Media use in the English classroom

Medieanvändning i skolämnet Engelska

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Abstract

This study investigates four teachers’ views and attitudes towards using new media, such as TV, movies and music as a tool in language learning. Using qualitative interviews, I have looked at a) how these media can be used in education and b) how four teachers incorporate TV, movies and music into their English classrooms.

My findings show that the majority of teachers are positive towards the use of media as a tool in language learning. The biggest obstacle that they face is that it is hard to work with these tools on a regular basis. This is due to the fact that there is not enough technical equipment to go around at every school. Some schools only have a couple of TVs and DVDs at their disposal, while other schools have every classroom fitted with these tools. New media can be a great asset; it can help students to improve their language learning in a multitude of ways. Teachers feel that one of the positive aspects of working with new media is that there is an enormous amount of material to draw inspiration from and that it provides the students with an opportunity to get exposed to different accents of the English language. The study has been carried out by using method triangulation in the form of a survey, interviews and observations.

Key words: Multiliteracies, TV, movies, music, language acquisition, second language learners.
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In today’s society we have become accustomed to having radios, TVs, computers and mobile phones always within reach and nearby. In a blink of an eye we can call home or read a newspaper that has been published on the other side of the world. We live in an age of technology and fast communication, where almost everything seems possible.

TV, computers and mobile phones were mere fictions 60 years ago. Today such technology can be found in most households. In my opinion, technology has increased our knowledge and understanding of the world in a number of ways. It has helped us become more time efficient, but one could also argue that it has to some extent taken over and consumed what was left of our spare time. Since most of us have these technologies with us and have grown to be more or less dependent upon them, our spare time has become a thing of the past. Outside of work we constantly answer the mobile work phone or check e-mails. Despite their drawbacks, most people would probably agree that they in spite of this have changed our lives for the better.

The invention of these types of technologies has changed so much, for instance how we view and define a text. The word “text” has many possible definitions; some consider text to be only written texts, while others view text as anything that has some sort of meaning, including signs and pictures.

When the new syllabus for English appeared in 1994, it stated that although text is predominantly seen as written text within the education system, the syllabi recognized the importance of using film as a tool in teaching (Skolverket, retrieved 2010-04-10). Since there are so many possible meanings of the word text it is necessary to establish a definition of how the word will be used in this particular degree project. The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines text in the following way, “any written material”. However, there are other possible definitions of the word. The syllabus for
English mentions that “text can be seen as more than written text; text can also be pictures or moving images” (Skolverket, Retrieved 2010-04-10). The definition used by the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English is too narrow to suit the aims of this study so I would like to broaden the definition of the word “text”. Christina Olin-Scheller has conducted research on the difference between how different generations define and view text, “since Lpo 94 text is now not only seen as books but also includes new media such as movies, TV and computer games. However, new media is not currently used as regularly as books in education” (Christina Olin-Scheller, retrieved from [www], 2010-07-12, own translation). It is this broader use I will be referring to from here on when I mention text. It is our duty as teachers to make sure that our students realize and familiarize themselves with texts of all sorts.

By investigating how different English teachers use TV, movies and music to help their students expand their knowledge of the English language and culture, I hope to learn new ways of integrating different types of texts into my future classroom. One of the problems that we as teachers face is getting our students motivated and interested in learning. I am of the opinion that if the students are motivated and enjoying themselves, learning becomes easy and fun. Our students come in contact with these different types of media outside of school and therefore they are already familiar with them. Education is supposed to be individualized to suit every student’s separate need and therefore it could be very valuable and stimulating to incorporate the students’ interests and experiences into the English classroom.

My own interest in the subject of media use in the English classroom was sparked during my last vft period. My partner school worked with an English book called *Magic*. This material consists of a textbook and workbook where each chapter centered on a specific theme, usually a book or a movie. At my partner school they worked with movies and it was up to the teacher in charge to decide if the class started out watching the movie or if the students waited until the end of the chapter. The Magic-series was used from grades 7 to 9.
1.2 Purpose and research questions

In an evaluation made by the Swedish board of education in 2003, Professor Jan Svartvik described the English language as “a global language” (Skolverket, retrieved 2010-07-12, p.18, own translation).

It is estimated that approximately one billion people study English and that English is the vital communication language in a number of different areas such as science, business, popular culture and tourism (Skolverket, 2005, p. 18, own translation).

Since English has become a world language it has become natural to incorporate “international and intercultural aspects in to the subject as well as an element of pop culture consisting of TV, music and the internet” (Skolverket, 2005. p. 21, own translation).

This report has found that as many as “86% of Swedish students consider English to be an interesting and popular school subject” (Skolverket, 2005.p. 42, own translation). Since the last evaluation, conducted ten years ago, they have come to the conclusion that;

there has been an increase in so called spare time or recreational English among students. The students themselves listed in a survey that they nowadays spent more time writing letters, surfing the internet, chatting and playing interactive games on the computer” (Skolverket, 2005. p. 87, own translation).

This enabled the students to get more exposed to the English language. The evaluation also showed that approximately 80% of Swedish students said that they outside of school were exposed to English music lyrics. 80% reported that they watched TV- shows in English with subtitles and 60% reported that they watched without subtitles (Skolverket, 2005. p. 82, own translation). The information that came to light through this evaluation could help teachers come up with new ways of integrating new media into language learning.

The syllabus for English clearly states that students in compulsory schools, should at the end of year 9 be able to:
develop their ability to read different types of texts for pleasure and to obtain information and knowledge. Pupils should understand clear speech, even though regional in nature, in instructions, narratives and descriptions concerning familiar conditions and their own areas of interest (Skolverket, retrieved 2010-04-10).

Teachers’ are responsible to see to it that their students get exposed to and familiarized with not just British or American English, but of all the different varieties of English that exist in the world, like Australian English, Indian English and African English just to name a few. Students also need to learn to categorize different types of texts according to the texts’ purpose. The word text has had its meaning broadened within the field of education. Today the concept of text has evolved and refers to written text as well as to pictures and film.

