

The Effectiveness of Acquiring New Vocabulary by Replacing Reading and Listening Comprehension Activities with Watching a Movie on the Topic of Health and Healthy Diet

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Abstract

I researched the effectiveness of gaining new vocabulary by watching a movie instead of doing reading and listening comprehension activities on the topic of health and a healthy diet. I included two classes of 57 students aged 17 to 18 studying for the profession of mechatronics technicians in the research. The topic of health and a healthy diet is part of the curriculum. In a class of 30 students, I classically taught new vocabulary through reading comprehension, listening comprehension, writing, and conversation. In a class of 27 students, I taught new vocabulary through writing and conversation and watching a movie instead of doing reading comprehension and listening comprehension. We watched a provocative and investigative documentary movie with the title “What the Health” which examines the link between diet and disease. Using the same vocabulary exam in both classes, I tested the effectiveness of acquiring new vocabulary by watching a movie. I also compared the amount of time students spent preparing independently for the exam in both classes.

Keywords: learning new words; measuring success; unconventional teaching; secondary education; teaching English as a second language

1. Introduction

I prepare and conduct lessons intending to exceed the goals of the curriculum. I spent 6 English lessons for 45 minutes researching the introduction of video content as the most current trend of obtaining information to prepare students for oral assessment and written exams. I studied the effectiveness of learning vocabulary on the topic of health and healthy diet with the help of the documentary *What the Health*. I compared the grades obtained in two classes, which normally achieve very similar results in learning English. In the control class, I traditionally addressed the topic by reading two articles and listening to an interview presenting food pyramid, food groups, eating clean, going on a diet, juicing and cleansing, cutting carbs, counting calories, following a meal plan, getting a daily dose of vitamins, vegetarian and vegan, genetically modified organisms, organic food, sugar-free, heart-healthy, superfoods, shopping for healthy food. In the experimental class, I discussed the topic by watching the documentary ‘*What the Health*, a 2017 documentary film that critiques the health impact of meat, fish, eggs, and dairy products consumption, and questions the practices of leading health and pharmaceutical organizations. Its primary purpose is to advocate for a plant-based diet. ‘[1]

Students practiced writing skills on the topic of vocabulary in both classes with the same type of tasks: short answers to questions and alternative type (correct/incorrect of the elective type); type of completion (completion of sentences, filling in blanks in the text, recording key information); type of connection (parts of a sentence, answer with a question).

2. Assignments and marking schemes

In the control class and the experimental class, I assessed the same two assignments according to the same criteria. I compared the average grades in both classes by sections in the criterion.

2.1 Assignment 1 Group work: discussion and report.

,You are in charge of a Healthy Lifestyle Club at your school. The local authorities have agreed to provide plenty of funds for one project which aims to promote healthy eating habits among teenagers. It is up to you to decide which of the three poster ideas below would be the most appealing to young people in your town. In your groups, discuss why you think your poster is the most effective. Then, prepare a short presentation giving your reasons. In new groups, present the arguments which you have prepared. Then, listen to the other two presentations. Make notes to organize your ideas. As a group, you should discuss the key points for each poster and decide: which project would be the most effective and why; why the other two projects aren’t as effective. Use the following language to help you. In my view ... I think ... I’d pick this one because ... This idea is the best because ... An alternative one would be ... I’d choose this one rather than the other two because ... I don’t think this one is any good because... ‘ [2]

Picture 1: Posters



Source: download (onestopenglish.com)

2.1.2 Marking scheme

,Content: 5-answers the questions and all the information is included; 4-answers the questions but one or two things missing; 3-answers the questions but a number of things are missing; 2-tried to answer the questions, but quite a lot missing; 1-failed to answer the questions.

Range of vocabulary and grammar: 5-uses a wide range of vocabulary and grammar appropriate to the task; 4-uses a wide range of vocabulary and grammar but not always appropriate to the task; 3-uses a fairly wide range of vocabulary and grammar appropriate to the task; 2-uses a limited range of vocabulary and grammar; 1-uses a very limited range of vocabulary and grammar.

Accuracy of language (i.e. pronunciation, functional language, etc.): 5-minimal errors, well-developed control of language; 4-errors occur when attempting more complex language; 3-a number of errors but they do not impede communication; 2-a lot of errors, distraction, difficulty understanding; - frequent errors, difficult understanding.

Fluency: 5-speaks well with only natural pauses (i.e. to collect thoughts); 4-sometimes hesitates when trying to think of a word or what they want to say next; 3-often pauses to think about what they want to say, but can use fairly complex language at times; 2-struggles to put together full sentences and pauses frequently; 1-only uses a few words and can't fully talk about the task.

Total is 20 points.‘ [3]

2.2 Assignment 2 A composition

„You are what you eat.“ – What do you think this statement means? Do you agree? Do you think your diet is healthy? Why or why not?

Write a composition of about 160–180 words.

