Teaching American Culture:
Film-based vs. Lecture-based Instruction[*]

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Kim, Haeyoung. 2020. Teaching American culture: Film-based vs. lecture-based instruction. *Korean Journal of English Language and Linguistics* 20, 282-306. This article explores the utility of films in the American cultural studies classroom. Argument for using film as a teaching tool for cultural studies in the language classroom is based on a comparison between classes taught through two different methods: a lecture-based course (control group) and a film-based course (treatment group). Data used in this study include pretest and posttest scores from tests measuring knowledge in American culture obtained before and after the treatment, and course evaluation scores from both groups. Results showed that the treatment group achieved higher scores on both cultural knowledge acquisition while the course satisfaction levels of the two groups were not statistically significant. These outcomes indicate that film-based courses can be as effective as, or in this case, more effective than the traditional lecture courses. The study also discusses the need for further development of film-based courses to enhance student learning in the language classroom. Implications and limitations of the study are also presented.

Keywords: American culture education, film-based instruction, lecture-based instruction, course satisfaction, quantitative analysis, tertiary education

1. Introduction

While the idea of integrating culture into the foreign language curriculum is anything but new, it was only during the 1980s that researchers began to emphasize the inseparability of language and culture (Byram and Kramsch 2008). Alptekin (2002) argued that learning a foreign language means enculturation through which people acquire new cultural frames of reference and a new world view. Today, language teaching has indeed become culture

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teaching.

As the English language assumes the status as the de facto lingua franca of modern day society, EFL classrooms are striving to seek ways to raise students into proficient intercultural speakers. This trend has been reinforced by the shift from the communicative approach to the intercultural approach, triggered partly by the recent technological breakthroughs in multimedia gadgets and devices, and has brought about a fundamental change in the role of media in teaching and learning, leading to ground-breaking innovations in the language classroom.

Of the multimedia formats, film is a great education means for transmitting knowledge and ideas. It is an excellent source of information about the outside world. Students are almost immediately attracted to this different mode of communication, and research has shown that students are drawn more to film than to text when absorbing information (Lee and Choi 2015), as its inherent nature of imparting knowledge via both visual and auditory senses makes the information last longer than any other means of teaching.

While films are hailed as one of the most effective teaching tools in the cultural studies classroom, its utility as a means to enhance the students' cultural knowledge is an area which lacks sufficient research. In fact, research on the efficacy of film in the foreign language classroom has largely focused on its role in improving functional skills such as debate/discussions, pronunciation, reading, vocabulary, listening, and writing (Albiladi, Abdeen and Lincoln 2018, Istanto 2009, Miura 2015, Tognozzi 2010). Thus, growing interest in and demand for the use of films in building intercultural competence call for solid evidence to lend support to the numerous experiential and anecdotal data on the efficacy of films in the classroom accumulated throughout the years.

This article examines the efficacy of utilizing film as a teaching strategy to enhance the acquisition of cultural knowledge in a foreign language classroom. The following research questions were used to guide the study:

1) Of the lecture-based and film-based cultural studies courses, which is more effective in cultural knowledge acquisition?
2) Of the two types of courses, which course did the students find more satisfying?

A comparison of two different classroom settings - one based on lecture, and the other based on film - was made to test the hypothesis that using films is as effective a method as the traditional one-directional lecture-style teaching.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Culture Studies in the Foreign Language Classroom

Why teach culture? What is its utility, and what outcome do we expect to achieve? Despite the various definitions of culture covering its scope ("From 'high art' - literature, music, architecture, etc. - on the one hand, to popular culture on the other" (Karpova and Kartashkova 2010, p. 116)), expanse of time ("an evolving way of life of a group of persons, consisting of a shared set of practices associated with a shared set of products, based upon a shared set of perspectives on the world, and set within specific social contexts" (Moran 2001, p. 24)), and commonality ("membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and common imaginings" (Moran 2001, p. 10)), one unequivocal stance is that the cultivation of awareness and sensitivity towards other cultures is an essential quality to be possessed by all citizens in the multicultural world of the 21st century.

Drawing a boundary separating language and culture is a futile task, and it is universally agreed upon that the study of a foreign language is in fact the study of another culture. Larsen-Freeman (2001) considered culture as the fifth element in language learning in addition to reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Kramsch (1993), in turn, put culture in a separate category altogether, stating that

> culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill, tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It is always in the background, right from day one, ready to unsettle the good language learners when they expect it least, making evident the limitations of their hard-won communicative competence, challenging their ability to make sense of the world around them. (p. 1)

Recent developments, both national and international, call for an enhanced multicultural understanding as well as a cross-cultural awareness in the classroom so that students may "benefit by gaining solid knowledge of the different world cultures, and develop the ability to compare their native culture to other cultures, to evaluate critically and interpret the results of such comparisons, and to apply this knowledge successfully in both verbal and non-verbal communication" (Chlopek 2008, p. 12).