The syllabus recognized that the students were surrounded and influenced by the English language not only in their school environment but in nearly all areas of their lives:

Pupils encounter today many variants of English outside school. They meet English in a variety of contexts: on TV, in films, in the world of music, via the Internet and computer games, in texts and via contacts with English-speaking people (Skolverket, retrieved 2010-04-10).

The purpose of this degree project is to investigate how TV, movies and music are used within the field of education. I am especially interested in how new media have been used and can be used to strengthen students’ knowledge of the English language.

My research questions will be as follows:

- What views and attitudes do some teachers of English express with regards to using TV, movies and music in the classroom?
• How do some English teachers describe their incorporation of TV, movies and music into their teaching of English?

2. Previous Research

There has been a lot of research done within the field of multiliteracy, which TV, movies and music are a part of. Authors Mary Kalantzis and Bill Cope have defined the meaning of multiliteracy as follows:

Multiliteracy describes what constitutes literacy in today’s world. Literacy has in the past been 'centered on language' but with the introduction and use of new technologies and visual texts into school literacies and home literacies, we now encounter, use and interpret multiple kinds of literacies which are embedded in multimodal texts. Multiliteracies address textual multiplicity. This includes the 'multiplicity of communication channels and mass media, as well as cultural and linguistic diversity. (Cope and Kalantzis, 2000, p.60-92)

These authors point to the changes that have occurred within our society. The way we today view meaning is considerably different and this is due to the radical change that technology has provided for us. According to these authors,

Multiliteracy has highlighted two related changes. The first is the growing significance of cultural and linguistic diversity and the emergence of multiple Englishes. The second change is in the nature of the new communication technologies. Meaning is made in ways that are increasingly multimodal – in which written linguistic modes of meaning interface with visual, audio, gestural and spatial patterns of meaning. These two developments have the potential to transform both the substance and the pedagogy of subject English. (Kalantzis & Cope, 2001, p. 9.)

Meaning is no longer only conveyed by writing but also by sound, sight and feeling. They also state that the English language is “breaking into multiple and increasingly
differentiated Englishes, marked by the accent, national origin, subcultural style and professional or technical communities” (Kalantzis & Cope, 2001, p. 11.).

Even the syllabus for English recognized the importance of letting our students get familiar with “clear speech, even though regional in nature, in instructions, narratives and descriptions concerning familiar conditions and their own areas of interest” (Skolverket, retrieved 2010-04-10).

Another author named Len Unsworth has in his paper “Towards a metalanguage for multiliteracies: Describing the meaning-making resources of language-image interaction” defined language as a “meaning-making system where the options available to individuals to achieve their communicative goals are influenced by the nature of the social context and how individuals are positioned in relation to it” (Unsworth, retrieved 2010-04-25). Unsworth implies that the society that we live in and the people we surround ourselves with have an impact on us as language learners and users. Therefore the new technology, such as TV, movies and music, that are available to us, affect the way in which we learn language. In Teaching Multiliteracies across the curriculum, he points out that,

although there is no doubt that multimedia and electronic information sources are quickly taking up the communication of much information previously presented solely in traditional text formats, conventional literacies are maintaining a complementary role as well as being both co-opted and adapted in the evolution of our textual habitat. (Unsworth, 2006, p. 8)

Unsworth does not see the new technology as something that will take precedence over the more conventional literacies. They can coexist and by doing so they will help create new versions of text.

Research about how TV can affect children; often point to both negative and positive aspects. In the book TV är bra för barn, the Swedish author Margareta Rönnberg presents how watching TV can be beneficial for children. I have chosen to translate the quotes
since the book is written in Swedish. Rönnberg points out five reasons why watching TV can be good for children and they are as follows:

1. The characters and their actions can help to develop identity, social connections and group belonging.
2. TV can show and lead to a discussion of stereotypical gender roles.
3. TV allows the child to process and act out different emotions in a safe environment.
4. TV helps the child to view things from different perspectives.
5. TV strengthens and develops the child’s imagination (Rönnberg, 1997, p. 18, own translation).

Certain TV-shows and movies are sometime thought of as commercial junk, but Rönnberg suggests that it depends on how we use the shows, not what kind of TV shows or movies we use (Rönnberg, 1997, p.64, own translation).

Professor Larry M. Lynch thinks that movies can be a valuable language teaching tool. He has listed five good reasons why teachers should use popular movies with their students for English language practice and acquisition.

1. Movies in English are widely enjoyed: a wide variety of learner types enjoy watching movies. It is a resource that you can extract considerable mileage on a wide range of themes and topics.
2. Movies in English are easily available: English movies are extremely easy to find. Rental shops, book stores, theaters, media outlets, record shops and music stores all have numerous titles available at any given time.
3. Different movie formats: you have the option of using whatever format you like best, VHS, DVD or BET.
4. The length of viewing is controllable: no matter what length classes you have, movies can be adapted to suit the timeframe you have available. Simply use clips from movies or installments instead of the whole movie.
5. **Use of sub-titles is controllable;** using sub-titles in English not only provides listening comprehension support, but aids in vocabulary development and reading comprehension as well (Lynch, retrieved 2010-04-21).

This shows that movies can offer us an easily accessible, dynamic resource to enrich and expand our English language teaching.

Åke Sahlin describes a method of using movies in school with a group of students who is seen as unmotivated, unfocused, and disruptive and has tendencies to be violent against others. Sahlin calls the method “compassion and empathy training through the use of movies”. The movie or sequences of movies helps the students to gain a greater understanding of how their actions affect the people around them. Sahlin uses all kinds of different movies in his teachings, even ones that have a high content of violence. He does not see this as a problem since most teenagers watch a lot of violent movies outside of school, but he stresses the importance of discussing and having a dialogue with the students about what they have seen or felt (Sahlin, 2001. p. 29-30, own translation).

