

Learning in student-generated TV commercials enhanced by computer technology

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In general, English language classes have used advertising mainly for cultural and linguistic content as well as to develop critical thinking but, to date, few teachers have taken advantage of computer technology to have their students create short commercials. This paper will focus on a collaborative project which incorporates filming and video-editing, and will examine student perceptions about the use of video production from feedback gained in interviews and reports and the ensuing learning when communicating in English. The project involved short, student-generated TV commercials produced by two monolingual English classes of third year undergraduates in Japan. Techniques include brainstorming, storyboarding, making dialogues, filming, video editing (iMovie2), and portfolio assessment, etc.

Introduction

It is interesting to note that “the average American is exposed to 3,000 ads every single day and will spend 3 years of his/her life watching TV commercials.” (Kilbourne, n.d.) With this in mind, it can be of educational benefit to capitalize on this familiarity to create student-generated projects of TV commercials. Such projects can stimulate English foreign language learners at various ages and levels to examine their values and assumptions while honing their language skills. As a learner-centred activity, the project can be integrated into an entire course or only part of it. It encourages small groups of learners first to produce their own scripts for commercials, then film and finally, video edit before sending these to a real target audience abroad for evaluation. Initial viewing of authentic

foreign commercials creates excellent possibilities for communication about observations of English speaking cultures. As TV commercials are now readily available on the Internet, their brevity makes it possible to consider using them. Video cameras and video editing programmes too have become more user-friendly and are at last within reach of more school budgets. This article then describes a third-year project in the Intercultural Communications section at Ibaraki University where students collaborate and prepare their own commercials in English. It analyzes the experience involved in carrying out such a project to gain insights into students' perceptions of the use of video production and computer technology and their opinions of the ensuing learning. Finally, through feedback gleaned in interviews and reports, etc., it will verify whether they thought the course was useful in increasing their English skills.

Literature review

In general, commercials have been used in the language classroom in a variety of ways. Firstly, they can facilitate the teaching of grammar or language abilities. Although many exploit commercials to practice particular language skills, almost all fail to mention film or video editing. Among others, Smith and Rawley (1997) acquaint their ESL learners with commercials to improve their listening and prepare them for the critical thinking skills of North America. Naski (2002, March) stimulates speaking. Jones (2004, September) develops critical thinking through both print ads and videos. However, small groups are asked to write collaboratively about the ads rather than video them. Palmer (n.d.) mentions commercials briefly but mostly to identify the product and sponsor and analyze how a specific mood is created. Sites such as EnglishCentral.com (see Appendix C) make commercials (among other topics) available to learners to target vocabulary, listening and pronunciation, etc.. Chauhan (2008), Moultry Belcher (2011) and McCulley (2008) exploit them to teach grammar and Lokon (2002, June) examines genre through this media. Ambrose (2002, April) requires small groups to submit portfolios after paraphrasing and/or writing original ads. Grigoryan and King (2008) also focus on collaborative writing but approach this activity via adbusters (parodies of ads) to have small groups post on walls and present for 10–15 minutes on their final products. Ernst and Dias (2004, Fall) too exploit adbusters to practice all four skills with final collaborative presentations via print, video, powerpoint or live performances, although no information is given beyond a descriptive preparatory procedure. Morris (2006, February) uses student-generated video teams to illustrate particular grammar points and functions but further information is limited almost entirely to the rehearsing and filming of brief clips. Hazzard (2006, December) used filming of clips to incorporate as many language skills as possible. However, again, no information is given about the actual process of filming and how the projects were copied. Secondly, commercials may be used for intercultural education. Stapleton (1997, May) examines the cultural differences between Japanese and American ads and Picken ((1999, October) looks at ads as a means to teach awareness of visual elements while exploiting language and culture. Various textbooks emphasize using advertising to teach intercultural concepts. Gerard-Sharp (1994) exploits reading and speaking in *Ideas and Issues*, to consider different cultures. Therein, one chapter in particular is dedicated to advertising. Iwasaki, Smith and Tuseth (1997) focus on language skills with cultural explanations to enhance listening in each chapter. Vardaman in *Selling America* (1997) concentrates on reading, writing and vocabulary using the texts themselves to explain culture. More recently, writers such as Gore (2007) in *English for*

Marketing & Advertising, Ceramella and Lee (2008) in *Cambridge English for the Media*, and Farrall and Lindsley (2008) in *Professional English in Use*, all concentrate on advertising and can aid an instructor wishing to introduce media through activities in textbooks although they do not invite learners to use the technology. Elsewhere, both Martinez-Gibson (1998) and Ambrose (2002, April) have commercials analyzed critically and culturally to improve cultural awareness and writing skills in their classes. Likewise, Keddie (2008, January) familiarizes his students with graffiti culture to challenge them to think and speak about as well as write speech bubbles about this special artwork. Tuzi, Mori & Young (2008, May) endeavour to improve listening by a variety of commercials containing world Englishes, and in the process, develop critical thinking by discussing culture and values.

A third approach and the one focused on in this article is that of using commercials to encourage **EFL/ESL** project work and above all, to incorporate filming and video editing. Projects involving commercials are not new although many articles on commercials were published before the advent of TeacherTube or YouTube. Davis (1997, March) has his class video presentations about commercials in poster form while Smith (2011, February) asks students to present their commercials via powerpoint presentations. Erkaya (2005, April) discusses commercials and public service announcements, offering techniques and a lesson plan. Yildiz (2008, April) focuses on K-12 teachers' efforts to integrate video production into the classroom and foster media literacy. She reminds us of the debate on whether media literacy alone can bring awareness from studying advertising or if creating videos should also be an integral part of the learning effort. In summary, the above mentioned authors use commercials for a range of projects but do not venture solidly into the realm of film production to enhance language skills.

Some **EFL** authors do enter into a small amount of filming but without exception, almost all do not include video editing. A passing nod to filming is given by Smith and Rawley (1997). Hanson (1996) explains a commercial project culminating in a mock Expo trade fair of product presentations with the rare group video possible although no information is given on this last aspect. A few like Fritsch (1998, March) describe the use of video in slightly more detail outlining a simple, autonomous project lasting 1-3 classes. Her learners design vacation commercials while she is conferencing with students. The latter can produce commercials in various forms with each group having 15-20 minutes on a single camcorder followed by viewing. We are not informed of her expectations nor the evaluation of the final productions. Brooke (2000, October) mentions the production of one-minute **TV** commercials videos. However, no information is given as to procedure and video editing is non-existent. Sagliano and Sagliano (1997, Fall) describe how small groups video and edit their commercials simply via two **VCRs**, viewed afterwards inside and outside of the classroom. No further details are given on follow up except for special awards to the best teams. Daniels (2004, January) gives practical, general advice on student-produced commercials using editing software while in an earlier article (1997, October), **TV** commercials are a one-week component in his cultural awareness course with no filming or video editing. With Davis (1997, March) mentioned above, it is rather the teachers themselves who film the final performances.

