project, thus providing students with the capacity for autonomy and empowerment. In contrast to tired and antiquated methods focused on rote memorization and repetition, they are encouraged to come up with their own ideas and opinions and work collaboratively in a way that is invigorating and inspiring; indeed, the potential and capacity for discovery is vast, and is not solely limited to textbooks or the dominant role or finite knowledge of a particular instructor. Likewise, this is a significant improvement to what Caine describes as learning for the sake of "memorization and replication of skills and known information" (Caine, 2011). Caine goes on to claim that "a case can be made that even though this kind of information may be necessary, much of this 'learning' is independent of student-generated interest and purpose, something videotext and technology in general supplies in abundance." (Caine, 2011). Ideally, it will inspire intrinsic motivation in learners, thus leading to sustained and ongoing discovery and intellectual curiosity.

Adaptability and flexibility are major components of this project, making it relevant and engaging for a wide variety of diverse individuals. The project is adaptive in that it draws upon digital content that is constantly being updated and reflects the

changing nature of the world and society in real time. Moreover, it can be adapted to the various learning needs and interests of each individual student in a way that is inspiring and affirming of their own unique identities as agents of their own learning and self-actualization. This is in direct contrast to what have been identified as archaic and dehumanizing “one-size fits all” approaches to pedagogy, which are alienating and ineffective for entire student populations (Bartolome, 1994).

Individual students can draw upon their own creativity and inspiration while honing the essential skills that are the target objective of this project. For instance, students who are interested in creative subjects such as art, music, or design will have the ability to master their understanding and expression in these realms, as well as being given the opportunity to come up with their own ideas and voice their own unique opinions. This can be validating and affirming emotionally, thus activating genuine interest and intrinsic motivation (Krashen, 1986).

Logical development, synthesis, collaboration, and skill sets that are essential for success in modern society form the foundational basis of this project. Critical thinking skills of analysis, reflection, and synthesis are central and have many peripheral benefits - students indirectly gain the benefit of increased knowledge, vocabulary, and cultural awareness in a natural process. Indeed, these skills are essential for success in modern society (Caine, 2011). Moreover, the ultimate objective of many students is to gain acceptance into an American graduate school, attain proficiency certification, or excel in a professional environment. These logical and systematic skills have been shown to be essential in achieving all of these objectives and more. Specifically, students will master listening skills such as determining main idea (gist), key points, and inferences - all skills

that are useful and relevant in various academic and professional contexts - and in addition they will focus on and master the usage of cohesive devices in order to determine and express the logical relationships between ideas.

Finally, creative sensibilities and various forms of intelligence will be valued and activated. Everybody has a blend of interrelated intelligences such as musical–rhythmic, visual–spatial, verbal–linguistic, logical–mathematical, bodily–kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic skills (Gardner, 2011). Creating teaching strategies based around this concept is empowering and meaningful (Gardner, 2011). In the context of this project, the use of streaming video and the use of imagery, pictures, and diagrams can activate visual spatial-intelligence. Synthesis of information, predicting, and summarizing skills can be classified as logical skills. Self-reflection activities are interpersonal, while collaborative or discussion activities are intrapersonal. Musical-rhythmic intelligence can be activated as well. All of these can be touched upon in improving verbal-linguistic capacities and powerful, articulate expression. All of these characteristics combine to make this project unique, relevant, humanizing, innovative, and effective for the modern learner.

Ultimately, this project has proven to be very successful, according to my experience - the project is modern, dynamic, and engaging, all while being based upon sound academic foundations and backed by current research - student interest and engagement are high in a low-anxiety, positive communicative learning environment in which individual thought, opinion, and analysis are valued and new information and knowledge keeps the content fresh and relevant. It also feels much more natural from the instructor's perspective, as the learning environment is dynamic and authentic. Feedback

from my students and administration have been stellar, and many of my students have even gone on to achieve proficiency certification, pass difficult academic exams, and even gain admission to some of the most prestigious schools in the United States such as U.C. Berkeley.

Based upon these stellar results, I believe that this project is adaptable and similar variations can be applied to various educational settings with equal positive results.

Recommendations

Modernizing the Integrated Approach Through Multimedia is a project that can be used to supplement a range of curriculums. One of the many benefits of this project is the fact that it is designed to be flexible, for versatile student-centered instruction and can be used in a variety of ways. In my years of experience as an educator, I have drawn material from libraries of books, materials, and multimedia. I will provide three specific recommendations regarding what has worked best for me and it is my hope that you achieve stellar results with this project as well. These suggestions relate primarily to supplemental materials, practical applications, and technological support and extensions.

Expansions and Extensions

In particular, this project can be used in order to add a high level of authenticity, interest and engaging content in terms of listening, speaking, and writing skills for academic English classes designed for language learners. Specifically, this project is excellent for building up listening skills such as listening for main idea or gist, purpose, detail, function, etc. that are very useful for American universities and graduate programs as well as proficiency exams. Moreover, students can develop and refine cohesive

devices and summarizing skills in the form of reading and writing. Accurate listening, speaking, and writing skills are valuable for students and aspects that many learners are interested in developing.

