

USING SONGS TO TEACH ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

<https://community.lincs.ed.gov/discussion/songs-learn-english>

IN 1999 while I lived in Tijuana, I taught English in a private school that was both a high school and a two year of college.

I had 6 to 8 classes every day – with 40 students, no materials, small rooms, and no idea what to do with so many young people!!!!!!

I was very frustrated. Every night I would go back to my apartment and turn on the radio, to a station that played American popular songs, such as the Beatles.

Then one day I had an idea. The radio I used was also a tape recorder that used audio cassettes. It was a Dual Cassette player and I could make copies of a cassette.

So at night I put a tape in to record the songs from the radio station. Then when I had 10 good songs, I made a master tape that I used to make lots of copies. I went to a store to buy cassettes which came in packages of 10, and I bought enough for all the students and made copies during the next week.

I also printed the lyrics to hand out to the students. You can imagine their surprise when I walked in one Monday with my tape recorder and a backpack filled with cassettes.

Here is the first song that we “studied” in class:

“Saw Her Standing There” - by The Beatles

Well, she was just seventeen,

And you know what I mean -

The way she looked was way beyond compare.

So how could I dance with another

When I was her standing there?

Well, she looked at me,

Etc., etc.

In the classes we studied pronunciation and grammar.

The pronunciation exercises included:

1. "TH" - with vibration, there, the , that, without vibration, through.
2. "j" - just
3. The "t" sound of various regular verbs - looked, crossed, danced.
4. "V" - love
5. gh words - through, night, tight

Grammar lessons included:

1. The past tense of irregular verbs - saw, was, went, held, fell.
2. The use of could and would.
3. The use of the apostrophe - I'd, wouldn't, I'll.
4. The use of will - I'll.

Well nowadays I use YouTube songs with the lyrics superimposed for the students to study and also to practice reading out loud and for listening comprehension. After a while, we sing the songs! I also have a Songs group on Facebook using this format.

Anyway, I encourage everybody to use songs in class, and you can send some to your students via your smartphone, which I do for ...homework.