The projects of McGee and Fujita (2001), Carney and Foss (2008) and Kearney and Shucks (2004, 2005, 2006) seem among the most pertinent to us. McGee and Fujita (2001) describe how small groups present **TV** commercials directly to each other and include useful worksheets. In their 2000 June article, however, it appears that only those possessing video equipment can film. Carney and Foss are perhaps the most closely related to our approach

of enhancing projects with video production and editing, although they concentrate rather on science and technology projects. Their eight college-level students create, film and video edit a moral dilemma. The procedure, using one digital camera and one computer, is well detailed but all observations stem from the teachers and are not data-driven. Kearney and Shucks, although focused on Australia, are very helpful in their analysis and insights on the benefits of student-generated, video-edited projects in the area of learning outcomes and teachers' rationales. The authors note increased engagement and sense of accomplishment when students are actively communicating, evaluating, and reflecting on their work. Similar results were stressed in Barnes and Yanagisawa (2001, December) who reported:

Despite the sometimes daunting technical considerations and, as a result, the shorter time spent on actual target language practice, the **SVP** group was able to achieve test results whose variance from the **SDP** group was statistically insignificant [...] show[ing] that the use of video production in language learning should not be discounted. (p. 12)

General information on popular Internet sites

Initially, when introducing commercials, it is exciting for your class to view authentic commercials. The latter abound in a variety of Englishes on YouTube, Vimeo, (see Appendix C) and so on, offering examples of claims and persuasions used by sponsors. They provide weaker students with the possibility of watching again at will.

Educational sites

Needless to say, one serious consideration is that of finding acceptable commercials, and countless hours may pass scouring the Internet for them. One relatively safe alternative is that of TeacherTube (see Appendix C) which contains educational videos shared freely among subscribers. The majority of commercials from North America here feature class projects, and consequently, may be less slick in presentation. Nevertheless, many contain interesting pictures, animations, captions and background music and can serve as examples for final productions. Among others, SlideShare (see Appendix C) suggests "The best commercials for teaching English" and EnglishCentral (see Appendix C) provides authentic listening, pronunciation feedback, tracking of student progress in quizzes, and a coursebook manual, etc. on its commercials.

Stumbling blocks when using popular sites

There is, of course, the matter of questionable videos. It is advisable to screen and through TeacherTube, a variety of acceptable commercials can be located. As they can be extremely fast-paced, pre-screening verifies the rate of delivery, repetition and clarity. However, beware! Occasionally, some TeacherTube commercials have buffering problems or may be voiceless. Voiceless commercials, however, can provide notions for role plays, especially when learners fail to find ideas. (see role plays in *Pre-production*, below.)

The study

Background of the study

In English language education in Japan, opportunities for small group discussion are frequently lacking as well as problem solving, negotiation, or chances to organize and communicate ideas, express points of view and learn about target cultures through direct contact. It is hoped, therefore, that this course and project can encourage more active participation and practice in English through exposure to foreign commercials, an email/Skype component with a class abroad, and the challenge of computer technology.

Description of course procedure

At Ibaraki University, this project is offered to seniors interested in developing their English via a semester-long, elective course. The main focus is on making one to two minute commercials enhanced by an international exchange. Although video exchanges (see Cunningham & Batten, 2000) had been undertaken previously, these proved time-consuming and somewhat complicated for freshmen with limited experience in autonomy and project work.

Research design

An interpretive research process was employed to draw out learners' experiences in media production and language learning. Initially, a survey was distributed to investigate familiarity and use of different kinds of media and lastly, a questionnaire to explore perceptions about learning using computer media. In addition, interviews and several short reports about work in progress were gathered. Emails to foreign partners were collected along with personal notes from observations in and outside of the classroom. Final portfolios containing self-evaluations were crucial in providing further information.

Participants

This elective course is composed of third-year monolinguals consisting of fifteen 90-minute periods at Ibaraki University, a national university in Japan. Enrollment varies from 2 to 10, and, at the time of writing, two classes had participated, the first in 2009–2010 with three students (1 male, and 2 females) and the second in 2010–2011 with five learners (1 male and 4 females): In the 2009 class, one was an undergraduate enrolled in the course and two audited to improve their English. In the second, all five were from the Faculty of Humanities in the Intercultural Communications section. The language capabilities of both classes were in the intermediate range having completed the required Level 4 General Education English classes. In other words, students had a mean score of 551 in the **TOIEC** (Saida, 2006) and 452 in the **TOEFL** (Saida & Kobayashi, 2011). In general, all lacked confidence in expressing themselves orally. All had had native language teachers, interacted with foreigners and had some limited experience in autonomous learning and project work. Survey responses indicated that all were relatively unfamiliar with foreign commercials in English and most did not feel competent in the area of computer technology. Only in the 2010 class did two have some experience in filming with digital camcorders and one a little video editing. It

is understood that the small number of students in the two classes limits the validity and scope of the results but this exploratory study invites teachers to consider undertaking such projects in the future, albeit with some adjustments.

Procedure

The questionnaire was administered at the end of both courses. The majority of questions were open ended, and focused on learners' perceived abilities before and after using computer technology as well as inquiring into what they felt they had learned culturally through viewing commercials and the brief exchange with classes abroad. Information was requested about age, language ability through either **TOIEC** scores or perceived competence in the areas of oral communication and English vocabulary learning, upon completing the course. The questionnaire was in English and was answered in the classroom with the instructor present to clarify information and questions. Students were allowed approximately the same amount of time or more if needed. Questionnaires were followed by taped oral interviews with seven of the eight learners after grades were posted.

Overview of English course using advertising content

This section will describe ideas for course procedure and suggest ways to integrate the project. In Weeks 1–3, to introduce the idea of commercials, print media can be exploited with a view to familiarizing students with the vocabulary of advertisements. This provides scaffolding for learners to express opinions about the messages (hidden or explicit), the target audience, and so on. Then, short **TV** commercials with their faster paced messages can be selected. (Described in *Pre-production*, below). In Week 4, students can view and discuss previous class productions and in Weeks 5–7, create commercials in small groups and exchange ideas about them with email partners (for more details see *Exchange class*, below). Storyboards and dialogues are created, and from Week 8 on, filming and then, editing of productions on iMovie2. If possible, these are sent to an exchange class for peer feedback. While waiting for results, portfolios can be compiled.