In light of the increasing emphasis on the need for multicultural literacy in the classroom,

the language pedagogy has responded with a major transformation of its own, i.e., moving away from the communicative competence model, which sets interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal. Learners faced with the daunting and unrealistic task of blending seamlessly into a fixed target culture generally fail to achieve such goal despite a long apprenticeship spanning up to a decade. The intercultural approach, on the other hand, emphasizes cross-cultural awareness and de-emphasizes the acquisition of a native-like identity. It encourages the learner to carve out a "third place" (Kramsch 1993). This approach frees the learner from the burden of having to imitate the "native speaker" and fit into the mold of a target model, and allows the learner to make negotiations between one's own culture and the target culture.

The range of culture dealt with in the classroom has also undergone an expansion which reaches far beyond the four Fs, i.e., foods, fairs, folklore, and statistical facts, a mainstay of communicative language courses. Culture in the intercultural classroom refuses boundaries and is viewed as a combination of mixes and flows, often even creating confusion rather than definite answers. In fact, it is subject to constant modification through extensive and intensive exploration. As a result, learners find themselves delving into various sources in search of meaning in the other culture and striving to find answers for real problems facing the world. In other words, building intercultural literacy and competence addresses the learners' need to understand, empathize, and communicate with members from other cultures (Byram 1997, Corbett 2003, Phipps and Gonzalez 2004).

Teaching culture in the language classroom requires careful planning and a well-designed organization. It can be challenging for the instructor, as the emphasis placed on both communication and cross-cultural competence demands higher level of language and cultural proficiency on the part of the teacher. Nevertheless, the increasing need for intercultural competence and its incorporation into the language learning environment calls for a new teaching model. And it is the task of the instructor to be aware of the similarities and differences between cultures and to arm oneself with background knowledge as well as language skills.

2.2 Film as an Authentic Tool of Language Instruction

Nowadays, learners engage in learning by absorbing and processing visual data with the use of a computer. The thinking process is activated and facilitated through the input in the form of words and images. The status of image has been elevated from a simple reproduction of reality to a language of its own and a re-creation of reality. As Barbash and Taylor (1997)

states, "Film brings people and cultures alive on the screen, capturing the sensation of living presence, in a way that neither words nor even still photos can" (p. 1). The images and scenes presented in films can have a lasting impression on the viewers. Films enable learners to use visual information as a way to improve comprehension through facial expressions, gestures, and other elements of body language that accompany speech (Richards and Gordon 2004).

Through the use of films, students are given the opportunity to access elements that are not obvious in texts, such as behaviors, attitudes, and reactions. Students are immediately connected to the language and cultural issues at the same time (Stephens 2001). The combination of visual and aural input presents a full context for language, as students observe, speculate and discuss the story and events unfolding before their eyes. Thus, if such new literacies represent a new language of power, it is in the interest of the students that such medium be introduced to and actively used in the learning environment.

The idea of using films in the EFL classroom has been around since the 1970's with the introduction of VCR. While the value of films may not have been immediately acknowledged at first, teachers eventually grew to accept this non-traditional format into the classroom, and researchers predicted that films in the EFL classroom would serve as a valuable learning tool and become an important component of the curriculum.

Another surge in technological innovation in recent years opened up yet again a new chapter in the use of film in the classroom. The "Millennial" or "Net" generation, born between 1981 and 2000, come into the classroom with a set of beliefs different from that of previous generations with regard to teamwork, social behavior, and learning as a whole (Nicholas 2008, Skiba and Barton 2006). These so-called "digital natives" (Berk 2009) grew up in a digitally saturate environment which validate the argument that the courses they take should adapt to a new modern social environment so that their learning needs are met. An effective way to entice tech-savvy Millennial learners while taking full advantage of the technological proficiencies they are known to possess is developing open-access multimodal courses (Kirakosian, McLaurin and Speck 2015).

