

**Some Considerations**

"The current increasing interest by Brazilians towards American, British, and other TV series are today extremely noticeable, which has undoubtedly helped stimulate this kind of market around the world. These TV series have attracted students' attention and raised their motivation regarding the process of learning English inside the classroom. It is far from being an easy task for the teacher, once it requires, among many other aspects, his/her effort, spirit, fortitude and commitment, both inside and outside the classroom.

Thus, departing from this context, I shall share here a successful classroom experience, which basically consists of a set of activities about one episode of the so acclaimed North-American TV series *Heroes*. The activities that I had the opportunity to design were implemented in a classroom of Cursos Extracurriculares at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC), where I have been teaching since 2007-2.

The activity was inspired on Koglin & Marchesan's ideas from the article entitled *A Utilização de Filmes para Desenvolver a Fluência em Língua Inglesa* (2006), in which they claim and discuss the production of English authentic teaching materials which explore socio-cultural aspects emphasizing both the comprehension and oral production of pre-intermediate and intermediate students from Curso de Extensão em Línguas Estrangeiras (CELS) from Universidade Federal de Santa Maria (UFSM).

**Target Students**

The activities were originally designed bearing in mind English students of level 3 (basic), 4, 5, and 6 (pre-intermediate) in 2008-1 of the Extracurricular Course. Nevertheless, I believe that it is important to tackle that this kind of activity can be certainly adapted, changed and reformatted for students of different levels and in different contexts, such as advanced or very basic classrooms. The groups in which the activities were implemented were very heterogeneous, with students whose age ranged from 17 until 50 years old. It is commonsensical though that TV series have been attained teenagers as the main audience, but this does not mean that it cannot be adapted for further use among other groups.

## Objectives

**General objective:** To vary the class dynamics, especially with big groups, in order to implement an activity that encompasses several aspects of the language, fulfilling pedagogical and linguistic aspects;

**Specific Objectives:** Using different formats of activities, this task was aimed at focusing on oral comprehension/production, phonetics and phonology discussion, some notions of register variation, and the acquisition of new vocabulary through a very specific context, by using a short-length video activity (around 50 minutes).

### Comments and suggestions on the implementation

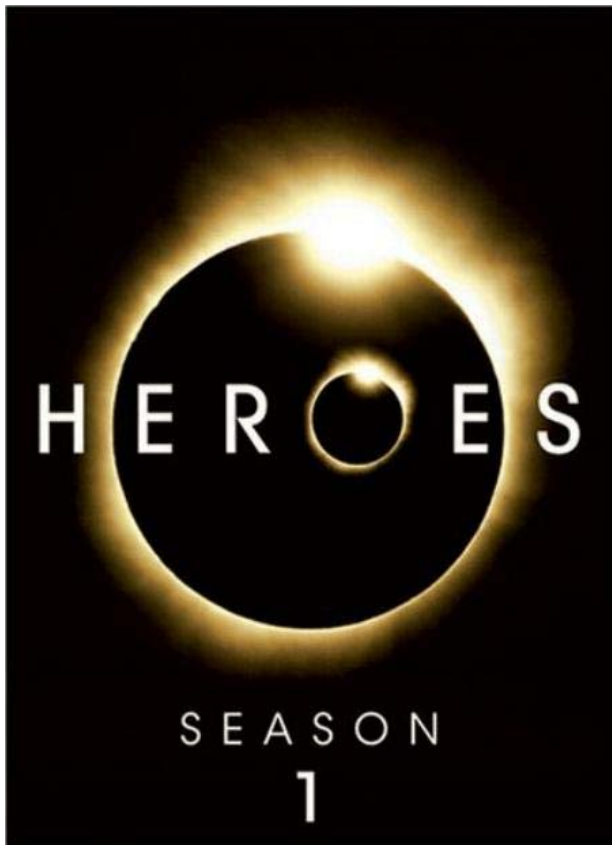
The activities are classified into PRE-VIEWING, VIEWING, and POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES. The PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES are used to contextualize the TV series, so that the students who have never heard of it may have at least a glimpse of what kind of video s/he will be watching. Yet in relation to this part, I decided to select a short text excerpt from the free encyclopedia *Wikipedia* and adapt it to help the contextualization. Depending on the level of the students and their age, this can be adjusted. Activity 1 was then aimed at functioning as a *Warm-up*, so that students would be more prepared for the pair discussion in activity 2.

The VIEWING ACTIVITIES correspond to the description of 4 scenes to which the students will be exposed to. Two of the reasons why I decided to use TV series rather than full-length movies are because: 1) TV series are very popular nowadays; 2) if compared to a full-length movie, the TV series are shorter and may be used in pieces (the duration of an episode is around 45-55 minutes, usually), which may amount to be an advantage for the management of time within the classroom.

The POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES focus on the language itself. Activity 4 entails phonetic and phonological aspects of the language, in which the teacher may address different variations of the English vowel sounds (American vs. British, for instance), whereas activity 5 tackles the issue of register (formal vs. informal), which may be used as consciousness raising for the linguistic variation and the notion of register (what is “grammatically [in]correct”). Activity 5 may be used in order to concentrate on listening comprehension practice (it may and has to be adjusted, depending on the level of the group).