Equipment and computers

To undertake this project, access to the Internet plus at least one tripod and video camera with an external microphone are needed. If lacking, colleagues or students may be willing to share resources. Several computers are best for greater ease in editing. In our case, Macintosh computers on which are installed the free, user-friendly iMovie2 video editing software were employed (although Windows has MovieMaker).

Pre-production

The course can be divided into two general sections: firstly, approximately 4–5 classes focusing on familiarization with English language commercials followed by 5–10 more 90-minute periods where commercials are created via filming and editing. Each of these sections is explained below.

Scaffolding

Familiarization: Discussing Japanese preferences. In the first week, memorable commercials in the language of the students can serve as a springboard into the world of English. A quick survey of students' favourite TV commercials can be made to facilitate discussion. Some Japanese commercials can be found on TeacherTube at http://www1.teachertube.com/viewVideo.php?video_id=9747&title=More_Japanese_Commercials. Pairs can complete simple worksheets on the products: for example, words to describe them in English, actions, sponsors, the message, etc.. In order to have more meaningful discussions, this initial step highlights familiar subjects with which to begin to describe and analyze commercials. A further benefit is mentioned by Schmidt (1998, August) as follows:

A key factor in this process was that the students acted as informants for me. [...] Class members were eager to fill me in, not only on the language used, but on the underlying cultural and historical background. Thus, they became teachers, and this role reversal had a lasting positive effect on class participation patterns and the development of a cooperative and community atmosphere. (p. 40).

Using print advertisements. After the general discussion mentioned above, real print advertisements in English are selected from magazines, movie ads, posters, billboards, logos, t-shirts to those on the Internet. (Media Literacy Clearing House (see Appendix C) makes some print ads available for downloading and Media Education Foundation (see Appendix C) provides worksheets for deconstructing advertisements). Such ads can increase motivation and opportunities for authentic learning and discussion, and in the process, strengthen the vocabulary of commercials. Commercials should contain simple language, every day settings, and actions and behavior students can relate to. Also to be considered are "images which suggest the product without revealing it [...]" and an effective punch line, slogan or catchphrase" (Sherman, 2003, p. 108). To heighten interest, print ads can be chosen, discussed and rated by the students themselves. Small groups name the product, describe the images, identify the sponsor, target audience, and message (explicit or implicit), etc. Sherman (2003) also suggests noting down the advertisement genre "dramatic, atmospheric, comic, or a mixture." (p.153). After writing collaboratively, these can be posted on walls to decide on the best descriptions. Carney and Foss (2008) had their students post the scripts on a wiki for all to read and comment on before selecting the final dialogue to be used. (p. 17) Schmidt (1998, August) reports that, in his situation, the three best commercials were voted on "using a zero to five scale, on criteria such as strength of image, effectiveness, visual quality, hardest sell/softest sell, use of humor, and use of music. Finally, each group announced their top-three in each category along with their reasons" (p. 39).

Finding appropriate TV commercials in English

The PBS Teachers site (see Appendix B) gives access to a host of resources such as lesson plans and worksheets on advertising. In my classes, activities to exploit television commercials include predictions about what occurred just before or just after, etc. (Sherman, 2003; Stempleski, 1992; Ambrose, 2002; Erkaya, 2005, April). In order to stimulate guesses about the product and situation, some commercials are viewed with or without sound (Sherman, 2003; Essberger, 2000; Case, 2007; Stempleski, 1992; Smith and Rawley, 1997; Erkaya, 2005) For weaker students, following Sherman's (2003) technique, my learners name and list

expectations before viewing. In addition, teachers can use transcripts or image sequencing activities for lower-level students.

Supplementing class work

Homework. As homework, **TV** ads can provide active ongoing practice in everyday vocabulary to be used later in the dialogue creation as well as reviewing advertising themes and techniques. Ads selected by students are more meaningful given that they correspond to a given age group and its immediate interests. Among others, **NBC** Network's collection of commercials, on chewing gum, pizza, bagels, Hershey's chocolate and so on offers more practice in analyzing techniques of persuasion, implicit and explicit messages, claims, and so on. In class, favourites can be selected and presented in small groups, referring to techniques studied thus far. One popular commercial is the Sapporo Beer Commercial (see Appendix C) which generates a good deal of discussion as it has not been seen in Japan. As the background and product are familiar, it therefore invites more comments on the intended audience, emotional appeals and techniques as well as the implicit and implied statements, etc.

Role plays. Learners in general and especially those who are a bit camera shy can benefit from this activity to encourage active English use in more structured situations where they can engage and gain confidence in risk-taking and creativity. Both Sagliano and Sagliano (1997) and Ambrose (2000) use video to have students "demonstrate how Japanese would 'sell' the same product on **TV**." (Ambrose, 2000, p.5). Based on this idea, a short role play created, filmed and viewed in one class can offer choice of topic while affording a first glimpse of self on camera. To keep things simple in my case, a few volunteers are asked to film so basic camera precepts can be explained quickly, in hopes that those with a variety of talents can shine brighter. After completion, given my small class sizes, these are copied and distributed to students to evaluate their performances.

A lot can be learned from this task. Some of the more common mistakes can be discussed in a gentle, constructive manner. Smith (2011) suggests that discussions should examine which was "the presentation that persuaded them the most and why". The class should be as constructive as possible, reflecting on learning in such areas as body language, loudness, eye contact, etc.. One-two positive, personal goals can be decided on for the next production.

Vocabulary lists. Keeping a vocabulary list (or log) of key terms facilitates discussion and assists in general understanding and review, in addition to ensuring that learners make efforts to retain some of the new words. Students are responsible and accountable for choosing unfamiliar words and entering them in their logs. Whenever there is time or if a change of pace is needed, small groups can recycle selected words, giving examples and 'testing' each other on the meanings. This initial scaffolding instills more confidence for, as Muller (2006) explains, learners need to "have a scaffold to ensure successful task completion when their interlanguage framework fails them." (p. 172). Occasionally, logs can be collected and, a small quiz can keep all on their toes. The 2009 class reported that this practice helped improve their English and all three students commented that their vocabulary had increased by the end of the course. Misato (2009) writes: "I had only a few vocabularies before that but now, it increased very much." Likewise, Lily (2009) states: "Before I take this

In her 2010 course interview, however, Nagisa mentioned that she did not know how to propose ideas to her group and frequently lapsed into Japanese when working on iMovie2, etc. She explained, “Sometimes I use dictionary so I want to teach [be taught] how to use this word, how to say what I’m thinking [sic].” From her interview, we realized that a list of functional vocabulary would facilitate more active English use. Certainly, asking students to go beyond official class vocabulary to those words they personally choose to retain will be useful.