2.3 Cultural Studies and Film

More often than not, lack of access to contextualized language learning makes it difficult for learners to cultivate intercultural competence in the language classroom. One way to address this problem is to use film as a teaching tool (Pegrum 2008, Pegrum, Hartley and Wechtler 2005). Due to its familiarity as one of the most popular media of cultural discourse,

film is an effective vehicle for exploring intercultural literacy. It is a "story another culture tells about itself" (Kern 2000, p. 21). The narrative presented by films calls for an analysis of the visual imagery, such as light, camera, sound, music, language, and interpretation. In other words, it serves as a reference point to understanding another world within a narrative context. This involves intense thinking on the part of the viewer about the film itself and its implications.

In addition to enhancing language proficiency by providing ample examples of authentic language use, films construct and represent the ideologies of its culture (Turner 2006). It is also an excellent communicator of cultural values, bringing the unfamiliar outside world into the classroom. As Mishan (2005) states, "A well-crafted film about contemporary society can yield huge amounts of cultural information, from trivia to their basic value systems" (p. 226). Thus, film with its image, language, and cultural context intertwined is an excellent "looking glass" through which viewers can catch a glimpse of another culture. In order to help expand the reach of instruction, teachers may use film as a frame in which information literacy and culture are blended. By providing ways to interpret and understand the history, politics, and social issues through film, students can fully achieve the information literacy, and expand and apply their knowledge in the real world.

Another important issue is the suitability of the film to be used in the classroom. This is a crucial step lest the students fall into potential pitfalls of receiving misinformation and/or forming stereotypes. The film should have cultural value within the target culture itself, and the cultural issues dealt with by the film must attract students' interest. In addition, linguistic aspects of the film are another important factor that should be weighed in when selecting a film. Voller and Widdows (1993) proposed that teachers select films of contemporary topics which use standard English (British or American), and avoid films with dialects, technical words, and long monologues. Slow-moving films or ones which require extensive background knowledge should also be avoided.

A typical cultural studies course at the tertiary education level mostly involve printed text as course material, holding steadfast to the tradition of using the written language as the predominant means of instruction. It focuses on factual information of the target culture, and in many cases, unaccompanied by contextualized texts, neither written nor image. As a result, the lecture-based delivery of cultural information remains in the students' minds as standardized and static rather than as a dynamic and flexible topic subject to diverse interpretations and change.

Despite the heavy emphasis put on the use of film as a new medium of instruction in the language classroom, few research has been conducted regarding the effectiveness of its use

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for educational purposes. In fact, the bulk of research dealing with the role of film as a conveyor of cultural knowledge focuses on content limited to the four Fs (foods, fairs, folklore, statistical facts) and/or paralinguistic features (Tognozzi 2010, Truong and Tran 2014). Even fewer is research done on a quantitative scale, although a study by Khosrav, Moharami and Karimkhanlouei (2014) which researched the effect of using simplified version of literary texts and film adaptation on the student knowledge retention presents a measured outcome of knowledge improvement among students. Results showed evidence that using such tools enhanced comprehension, knowledge retention, and student satisfaction. Therefore, this study aims to answer the research questions based on quantitative data obtained through structured research design and examine the efficacy of using films in a cultural studies class through a direct comparison of knowledge achievement and course satisfaction between a traditional lecture-based class and a film-based class.

3. Methodology

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the utility of films when they are incorporated into the cultural studies classroom. A comparison of the cultural knowledge achievement and course satisfaction level was made between students in a conventional lecture-based course (control group) and those in a film-based course (treatment group). Cultural knowledge achievement was measured through the retention of knowledge taught in class at the end of the semester. Also, a comparison was made between the two groups on their course satisfaction level.

3.1 Participants and Setting

The study was carried out at a South Korean university during the fall semester of 2019. The subjects of this study were composed of 111 undergraduate students taking one of two American cultural studies courses offered by the English language and literature program at the university: Understanding American Culture, a lecture-based course (n = 60), and Understanding American Culture through Film, a course taught using films (n = 51). Both courses were taught by the same instructor, and the subjects ranged from second- to fourth- year students. The courses were elective courses offered to English major students. The breakdown of the student demographics is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Student Demographics

	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year	Total	English Major	English Major (%)
Control	0	34 (34)	20 (19)	6 (3)	60	56	93.3%
Experimental	0	8 (8)	16 (13)	27 (16)	51	37	72.5%

( ) indicates the number of English major students

3.2 Design of the Study

A quantitative design was chosen for the comparison of cultural knowledge acquisition between the control group and the treatment group. The curricula of the lecture-based course and the film-based course included six common themes. Over the course of a 15-week semester, the classes met for 150 minutes, twice per week. During the first week of the semester, a pre-test was administered on both groups to assure the validity of the treatment (See Appendix A). The test consisted of 15 multiple-choice or true/false items on general knowledge about the United States.

