

## Integrating Viewing into Classroom Practice

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### **Abstract:**

In response to the changing modern communication environment, a number of education systems around the world have modified their literacy curricula to integrate visual skills alongside listening, reading, speaking and writing skills. In this article, we explore why viewing is increasingly important in ELT and how teachers can incorporate viewing into their teaching practice. It offers tips on how teachers can help students understand the viewing process in the classroom. It also discusses how to develop students' vision outside of the classroom through Broad Vision and Narrow Vision approaches using easy access to movies and TV shows on streaming platforms. Students should be able to interpret multimodal texts effectively. By helping students do this, we connect their life worlds to the classroom. In addition to helping students acquire information, viewing helps them appreciate the ideas and experiences presented by others in a multimodal manner, and develops his multimodal communicative competence.

**Keywords:** multimodal manner, communicative competence, ESL students, L2 learners, students' vision, classroom practice, pre-viewing, films, TV material, TV texts, extensive viewing, differences, narrow viewing, critical viewers.

**Introduction.** In the past decades, numerous studies have researched the effects of videos with subtitles (i.e., on-screen text in the mother tongue, L1) and/or captions (i.e., on-screen text in the same language as the audio, L2) on L2 vocabulary learning. Yet, it remains unclear what the role of these types of on-screen text is for L2 vocabulary learning. When looking at the methodology of previous studies, two problems seem to arise: the duration of exposure is very short and the frequency of occurrence of the target words is often not taken into account. And yet, these two factors are crucial for learning vocabulary. In order to address these gaps, this study used the concept of narrow viewing, which consists in providing input that stimulates repetitive encounters with specific words across different videos. A wealth of research indicates that viewing multimodal texts improves learners' reading comprehension, listening comprehension, ability to remember

vocabulary, critical thinking, and motivation. Learners also need to become active, effective, and critical viewers in order to be able to participate fully in society. When teachers attempt to integrate viewing into their classroom practice, it is very important that this does not seem totally different to their current teaching practice, which might discourage them from trying. Teachers need to be aware that viewing is connected to what they are already doing and that they can teach it in an integrated way. So, for example, when they teach listening and reading, they can also teach viewing. It is also essential that both teachers and learners are aware that understanding the viewing process is as important as understanding the listening process, and that the viewing process has many similarities to both of these. To become effective, active viewers, teachers and learners could use the following procedure: 1. Pre-viewing: Learners prepare to view by activating the prior knowledge they bring to the study of a topic or theme (their schemata), anticipating a message, predicting, speculating, asking questions, and setting a purpose for viewing. 2. During viewing: Learners view the multimodal text in order to understand the message – they do this by making connections, confirming predictions and inferences, interpreting and summarizing, pausing and reviewing, and analyzing and evaluating. Learners should monitor their understanding by connecting to their background knowledge, questioning, and reflecting. 3. After viewing: Learners should be given opportunities to respond personally, critically, and creatively to multimodal texts. Learners respond by reflecting, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Whether using artworks, print media, website images, picture books or scientific illustrations, students may be asked to show their knowledge of these texts in a written response. In the same way that an essay may argue the effectiveness or power of a novel or poem, so, too, a visual image may be the basis for a written piece. While some formal testing may use an image as a prompt for writing a narrative, the more common cultural experience of images requires students to understand how images may be informing, entertaining and persuading an audience. Cross-curriculum work often requires students to access written and visual texts, where they must interpret, then discuss their understandings. By extending the five senses approach above, the classroom teacher introduced the genre of "response and review" writing to her students and engaged them in using their language for analyzing and discussing visual images to write about an artwork. The basic structure for a review and response piece was shown to the class. The teacher and students read a clear example in a modeled reading lesson, and identified the structural elements as well as the key information that the needed to be included. The structure for the review and response included: Introduction – setting the context Identify the artwork and provide key information about the artist Description of the artwork – key compositional and visual terms Describe the subject matter and location, the materials and techniques used and the effect of these on the viewer. Reaction – personal response to the artwork Evaluate how the artwork impacts on you and what is its relationship to the topic being studied.

**Research and methods.** How to develop learners' viewing outside the classroom? Digital technology has made it much easier for learners to view films and TV shows on streaming platforms such as Netflix, HBO, and Apple TV. The greater accessibility to films and TV that learners now have can be exploited to help them develop their viewing outside the classroom. Many learners are now watching huge amounts of film and TV online. One interesting and relevant development is "binge-watching"– where people watch multiple episodes of a TV show one straight after the other, typically by means of digital streaming.