Analyzing effectiveness of commercials

Locating appropriate commercials

To assist students in processing commercial information, transcripts can be employed, especially when exploiting a sequence of events, a fill-in-the-blanks, a who said what, or an exercise in language for vocabulary or grammar. Depending on the commercial and on available time, transcripts also serve to identify the target audience more closely, the relationships involved, as well as what gestures correspond to which words, etc. (Sherman, 2003, 131; Erkaya, 2005, 53). McGee and Fujita (2000, June) recommend handing out transcripts so students “move beyond language comprehension and into analysis and criticism as quickly as possible.” (p. 18).

For those less familiar with commercials

It is important to discuss the effectiveness of commercials and their impact on the audience. McGee and Fujita (2001) give helpful guidelines and worksheets about implicit and explicit messages and Jean Kilbourne (n.d.) has a series of short relevant lectures on media literacy. In general, according to information gleaned from the interviews and self-reports, students would have liked to watch more commercials and 2010 class member Fumiko contends that watching as many English-speaking commercials as possible helps all become more knowledgeable and creative when making student-generated commercials.

Creating commercials

Pre-editing stage

Setting the bar. At this point in the course, goals will have been clearly explained and students acquainted with a rubric for self and team evaluation used in the final assessment (see *Assessment*, below). In addition, strengths and weaknesses of several student-generated commercials from previous courses (or class-made clips on TeacherTube mentioned above) will have been viewed and analyzed. The latter act as concrete models of what students should achieve or avoid in their upcoming projects. Topics are brainstormed with small groups of 4–5 students forming around similar areas of interest. Commercials should incorporate a determined number of claims and persuasive techniques studied in the first section (Dowling, 2011, Feb.) as well as implicit messages, etc. All learners should be involved in the various phases of the project and speak equally on camera. Availability should be clarified so that no one task falls too heavily on any one group member. In my case, both classes were reminded of the target audience, (an exchange class in North America) in order to

brainstorm topics of interest (see *Exchange class*, below). The 2010 class adopted the theme of Japanese food: one group developing the idea of cold weather related to seasonal food and the other about strawberry daifuku. The 2009 group decided to dwell on tourism and to welcome their audience to Japan by filming a traditional tatami room.

Bell (2005) states that “the quality of an audio/video project is directly proportional to the time spent in pre-production.” (slide 6). It is important to realize that fleshing out ideas requires time and it is wise to allocate 2–3 classes for creating dialogues. Learners can first consider the goals of the chosen product as well as a title, and a catchy slogan. Grigoryan and King (2008) suggest a mind map here “with both the central and hidden messages forming the center and all the evidence students find for the existence of hidden messages displayed in word bubbles around the center.” (p.6)

Keeping the audience in mind. Learners are not always aware of what a foreign audience may know about Japanese lifestyle and therefore, some input from the instructor is often essential. Communicating with a foreign exchange class if possible at this point is particularly motivating, for students are genuinely eager to learn from each other. This direct contact with the target language community is one of the high points in my course for many learners have had few opportunities to communicate, share and discuss ideas with native speakers. It is an extra incentive to convey meaning and advertising concepts in a clear and enjoyable way. In the process, it can increase “aware[ness] that people of different backgrounds can interpret an individual message in many different ways”. (Grigoryan and King, 2008, p. 7). Comments on this exchange ranged from class member, Lily’s (2009) self-evaluation, “It helped me to change different idea, information, viewpoint on CMs [commercials] which was made by ourselves with the University of Sherbrooke” to Misato (2009): “We learned about their culture. It was fun.” If an exchange is not envisaged, these videos could be used as promotional tools in Open Campus, posted on the school website, or showcase efforts on parents’ nights, (Grigoryan and King, 2008). Other benefits of performing via video rather than appearing directly in front of an audience were mentioned in Kearney and Schuck that students “believed that the video alternative reduced the anxiety of a live class presentation in front of their peers and improved their performance. [...] Everything can be prepared beforehand [...]. They then do not have people laugh at them.” (Kearney and Schuck, 2004, p. 4).

Finally, if foreign students are involved, it can be truly a win-win situation for all. One of the 2010 groups decided to invite a foreigner to participate, with the understanding that all needed to speak for an equal time in the dialogues. The foreign student was delighted to make new friends and in the process, my class benefited from the extra English practice, cooperation and feedback. As Hitomi notes in her 2010 interview: “To have Skye in our group was very good because when I was making the CM [commercial], I could ask how to say in English. He didn’t know *daifuku* so directly, we could know his real reaction. He is American so we could ask a lot of questions. When we were making the CM, we could think maybe American students have the same feelings as him. He was very good assistant for us”.

Storyboards. One of the most important points in creating successful productions prior to doing much writing of dialogues is to break down the scenes into short, manageable chunks via storyboards, etc.. As Einstein said, “If I can’t picture it, I can’t understand it.” (Atomic Storytelling Guide, (2007), p. 46. see Appendix A) Storyboards give learners a

analyze the needs of each scene as to locations, props and costumes, key words or phrases, characters, approximate timing, etc.. (see Cunningham and Batten, (2003)). Thanks to the storyboards, in the 2010 questionnaire, Nagisa realizes, “We use many camera angle, (front, up, back)” to further accomplish this goal. Indeed, short scenes can make or break a group project. It is crucial for learners to understand that if properly organized at this stage, the whole production can be easier to film. Finally, with short scenes, lines are fewer and therefore, easier to remember, which is important for those apprehensive about acting abilities.

During this section, group members are also learning about time management, for unfinished work must be completed after class. Approximately 2–3 classes are often devoted to this important work. Taking time at the start of a lesson for groups to discuss what needs to be achieved is useful. Occasional homework on how all is progressing is also helpful. Filming can be commenced on any scene that is ready and is a first wee taste of reality when filming.

Dress rehearsals. If possible, short individual group dress rehearsals are advisable as they permit the instructor to catch common mistakes such as filming into the light, backs to the camera, etc.. In addition, body language and timing can be quickly verified. Above all, rehearsals can be used to encourage those still lacking confidence.

Filming. In general, students have become increasingly familiar with video cameras but time is well spent in stressing good techniques such as using tripods, shooting scenes from several angles, stressing the importance of lighting, using panning, close up shots, leaving ten seconds of footage at either end of scenes, and so on. A charger, extra batteries and a headphone to verify segments immediately after filming minimize the need to reshoot later. Written permission may be required if filming off campus and owners of public places should be consulted. Some groups may be overly cautious in filming and re-filming. Unfortunately, this then takes up a great deal of computer memory when importing into iMovie2. If pre-production is done carefully, this problem can be solved. Upon return to the classroom, students should discuss the quality of the newly filmed scenes, with decisions made as to whether to proceed to video editing or re-take a shot.