The Understanding American Culture course is mainly based on lecture in which the lecturer acts as the main provider of information using written materials including a textbook [1], lecture notes, and other complementary resource. The textbook is based on cultural issues linked with the past and present of American society. For example, the issue of diversity is first looked into through America's past including Native Americans, African slaves, and the history of immigration mainly from the European continent. Then, the topic expands to more current issues such as immigration from non-white non-European nations and undocumented illegal immigration. Students were given a quiz before each new chapter of the textbook to ensure that the students have the basic knowledge to absorb additional information disseminated during class. In addition, students were required to study the location of the 50 states of the U.S. as the progression of American society is deeply related to its expansion from the East to the West coast of the North American continent. While the course is not a history course, familiarizing the students with the geography of the U.S. was one of the key components of the course considering the composition of the textbook.

The Understanding American Culture through Film is an American cultural studies course in which films are used to enhance the students' understanding of the cultural themes

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[1] Williams, J. 2013. *Academic Encounters* (2nd ed.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

discussed in class. The course was divided into two parts: a lecture in which the instructor made a short presentation on the assigned topic followed by film showings. In a lesson on the Great Depression, for example, the cause and effect of the decade-long economic depression was examined, followed by its long-lasting impact and institutional changes on American society. The film selected for this segment, *Cinderella Man*, a film based on a real story, deals with the suffering of the American people during this period. In addition, movie reviews and stories related to the film, especially when it is based on real people and events, are presented to the students. The film was shown in its entirety and not in segments. The themes taught in both courses were American expansion, diversity and immigration, the Great Depression, civil rights, women's rights, and capitalism.

At the end of the semester, students in both courses were given tests to answer questions related to the topics taught during the semester to measure their understanding and knowledge growth (See Appendix B). The test items were part of a different test set for both courses, as each course taught other topics that were not taught in the other. In addition, course evaluations administered by the university were also used as data to measure and compare learner satisfaction level (See Table 8).

3.3 Treatment

Instruments used in this study for the experimental group were films related to the topics discussed in class (See Table 2).

Table 2. Course Topics and Films

Topic	Film
American Expansion	Dances with Wolves (1990)
Diversity and Immigration	My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002)
The Great Depression	Cinderella Man (2005)
Civil Rights	Mississippi Burning (1988)
Women's Rights	Thelma and Louise (1991)
Capitalism	Wall Street (1987)

The criteria for selecting the films followed the guidelines proposed by Tasgold and DeCuir-Gunby (2012). First, the purpose of the film was determined. Second, more recent movies were chosen to secure social and cultural relevance and to prevent students from getting distracted by features not directly related to the topic, such as outdated clothing,

manner of speech, etc. Third, films with multiple layers of relevance were selected, that is, films that address several major issues in the grand scheme in addition to the topic at hand were chosen. Fourth, reading materials related to the film, such as movie reviews and newspaper articles were provided to the students. Fifth, films with which the students can relate on a personal and social level were selected so that students may engage in self-reflection and make the connection between the cultural topic and their own lives.

The film was presented to the students in its entirety with Korean subtitles. While Canning-Wilson (2000) states that the film as a teaching tool is most effective in improving listening comprehension when shown in segments and not as a whole, the film-based course adopted a different method, as the purpose of the course was to learn about cultural topics rather than enhancing listening comprehension. The provision of Korean subtitles is also based on the same reason, and is supported by Ryan (1998) in that showing the movie without subtitles is likely to prove a de-motivating factor as students may find the content too difficult to understand. Even showing the movie with English subtitles often proves ineffective, as students still found it difficult to understand the content, resulting in the instructor having to spend additional time explaining the content of the film. Thus, in light of the course objective – to raise cultural awareness rather than to enhance listening comprehension – it was decided that showing the film in its entirety with Korean subtitles was the optimal method for this course.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected from both the control and treatment group on the pretest and posttest in order to make a comparison between the two groups as well as within the group. SPSS version 21 was used to analyze the collected data. In addition to the descriptive statistics, analyses of inferential statistics were also conducted.