Apart from TV and movies there is also research that claims that music is beneficial for second language learners. Professor Suzanne L. Medina expresses the benefits that working with music can bring to language learners in the following way:

> Singing songs and listening to music are enjoyable experiences and as students repeatedly work with music, their confidence level rises. By engaging in a pleasurable experience, learners are relaxed and their inhibitions about acquiring a second language are lessened (Medina, retrieved 2010-04-23).

Medina emphasizes that music in the second language classroom is beneficial on many levels.

> When second language learners hear songs, which are stories that have been set to music, it is possible to acquire vocabulary. It is therefore, in the interest of the second
language teacher to provide an environment which evokes positive emotions. Music does precisely that (Medina, retrieved 2010-04-23).

By creating an environment that is non-threatening and pleasant to spend time in, you are optimizing the students’ chances of optimal learning. This is just one small part of all the available research that promotes the use of media in order to facilitate knowledge.

3. Research method

I have always enjoyed watching movies and I have come to realize that it is possible to learn a lot of English from watching and following along with a movie. By observing what is happening, listening to the language and reading the subtitles, one could acquire vocabulary and pronunciation, and ones ability to read could possibly be developed. This belief mixed with what I observed at my vft school sparked my interest to further learn and find out more about the possible benefits that TV, movies and music can bring to students studying the English language. Since the term multiliteracy involves so much my focus will be on the use of these particular three kinds of media TV, movies and music.

The investigation was carried out in the following way, first I created a survey. The survey was then used in a screening process to find suitable people to do more in depth interviews with. Finally I have done two classroom observations.

3.1 Survey

I chose this method because it is “easy to construct, very versatile and a questionnaire can gather a large amount of information in a short period of time” (Dörnyei, 2007, p 101). My survey was two pages long and it was distributed among teachers of English who are working with students in secondary school. It consisted of seven questions. I had attached a letter explaining the purpose of the questionnaire and what the findings would be used for. The participants were able to leave their name and contact information at the end. This gave those who wished to be apart of a more in depth interview on the subject of
using new media to teach English, a chance to be found and followed up at a later point in time. I chose to hand out my questionnaire at my partner school and the other secondary schools in the area. The reason why I chose my partner school was that it provided me with accessibility, feasibility and familiarity since the teachers already knew me and what my degree project was investigating. These are concepts that Hatch viewed as important to think about before you start working on the task at hand (Hatch, 2002. p. 44). I contacted other schools and asked for permission to distribute my survey. I had explained in detail what I aimed to investigate, when and for how long. I informed the participants about how the collected data was going to be handled.

My survey consisted of factual, behavioral and attitudinal questions, (appendix 1). The factual questions were used to find out age, gender and how many years the participants had been teaching. The behavioral questions were used to see what kind of experience they had had with working with TV, movies and music. The attitudinal questions were used to find out the opinions and beliefs of the participants (Dörnyei, 2007. p. 102).

Most of the questions were close-ended, which means that the participants did not need to come up with their own answers since there were alternatives for them to choose from, in the form of a multiple-choice survey. In order to get as much information as possible I used some clarification questions after the multiple-choice questions (Dörnyei, 2007. p. 105). However, I did include one open-ended question, in the form of a sentence completion, which meant that the beginning of an unfinished sentence was presented for the participant to complete (Dörnyei, 2007. p. 107).

I am aware that the results from the survey will be shallow and superficial and not representative for the city or region at large, but since this study is quite small, it would be impossible to come up with data that is anything than superficial and basic. The questions are short and written in simple sentences so that the language is natural and easy to understand.
The questions were put in a specific order and the opening question was neutral and set the tone for the rest of the questionnaire. Next in order were the open-ended questions and the factual questions. At the very end there was an opportunity for the participants to leave their names and other contact information and the survey ended with a sentence where the participants were thanked for their involvement in the study. The survey questions were intended to give an idea of how teachers felt about working with new media. They were constructed with the two research questions in mind and they were of a very general and basic nature. The survey questions were also used to see if there were any differences between the gender, and the age of teachers’ attitudes towards using new media.

My goal was to get 20-30 informants to participate in the survey, out of these do interviews with 4 teachers of English. The original thought behind the survey was that it was going to lead me to a selection of teachers that were willing to participate in interviews. However, after I had distributed the survey I found that there were only five people that had left their contact information. I had expected to find more teachers that were interested. I would then have chosen four to interview out of a larger group that were of different opinions in the subject at hand. Since there only were five to choose from I have to admit that the survey did not work in the way that it was first intended.

### 3.2 Interview

The other method I used was the qualitative interview. Each interview was a one-off event, approximately 30-40 minutes long. The interviews were semi-structured since this allowed me, the interviewer, to have a set of already prepared questions that provided guidance and direction, but at the same time allowed the interviewee to elaborate their answers (Dörnyei, 2007. p. 136). In advance I had made a set of interview questions that helped me to cover all areas of interest (p. 137). All interviews were recorded in order to make sure that no information was lost (p. 139).

Before the interview started the interviewee was informed about the purpose of the interview and what would happen to the recorded material and the principles of
confidentiality (p. 140). I did my best to create a calm and non-threatening environment in order to get the participants to be able to relax (p. 140). During the interview I tried to mirror the interviewee, which means that you say “let me see if I have understood this correctly” and then you summarize what had been said. This gives the interviewee a chance to see if they have anything to add, and it gives me the chance to see that I had heard and understood everything that had been said so far (Johansson & Svedner, 2006, p. 52). The interview questions were more focused and specific than the survey questions. The purpose of these questions was to get more individual and personal answers from the interviewed teachers. It was my intention to use the survey and the interview questions to get the answer to my first research question, what views and attitudes do some teachers of English express in regards to using TV, movies and music in the classroom?

3.3 Observation

As a complement to the interviews I did observations as well. I chose to do this in order to see for myself how some teachers incorporated the new media into their English classrooms. This way I could see if TV, movies and music were actually being used in the way that the interviewee had described.