Editing stage

It is likely that the majority of your learners will be inexperienced in using iMovie2, but usually, after approximately 20 minutes training, they can proceed. Six of the eight students in the two classes commented on how easy iMovie2 was. Fumiko (2010) stated that “iMovie2 was simpleness and ease to make **CM**. Only I had to do was clicking”. When introducing iMovie2, students should learn how to connect the camera to the computer, open the programme, import and save a working copy onto an external hard drive (or firewire drive) giving it a file name. The programme itself does all the initial work: clips are based on when the camera started and stopped, and are imported automatically after connecting the camera to the computer. Learners drag and drop clips onto a working track near the bottom of the screen for viewing and editing. Cutting unwanted parts of scenes, organizing clips into a desired order, reversing decisions when mistakes are made, integrating various effects, etc. are not difficult. Finally, learners should be taught how to export the finished project onto a **USB, DVD** or upload onto the Web (see TeacherTube information in the last paragraph of this section).

Teachers less familiar with the editing software, or those with large classes, may want to call upon a TA or student with experience in using iMovie2 to assist in the training. This increases time for supervising and advising those left in the classroom. Carney and Foss (2008) learned iMovie2 themselves and then, taught it as well. However, it took them away from helping lagging groups involved in script work or filming. One problem at this stage is that some groups may be sluggish and it is essential to be in the classroom to give encouragement and assistance so they too can be successful.

Once editing begins in earnest, there is much to do: appropriate music must be selected and imported into iMovie2, titles, captions and credits made, transitions chosen (such as fade ins or dissolves), special sound effects (drum rolls, etc.) added as well as other effects such as fast forwarding, freezing a frame, etc.. Students may also have to use 'voice over' (when a clip contains unplanned background interference or low volume, etc.) If projects are kept to one to two minutes, less computer memory is required. Working copies can be stored on external hard drives to avoid computers freezing when too much memory is used.

Deadlines should be constantly clarified for each phase of the project and class time given for some editing. If efficient, much can be completed in class. Lastly, a release form is signed by students as suggested by Glass (1992, p. 154). Final productions are saved onto a **USB** and then, preserved on the researcher's external hard drive. These are then burned onto a class **DVD** and each student can receive a memento of the project.

There are different options for uploading class projects onto the Internet, however, student security should be of concern and possibly even written permission from parents of younger learners. A relatively safe alternative is that of TeacherTube since once you sign up for free, you can choose to make your clips public or private. Other decisions include comments and ratings, etc. Maximum size is 100Gb and instructions to upload are simple. To make things easier, check that clips are: mpeg, avi, mov, mpg, flv, mp4, and ram. Once uploaded, it may take up to 24 hours for permission to post officially. (see Appendix A)

Exchange class

Completed productions are sent to the exchange class for feedback. "This feedback on their work is very different (and often supplementary) to other methods of deferring to a supervising teacher or other "expert"". (Kearney & Schuck, 2006) In the peer review evaluation sheet negotiated between classes and/or teachers, items to be judged may include originality, best screenplay, effectiveness of messages containing advertising claims, best slogans, best cinematography, etc.. To celebrate the learning and efforts of all, awards given to all participants (Cunningham and Batten, (2003), Sweeder (2007) but in my case, first choice of small, inexpensive souvenirs accorded from Canada are based on the feedback from the exchange class. Needless to say, comments should be constructive and encouraging. The exchange classes' announcement of the best commercials is always eagerly awaited.

The 2009 exchange with instructor Michelle Paradis and her second-year University of Sherbrooke students studying to be **ESL** teachers was exciting. Comments were helpful and, coming as they did from peers rather than the teacher, were well received by our students. Paradis had this to say about the collaboration: "This was a good assessment exercise for my students because they had to pay attention to specific production criteria and apply them to students they had never met". (personal communication, January 23, 2010) Thus, peer-assessment from across the globe was valuable in both cases.

162 In the 2010 exchange, Professor Tim Cook made the following comments: "As a Japanese

instructor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (**UAB**), a sister university of Ibaraki University, I had been looking for ways to make our sister connection feel more real than just an official paper agreement. Working with a like-minded English instructor at Ibaraki, I had the **UAB** students write their Japanese peers on an Internet bulletin board and participate in live Internet videoconferences with Ibaraki.

Eight **UAB** students of Japanese came out for viewing the Ibaraki students' video. While unanimous in their decision as to the better video, they appreciated both and mentioned strong points about both. Overall, the **UAB** students were genuinely impressed that the Ibaraki students could put together such videos. Neither I nor the students had attempted to do the same in Japanese for Japanese viewers. We composed a joint message to them as follows:

Greetings.

We've just watched your videos and it's unanimous: We like the Strawberry Daifuku video best. We liked the way you dressed up as daifuku and your dramatic reactions, which made it easier to tell what you were promoting. We want strawberry daifuku.

However, we also like the nabe video. It showed us how to actually make nabe and it made us hungry. There was also more natural English as well as some slang. Too bad your audio was a little choppy at the beginning. We understand how hard audio is. Thanks for sharing.

The **UAB** students judged the *daifuku* video best because the students did more acting. Video is an effective medium for such dramatization, which otherwise can feel awkward or silly to attempt in the classroom.

The suggestions for the Ibaraki students were all technical. Were we to do this over again, my suggestion as a Japanese instructor would be to follow up by asking the Ibaraki students to send us strawberry *daifuku* and combine that with our own attempt at making a *nabe* meal. We could then share all this live through another videoconference. (personal communication, May 24th, 2011)

In her 2010 interview, Hitomi suggested that, in addition, excitement would increase if the American students were to film their feedback, as opposed to simply posting. Combined with the ideas above, this would render the exchange more realistic yet and listening would be for a true purpose. The comments could be used to prepare further questions for the **UAB** class, thus making communication a real tool in the learning process.

While awaiting the feedback, the productions can be viewed and the class can enjoy the excitement of appearing on video. This part of the project is important and should not be neglected or hurried. However, Kearney and Schuck (2006) warn that all too often in the past "final class presentations became more of a 'show and tell' and lacked insightful discussion of underlying themes and concepts." Indeed, in my class, each group is responsible for presenting and discussing its clip. Clarifications of behind-the-scene decisions about the product, the message, slogans, difficulties and solutions are thus encouraged. Each member of the group should elaborate on one aspect and explain how content from the first section of the course was integrated. Questions and comments are also encouraged from classmates.

