

Add 10 Minutes Of Music To Each Session Teaching English In The Classroom

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Abstract

After a longtime teaching English, I find it's very necessary and important to warm up a few minutes at the beginning of each lesson. This helps students feel comfortable, relaxed, next, they will be very active and gain a lot of energy before starting a new class. I usually have 3 periods/ lesson (150 minutes), so I decided to spend the first 10 minutes listening and singing along to an English song that suits their level instead of checking the old lesson, correcting the old one. I hope that my research will be spread to English teachers in a positive and energetic way no matter where they are taught and at any age.

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I. Introduction

One of the problems that all English teachers face, whether teaching English to children, students or adults, maintaining students' interest throughout the lesson is of utmost concern. Therefore, English teachers often create many different teaching methods to attract students' attention, one of which is the use of music.

What makes music such a useful teaching tool is its universal appeal, music's ability to connect all different cultures and languages. Therefore, music becomes one of the great motivational resources in language classes, regardless of the age or level of learners.

II. Literature Review

Plan to include songs in English class

The song selection process is one of the most difficult aspects of using music in teaching. Here are some things you might need to keep in mind to make sure you find the right song:

Identify the content of knowledge you want to convey

Is it a lesson in vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, or a specific topic? For example, Carly Simon's song *You're so vain* could be used to introduce arrogant people, or *In the air tonight* would be great for teaching about the present tense that continues. However, no matter what area of knowledge you want to focus on, remember that you don't have to limit your use of songs to a certain area. For example, you might want to use a song to illustrate an English tense, but at the same time you can use it to teach about the interesting idioms contained in the lyrics.

Considerations about student qualifications

The level of the student determines not only which songs to use, but also what other complementary activities – such as games or writing exercises – will use to develop the lesson. For example, low-level learners will struggle and feel frustrated when listening to fast-paced songs. Conversely, a simple song repeated may not be interesting to people at a high level.

Age of students

If the student is a child, you should use songs that are repetitive and easy to understand. However, for teens, use modern or newly released pop and rock songs. You can even ask your students what songs are trending right now. Meanwhile, for older learners, who generally take a more open approach to classes, use songs appropriate for their age group.

Are there any culture-related issues in your class?

Is there anything that is generally unacceptable in the culture you're teaching? Don't just use music based on your own cultural norms, consider your listeners and their sensibilities, and better let them choose songs for you to use in class.

Participants

I am currently a teacher at Dong Nai University (DNU), Bien Hoa City, Dong Nai Province, Vietnam, so I chose the participants according to my study as 30 students of English Language (NNA) of the Department of Foreign Languages and 30 non-major students of the remaining majors where English is their compulsory subject. At the same time, I also apply these 10 minutes to those who are studying with me at the center outside DNU which is 30 students at the Melody Chinese English center (HMC). At the end of 3 weeks of study of 3 classes, I found that 10 minutes of additional music at the beginning of each session was extremely effective.

III. Focus On Checking Old Lessons 10 Minutes Per Lesson

Six steps to making a song the focus of a lesson

1. Listen to the song

I usually start classes for students by listening to a song or watching a music video. Remember that this is a fun activity and don't take it too seriously or boring. Teachers can ask if students have heard this song before, and don't force students to do too much homework at this point, simply let them enjoy it.

2. Ask questions about the song title

Here are a few examples of questions you might ask:

For John Lennon's song Jealous Guy:

What is a "jealous guy"? (What is a jealous guy?)

What are three things a jealous guy might do? (What are three things a jealous guy can do?)

What kinds of jealousy are there? (What types of jealousy are there?)

For the classic song We are champions:

What is a champion? (What is a champion?)

What kinds of champions are there in the world? (What kind of champions are there in the world?)

What activities have champions? (What activities have champions?)

Such questions are often very effective for starting conversations, you can divide the class into groups of three or four people to discuss and receive feedback from students, or you can also bring this step to the beginning of the lesson, before starting to listen to music if necessary.

3. Listen back with lyrics

This time, I let the learners read the lyrics that had been printed or shown on slides. Learning can take this in several forms as follows, requiring:

Learners listen to the lyrics while watching the lyrics. They can mark unknown words for later discussion.