**Extensive Viewing** "Extensive Viewing" is defined as a language teaching and learning approach that encourages language learners to view a large amount of easily comprehensible and enjoyable material (such as films and TV shows) presented in the target language over an extended period. Research indicates there are many benefits of Extensive Viewing programs. Learners become better at listening, learn more vocabulary, improve their speaking and pronunciation, as well as improving their overall language competence. Extensive Viewing is inspired by the philosophy, practice, and literature of Extensive Reading. Two of the key principles of the Extensive Reading approach are

that: **1.** Learners select the study material themselves and have a wide variety of genres and topics to choose from. **2.** The reading material is relatively easy for the level of the learners as too much unknown language prevents learners from reading quickly and fluently. However, while Extensive Reading programs and activities have an enormous base of printed material that is graded to match the level of the readers, Extensive Viewing does not benefit from a large database of graded film and TV material. Grading a film or TV text according to language difficulty is a much more difficult and expensive process than grading a print text. However, ELT publishers are increasingly using videos in their course books and many of these videos are graded. Since there is a lack of graded film and TV material, film and TV texts need to be made more accessible to learners. There are a number of ways to do this: - By activating learners' background knowledge through pre-viewing discussion questions in the classroom. - By giving learners a plot summary of the film or TV show; this will reduce cognitive load and aid comprehension when learners view the material; the summary can be read in class or at home.- By giving learners a glossary of the most difficult words and expressions in the film or TV show. This will again reduce cognitive load and aid listening comprehension when learners view the film or show – the glossary can be read in class or at home.- By encouraging learners to use subtitles when they view the film or TV show.

### **Results.**

Studies have shown that subtitles are associated with improvements in acquiring new vocabulary, aiding listening comprehension, and understanding grammatical structures. They have also been useful in improving learner motivation and reducing anxiety. Learners at lower levels (A1 and A2) may benefit more from watching with subtitles in L1, while learners at higher levels (B1, B2, C1, and C2) should watch with subtitles in English. Teachers should raise awareness of the value of an Extensive Viewing approach with their learners and the parents/carers of their younger learners to support and develop out-of-class viewing. Learners and their parents/carers should also be made aware of the many language learning benefits of increased in-class viewing.

### **Discussion.**

**Narrow Viewing** “Narrow Viewing” involves watching different episodes of the same TV show in chronological order. Through Narrow Viewing learners develop background knowledge of the characters and their relationships, the setting, and the storyline; this aids comprehension of subsequent episodes. Learners also develop an emotional attachment to characters they encounter in multiple episodes. Another benefit of Narrow Viewing is that the lexical load (the number of words and phrases) of different episodes of the same show is lighter than unrelated episodes of different shows. This is because each show tends to contain topic-related vocabulary that often occurs again and again. This results in a smaller number of different words used in multiple episodes of one series than in random episodes of different shows. Frequent encounters with topic-related words also have a positive effect on vocabulary learning because repetition of the same words increases the potential for learning vocabulary. To overcome the issue of not having a large database of graded TV material, we can make the texts more accessible to our learners. There are a number of ways we can do this: - activating learners' background knowledge through pre-viewing discussion questions in the classroom; - pre-teaching a small number of words that are very frequent in an episode or items that are essential to comprehension; - giving learners a glossary of the most difficult words and expressions in an episode – the glossary can be read in class or at home; - having learners watch an episode more than once as multiple viewings of the same text can improve comprehension and vocabulary learning. Teachers should make their learners and the parents/carers of their younger learners aware of the value of a Narrow Viewing approach to support and develop their out-of-class viewing.

**Conclusion.** Viewing is a vital part of the language learning process in the digital age and involves learners paying attention to, analyzing, and interpreting multimodal texts and responding to them

critically. When teachers integrate viewing into their classroom practice, it is important that they do not consider viewing as completely different to their current teaching practice and are aware that it is connected to what they are already doing. So, when they are teaching listening and reading, they are also teaching viewing. By raising awareness of the Extensive Viewing and Narrow Viewing approaches with their learners, teachers support and develop their students' viewing outside the classroom. Most texts learners access outside the classroom are multimodal texts and they should be given opportunities to critically view – analyze and interpret – these types of texts in the classroom.

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