

Creating Interactive Skill-Based Units in World News Class

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General Background

**Two Courses: 1) World News (two-year college)
2) Studies in Current World Events (four-year university)**

- Courses are identical in materials and assessments
- One-year courses (two semesters: Spring, Fall)
- Content-based with strong focus on vocabulary and listening
- Authentic English language news stories (BBC, NHK, etc.)
- Assessments: worksheets (paper and on-line) and quizzes (Google Forms)
- All students are required to take the course for their college/university
- All students receive the same content, regardless of language ability

General Background

Students

- Second-year university students
- TOEIC Score: 255 - 925, Average 495.2
- Students are streamed into one of six class levels according to IP TOEIC score.

Original Lesson Plan

- Twelve units (six per semester)
- Approximately 2-1/2 weeks per unit
- Students download unit materials from Google Classroom to their iPads
 - Each activity is a separate download
- Each unit consists of
 - Brief introduction of the topic
 - Video
 - Warm-up discussion questions
 - Vocabulary List
 - Matching HW
 - Fill in the Blank HW
 - Reading
 - Reading Comprehension Questions (HW)
 - Video
 - Listening Comprehension Questions HW
 - Transcription HW
 - Discussion Questions
 - Unit Quiz

Problems

- Students get much of their daily news from the Internet, particularly from Social Networking Services (SNS)
- Students have low awareness of how their opinions are shaped by their online activities
- Students lack the critical thinking skills necessary to analyze and evaluate the news and news sources
- SCWE/WN courses focus on memorization of vocabulary and information, not media literacy skills.

Solution: Skill Units

1. Fake news
2. Bias
3. Filter bubbles
4. Image and graph manipulation

Two skill units per semester

1. Spring semester

- a. Fake news
- b. Bias

2. Fall semester

- a. Filter bubbles
- b. Image and graph manipulation

Skill Units - Development

1. Topics must be topical (natch!)
2. Topics must fit course requirements for reading, listening, discussion activities
3. Topics must be understood by students with a wide-range of language skills
4. Topics must develop life-long skills
5. Topics and materials must be accessible using available technology (all students have iPads)

Unit 1: Fake News

Goals - By the end of the unit, students will be able to:

- Understand how to read a newspaper article
- Understand why people create fake news
- Understand how they create fake news
- Identify Fake News using five strategies
- Create fake news articles

Unit 1: Outline

1. Vocabulary and Reading a News Article
2. Trial Activity
3. Warm-up Discussion Questions
4. How to Identify Fake News (Five Strategies)
5. Discussion Questions (Purpose of Fake News)
6. The Fake News Business Model
7. How to Write Fake News
8. Collaboratively create a Fake News Story

Unit 2: Bias

Goals - by the end of the unit, students will be able to:

- Understand what biased news is
- Understand how to identify Bias (six ways)
- Understand how biased news influence people
- Demonstrate how words create Bias
- Understand how to create Biased News
- Create a Biased News Story

Unit 2: Outline

1. Warm-up Discussion Questions
2. Vocabulary Practice
3. Examples of Bias
4. Six Ways to Identify Bias
5. Identifying Bias
6. Discussion Questions (Personal, Social, Political Bias)
7. How to Make Biased News
8. Create a Biased News Story

Unit 3: Filter Bubbles

Objective - To raise students' awareness of the consequences of their online activities

Goals - By the end of the unit, students will be able to:

- Explain what a filter bubble is
- Understand how filter bubbles are created
- Understand that everyone is in multiple filter bubbles
- Understand that filter bubbles impact the kind of news they get
- Know how to avoid/minimize the negative effects of filter bubbles

Unit 3: Outline

Four assessed activities (in bold), 8 optional activities

1. What is a Filter Bubble?
2. Warm-up Discussion Questions
3. **Vocabulary** (worksheet w/online quiz)
4. **Beware of online filter bubbles** (TED Talk Worksheet)
5. **Why Collaborative Filtering is Putting You in a Bubble** (Reading w/online quiz)
6. Search Engines Activity
7. Your Identity is a Filter Bubble
8. Twelve Ways to Avoid Being Trapped in a Filter Bubble
9. What Information Do Websites Collect?
10. See your Filter Bubble Change
11. What is my IP Address?
12. **Unit quiz** (online)

Unit 3 activity: TED Talk - Beware of online filter bubbles

Purpose: to raise student awareness of filter bubbles, how they are created, and their impact on their online activities, particularly the news they get

- Students watch TED Talk video
 - For lower level classes, students can turn on English/Japanese translation/transcription
- Students form groups of three or four
- Students work through the worksheet questions and activity
- Students submit their worksheets to Google Classroom for assessment
 - Teachers can download answer key from Google Classroom

Unit 4: Image and Graph Manipulations

Goal- By the end of the unit, students will be able to:

- Explain how images are manipulated
- Understand what a deepfake is and the purpose of creating it
- Identify the four ways to manipulate information with graphs
- Understand the effects of manipulated pictures and graphs on your opinion about news
- Manipulate pictures to match (biased) headlines

Unit 4: Outline

1. Unit introduction & Warm-up Discussion Questions
2. Unit Vocabulary Practice - (Vocabulary Match HW)
3. Image Manipulation (perspective and cropping)
4. Deepfakes - (Reading Comprehension HW)
5. Basic Parts of The Graph / Three common types of graphs
6. Four Ways Writers Use Misleading Graphs to Manipulate You
7. What is Wrong With These Graphs
8. Unit Quiz

Current Results

- Student media creation skills
- Student engagement in the skill unit lessons
- Positive comments on productive activities (Course Feedback)

Future Development

- Implementation of skills in content units
 - 4 skill units out of 12 units
 - Currently isolated from the other units
- Cumulative testing of skills
- Longitudinal study on skill retention

Q and A session

Thank you for your participation