A nonequivalent control group pretest/posttest design was adopted for this study. This design allows the comparison between two groups as well as the pretest and posttest performance within each group. A pretest will show whether the two groups are equivalent on the dependent measure before the treatment is given to the film-based class. This repeated-measures design observes and measures the subjects' response twice through the pre- and posttests. Any changes which may have occurred in either group may be assessed by comparing the pretest measures for both groups with their posttest measures. If the treatment is effective, a greater change from the pretest to posttest for the treatment group is expected than for the control group. In addition, a routine student course evaluation

administered by the university at the end of each semester was analyzed and compared. The questionnaire consists of 11 items to be answered on a 5-point Likert scale.

4. Results

The present study examined the effect of introducing film to the cultural studies classroom by comparing student performance in a film-based course and a lecture-based course. In addition, the study also looked into the course satisfaction level expressed by the students in the two courses.

4.1 Effects of Treatment on Cultural Knowledge Acquisition

Table 3 shows that the mean score of the control group was 10.383 with a standard deviation of 3.7148, and the means score of the treatment group was 12.039 with a standard deviation of 3.1557. The preliminary statistics shows that students in the film-based course achieved higher scores than their counterparts in the lecture-based course.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics on the Posttest

Dependent Variable: Posttest

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Control	10.383	3.7148	60
Treatment	12.039	3.1557	51
Total	11.144	3.5518	111

Prior to ANCOVA, the Levene's test was run with the pretest included in the model as a covariate. According to Table 4, the Levene's Test was not significant, $F(1, 109) = 3.014$, $p = .085$, indicating that the group variances were equal, that is, the assumption of homogeneity of variance has not been violated and the homogeneous error variances can be assumed.

Table 4. Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances

Dependent Variable: Posttest

F	df1	df2	Sig.
3.014	1	109	**.085**

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

Design: Intercept + Pretest + Group

The homogeneity of regression slopes was also tested (See Table 5). A statistically not significant interaction term (Group*Pretest) in Table 5 indicates that the regression slopes for the covariate do not differ between treatments, and that the assumption of homogeneity of regression is not violated, $F(1, 107) = 3.796$, $p = .054$.

Table 5 Test of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Posttest

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	188.975[a]	3	62.992	5.623	.001
Intercept	337.455	1	337.455	30.122	.000
Group	17.346	1	17.346	1.548	.216
Pretest	77.672	1	77.672	6.933	.010
Group*Pretest	42.523	1	42.523	3.796	**.054**
Error	1198.719	107	11.203		
Total	15173.000	111			
Corrected Total	1387.694	110			

a. R Squared = .136 (Adjusted R Squared = .112)

Having satisfied the assumptions of ANCOVA, the One-Way ANCOVA was run in order to check the inter-group differences. Table 6 shows that controlling for the pretest, a statistically significant difference is shown between the two groups on the posttest, $F(1, 108) = 7.909$, $p = .006$, that is, there was a significant difference between the two groups in their performances on the cultural knowledge posttest, indicating that the film-based instruction group outperformed the lecture-based instruction group. Therefore, the treatment (i.e., film-based instruction) had a positive effect on the dependent variable (cultural knowledge acquisition). Partial Eta Squared (.068) shows that 6.8% of the previously unexplained variance can be explained by the treatment.

Table 6. Test of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Posttest

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	146.451[a]	2	73.226	6.371	.002	.106
Intercept	346.955	1	346.955	30.188	.000	.218
Pretest	70.863	1	70.863	6.166	.015	.054
Group	90.902	1	90.902	7.909	**.006***	**.068**
Error	1241.242	108	11.493			
Total	15173.000	111				
Corrected Total	1387.694	110				

a. R squared = .106 (Adjusted R Squared = .089)

4.2 Course Satisfaction among Students in the Two Groups

Table 7 shows the course evaluation scores rated by students in both courses. All items except for the last (Q11) ask the teaching quality of the instructor rather than the course itself. The treatment group felt a higher level of satisfaction overall although the difference between the two groups seems small (87.13 vs. 86.98). In fact, scores of three items (3, 7, 10) were tied, and each group shared roughly the same number of items with higher scores. Still, here again, the treatment group came out as the more dominant (5 items vs. 3 items). Interestingly, the only item which directly addressed the satisfaction level of the course showed the largest difference between the groups, with the treatment showing greater satisfaction. (4.31 vs. 4.19).