I conducted the observations according to the guidelines that were given to us in the lectures that Malmö Högskola provided. The lecture on observations as a research method was given by Jan Nilsson on the 25/1 2010. Each of the lessons that I observed was 40 minutes long. The observations were carried out in the following way: I was seated in the back of the classroom and I did not participate in the lesson. My purpose was to observe and to take notes.

I contacted four different schools in the south of Sweden. One of the schools is my own partner school and this is because I had easy access to both the school and the teachers, since they already knew me and were aware of the nature of my specific degree project.

In order to get in contact with the other schools I called the principal and asked if I could have their permission to come and distribute a questionnaire. Some of the schools that
were contacted declined to participate, while others were willing to participate. Therefore the schools that are represented in the degree project were both chosen out of accessibility and the teachers’ willingness to participate.

I wanted to find out a) if they incorporated new media into their teaching of the English language and b) how they did this. The observations were made with the same teachers that I had done in-depth interviews with. This enabled me to see if they practiced what they preached, so to say. The aim of the observations was to help me answer my second research question: how do some English teachers describe their incorporation of TV, movies and music into their teaching of English?

4. Results

This section shows the findings from the initial survey, the teacher interviews and finally the classroom observations.

4.1 Survey

The purpose of the survey was to guide me to suitable and interested teacher to do interviews with. As I mentioned before the survey failed to work as a screening process, since it was more a question of just interviewing the teachers that had showed their interest instead of actively selecting the most interesting teachers to interview. However, the survey provided a general feel of what the situation in the schools might look like, regarding technology and learning. The first page of the survey was a letter to the participants explaining what the study was about and thanking them for their time and involvement. The survey consisted of 7 questions. I handed out 30 surveys, distributed among four different schools and I got back 28 that were fully completed. I chose not to use the two surveys that were unfinished because I feel that it would be more beneficial to focus on the ones that were completed. I got the impression that most of the teachers that participated thought that it was an interesting subject.

The survey showed that out of the 28 teachers that participated, everyone except 3 had a teachers’ degree in English. The female teachers outnumbered the males by 17 to 11 and
the majority of the participants had been working as an English teacher for 10 – 15 years. However, all of the categories were represented, 1 to over 20 years of experience. Since the survey was used as a screening process to get in contact with teachers that were interested in participating in the in depth interview, the information gathered from it resulted in very general and vague opinions of how TV, movies and music were used by these specific participants.

The survey showed that all of the participants stated that they at their school had access to technical equipment such as TVs, DVD players, CD players and computers. Although the teachers had access to these tools, some of them said that it was difficult for them to use this equipment on a regular basis because they were few in numbers and therefore always in demand, not only from the English teachers but teachers of all subjects. The shortage of these tools was probably the most significant factor that prevented the teachers from working with TV, movies and music in a larger extent.

The majority of the teachers said that they used different kinds of media in their teaching of English. Several of the teachers saw this as something natural since technology today has become a part of our everyday lives it is only natural that we use it in order to facilitate knowledge. Text and work books, the overhead projector, the computer and the CD recorder were the most commonly used tools. However, when asked to circle the media/tools that the teachers and their students worked with on a regular basis TV, movies and music were also represented among their answers.

The answers given in the survey suggest that these particular teachers of English used movies both to strengthen their students’ vocabulary and listening skills as well as an enjoyable break between two large work areas. One of the teachers said that film is so versatile, because it is a tool that can be used in many different ways depending on what you want to focus on. Films are easy to get hold of and easy to use as a starting point when it comes to introducing different themes. Another teacher said that he used clips of movies as a way to introduce and get the students to discuss different kinds of sensitive
and difficult subjects, such as bullying, violence and sex. Other teachers said that they almost always use movies for entertainment purposes.

The participating teachers agreed that TV, movies and music could help their students to develop a number of skills, such as vocabulary, listening comprehension, reading, and pronunciation and speaking. One teacher said that it could be used to familiarize the students with different accents of the English language.

4.2 Interviews
There were four teachers that showed an interest in participating in an interview. I chose to categorize the teachers as A, B, C and D in order to protect their anonymity. Every interview was conducted in the same way with the same order of pre-prepared questions. The interviews lasted 30-40 min, during which I took notes. As a precaution I recorded the conversation so I would not miss anything by accident.

Teacher backgrounds
Teacher A is a woman who works in a smaller school, 7th to 9th grade, in the south of Sweden. Her subjects are English and Swedish, a combination that is very common. She had worked as a teacher for over 20 years.

Teacher B is a woman who had been working as a teacher for 12 years. She works in a school situated in the middle of a larger city in the south of Sweden. The students that attend this school come from a wide range of different cultural and social backgrounds. Teacher B teaches English and Swedish.

Teacher C is a man who had worked as a teacher for 11 years. The school that he works at is a kindergarten to 9th grade school within a smaller village in the south of Sweden. He has a teacher’s degree in English and music.
Teacher D is a young woman who had been working as a teacher for 3 years. Her school is located in the southeast of Sweden and is a smaller rural school. At this point in time teacher D only had English lessons with 7th and 8th grade. The reason for this is that there are fewer classes and students in the 9th grade, normally they had four 9th grade classes at this school but because there are not enough students this year there were only 3 classes.

Experience and ways of working with new media

This section will show the teachers’ answers to questions 1, 2 and 3 (see appendix 2). All of these questions dealt with the teachers’ experiences and the way they normally worked with new media.

Teacher A started out saying that:

at the beginning of my career, it was very rare for English teachers to use or work with TV, movies or music in the classroom. TV, movies and music were seen as something that the students could enjoy themselves with on their spare time. The norm was to use a textbook and a workbook in order to teach English to the students. The syllabus and the national curriculum had a different focus than today. New media was not regarded as a valuable tool for language acquisition (Teacher A, 2010-05-17).

This has however changed over the years. More and more technology has found its ways into the field of education. Teacher A admitted to not spending that much time working with and using TV, movies and music together with her students. She was more used to working in the traditional way, with book based teaching, and she also felt that she was not in touch with the current teen trends and interests.