2.2.2 Marking scheme

Content and message: 5-The student takes into account all the cues. He provides reliable information. The message is clear. The student carefully develops his thoughts, describes and expresses his views, which he also duly substantiates and illustrates with examples; 4-The student takes into account all the cues. He provides information in sufficient detail, but does not substantiate all views or substantiates them deficiently or vaguely. The message is clear. The student develops thoughts, describes and expresses his views in sufficient detail, but does not substantiate all views or substantiates them deficiently or vaguely; 3-The student considers most of the cues. He provides simple information, does not substantiate all views or substantiates them deficiently or vaguely. The message is understandable. The student still develops thoughts, states data and expresses views appropriately, but does not substantiate all views or substantiates them deficiently or vaguely; 2-The student takes into account half or less of the cues. He provides simple, sometimes inappropriate information, which is rarely

substantiated or is insufficiently or vaguely substantiated. The message is still understandable. The student provides simple, sometimes inappropriate information that is not substantiated or is insufficiently or vaguely substantiated; 1-The student takes into account half or less of the cues. He provides simple, unrelated or inappropriate information that is not substantiated or is insufficiently or vaguely substantiated. The message is only understandable in places. The student provides simple, unrelated or inappropriate information, which is rarely and deficiently or vaguely substantiated; 0- The student writes a content-inappropriate text or does not write it.

Language: 5-The text is linguistically correct and also contains more complex language structures. Linguistic errors occur mainly in more complex sentences, but do not cause misunderstanding. The spelling and use of punctuation are correct, errors do not hinder understanding; 4-The text is linguistically appropriate and contains more complex language structures. Linguistic errors occur mainly in more complex structures but rarely cause misunderstanding. Spelling and punctuation are mostly correct, mistakes do not hinder understanding; 3-The text is linguistically appropriate but contains mainly basic language structures. Linguistic errors occur but do not significantly affect the intelligibility of the text. Spelling and punctuation errors are relatively common, but the text is understandable; 2-The text is partly linguistically appropriate, contains basic language structures. Linguistic errors are common and affect the comprehensibility of the text. Spelling and punctuation errors are common; 1-The text is hardly linguistically appropriate, contains basic language structures. Due to many linguistic errors, the text is barely understandable. Spelling and punctuation errors are so common that they significantly impede comprehension; 0-The text is incomprehensible due to language errors.

Vocabulary: 5-Vocabulary is appropriate, rarely repeated, contains idiomatic expressions, and corresponds to the type of text. Mistakes are rare and do not hinder understanding; 4 -The wording is appropriate, contains idiomatic expressions, and corresponds to the type of text. Mistakes are rare; 3-Vocabulary is basic, repetitive, but mostly appropriate. Occasionally, the type of text is inappropriate. Mistakes are common and often hinder understanding; 2-Vocabulary is simple, often repeated, but relevant. It also does not fit the type of text. There are many mistakes and they often hinder understanding; 1-Vocabulary contains only a narrow set of repetitive terms that are often inappropriate. For the most part, it does not fit the type of text. There are many mistakes that significantly hinder understanding; 0-Vocabulary is inappropriate, incomprehensible, or completely inappropriate.

Structure: 5-The text is reasonably coherent and articulated accordingly. The transitions between sentences, and paragraphs are smooth and understandable; 4-The text is mostly meaningfully linked and coherent. The transitions between sentences, and paragraphs are mostly fluent and understandable; 3-The text is sometimes incoherent. The transitions between sentences, and paragraphs are often unexpected and unclear; 2-The text is often incoherent. The transitions between sentences, and paragraphs are unexpected and unclear; 1-The text is unconnected and inadequately articulated. The transitions between sentences, and

paragraphs are unexpected and unclear; 0-The text consists of individual unrelated phrases and sentences.

The total is 20 points.’ [4]

3. Results

The average number of points achieved for assignment 1 in the control class was less (13 points) than in the experimental class (14.1 points) of the total 20 points. Points for fluency and vocabulary in the experimental class caused most of the difference. Students in the experimental class, who were gaining knowledge through a controversial documentary, were more active in the discussion in assignment 1, which they did better and faster in 90 minutes. In the control class, some students were passive. The report was often not smooth. Students needed 135 minutes to complete assignment 1.

The difference in the achieved points for assignment 2 was more abundant than for assignment 1. Students did this assignment individually. The results of this assignment present 17 % of their final grade. The control class averaged 13 points, the experimental class averaged 15.6 points. While the difference in scores in assessing language, structure, and connectivity was less than 0.3 points out of a possible 5 points for each section, the experimental class averaged 1.7 points out of 5 points for content and message. The experimental class improved last year’s average score by 1.3 points.

4. Conclusion

It has long been known to me that video materials for learning are more appealing to students than others. But we must not forget the importance of reading. We also develop reading skills by playing video content with subtitles in the original language.

The results of the second assignment confirmed my observations that students in the experimental class were more motivated to participate in lessons. I have noticed that some of the students have self-initially explored the truth of the statements from the film in their spare time. They reached a level of critical thinking to express their personal opinion supported by arguments.

Teenagers in the last decade, especially the last 6 to 7 years, have been getting most of their information from videos. The introduction of video materials as the primary source of teaching parts of the curriculum is worth considering and upgrading. Just watching an educational documentary increased the students' knowledge. Teachers need to adapt traditional ways of acquiring knowledge to current trends in information sources, which are almost limitless.

References

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