Table 7. Course Evaluation Questionnaire Items

	Course Evaluation Questionnaire Items	Control	Treatment
1.	The syllabus was announced in advance at the time of the class registration.	4.48	4.44
2.	The instructor was well prepared for class.	4.44	4.46
3.	The instructor showed enthusiasm in class.	4.48	4.48
4.	The instructor effectively explained and illustrated course concepts.	4.37	4.38
5.	The instructor's teaching methods were effective.	4.29	4.33
6.	The instructor stimulated my interest in the subject matter.	4.32	4.19
7.	The instructor presented course material in a clear manner that facilitated understanding.	4.29	4.29
8.	How well did your instructor answer students' questions?	4.31	4.25
9.	The instructor held classes as scheduled, and makeup classes were scheduled for cancellation of classes.	4.32	4.44
10.	The instructor grades consistently with the evaluation criteria.	4.35	4.35
11.	Overall, how would you rate the course?	4.19	4.31
Total		47.84	47.92
Percentage		86.98	87.13

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the student satisfaction level of the two groups (See Table 8 and 9). Results show a statistically not significant difference in the course evaluation scores between the control (M = 4.3491, SD = .08860) and experimental group (M = 4.3564, SD = .09320) at the .05 level of significance ($t = -.188$, df = 20, $p = .853$). These results suggest that students in both groups did not show a statistically significant difference in the level of course satisfaction.

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics for Course Evaluation

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Score	Control	11	4.3491	.08860	.02671
	Experimental	11	4.3564	.09320	.02810

Table 9. T-test Results

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Score	Equal variances assumed	.136	.716	−.188	20	.853	−.00727	.03877	−.08815	.07360

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined how the use of films in the lessons enhances cultural knowledge and improves intercultural awareness at the university level. A comparison between two teaching methods – lecture-based instruction and film-based instruction – showed that learners acquired knowledge better and showed higher level of satisfaction when film was incorporated in the lessons. Based on the results, the use of film should not be confined to the conventional realm of functional and communicative courses but expand to content courses to cover a wider range of language proficiency, i.e., acquiring cultural knowledge and cultivating critical thinking skills.

One interesting outcome of the study is that content-focused learning failed to produce better results than the contextualized curriculum. The research question posed for this study was whether the film-based course was "as effective as" the lecture-based course despite the lesser amount of time spent on teaching factual knowledge to the students. The assumption was that the amount of information provided to the students would be greater in the lecture-based course, hence the more knowledgeable the learners would be. However, the results produced the opposite outcome. One interpretation of such results could be that culture taught in context was actually more effective in acquiring knowledge.

One element worth considering is the role, if any, played by the composition of students in the results (See Table 1). The lecture-based course (control group) were composed of students predominantly from the English department (93.3%) compared to the film-based course (72.9%). On the other hand, the majority of the lecture-based course were sophomores (56.7%) while the seniors comprised of 52.9% of film-based course students.

The rather uneven distribution of the students may have played a role in the outcome – an indication that perhaps the film-based course might be more effective in classes with beginning learners and students with diverse academic backgrounds and the conventional lecture-style more suitable for experienced English-major learners.

Also, the statistically not significant difference between the two groups regarding course satisfaction among students is somewhat unexpected and interesting. Considering the affinity towards film as an instructional tool among the students, it was initially predicted that students in the film-based course would show higher level of course satisfaction than their counterparts. One factor which might have played a role in this outcome is the composition of the survey items. As is shown in Table 7, ten out of eleven items in the survey ask about the instructor's ability, and only one item measures student satisfaction about the course. Therefore, the survey might not have been sufficient to assess the course satisfaction level per se.

With regard to the selection of film for the culture studies course, a carefully devised plan, in addition to the criteria presented previously by Tasgold and DeCuir-Gunby (2012), should be laid out to meet the demands of the course objective as well as the students. As Miura (2015) states, the collaboration among educators is crucial in order to find appropriate films amongst the myriad of materials available nowadays to meet the teaching goals. While the learners' taste and preference should be taken into account in the selection process, research has shown that catering to learners' preference does not necessarily result in better performance (Barzaa and Memarib 2014). Thus, the responsibility squarely lies squarely on the teachers to make the final decision as to which films should be included in the syllabus and which to be set aside.

As the needs of the learners are different across language proficiency level and social environment, the selection of films is an on-going and evolving process of accumulating data, staying vigilant to the constant social change, and staying open to new ideas and insights of fellow educators. Maintaining a healthy balance between enticing learners to venture outside their "bubble" and at the same time respecting their film genre preference is a challenge for all teachers using film in the classroom.

Some examples and suggestions for film-based cultural studies courses at the tertiary level are presented in Table 10. Again, the list below is by no means carved in stone, and is subject to change as new and better films suitable for the narrative of the topic continue to appear.