Teacher A rarely used movies in her teaching of English and in those rare cases it was for pure enjoyment. Usually this happened at the Christmas break or summer break when there were a few lessons to dispose of. Teacher A had never used TV or music to deepen her students’ knowledge of English. Since teacher A only used new media as pure...
entertainment she did not have any follow up activities to check on what her students had learnt.

Teacher B stated that she would like to work more with new media in the classroom than she does at the moment.

I find it difficult to utilize these particular resources since the school only had two TVs and DVD players, which have to be shared between all of the subjects and 3 different grades and 6 classes. Because of this it is difficult to use the TV and DVD player on a regular basis. Using music is much easier since there is a CD player in every classroom (Teacher B, 2010-05-20).

Teacher B allowed her students to listen to music during the lesson when they were working on their own. She usually had the students work with a music task sometime in the 8th grade. “The students are supposed to pick a song that they like and write down the lyrics. Then they have to write a 1 – 2 page text on why they like the song and how it makes them feel” (Teacher B, 2010-05-20). The students then had to play the song to the rest of the class. A few incorrect sentences from each of the texts were shown to the students on an overhead projector. The students then corrected the sentences together. This way everyone got to learn from the most commonly made mistakes. Teacher B felt that this was a very good exercise to do with her students since it combined her students’ interests with language learning, in this case writing and spelling.

When teacher B used movies, she normally followed up with a class discussion, where everyone got a chance to say what they thought about the movie, characters, plot and so on. The music task that was described earlier was always followed up in the same way, with incorrect sentences that the class corrected together. The students wrote down rules and guidelines to help them remember how to deal with some of the more common mistakes in their notebooks. This was done so that the students always had a chance to go back and look at the rules if they were ever uncertain or when they had to correct something in the future.
Teacher C's school was currently involved in a state funded movie project. This meant that the school was allowed to show, pretty much any TV-show or movie the school/the teacher liked. This together with the fact that most classrooms are equipped with a projector that can be used to view movies or to look at the internet, provides the school with a unique opportunity to incorporate media into all areas of teaching not just the subject of English. Teacher C worked a lot with TV, movies, internet and music in his teaching of English. He felt that the students enjoyed working this way. Teacher C felt that having this technology helped him to be more flexible as a teacher. “If a student has a question about the London Eye for instance, it only takes a few seconds to get on the internet and show them pictures and to find facts about this attraction” (Teacher C, 2010-05-23).

Teacher C used TV and movies to improve his students’ vocabulary, pronunciation and listening comprehension. He viewed language as puzzle pieces.

In order to learn a language you need all the different parts, reading, writing, listening and speaking. I think that TV, movies and music can be used to improve all of these aspects. If you show a TV-show or a movie with subtitles your students will practice reading. They also have to listen, in order to keep up with what is happening. After the viewing there are a number of ways of practicing writing and speaking. Give your students an assignment that in some way involves the TV-show or movie they just have seen (Teacher C, 2010-05-23).

Teacher C had a number of different ways of following up on his students’ abilities: “there are no differences from the way you follow up when you had a book based approach to teaching. Questions, group, class and one on one discussion, are just some of the ways to follow up; the only limit is your own creativity” (Teacher C, 2010-05-23).

Teacher D had occasionally worked with TV, movies and music together with her students. The students seemed to enjoy it. However, she found it very difficult to find appropriate and suitable material to work with. Teacher D did not feel comfortable
showing her students’ scenes of violence, too explicit sexual content or having them exposed to rude and offensive language. Since her students are still quiet young, she is afraid that they would be too influenced by what they see:

It can be hard for a student to differentiate between what is appropriate and not. Take language for instance, in movies and on TV it seems like swearing is very common and therefore accepted to a certain degree. If one visits the US or Britain in real life and one uses that kind of language one would find out that swearing and other “bad” language is not tolerated or accepted (Teacher D, 2010-05-25).

With this in mind teacher D was opposed to letting her students view too many movies and especially, what she regarded as “unsuitable” movies during the English lesson. The movies that she did use were ones that the English teachers had agreed were of good quality. Teacher D thought that TV and movies should be used with care. She agreed that they could be used as a complement to traditional book based learning but the teacher in charge had to have spent a lot of time thinking through what kind of message the students might get from the TV show or movie.

Teacher D checked her students’ progress with a notebook where every student wrote down what they felt they had learnt after every work area. This worked well with most of the students, but there were some that seldom wrote anything. Apart from writing down what her students had learnt she also encouraged them to write what they felt they needed to improve and practice on further.

**Teacher Attitudes**

This section will show how the teachers responded to questions 4, 5 and 6, which all dealt with their views and attitudes towards new media.

Teacher A had in the past only used movies in her education of English as a reward or as pure entertainment. However, she could see that movies could possibly be used to improve and practice listening comprehension.
On the few occasions that teacher A had chosen to show movies to her students the response and feedback from the students had been positive. However, teacher A thought that this had more to do with the fact that watching a movie meant that the students did not need to produce, interact or in any way had to participate other than watching the screen, and therefore could just relax. Teacher A felt that since she had not worked with film in the classroom she did not have any experiences to share, positive or negative.

Teacher B thought that TV, movies and music could be used in every aspect of language learning as long as you as a teacher had a clear idea of what you wanted your students to learn.

I think that it is important that the students know the reason as to why the teacher have chosen to give them certain tasks, so that they in advance know the purpose of the tasks given to them. This way the students are more aware of what and in what way they learn (Teacher B, 2010-05-20).

Teacher B felt that the most positive aspect of working with these media together with her students was that the students in most cases were drawn into the exercise since it involved something from their area of interest and they could draw upon their own experiences. “If the students felt that they are having fun while working half the battle was already won, so to speak” (Teacher B, 2010-05-20). Another positive thing was that the students had an opportunity to get used to working with technology and media, which in teacher B’s opinion, would take on a more common and central place in our society, a trend that we already have seen in the last 20 years.