Assessment

A portfolio is an excellent tool to evaluate learning outcomes and for this reason, at the end of the project, learners review and reflect on work done individually and in groups in order to pinpoint meaningful learning throughout the course. Materials gathered and selected for this purpose demonstrate the work, in well-organized portfolios (Cunningham & Batten, 2003; Ambrose, 2002, Nikitina, 2011). Students comment on and analyze the degree to which course content such as advertising concepts, techniques and claims were integrated. They should also discuss participation (both individual accountability and positive interdependence in team work) and give a group mark. Goal setting and relevant outcomes can be clearly specified, constructive suggestions for improvement given, and concrete changes pointed out and celebrated. Stix (1997) mentions that, rather than requiring learners to use letter or numerical grades, self-assessed achievements and outcomes could include more neutral ratings of four possibilities such as 'attempted, admirable, and awesome' or non-pejorative rankings as 'novice, apprentice, proficient and distinguished', although a numerical ranking within each category could be required." (p. 4) Such a technique seems a particularly good alternative for those who are reticent about putting outcomes into writing. (Kearney and Schuck, (2004), p. 17)

The portfolio itself can contain such entries as a cover page, table of contents, 1-2 sources in English about the product, the brainstorming, the storyboard, several progress reports, the group-generated dialogue, and copies of email exchanges. The final self-evaluation of individual and group work, etc. can also give rich insights into the quality of the learning in relation to the team, language use, video content, time management, etc.. Other possible entries can include reports or logs on the amount of English spoken, vocabulary logs and work logs (mentioned briefly in *Discussion: Time management*, below).

The above may seem like an impossible amount of toil to evaluate and indeed, Henderson, Auld, Russell, Holkner, Tong Seah, Fernando and Romeo (2010, February) point to those who prefer to rely on additional video footage that the students themselves film as reflective comment on their individual skills (p. 18). However, if portfolio rubrics are employed such as those in *Digital Video in Education* (2002) points can be more quickly assigned in categories such as the storyboard, script, logs, overall content, technical points, cooperative group work, and so on. In the opinion of this author, this kind of portfolio is invaluable to lighten the load of the instructor since (s)he cannot be present in each group throughout the project. Using assessments of this kind focuses on both the process and the final video product thereby, rendering students accountable for their participation and learning.

Discussion

Courses or projects are naturally not without challenges. However, many problems can be circumvented, if forewarned. To this end, the self-reports, evaluations and interviews with members of the 2009 and 2010 classes were most valuable. In their interviews, Masashi (2009) and Fumiko (2010) both emphasized enjoying watching foreign commercials but recommended using as many as possible early on, for this provides vocabulary, examples, ideas for creating student-generated commercials as well as food for thought with which to participate more actively during the international class exchange. Lily (2009) realized that "a teacher is hard to find commercials to match the different interests in the class [sic]."

164 However, as mentioned above, having students select their own commercials for homework

can help satisfy all tastes and increase interest. In her interview, Fumiko (2010) stressed that watching and discussing the commercials encouraged learners to get more accustomed to expressing ideas, before arriving at the project stage. Masashi (2009) suggested the use of the latest commercials to expose all to the most up-to-date techniques and themes.

Themes and topics

Since we are in the Intercultural Communications section of our faculty, the focus of the theme for the student-generated commercials is connected to this area. To date, the third year students have been asked to introduce Japanese culture via related topics that they themselves select from an initial brainstorming session. In her interview, Fumiko (2010) thought that, especially at this stage, the choice of theme is important. She contended that, "If the theme is easier, not Japanese culture but university life of students for example, we could do it easier. We are Japanese so we can't feel the good things to interest the exchange class. I felt shortage of ideas. We can ask the exchange class and if they want to know daily life of us, we can take good movies." However, not all third-year learners agree with Fumiko. In her 2010 interview, Nagisa stated that in her group, the theme of seasonal food and nabe (hot pot) "was fun and interesting. I wanted to introduce Japanese culture and the theme was not difficult." Hitomi too, in her 2010 interview, emphasized that "the theme was good. It was a good experience to explain what is Japan and good to know the differences. For example, I learned that we don't ask questions sometimes, because it is rude. I didn't realize that before."

There can be many reasons why a group is slower in brainstorming, etc.. It would seem to me that university life can be readily included in the discussion of culture. It may have been that Fumiko's group needed to expand on strawberry daifuku to include several examples of other Japanese sweets. It could also be that "not all students will be effective planners and producers of digital video naturally and may require some structured skill development to maximize their potential." (Shuck and Kearney, 2004). Certainly, such situations will bear closer supervision in the future. Daniels (2004, January) mentions, "Commercials are a great way to get students to introduce their favorite restaurant, hometown or interests" as well as temples, sports, food, apartments, and so on.

However, it may be that real world topics such as a community issue might resonate more with certain groups. Such teams could consider commercials about a struggling business or community efforts which might benefit from added exposure (Digital Video in Education, 2002) or even issues such as saving power within an institution or city. The same might apply to language schools looking for future teachers from abroad, a non-profit organization, or charity seeking money to support earthquake-stricken areas, etc.. Whatever the case, with slower teams, it seems best to give more direct feedback and guidance when brainstorming. In this way, such groups may then pass on to collaborating on dialogues more quickly where English will be used. It is indeed a fine line to walk between offering more choice and exercising a little more control. Each instructor must judge how much autonomy to give, how to engage and motivate effectively and when to step in with more direct input, particularly at this stage. In order for learners to feel successful, the teacher must reflect on whether individuals are risk-takers or not and how to encourage creative behavior.

Also of value is the suggestion by Digital Videos in Education (2002) that teams should make specific proposals for the teacher to consider: "It is very important that the instructor

reads the proposals carefully (check spelling, etc.) and meet with the group, rejecting any proposals that may be too difficult or inappropriate. Project rejection and modification occurs often in the world of film. Only once they've received the Executive Director's stamp of approval may the students proceed with their projects." Elsewhere, Kearney and Schuck (2006) focus on storyboards, describing a "requirement that they [students] had to 'sell' their storyboard to their teacher (the director) (i.e. persuade their teacher of its worth) before they could start filming." (p. 2870) Thus, each member of the group can be responsible for discussing a scene, its reasons for existence, the challenges that may go into making it, etc.. In order to convince the instructor of their storyboard, students have to think more deeply by planning, analyzing and organizing it well. Ultimately, the best explanations at either of these stages could be filmed and conserved as models for future classes. If proposals are well thought out, clear and precise, students should be able to proceed more easily at the filming and video editing stages.

Filming and video editing

All seven students interviewed were in agreement in wanting to improve their speaking and listening skills. Among other reasons, in her interview, Fumiko (2010) mentioned that she enjoyed filming and that "it was fresh to take movies. I wasn't belong to movie clubs or drama. I had to speak, think in English and thinking in English was so fun for me." Lily (2009) stressed that knowledge of another language "does not just come from textbooks where we can get formal knowledge (vocabulary, grammar) but in such classes... in the **CM** [commercial] class, we can pay attention to music, slogans, and special words from daily life." Hitomi, in her 2010 interview, emphasized that working with the American exchange student, Skye, in her group was particularly useful because "He corrected our English many times. We could speak English but academic English... but he could speak every day English. It was good communication." In a sea of monolinguals, these moments of true exchange were precious. It is hoped that in future courses, such students can be enticed to participate again.

