

Effectiveness of the Interactive Videodisc Workstation in Use in the English Language Center at Brigham Young University

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Personnel in the McKay Institute and the English Language Center (ELC) at Brigham Young University have developed interactive videodisc workstations for use with non-native English-speaking students enrolled in the ELC program. These workstations, using the movie "*Raiders of the Lost Ark*" as an authentic language experience with student-controlled instructional processes, are evaluated according to their effectiveness and motivational value in teaching English as a second language.

The three major goals of the interactive videodisc (IAVD) project include: increasing students' understanding of language in context; creating a less inhibitive learning atmosphere; and providing a motivating instructional experience.

Conclusion

The development of the Raiders program stems from the idea that we can provide current, highly motivational and interesting material for ESL students to progress through at their own pace. The use of the motion picture medium itself provides inherent advantages in that it compels sustained attention, heightens reality, builds on a common denominator of experience, and offers a satisfying aesthetic experience (see Dale 1969:391-397). The use of the Annotate program allows for student individuality in deciding focus and sequence. Within certain limitations, the students control their own progress. The use of a popular videodisc such as Raiders provides unprecedented incentive and prior preparation on the part of the student, because many (if not most) students already will be acquainted with the content from having viewed the film with subtitles in their native language. This helps to lower the filter and set the stage for comprehensible input and a positive language acquisition experience.

Our observations and student reaction so far indicate that an interactive videodisc workstation is very promising and merits additional, long-term study. The students found the learning experience to be pleasant and free from anxiety. This is probably because the Raiders program, while highly interesting in content, allows for a prespeaking or listening phase along with limited required reading. Using only the receptive skill, the student does not feel threatened or intimidated.

Reference

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Why Movies Are Most Effective in the Language Learning Process

(Dale, 1969, 391-97)

Movies generate high interest and high student motivation

- The motion picture compels sustained attention. The movement and change in a motion picture attract the viewer and hold his attention. Most outside distractions are cut off. The film can provide an intense experience, sometimes of high emotional quality.
- The motion picture heightens reality. The “duplication” of reality that can be achieved through films with sound and color makes the motion picture an especially effective teaching tool. Paul Reed, editor of *Educational Screen and Audio-Visual Guide*, once described certain wide-screen films as “more real than reality.”
- The motion picture can bring the distant past and the present into the classroom. The film effectively supplies concrete detail that few of us are able to visualize when we read about various subjects in books.
- The motion picture builds a common denominator of experience. A certain level of reading skill is required to share the thinking and ideas of the author of a book. But even illiterates can mine rich meanings from films and discuss them with others.
- The motion picture offers a satisfying aesthetic experience.

Reference

Dale, Edgar, 1969. *Audiovisual Methods in Teaching*, 3rd Edition, New York: The Dryden Press.

Additional Observations on the Effectiveness of Movies.

(Dale, 1967)

- The motion picture, properly conceived, is not another textbook. It is not a compendium of facts, a tightly-knit summary. . . . it is a realistic, dramatic story, with full-bodied explanatory materials. The film has a beginning and an ending.
- You can't study a film bit by bit, page by page. You take all or you take nothing. It does not lend itself to drill, repetition, or memorization. Rich understanding comes with a single viewing. A film may be re-run with profit, but you get the big idea the first time and look again chiefly for points that may have been missed.
- There is little parallel between the intelligent use of a film and the reading and reciting process that too frequently accompanies the use of textbooks. This reading and reciting are based upon a series of facts--parts of speech, dates, definitions, vocabulary, grammatical errors, Emphasis is placed upon drill, review, memorization as a way to make these discrete facts stick.
- Now if you understand something, you don't need to mechanically memorize or drill on it. Too often students merely repeat words, without understanding what they mean. the high degree of forgetting which follows mere memorization is a testimony to its wastefulness. Further, to memorize is not to apply. Indeed, memorization without understanding may prevent broad application of what is learned. You cannot use with understanding what has not been learned with understanding.
- Bare facts, facts not understood, are easily forgotten. They lack the connective tissue, the detail, the human interest, the concreteness which enable a learner to tie up the idea, the word, the abstraction, or the principle with his own experience.
- The motion picture, then, . . . can supply the concrete detail which will help ward off experiential anemia. But it can do more. the commentary and the picture make it possible to match the abstract word with the concrete image. You literally see what is being talked about.
- There is yet another fundamental difference between a textbook and a film. The textbook carefully defines and limits the responses of the students. We don't have "general" textbooks. We have textbooks in various subjects. But motion pictures, partaking as they do of many of the general aspects of life, may not be so easily classified, and if the vocabulary of the commentary has been wisely prepared, the film may be used in a wide range of grades.
- Our purposes are like the strings on which beads are placed. By relating film content to purpose we string beads of experience together in a pattern.
- But equally important as providing the right mental context for the showing of films is the provision of the right physical context. The setting, both physical and mental, will affect the nature and quality of student response.

Reference

Dale, Edgar, 1967, *Can You Give the Public What It Wants?*, New York, Cowles Education Corporation.

Video Films as a Language-teaching Aid

(Loneragan, 1984, 4-5)

- The outstanding feature of video films is their ability to present complete communicative situations. The combination of sound and vision is dynamic, immediate, and accessible. This means that communication can be shown in a context, and the many factors in communication can be perceived easily by viewers—and language learners.
- The speakers in dialogues can be seen and heard; other participants in the situation can be seen. The language learner can readily see the ages of the participants; their sex; perhaps their relationships one to another; their dress, social status, and what they are doing; and perhaps their mood or feelings. Further, paralinguistic information, such as facial expressions or hand gestures, is available to accompany aural clues of intonation.
- Similarly, the setting of the communication is clear; the language learner can see on the screen where the action is taking place. This information may help to clarify whether the situation is very formal, or perhaps informal.
- . . . At their best, video presentations will be intrinsically interesting to language learners. The learner will want to watch, even if comprehension is limited. The material should be motivating; the learner should want to see more, to ask questions, to follow up ideas and suggestions. By generating interest and motivation, the video films can create a climate for successful learning.

Reference

Loneragan, Jack, 1984, *Video In Language Teaching*, New York, Cambridge University Press.