Some of the negative aspects that teacher B had experienced when working with these types of media was that sometimes the students seemed to think that the assignments that followed were not as important as the assignments which dealt with more traditional book based ways of working. Teacher B also thought that some teachers were wary of the use of TV, movies and music because the students’ parents felt that their children were
not learning anything of value. They viewed it more as plain entertainment and therefore possibly thought that it could lack in providing sustainable knowledge.

Teacher C was of the opinion that TV, movies and music could and should be used as much as possible to help students learn and improve their knowledge of the English language in all contexts of teaching.

Teacher C felt that using TV, movies and music were a modern way of incorporating the students’ everyday lives and experiences into their language learning. One of the positive aspects of using media as a tool to teach language was that there was a vast amount of different engaging and exciting topics to draw on:

Every year thousands of movies are released and are therefore easy to access on DVDs. The alternative to using old outdated recorded tapes which feature artificial conversation between two speakers of English. The use of TV, movies and music has made it possible for students to hear a variety of different regional types of English, such as Irish, Scottish, Indian, Australian and African English (Teacher C, 2010-05-23).

Teacher C felt that the general quality of the listening comprehension provided by these media was immensely better than most of the tapes and CDs that were available for teachers. Another positive thing was that it gave the students a chance to be more involved and in charge of what topics that were going to be dealt with. They had more power to decide what they would like to work with; more so than when they worked with a ready made book with topics that were already chosen for them, usually by adults.

Teacher C had experienced very few negative sides to working this way with his students. One of the negative aspects was that watching movies or listening to music was viewed as inferior ways of learning both among people within the field of education and of the general public:
Even in this day and age it seems like most people think that it is not possible to have fun while learning. Unfortunately this rubs off on our children and some students seem to think that watching a movie automatically means that they do not have to pay any attention or that it is the same as a break (Teacher C, 2010-05-23).

Teacher C thought that it was important to try and change this way of thinking so that we could open up to new teaching possibilities that using these media could help create:

It will take time to change these attitudes and views towards using TV, movies and music in this way but it has to start with us as teachers. If our students see that we strongly believe that this is beneficial to language learning and that we view it as worthwhile tools then they will slowly come around themselves (Teacher C, 2010-05-23).

Teacher D was of the same opinion as teacher B and C that it was possible to use new media in all contexts of teaching.

The positive experiences that teacher D have had when working with media was that the majority of her students seemed to be more engaged and that they were more willing to engage in discussions, where they expressed their own opinions and experiences. Teacher D felt that she got to know the students values and what young people of today think and feel about the subjects that the movies dealt with. Teacher D felt that the negative aspects were that movies do not portray the real world and could be misleading when it comes to customs and behavior.

4.3 Observations

I conducted observations with two of the four teachers. Each observation lasted 40 minutes. I only had the opportunity to do two observations, since the teachers were very busy at the end of the school year and therefore did not feel that they had the time to spare. Unfortunately one of the observations did not feature anything that was of interest in regards to my investigation, because of this I decided not to include the findings of this particular observation.
The observations helped me to investigate my second research question, which is how do some English teachers incorporate TV, movies and music into their teaching of English? My goal with the observations was to see a) if and b) how the two teachers used new media in their English classrooms. If these lessons had any elements of using media as a tool for language learning, then what kind of exercises or tasks did the teachers give to their students? When conducting these observations I got a chance to see how the teachers used new media in the practical way and to experience their attitudes.

I had taken into consideration that the lesson might not contain any evidence of media use and that it was impossible to draw any real conclusions from just observing a once of lesson. However, I felt that it could give some indications as to how often the teacher used any technology and in what way it was being used.

Observation with Teacher C
Teacher C had a small 7th grade class consisting of 8 boys. These boys all have concentration issues and they have a need for more English, since they are considered weak in this subject. Therefore they have English when their peers have German, French or Spanish class. Some of the students have violent tendencies and several different concentration disorders like, ADHD and Asbergers syndrome. Because of these circumstances there were always two extra people except the teacher in the classroom at all times. This particular lesson was held before lunch and lasted for 40 minutes. The students had begun working with London and the many sights that you can see and visit there.

The lesson started at 11.40 but at 11.45 there were still no students present in the classroom. Since the students were tardy the lesson could not start until 11.48. Teacher C started to ask the students why they were late but did not get a proper answer from anyone. After this he continued to ask the students if they remembered what they had been working on the last time they had English. One of the students said that the teacher had showed them a map of London and of the underground railway system. Then they had read a text out loud in class that had contained some information about Buckingham
Palace, 10 Downing Street, Trafalgar Square and the London Eye. While some of the students were listening to what one of their classmates were saying one of the other students refused to sit down in his seat, his assistant tried to plea with him take his seat and to pay attention to his classmate but he still refused to cooperate. The assistant threatened to go to the principal, without any result. The assistant finally got the student to leave the classroom so that he no longer disturbed the others. Outside of the classroom one could hear yelling and loud voices.

Teacher C who seemed undistracted by this episode continued on to explain to the students that they were going to look at some of these sights with the help of the internet. Teacher C asked all of the remaining students what sights they would visit if they ever got the chance to visit London. One student said Buckingham Palace so the teacher typed in Buckingham Palace. Teacher C had also prepared some information about these sights and told the students that the palace had been bombed a total of 16 times since it was built. One of the assistants had been to the huge toy store called Hamelys, which they looked up next, during this time the assistant told them that the store was five stories high and had every toy imaginable. During this show and tell session most of the students spoke Swedish despite several attempts from teacher C to get them to try and say it in English. After the toy store they moved on to the London Eye and teacher C who had ridden it, told them about how big the wheel is, how many people that fit into one cart and how much it cost. They then proceeded to look at Trafalgar Square, Piccadilly Circus, Oxford Street and Marble Arch. The last few minutes of the lesson teacher C handed out a crossword puzzle that described the sights that they had seen and discussed.