Nikitina (2011, January) states that such projects give learners the opportunity to express their world as they see it, "to define themselves as human beings and to make sense of their experiences". (p. 35) Fumiko explained in her 2010 interview, "I enjoy to be the person who can speak English. I felt a little pride. It was interesting to watch me in the commercial." In traditional monolingual **EFL** classes, most students will never conceive of their identities as other than strongly Japanese, even when speaking in the target language. It would seem that Fumiko is beginning to envisage a new English speaker identity which she began to note while engaged in filming and video editing. Perhaps, having to watch herself again and again on video helped reinforce this new image more strongly. Moreover, when viewing themselves in the video clips, students noticed various aspects of their culture and questioned ways of doing things in order to explain them. For example, Lily (interview, 2010) mentioned, "In making the **CM** [commercial], we joined together to make it ...to show Japanese culture. But what is Japanese culture? Is it appropriate to introduce this part of Japanese culture? When we live in this culture, it is more difficult to think about the customs, what we must pay attention to, the gifts we can find to give when we visit, how to talk to friends, express our appreciation, etc." This is one more good reason why an exchange can benefit all.

Time management

Time management can be another serious issue and sometimes, much of it can be lost in casting about for initial ideas or in filming long scenes, which then impacts negatively on the final video editing. The two principle stumbling blocks seem to be at the pre-production stage and video editing stage. Indeed, in her questionnaire, Misato (in the 2009 class) confesses: “We needed to talk over more and more before camera work.” Given the absenteeism in her group, in her interview, Hiroko (2010) states, “We needed more time to talk about it in classroom and in iMovie2. Our group would have [had] more time to ... All members didn’t come in practice and so we couldn’t make more ideas. We make it speedy so quality wasn’t good.” Hitomi, in her 2010 interview, puts the same request for more time into perspective by stating, “I think we needed maybe one class or 2 more classes to do this work to find more ideas and create dialogues.” It may be useful for students to build in a little extra time (as in real life) in the storyboards, rehearsals, and schedules for filming and video editing. Filling out a blank calendar or work log are also good visual reminders of the roles and responsibilities to be carried out by each member and task deadlines.

Music

Appropriate background music is important and although it would seem evident that students know to select suitable background music, it is not. The volume of the music in the 2009 class commercial vied with the oral message and undid much of the success. Students have to be reminded that volume levels should be kept constant throughout the video. 2009 Misato mentioned in her 2010 interview, “For example, music. If we [had] talked more, we could [have] prepare clearer CD.” Given this experience, music will be henceforth mentioned early in at the pre-production stage.

iMovie2

Teacher’s observations and learning. When using iMovie2, there are several key points to efficient editing as I learned. One is to distribute a list of pertinent basic vocabulary since learners do not necessarily know this specific language and it becomes tempting to lapse into their mother tongue. Words such as drag and drop, cut, edit, paste, scenes, are helpful to increase speaking in English.

Another key is to stress short scenes. Should mistakes occur, less time is spent on re-filming. In her interview, Fumiko (2010) added that learners should be told that it is “OK to erase or delete when use iMovie2” and not to worry about doing this. Some students become so interested and perfectionist at this stage that inordinate amounts of time are spent on editing. Finally, students should save, save, save!!! Computers tend to freeze so saving constantly reduces frustration and grief.

Students’ observations and learning. The students themselves had much to say about the project in the areas of course content, purposes and iMovie2, putting forth such constructive and insightful comments and suggestions.

To English or not to English. All truthfully admitted to using mostly Japanese when filming and working on iMovie2 after class, for, contrary to the reports of Kearney & Schuck (2004, 2005, 2006) who observed Australian classes where English was needed to convey

meaning, EFL monolinguals do not have to express themselves in English when working on such projects. However, many used this viewing time as an opportunity to focus on various aspects of their English such as vocabulary, pronunciation and intonation. Lily (2010 interview) mentions that “from learning CMs (commercials), by paying attention to it, the class helps me know what is normal language in CMs when design short slogan, etc. ... CM needs short time to express plenty of meaning, to introduce different things. It pushed me to know idioms, proper vocabulary in certain areas. It influenced me.” Finally, Hitomi, in her 2010 interview, stated, “I think I could learn real English and that if I wanted to make an impact, I should not use very long sentences, just simple words and more body language. I needed daily words, not academic English.”

In the area of speaking, in her interview, Fumiko (2010) clarified further, “I could listen to my pronunciation and talking again. When I saw the movie, I thought I couldn’t speak English well so I wanted to improve my pronunciation. It was useful...” As mentioned above, there are not so many opportunities for students to speak English in Japan and it is my belief that I should have offered Fumiko (2010) and others like her, more support to improve speaking by recording dialogues on MP3 recorders before dress rehearsals. In this way, apprehension about enunciation, grammar or vocabulary could be lessened, resulting in more confidence during delivery. In her 2010 interview, Nagisa remarked that while watching herself on iMovie2, she realized that her intonation and voice volume needed improving. She states, “When my group filmed, another three members were very active, smiling, with very big voice but I am very nervous. I tried hard but when I watched my voice tone is very low, another three members’ voices were very high so I thought, ‘Next time filming, I try more active and projecting’. Another three members said: ‘Don’t be nervous and gradually, I changed.’” This comment points both to positive affective learning outcomes and group cohesiveness. Thanks to peer support, Nagisa has grown in self-esteem and risk-taking. Lily (2009 interview) too stated: “By the end of the course, there was a kind of cooperation in our group. We exchanged ideas and opinions on our objectives and tried our best to make it. It pushed us to use English and practice our English and if we couldn’t understand, it was challenging and interesting. We are not professionals but it pushed us to focus on expressing ourselves.” Both groups have developed good teamwork skills which helped them engage and achieve good results. Quite literally, Nagisa and Lily are finding their voices and learning to express their personalities.

However, the question still remains. What can be done pedagogically to encourage more active participation in English beyond lists of words and MP3 recordings? Needless to say, after class, teachers must attend to their own busy schedules but when the ‘cat’ is away from the computer room, the ‘mice’ will play, especially in the case of monolingual classes. In her interview, Hitomi (2010) explained that “If you [Joyce] are there, we speak in English. We talked in Japanese where you were not there. If there, our skills was improve. Sometimes we had a question: is this word good or not but if you are there, we can ask you.” In her 2010 interview, Lily voiced a similar opinion when she stated, “If the teacher is there, it will encourage and push students who are maybe all shy to use language which they are not good at, how to express themselves clearly. If the teacher encourages us we can express appropriately what kind of expressions we need.” It was Nagisa (2010 interview) who suggested a possible solution. In her opinion, it would be acceptable for the instructor to be in the computer room working on lesson preparation and that the presence would encourage more active English. This compromise between consultative presence and personal pedagogical work is certainly worth considering, when benefits outweigh the extra

'duties'. Of course, not all instructors have this flexibility but teaching assistants or native speaker foreign students are another possible resource.