Learners fill in the blanks with missing words as they listen to music

4. Focus on vocabulary, tenses or a specific grammatical structure in the old or new post

Almost all songs use only one tense or a specific grammatical structure. Learners can start with questions such as:

How many examples can learners find using the simple past tense in the song?

Why did the writer of this song choose this verb?

This acts as a springboard to discuss the function of a particular English tense, as well as examine the form in which it is used. Furthermore, this activity is often likely to raise learners' awareness of grammar flexibility. Learners often expect songs to follow the grammar rules they've learned, but in most cases, learners may discover that rules can also be broken.

5. Focus on vocabulary, idioms and expressions

Many songs bend grammar rules and use very creative and artistic vocabulary. Songs often serve as good backdrops for phrases and idioms. Through that, learners can know more about how to use vocabulary as well as apply it to many different situations. Back to the classic song We are champions, you can ask your students:

What does 'I've paid my dues' mean?

What does 'My Share of' mean?

- What does 'I've taken my bows' mean?

6. Access to creativity

Creativity is an important part of staying motivated and shouldn't be limited to teaching. Depending on the initial factors (age, language level, cultural characteristics of the student), you can stimulate the creative thinking of students in one of the many forms below:

- Rewrite a verse or piece of the song but still keep the main idea and style of the original. This can be done individually or in groups.
- Ask learners to come up with ideas for making music videos for songs. Each group will decide the location, characters, and what happens. Then, each group calculates its ideas to the whole class, and everyone votes for the best group.
- Journaling a character in the song. Ask learners to imagine the thoughts and feelings that led to the story played out in the song.

IV. Improvement Strategies

Through 3 weeks of monitoring and evaluating DNU students and HMC students on the addition of 10-minute music at the beginning of each session, I found that students received a lot of energy and they were able to maintain this energy up to 90% of that session. The number of participants sings 100%, is positive, has fun with tablemates and can do well the requirements of the old song.

Table 1: The class improves every week.

Date	Class	Lessons	Techniques used	Notes
1 April 2024	NNA 1	Unit 2: Present simple	Review old lessons	Some students don't remember the old lessons.
2 April 2024	Non-Major	Unit 3: Present continuous	Check old lessons	Many student are worried because they haven't finished the lessons yet.
3 April 2024	HMC	Unit 4: Past simple	Check old lessons on the board	Can't remember the recipe and feel tired.
8 April 2024	NNA 1	Unit 3:	Use games to review old lessons	Students were more interested but didn't participate because they were shy.
9 April 2024	Non-Major	Unit 4	Only listen to music for a few minutes at the beginning of the hour, when the music ends, you will check the old song	Learners are not interested and do not show positive signs afterward.
10 April 2024	HMC	Unit 5	Play games, listen to music and check old lessons	Participate and maintain more positive energy than previous class sessions
15 April 2024	NNA 1	Unit 4	Listen, sing along to the music and correct pronunciation and grammar errors of old songs	Learners gain energy and theological comfort when participating in singing along.
16 April 2024	Non-Major	Unit 5	Listen, sing along to the music and correct pronunciation and grammar errors of old songs	Re-sing patiently, actively correct mistakes and remember old songs quickly.
17 April 2024	HMC	Unit 6	Listen, sing along to the music and correct pronunciation and grammar errors of old songs	The number of people participating in singing is 100%, positive, happy with their tablemates and able to do well the requirements of the old song.

Through the above 3 weeks, I see that the progress and positive learning attitude of learners is improving significantly week by week. In addition, I also encourage learners of 3 classes to freely compose, create a song or a composition according to their musical ability with the requirement: In the composition there must be vocabulary, phrases, structure and grammar of the old lesson or new lesson and they will perform before each lesson instead of the teacher Do all of these activities throughout the course.

The application of music to my curriculum, specifically the first 10 minutes of the lesson, showed very good results.