Since many podcasts focus on political issues and current events, there is ample opportunity to expand and extend the lessons with supplemental reading material on similar topics. In particular, *The New York Times* “Learning Network” has some outstanding resources for second language learners, including topics on vocabulary and current events. Specifically, the “5 Questions about the News” section coincides with this project extremely well, because it similarly focuses on synthesis, summarizing, and discussion. Incorporating articles into the curriculum is engaging and authentic, and lessons can be designed around the skills of skimming, scanning, and determining meaning from context. Additionally, students can comment online or summarize content as a writing assignment – lexical and syntactic variety can be expanded with a focus on integrated and independent writing skills of opinion and synthesis.

In the context of academic English classes, I highly recommend the book *Writing Academic English*. This is an excellent book that focuses on paragraph organization, sentence structure, and cohesion. Students can also focus on expanding vocabulary and restating and rephrasing key ideas. I also recommend *Focus on Grammar*, which is a well-known book that presents essential grammar in an interesting way, combining this crucial material with interesting topics and communicative activities. For advanced students interested in proficiency examinations or American graduate school programs, Delta books are some of the best I have used; this material integrates all essential

language skills in an interesting and realistic way built around critical thinking that definitely builds confidence and increases levels of engagement.

In my experience, this project has worked well in various contexts. For instance, at the international school where I am currently working there are morning general English classes with a structured curriculum and book, and afternoon classes that are more flexible, focusing mainly on listening and conversational skills. This project works very well in both types of class. In the afternoon class, it is a great centerpiece of the lesson plan as it naturally opens up into a natural conversation and interactive communicative competence exercises. It also works in the morning classes with the structured curriculum, especially if the content of the videos or podcasts tie in with the various themes of the lesson plan or curriculum. Of course, every school or institution has different classes and systems, so the project is highly adaptable for each context.

Another positive aspect is that the project can be customized based upon the time available. For instance, this project can range from 30 minutes to 2 hours, depending on how much extension and time for free practice is given or available.

In particular, for general English classes I recommend this project in conjunction with the textbook *American English File*, upper intermediate or Advanced Level. This is one of the best books that I have used and uses authentic American English that is modern, engaging, and high interest. The themes of the units are also relevant and easy to tie into multimedia content. Moreover, American English File has an online database of material accessible students that ties in perfectly to this project. At American University Alumni program in Chiang Mai, Thailand, the curriculum was based around the Hemispheres series of books, which I also highly recommend based upon the modern,

sleek and intuitive design, clear presentation, and high levels of interest. Again, this project would work best with upper intermediate to advanced levels.

This project can further be expanded with lexical extensions. I always encourage my students to build up their vocabulary. I have noticed that students who reach the highest levels of success and achieve their objectives academically very conscientiously take note of new vocabulary and are always expanding their lexical resources. Videos and podcasts usually have an array of interesting vocabulary that can be new for learners. Therefore, I recommend various academic vocabulary workbooks such as those published by Wyatt and Rawdon and McGraw Hill. Especially books with exercises on synonyms and antonyms and vocabulary in context are very appropriate for this project. I also recommend that students actively practice reading, specifically *The New York Times*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *Voice of America News*, and Cambridge set texts. Additionally, I would recommend the following streaming videos and podcasts for future variations of this project: *Radiolab*, *NPR*, *BBC News*, and *Cosmos* or other material from Neil DeGrasse Tyson, as well as many others.

Multimedia Support

Multimedia content is current and virtually endless. Therefore, there are literally infinite permutations of this project. I strongly recommend podcasts and streaming video resources such as *TED.com*, *Radiolab.org*, *VOANews.com*, *NPR (This American Life, Story of the Day, Wait Wait Don't Tell, etc.)* *The New York Times*, and *BBC*. Subscribing to podcasts on iTunes and other similar platforms is intuitive and provides instantaneous updates that can be listened to conveniently on portable devices. In particular, one benefit of TED videos is that they are modern, interesting, and multicultural; there are

videos from speakers from many countries covering a vast range of topics. Therefore, the videos and podcasts could be interesting for many different types of students, and each individual's interests, intelligences, and cultures are validated in the practice of humanizing pedagogy. Moreover, TED has a website with a mailing list and a smartphone app with notifications, so that users can know exactly when a new video is updated. In my experience, it is always more interesting for everyone involved to use brand new and fresh content. In fact, on many occasions I have designed customized projects based upon videos that were uploaded the very same day, in order to keep it current and interesting.

Additionally, this project can be extended with authentic reading material. The academic skills of skimming, scanning, and summarizing can be cultivated in the context of reading passages. In terms of authenticity, I highly recommend *The New York Times* Learning Network. This is a free blog that features excellent sections such as “5 Questions about the News”, which is current, interesting, and highly adaptable for educational contexts or self-study. In addition, the Learning Network blog has vocabulary exercises, student opinion sections based on current events, and comment sections where students can share their perspectives on various topics. This can be a great extension for classes, and students can use this independently, which promotes autonomy and intrinsic motivation.