Other interview comments were rather focused on needing more time during the editing stages. One possible solution to sensitizing students to time management (and finances) is mentioned in *Digital Video in Education* (2000) which suggests allotting an imaginary sum of money for each team's project budget: "Assign a project budget of \$3,500, where each student hour costs them \$85.00. The students log each hour on their work log, and then try to complete the project within the assigned budget." In this way, learners become more responsible to the team and for their own availability, as one particular shortcoming is regular attendance. In the 2009 course, the two auditing students did not come regularly, causing an imbalance in iMovie2 work. In 2010, this improved somewhat but, during video editing, Hitomi admitted to only being present once, thereby causing undue pressure on the others. In third year, students do have busy job hunting schedules. In real life, however, the results of missing deadlines would be increased costs in production and less profit. Students must realize that their decisions have an effect on team members as well as their own grades.

Conclusion

It is my belief that this student-generated project can promote meaningful language and real-life learning situations linked to contemporary content. It can increase interest, motivation and autonomy in decision making. In the process, students are exposed to authentic listening containing everyday vocabulary and form encountered in commercials and there is incentive to analyze the conventions, attitudes, values, assumptions and beliefs of the target culture with a more critical eye.

In such an environment, making memorable commercials requires learners to become more autonomous when brainstorming and planning, organizing and negotiating steps and responsibilities. Work must be gathered, synthesized and assessed in rubrics and portfolios, and time managed efficiently. Learners can feel successful and take pride in the ownership of their final polished products where they have integrated basic claims, slogans, explicit and implicit messages used by advertisers, etc.. Furthermore, budding technical skills have been encouraged in several media tools such as MP3s, email, digital recorders, and movie editing software. If international partners are involved, reflection on valuable peer feedback will enhance learning outcomes.

However, just as with advertisers' claims, it is essential to deepen the understanding between teachers' beliefs about the perceived benefits of computer technology and actual practice which can be complicated and at times, possibly overwhelming for some learners when such technology is involved. Therefore, in the present study, it was important to listen to the student voices to better grasp the true nature of the learning. The questionnaires and interviews with seven of the eight students provided valuable insights into learner perceptions of using computer technology. The student voices and concerns have inspired this author to consider how to develop better classroom instruction related to student-generated video technology. Given the constructive feedback, in the future, it will be vital to continue to identify and adapt effective activities and strategies to improve the learning incurred in filming and computer technology in order to better measure the impact such learning has on our learners.

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Author biodata

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Appendix A

Tutorials

Atomic Learning, Inc. (2007). Video storytelling guide. (Downloads section). Retrieved on June 12, 2011, from <http://www.atomiclearning.com/k12/freexamples.shtml>
—This guide is helpful to review camera techniques and terminology.

iMovie2 www.apple.com/support/ilife/imovie/

—If you have iMovie2, this site shows you wonderfully easy new features such as movie trailers, one step effects, and people.

<http://multimedia.journalism.berkeley.edu/tutorials/imovie/>

—This delightful site will introduce you to an easy step by step description on using iMovie2 beginning with how to connect the camera to the computer. Instructions are clear and accompanied by visual support to show you exactly what to do.

Teachertube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TtZ-qpCum0>

This tutorial will help you understand how to upload your commercial videos to this site which is free for members. Look for “TeacherTube for WAVV Part 1, 2 and 3”. It can take up to 24 hours before you have permission to upload.

Windows MovieMaker <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-vista/Getting-started-with-Windows-Movie-Maker>
—This site introduces you to Moviemaker and how to use the programme.

Appendix B

Media Literacy

Media-awareness.ca <http://media-awareness.ca/english/index.cfm>
—This site has quite a few interactional educational quizzes that students can take to make them more savvy about advertising about alcohol, fashion, internet gimmicks and so on. It also has good information on media violence and stereotyping, etc.

Media Literacy.com <http://www.aboutus.org/MediaLiteracy.com>
http://www.medialiteracy.com/advertising_consumerism_media.htm

PSB Teachers <http://www.pbs.org/teachers/>
—This site provides good information on media and advertising accompanied by teaching plans in such areas as the image of women in media and suggests materials and resources, often with quizzes, links to other websites, etc.

Stapleton, P. (1997, May). Japanese and American television commercials: A cultural study with **TEFL** applications. *JALT Journal*, 19(1). 123–137,
—If based in Japan, this article is a good jumping off place to acquaint you with the cultural differences between Japanese and American television commercials for content-based classes.

Appendix C

Video resources for the classroom

EnglishCentral.com
—EnglishCentral provides a downloadable coursebook with 20 lessons on watchable commercials for lower level beginners which include vocabulary and grammar practice, speech recognition for pronunciation feedback and a method of tracking students' progress, etc..

Media Education Foundation <http://www.mediaed.org/wp/handouts-articles#V-Z>
—This site provides worksheets on deconstructing advertisements, films and other educational resources on mass media.

Media Literacy Clearing House <http://www.frankwbaker.com/>
—This site provides a wide range of information on ads and includes visuals, lesson plans and worksheets. Material is well categorized but so abundant that you will need to spend some time to satisfy your needs.

Sapporo Beer Commercial — Legendary Biru <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-Rs6YEZAt8>

—This amazing commercial was not shot in Japan but in China and made by a Toronto-based Dentsu (advertising agency). Good discussion material getting interesting reactions from Japanese students on others' perceptions of them. Background music and rhythm are catchy: Worthwhile sample of different areas to aim for in a commercial.

Slideshare <http://www.slideshare.net>

—Many excellent powerpoint presentations on advertising, available for free downloading. It also offers "The best commercials for teaching English" which can be downloaded along with several worksheets at <http://www.slideshare.net/ddeubel/top-100-youtube-videos-for-teachers>

TeacherTube <http://www1.teachertube.com/>

—A free site for teachers and students with abundant videos and lesson plans. Your videos can be uploaded here. Very useful for a variety of topics and areas.

Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/>

—**TV** ads and commercials can be found here and if you are not worried about safe sites, you can upload videos here too.

Youtube www.youtube.com/

—Abundant **TV** commercials and ads. Uploading is also an option here. Youtube is owned by Google and a Google account allows you a number of advantages.