Table 10. List of Films by Topic

Topic	Recommended Films
Race	Mississippi Burning (1988), Guess who's coming to dinner (1967), Driving Miss Daisy (1989), Glory (1989), Ghosts of Mississippi (1996), Amistad (1997), Crash (2004), The Central Park Five (2012), Lincoln (2012), 12 Years a Slave (2013), 13th (2016), O.J.: Made in America (2016)
Gender	Working Girl (1988), Fried Green Tomatoes (1991), Thelma and Louise (1991), Crying Game (1992), Erin Brockovich (2000), Working Girl (1988), Brokeback Mountain (2005), Colette (2018)
Vietnam War	The Deer Hunter (1978), Platoon (1986), Forrest Gump (1994), American Sniper (2014), Miss Saigon: 25th Anniversary (2016), The Post (2017) (cf. 1st Amendment)
Capitalism/Consumerism	Wall Street (1987), Office Space (1999), Super Size Me (2004), The social network (2010), The Founder (2016)
1st Amendment	All the President's Men (1976), Mark Felt: The Man Who Brought Down the White House (2017), The Post (2017)
The Great Depression	Grapes of Wrath (1940), Sting (1973), Annie (1982), Seabiscuit (2003), Cinderella Man (2005)
Politics	Nixon (1995)
Judicial System	12 Angry Men (1957), To Kill a Mockingbird (1962), Law & Order (TV series)
Immigration/Gangster	The Godfather (1972), An American Tail (1980), The Untouchables (1987), Coming to America (1988), Goodfellas (1990), Gangs of New York (2002)
2nd Amendment	Bowling for Columbine (2001)
American Expansion	Dances with Wolves (1990), The Last of the Mohicans (1992)
Diversity	My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002), Star Trek (TV series)
WWII	Casablanca (1942), Sophie's Choice (1982), Saving Private Ryan (1998)
Cold War	Mission Impossible (TV series)
Superheroes/Zombie	X-men (2000), The Dark Knight (2008), Logan (2017), Wonder Woman (2017)
Health system	Supersize me (2004), Sicko (2007)

Film is a stimulating and entertaining learning tool, and offers a glimpse to a more realistic and practical view of the target culture. Also, film plays a critical role in building intercultural literacies by offering students a new means to "'read' cultural events and activities" (Kumaravadivelu 2003, p. 274) in their own as well as other cultures. Such skills are essential in an increasingly globalized world, as students are continuously urged to navigate the intricacies and challenges in this culturally diverse society.

Using an additional instruction tool on top of conventional resources inevitably complicates the process and the road to understanding may become even more elusive, as films are laden with multiple layers of linguistic and cultural influences, and learners, too, come to class with individualized and diverse backgrounds. Thus, a uniform method cannot be applied to every classroom, and teachers must always keep in mind that a myriad of factors are involved in the cultural studies classroom. It is the teacher's task to furnish adequate material to class so that students may reflect on the cultural issue of the lesson and its relationship with the film they are viewing. Their reflections must expand beyond the lesson at hand, and students should be encouraged to make the connections across cultures so that they can explore their own culture and their place in this world. Teachers may feel overwhelmed by the sheer scope and amount of cultural issues presented in a film. Considering the enormity of the subject matter, however, the instructor's role is not and cannot be the comprehensive and/or complete delivery of knowledge. Rather, his/her role suffices to provide a pathway which will hopefully motivate students to continue their quest for learning.

As is the case of all studies, this study also has limitations and room for improvement: a relatively small sample size (N = 111) and the short duration of the experiment (15 weeks), which may explain the small, albeit statistically significant difference in the posttests and course evaluation scores between the two groups. Also, it would be interesting to see if the same result repeats itself with subjects of younger age, and see if the case for film-based instruction can be made in primary and/or secondary education settings. In addition, the lack of raw data for the course evaluation made it impossible to conduct detailed inferential analysis and to interpret the results. It is suggested that future studies include course evaluation as a measurement so that raw data can be secured, and that the items pertain to the course itself instead of focusing predominantly on the instructor and his/her capabilities.

The teaching of culture should not focus on merely stating facts, but should be presented to the students as a "cultural experience." The cultural learning consists of "knowing about," "knowing how," "knowing why," and "knowing oneself" (Moran 2001, p. 8). In other words, it is an iterative process of acquiring knowledge, developing behaviors, discovering explanations, and forming personal responses. Through strategic planning and instruction, the teacher can ensure that students go through this process so that they can understand the perspectives and practices of the target culture, and enhance the level of cultural awareness. Film cannot and should not be regarded as a cure-all for all our linguistic and cultural needs in the classroom. However, it definitely has its place in the classroom as a guide towards better understanding of the target culture as well as one's own culture. The ability to expand one's perspective on diverse cultural practices through the negotiation between different

cultural worlds eventually leads to greater empowerment and awareness on a personal as well as a societal level. And educators have the obligation to assist students obtain this goal.