Here are the results:

Table 2: Students' feedback on questionnaires

Questions	Options	Response	Percentage
1. How do you feel about checking old songs in songs?	confused	30	20%
	worried	10	5%
	satisfied	70	65%
	other	10	10%
2. Are you satisfied with being able to test your old lessons through music?	appropriate	99	90%
	inappropriate	21	10%
3. What method will you use to learn quickly?	Traditional check	20	15%
	Use music	70	70%
	Composing and performing	30	15%
4. How many vocabulary and grammatical structures can you remember after being tested in musical form?	not much	20	15%
	much	60	55%
	very much	40	30%
5. Is music useful for practicing pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar?	Yes	120	100%
	No	0	0%

The data shows that 70% of students are very interested in checking old papers through music at the beginning of the class. 20% are still a little surprised because they are not familiar with this test. The 5% were worried because they had never sung in public. In general, checking the old post is still very much preferred when inserting the old one in 1 song.

Although there are some learners who are still nervous about using this method, when given the choice of testing, they still choose to test with music as the most appropriate method for learning, accounting for 90% of responses are satisfied. The remaining 10% is also a very small number for teachers to be proactive in testing because often these students also do not have many opportunities to be shown or actively tested.

Most students today are very active and active in participating in school activities, classes, union activities and associations of the faculty. I think self-study and checking old lessons through this method is very useful. It helps students, in addition to remembering old lessons with a spirit of fun, comfort, remembering lessons quickly, also helps students gain confidence to share, communicate in public, improve many skills in learning English. Teachers applying this method to each teaching session will be very effective, creating fun, excitement and maintaining energy for students while also reducing the pressure of continuous teaching throughout 3 periods for teachers.

V. Advantages And Limitations Of Teaching English Through Music

Advantage:

Unlike traditional lessons, teaching English through music, specifically a song helps learners to "learn by playing, playing by learning". Therefore, I always prefer to insert music at the beginning of teaching sessions because of the benefits they bring:

- Enhance memorization: When listening to and singing their favorite English songs continuously, learners increase their exposure to English vocabulary and grammar in a repetitive way. Therefore, this helps learners memorize vocabulary and grammar more quickly and effectively.
- Practice pronunciation: Singing along to English songs is how learners practice pronunciation and speak English correctly. Learners can listen and imitate the singer's vocal tone to practice their pronunciation skills.
- Increase vocabulary: Lyrics use a variety of vocabulary, through them learners expand their vocabulary a lot, including communicative vocabulary to specialized words, or native slang.
- Enhance listening comprehension: Listening to English songs helps learners practice their "Listening" ability quite well. You can listen and imitate native speakers' pronunciation to improve your listening comprehension as well as your ability to speak and read English.
- Inspire learning: Through catchy songs, build more excitement and fun for learners. This helps learners stay motivated to learn and achieve higher learning efficiency.
- Create an exciting atmosphere for learners.
- Create healthy competition among learners.
- Learners have the opportunity to be creative and give their opinions.
- Practice necessary skills such as reflexes, teamwork, ...
- Reduce stress and pressure during class.

Restrict:

- Currently, where I am working, there are still many limitations in terms of technology equipment, wifi and sound is often not good, so I think, 10 minutes is still the most time allowed.
- If you are not proactive about the equipment, the teacher will not be able to manage the time of the lesson that day.
- Along with teaching in class, teachers also spend more time and effort searching for songs with melodies and lyrics suitable for the learner's level, which is reflected in the vocabulary and grammar inside the song, as well as moderate rhythm. Songs with catchy melodies and simple lyrics will help learners easily memorize the vocabulary and grammar of old or new songs right in class.
- It is difficult to find a song that can fit all learners in the same class.
- It takes extra time to teach correct pronunciation, joining, and surfing. However, this is something that should be done for learners.

VI. Conclusions

Above is the practical sharing from choosing my method "Insert music for the first 10 minutes of the lesson" for the 3 classes I am teaching. I succeeded in selecting and applying this teaching method as well as sharing it with several colleagues, namely Ms. Nga, Ms. Thu and Ms. Tuyet about the results of my experiment. They also applied for several weeks, and reported to me very positive results and worthy of application in each session. I hope that teaching English to insert 10 minutes of music at the beginning of the lesson to check old lessons or prepare for new lessons will be extremely useful and help all teachers and learners to access English through songs easily. The above way of learning English will hopefully help teachers apply as soon as possible to improve and find more suitable methods for themselves.

Let English teaching time become a relaxing and comfortable moment and always give English learners the most positive and energetic way.

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