

Title: Finding the Murder Weapon – Innovative Approaches to Using Digital Media as Learning Tools

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L2 advancement, viewed from the perspective of functional linguistics as developed by M. A. K. Halliday, is based on contextualized learning. Language is embedded in culturally bound contexts that are manifested in a range of genre types. Second language acquisition increases when students are exposed to meaningful and relevant culturally based content. Language learning is necessarily experiential; students learn by using their language skills.

Digital media are changing the way people communicate, learn and socialize. The goal of this semester long project was to revise a standard intermediate level curriculum in such a way as to use digital media as the primary learning tools. Digital media technologies lend themselves to promoting and enhancing active contextualized learning as conceived by Halliday. Digitized film exposes learners to contextual cues (gestures and facial expressions) that accompany spoken language. The film making process requires students to apply their knowledge and use a wide range of active language and passive skills in a creative process.

This paper will report on an intermediate language curriculum that uses the detective genre as the primary frame for a semester-long course. The topics presented in the standard intermediate level curriculum such as physical description of people, expressing emotion, describing motion and pragmatic collocations (making requests, politeness, issuing commands, etc.) were integrated into a detective drama. Selections from detective fiction as well as clips from TV crime series were used for mastery of vocabulary. During second half of the semester students created an original detective drama for which they wrote a screenplay, designed a storyboard, acted, shot, and edited a 12–15 minute film. This paper will present an overview of the curriculum and give samples of the multimedia materials that were used produced.

Halliday, M. A. K. and Ruqaiya Hasan. 1991. *Language, Context and Text*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.