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Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Levels: Tertiary

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Appendix A

Cultural Knowledge Test (Pretest)

1. The population is approximately
(a) 150,000,000
(b) 300,000,000
(c) 500,000,000

2. The first U.S. president was
(a) Abraham Lincoln
(b) George Washington
(c) Thomas Jefferson

3. The capital of the United States is
(a) Los Angeles
(b) Boston
(c) Washington D.C.

4. The largest state in the U.S. is
(a) California
(b) Texas
(c) Alaska

5. The most populous city in the U.S. is
(a) New York City
(b) Chicago
(c) Los Angeles

6. The largest minority group in the U.S. is
(a) African-Americans
(b) Latino
(c) Asians

7. The Capitol in Washington D.C. is
(a) the U.S. President's residence

(b) the U.S. national museum

(c) the U.S. Houses of Congress

8. When it's noon in New York City, in San Francisco it is

(a) 7:00 a.m.

(b) 9:00 a.m.

(c) 3:00 p.m.

9. The two main political parties are

(a) the Socialist and the Democratic parties

(b) the Democratic and the Republican parties

(c) the Liberal and the Republican parties

10. When is *Independence Day* in the U.S.?

(a) July 4

(b) Fourth Thursday of November

(c) third Monday each February

11. The U.S. has a federal government

(a) True

(b) False

12. The U.S. president is elected every five years.

(a) True

(b) False

13. There are 52 states in the U.S.

(a) True

(b) False

14. The leader of each state is called a senator.

(a) True

(b) False

15. English is the official language of the United States.

(a) True

(b) False

Appendix B

Cultural Knowledge Test (Posttest)

<American Expansion>
1. What is the legislative action which took effect in 1830 in order to force Native Americans living between the Appalachians and the Mississippi out of the area?

2. What is the 1000-mile path which the Cherokee followed in 1838 during their forced relocation?

3. What is the following event? Fill in the blank.
Massacre at (   )

> The slaughter of approximately 150-300 Lakota Indians by United States Army troops on December 29, 1890, in southwestern South Dakota. The massacre was the climax of the U.S. Army's late 19th-century efforts to repress the Plains Indians. It broke any organized resistance to reservation life and assimilation to white American culture.

<Diversity/Immigration>
1. What is the first U.S. immigration law which discriminated immigrants based on race and/or country of origin?

2. Where is the place described below?

> It is an island that is located in the Port of New York and New Jersey, United States. It was the gateway for millions of immigrants to the United States as the nation's busiest immigrant inspection station from 1892 until 1954.

<The Great Depression>
1. In what year did the Great Depression begin in America?

2. What is a series of programs and projects instituted during the Great Depression by President Franklin D. Roosevelt that aimed to restore prosperity to Americans?

3. What is the name given to the Great Plains region devastated by drought in 1930s depression-ridden America?

<Civil Rights>

1. What was the measure that laid out the process for readmitting Southern states into the Union after the civil war?

2. What is the following system referring to?

> The name of the racial caste system which operated primarily, but not exclusively in southern and border states, between 1877 and the mid-1960s. It was more than a series of rigid anti-Black laws. It was a way of life. Under this system, African Americans were relegated to the status of second class citizens. It represented the legitimization of anti-Black racism.

3. What is the following referring to?

> A murder that occurs, usually by hanging, when an angry individual or group decides that someone is guilty of a crime or misbehavior and kills the suspect without a trial.

<Women's Rights>

1. Who is the following referring to?

> • American feminist icon, journalist and women's rights advocate.
> • Founder and original publisher of *Ms.* Magazine

2. What is the name of the largest feminist group founded in 1966 in the United States that promotes equal rights for women? (Write the abbreviation)

<Capitalism>

1. What is the following term referring to?

> a term that is also sometimes attributed to any successful businessman or woman whose practices are considered unethical or unscrupulous. This can include employee or environmental abuse, stock market manipulation, or restricting output to charge higher prices.

2. What is the following referring to? Fill in the blank.
(   ) Industrial Average

> A stock market index that measures the stock performance of 30 large companies listed on stock exchanges in the United States

3. Who is the richest person in history? Write the last name.