It was a very unusual lesson, or at least it seemed so to me, there were many distractions and it must be hard to remain calm and collected and not to lose focus of what it is you are trying to teach in a situation like that. That is one of the reason why I asked teacher C how he felt the lesson had been when all of the students had left. Teacher C said that it is a situation that you get used to, the main thing is to focus on the students that actually listen. It might be hard to see them because they are quiet and do not make a lot of noise and therefore they faded in comparison to the louder and more rambunctious students.
Teacher C also said that it would be impossible to teach if he was the only adult in the room, the fact that there were assistants there to help him deal with the behavioral problems that occur is priceless.

Teacher C’s lesson contained the use of media as a tool in language learning. Although the teacher was interrupted and objected to different distractions throughout the lesson, he managed to use the computer as a tool to teach the students about different famous sights that could be visited in London, England. This exercise would have been possible to conduct in another way. Many textbooks have a chapter dedicated to London and specific sight. However, these particular students had trouble sitting down and concentrating for any longer period of time. There had to be something happening all the time and working with the internet and the projector gave the teacher a chance to invite the students to share their own experiences, explore their curiosity and also gave the students the chance to have an impact on what sights to investigate.

5. Analysis

The results from the questionnaire showed that all of the participating teachers’ had access to the technology needed to work with media in the classroom. The leading problem that the teachers were faced with was that it was very hard to work with these tools on a regular basis since there was not enough equipment to go around. There was an enormous difference between the schools when it came to both what kind of technology that was available and how many teachers that had to share them. Some schools only had a couple of TV and DVDs at their disposal, while other schools had every classroom fitted with TV, DVD, computers, a projector and CD or tape recorders.

In this day and age it seems strange that new media has not made a bigger impact on the field of education since it is so prominent in every other area of our life. However, it is clear that the teachers in this study make the best out of the resources that are available to them. Most of the teachers were of the opinion that new media could be a great asset; it could help the students to improve on their language learning in a multitude of way, such as reading, listening and speaking.
The four teachers featured in the interviews agreed that it was a question of having the right equipment at their disposal, rather than the reluctance to use media as a tool in language teaching that had kept them from working this way. The teachers all had different previous experiences from working with new media. Teacher A, who had been active in the teaching profession the longest, remembered a time when technology had a very limited use as an instrument of language learning. Teacher B stated that the circumstances at her school made it easier to work with music than with the other medium of TV and movies. Teacher C: s case it was a bit different from the other teachers. His school had made the choice to get involved with a project that gave the school a chance to use TV and movies to a greater extent. It is understandable that the school and the teachers who work there have become accustomed to having this advantage and that they utilize all of the available resources. Teacher D points to yet another reason as to why some teachers might be careful or unwilling towards the use of media in the classroom. She feels that it is our responsibility as teachers not to subject our students to violence, strong sexual content or rude, offensive language, which can be found in many TV – shows, movies and music lyrics.

The interviewed teachers all had different ways of working with media. Teacher A admitted to using movies on occasion as a way of giving her students a break from the more challenging tasks. Teacher B used music to get her students to practice writing, speaking and listening. Professor Medina said that music could benefit second language learners in the following way, “through music it is possible to acquire vocabulary and it helps to create an environment that lessens learner inhibitions” (Medina, retrieved from [www], 2010-04-23). However, the teachers in this study used music in a very limited way. The previous research showed several other ways of using music to maximize language learning, Medina mentioned that getting the students to sing could potentially help them with vocabulary training. One could draw the conclusion that music had not been used to the same extent that TV and movies had been used in the English classroom. The use of music could be improved to further promote language learning. Teacher C used TV and movies to help his students practice reading and pronunciation. Using TV
and movies in this way connects to the benefits that Lynch describes, it provides different movie formats, viewing control and the choice of subtitles. Finally teacher D felt that new media could be used as a compliment to tradition book based teaching. The way the four teachers followed up on what their students had learnt, included class discussions and self evaluation. The students wrote down in their notebooks what they felt they had learnt and what they needed further practice on.

When it came to what context the teachers thought that new media could be beneficial to work with, they all agreed that there were no negative contexts. Teacher C felt that TV, movies and music could and should be used as much as possible to help students learn and improve their knowledge of the English language.

The teachers felt that were many positive things that could come from working with media. The students were usually very interested and engaged. They enjoyed watching TV and movies and listening to music, something that is a part of their everyday life. Another thing was that there is an infinitive amount of material and different genres to draw inspiration from. Teacher C agreed with reason 1 and 2 of Lynches 5 reasons for using movies in language teaching, “Movies in English are widely enjoyed and easily available” (Lynch, Retrieved from [www], 2010-04-21). New TV - shows, movies and music are constantly produced and therefore up to date and in tune with what is happening in the world. It also provided the students with an opportunity to get familiarized with different types and accents of English. Teacher B allowed her students to listen to music when they were working individually; research show that music is an element that has a calming and suiting effect on people. Therefore music can help create an environment of peace and comfort. Feeling safe and relaxed is at the core of learning, if you feel threatened or insecure the probability of learning diminishes to a great extent.

Some of the negative sides that the teachers had experienced had been that the students assumed that these exercises did not count for as much as the traditional book based exercises did. The teachers felt that there was a general opinion among the public that watching movies or listening to music did not lead to any worthwhile learning. There was
a sense that learning could not equal fun. This could explain why some teachers might be hesitant to using new media in their teaching. Another point of view was that new media did not portray the real world and could therefore be misleading.

The observation with teacher C showed that media could be useful when it comes to dealing with special needs students, similar to how Sahlin worked with his students which was described in the previous research earlier. Instead of the use of TV or movie clips like Sahlin used, teacher C used the computer and projector. The use of the internet and a projector gave the teacher access to information and pictures at a very quick pace. In this particular lesson it gave the teacher the opportunity to take advantage of the students’ questions and curiosity about places they had visited or simply heard about.