Musical-rhythmic intelligence can be activated with programs like NPR's *Microphone Check*, hosted by DJ and Producer Ali Shaheed Muhammad of the legendary hip-hop group A Tribe Called Quest. The show features in-depth interviews with

conscious artists such as Kendrick Lamar and Run the Jewels. Beyond this, detailed lyrical annotations can be found on the *Genius* platform.

In addition, the capacity for further research and investigation is an option with this project. For instance, a recent TED speaker gave a talk on a hot river in Peru in his talks, and has written a book on this same subject. Similarly, it may be interesting for students to look into the back history of some of the speakers or presenters. For instance, a recent TED speaker mentioned that her mother escaped from North Korea and immigrated to the United States, where her family has worked hard and reached levels of achievement and opportunity that never would've been possible if she hadn't been so brave. Stories like this inspire awe and curiosity in several students, and therefore the context is provided for deeper analysis, reflection, and expansion.

Finally, autonomous learning, review, and reflection are highly encouraged as a part of this project. Because of the nature of multimedia, students can access specific content easily and conveniently, especially because they are citizens of the knowledge era. In addition, they can access not only what has been assigned by an instructor, but they can also search for and find material that interests them individually. For instance, they can browse the "topics" or "playlists" subcategories of the TED website to discover material that is relevant for their interests or professional spheres. Moreover, students can use subtitles or transcripts to check comprehension and study new vocabulary.

A very exciting advantage of multimedia content is the capacity for real-time interactivity. It is possible for students to leave comments on articles or videos online, sharing their opinions and honing their writing skills with lexical and syntactic variety. Moreover, if the learners feel compelled to seek out further information, they

can directly contact the creator of podcasts; many podcast creators are happy to engage with listeners and learners, especially if they have specific questions. This is exciting and makes the learners an empowered and active participant in the learning process. For instance, the relatively new *Congressional Dish* podcast, which is local in the San Francisco Bay Area, covers American politics in depth, and the creators of this podcast are eager to interact with listeners. This is an excellent opportunity to not only practice communicative skills but also learn something new in a realistic and authentic setting that results in greater knowledge, understanding, and civic responsibility.

Various ways to expand this material are possible, such as student presentations. As previously mentioned, they can determine key points and summarize the material in written or spoken form and presented this to the class, opening it up to a communicative discussion. In my experience, students find this very empowering, as they become the source of knowledge and information. Furthermore, they can use online presentation software to create a multimedia display. Specifically, I recommend Prezi, an intuitive and visually-impacting resource which is often used in University of San Francisco graduate school presentations to high effect. With the ubiquity of high quality audio recording devices in smartphones and computers, it is even possible for students to record their responses or create their own podcast content. The dynamic nature of the internet allows students to be not only empowered and autonomous learners, but also content creators.

Technological interfaces and programs can assist this project, and so ideally instructors should stay on top of the newest developments. For instance, programs like DropBox can be used for students to upload their content (summaries, etc.) and it can be

easily shared with other students and the instructor directly. Of course, applications are continually being developed and improved, so it is essential to keep up with the latest developments and versions.

However, technology is not always reliable and is often prone to unpredictable and unforeseen errors and technical issues. I have personally seen this time and time again in my professional experience, as well as in my master's studies at University of San Francisco School of Education. Especially with internet connectivity, software compatibility, and hardware connections, there is always something that can go wrong. In order to prevent this, I simply recommend the instructor leave enough time before the lesson to test out the software and equipment. Although instructors are often in a rush and pressed for time, this step is essential to ensure that the lesson runs smoothly.

Ideally, there should always be a backup plan (for instance, videos can be downloaded or streamed and stored on various devices); additionally, there should be the capacity to switch the activity at a moment's notice if for some reason a technical issue arises.

Final Thoughts

“Knowledge reigns supreme over nearly everyone”

– KRS-One

In conclusion, creating an empowering model in which students can thrive and develop essential skills in a natural environment is key. It is high time to abandon outdated methods of memorization, repetition, and standardization that have been recognized as sterile and dehumanizing; these archaic and standardized modes of thinking must be replaced with new approaches that are innovative, stimulating, and adaptable to these modern times that are constantly changing and evolving. Myriad opportunities for synthesis, collaboration, critical thinking, and the true pursuit of knowledge driven by genuine curiosity and enthusiasm are possible. Dynamic use of authentic multimedia content such as podcasts and streaming video naturally leads to intrinsic motivation, more passionate and authentic connection, and ultimately higher levels of achievement and self-actualization. It is my hope that this project provides inspiration, excitement, and enrichment to everyone involved in the process.

Appendix

Disclaimer: All images and videos in the project are from TED (www.ted.com)

Standard of assessment rubric adapted from ETS.

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