6. Discussion

This section will refer back to my two research questions which are; what views and attitudes do some teachers of English express with regards to using TV, movies and music in the classroom? And; how do some English teachers describe their incorporation of TV, movies and music into their teaching of English?

All of the interviewed teachers seemed positive towards the use of media as a tool in language learning. One of the teachers however, pointed to the fact that new media should be handled with care, since it is possible for our young students to misinterpret and get the wrong idea about customs and behaviors. The way that teachers incorporate these tools into their teaching is very diverse. A lot depended on what type of technology that was available to them. It is hard to understand that some of the schools in our communication and technology society do not feel that it is worthwhile to spend money on technical equipment that could improve teaching across all subjects. The teachers featured in this study use new media to promote reading, listening, speaking, vocabulary and many other skills.

It was also interesting to hear that the teachers felt that TV, movies and music have had a tendency to be viewed as inferior to the traditional book based teaching. According to
teacher A: s experience, media was only thought of as entertainment, and was not believed to be beneficial or in any way suitable to be used as a method of teaching. This notion has to some degree changed over the years, but teachers’ have continued to use TV and movies for entertainment purposes first and foremost.

There is plenty of research that points to the advantages of using media as a tool for language learning so why have not our attitudes towards it changed. Some teachers still feel that there is no other use for new media than as entertainment. If we as teachers view the use of new media this way, then it is only natural that our students will be influenced by this and therefore they will not take it seriously either. On the other hand if we show them that we believe in this and tell them about the potential learning possibilities, then they will grow to see the use of media as a natural part of learning. As we have heard from the interviewed teachers in this study, new media can help our students in a number of ways, for instance with pronunciation, vocabulary and reading.

Many teachers might be afraid of what parents or other coworkers will think about this way of working. It seems that we still live in a society that believes that fun does not equal learning. As a teacher it is always important to have a clear reason behind the tasks that you give to your students, this includes a purpose and what kind of skills that will be developed through the exercises at hand.

We live in a time of constant change and we as teachers need to be finely tuned in to these changes if we want to be able to draw upon our students own interests and experiences. By upgrading and updating our tasks and exercises on a regular basis we will be more in face with the world that our students abide in. To be a teacher means a multitude of things, but I believe that at the core it means that it is our responsibility to help our students to thrive and exceed in the world, so that they can move forward and be contributing members of our society. In order to do this to the best of our abilities we need to reflect and work together with the current way of life.
One of the main benefits with new media, as we have heard some of the teachers say, is that TV, movies and music can be viewed as a never drying fountain of possibilities and work material. With this bounty and richness also comes a responsibility of thinking about exactly what it is that we are exposing our students to and in what way they might be influenced by this material.

As with much in life it all comes down to having a good balance, a mix between all of the available tools that can be used to promote language learning. We all know that everyone has different ways of learning and that is the major reason that we as teachers should try and incorporate as many different elements of learning as possible. Incorporating different ways of working lets us provide a wide range of learning opportunities and hopefully it will benefit our students.

7. Conclusion

The main purpose of this degree project is to help create a better understanding of what it means to be and work as a teacher, get familiarized with the potential problems and difficulties that teachers are faced with. I feel that this degree project has showed me a part of this. We are becoming more and more dependant on technology even with in the field of education. New media can be a fantastic tool that is very versatile and useful in order to promote language learning. We as teachers can use new media as a way of incorporating our students’ experiences and everyday lives into the field of education. New media is a tool that can be molded to suit different needs and resources. The only limits are our own creativity and our willingness to try new things with our students.
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To the participants of this survey

My name is Johanna Olsson and I am currently attending Malmö Högskola. I am in the process of working on my degree project which will enable me to get my teachers degree. My major will be English and my minor will be Swedish.

This degree project aims to investigate how TV, movies and music possibly can be used in the teaching of the English language and culture. In order to find the answer to this question I have decided to start out with a survey that will be used as a screening process to find English teachers that are interested in the subject and who would like to participate in a more in depth interview at a later point in time.

The data collected from the survey will only be handled and used for the degree project and by myself. When the material has been used it will be destroyed. At the end of the survey there is room to leave one’s contact information if you are interested in participating in the above mentioned interviews.

The survey is 2 pages long and will take approximately 10 min to do. If you have any questions do not hesitate to ask.

Thank you for your participation

Johanna Olsson
Survey

1. Do you have access to TV, DVD players, CD players and computers at your school?
   Circle your answer.
   Yes    No    Other
If you have chosen other, please explain__________________________________________________.

2. Do you use different kinds of medias as a tool to teach English?
   Circle your answer.
   Yes    No
Please explain__________________________________________________.

3. What kinds of media do you and your students work with in the English classroom?
   Circle the ones you use.
   Computers    Movies    Music    Books    TV    Overhead

4. How do you use movies in your teaching of English?
   Circle your answer.
   To improve vocabulary    as a break between to work areas
   To practice listening comprehension    other
If you have chosen other, please explain__________________________________________________.
5. Please finish the sentence.
TV, movies and music are tools that possibly can help students to improve______________________________.

6. Do you have a teacher’s degree?
Circle your answer.
Yes No

7. How long have you been working as a teacher?
1-5 years 5-10 years 10-15 years 15-20 years More than 20 years

Please circle one.
Male Female

Please leave your contact information below if you are interested in participating in a more in depth interview on this subject.

Name: _______________________
E-mail: _______________________
Phone nr: _______________________

Thank you for your time
Interview Questions

**Experience and ways of working with new media**

1. What is your experience of working with TV, movies and music in your teaching of English?
2. In what way do you use TV, movies and music in your English classroom?
3. Could you tell me about how you follow up what your students have learnt when you have been using these media?

**Teacher Attitudes**

4. In what context do you think that these media would be beneficial to use?
5. What positive experiences do you have from working with TV, movies and music in your classroom?
6. What negative experiences do you have from working with TV, movies and music in your classroom?