The video may be played with subtitles in English or in Portuguese. The teacher is expected to analyze the group’s level in order to decide which option is more appropriate to be adopted. During the listening comprehension practice, it is necessary that the teacher play the scene again (scene 03) and remove the subtitles, so that students may undergo the task.

### Heroes (2006-2008)



**Plot Outline:** *Heroes* is an American science fiction serial drama television series created by Tim Kring, which tells the stories of ordinary individuals who discover that they have superhuman abilities. It also explores how they adapt to the changes these abilities bring, and their roles in preventing catastrophes and saving humanity. The first season attracted an average of 14.3 million viewers in the United States and received the highest rating for any NBC drama premiere in five years. The first season's run consisted of 23 episodes. *Heroes* has garnered a number of awards/nominations. On July 19, 2007 *Heroes* was nominated in eight categories at the 2007 Primetime Emmy awards, including Outstanding Drama Series and was also nominated for Best Television Series-Drama at the 2007 Golden Globes. The series won a People's Choice Award in 2007 in the category of Best New Drama, and was named Program of the Year in 2007.

Adapted from: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heroes\\_\(TV\\_series\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heroes_(TV_series))

### Cast Overview (Season 01, Episode 02)

Name	Portrayed by	Summary
Claire Bennet	Hayden Panettiere	A high school cheerleader who has a regenerative ability. She is Noah Bennet's adopted daughter, as well as Nathan Petrelli's biological daughter.
Noah Bennet	Jack Coleman	Bennet works with and then against the Primotech Paper Company, a cover operation for an organization that investigates people with superhuman abilities. He has no superpowers.
Simone Deveaux	Tawny Cypress	Simone is an art dealer and gallery owner whose skepticism and complicated romantic life are tested. She has no superpowers.
Ando Masahashi	James Kyson Lee	Ando is Hiro's friend, co-worker, and traveling companion. He has no superpowers.
Isaac Mendez	Santiago Cabrera	An artist living in New York who can paint future events and also writes and illustrates the comic book <i>9th Wonders!</i> .

Hiro Nakamura	Masi Oka	Hiro is a programmer from Osaka with the ability to manipulate the space-time continuum. He is convinced that he is a hero who can use his gift to help those in need around the world.
Matt Parkman	Greg Grunberg	Parkman possesses the ability to hear other people's thoughts and control others' actions. He is an NYPD detective and a guardian of Molly Walker.
Nathan Petrelli	Adrian Pasdar	Nathan, who is able to fly, is a New York Congressional candidate.
Peter Petrelli	Milo Ventimiglia	Peter is a hospice nurse with the ability to absorb the powers of others he has been near and recall them.
Micah Sanders	Noah Gray-Cabey	A child prodigy and technopath, Micah has the ability to "talk" to electrical devices, giving him control of machines and electronic devices. He is D.L. and Niki's son.
Niki Sanders	Ali Larter	An internet stripper from Las Vegas who exhibits superhuman strength and has multiple personalities. She is D.L.'s wife and Micah's mother.
Mohinder Suresh	Sendhil Ramamurthy	Suresh is a professor of genetics from India who travels to New York to investigate the death of his father, Chandra. Through his investigations, he comes into contact with people his father listed as possessing superhuman abilities. He does not have any super powers.
Sylar/Gabriel Gray	Zachary Quinto	Sylar is a serial killer who seeks out superhuman individuals, killing them in order to take their powers. He has multiple acquired abilities.

### PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

**1. Based on the plot and also on your previous knowledge, answer the following questions:**

- a. What is the series about?
- b. What is the series genre?

**2. (PAIR WORK) Based on the plot and also on your previous knowledge, discuss the following questions with your partner:**

- a. Have you already watched *Heroes*? If so, what is your opinion about this TV series?
- a. What are your favorite TV series/movie genres?

### VIEWING AND POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

**3. You are going to watch episode 02 of season 01. Complete the following chart:**

<b>Events – select 04 (What happens?)</b>				
<b>Location (Where does it happen? Describe the place)</b>				
<b>Characters (Try to characterize them)</b>				

**4. (PRONUNCIATION)** While the narrator speaks, do you notice any different English accents? What are some of the words you find “strange” when pronounced? Can you guess where he is from?

**5. (LANGUAGE PATTERNS)** What kind of language is used in scene 02 (while the characters Peter and Nathan are talking)? Is it more informal or formal? How do you notice it? Give some examples.

**6. (LISTENING COMPREHENSION)** Complete the following dialogue, according to what you hear in scene 03:

**Claire:** \_\_\_\_\_? Do you \_\_\_\_\_ if I \_\_\_\_\_ to you about something?

**Noah:** You \_\_\_\_\_?

**Claire:** What? No.

**Noah:** You \_\_\_\_\_?

**Claire:** Dad.

**Noah:** \_\_\_\_\_, I already know what it’s about.

**Claire:** You do?

**Noah:** It’s about wanting to know who you really are. Your mother told me that you’ve been asking about your birth parents.

**Claire:** Well, I think it’s time \_\_\_\_\_.

**Noah:** Well, I have a \_\_\_\_\_, not the least of which is, \_\_\_\_\_?

**Claire:** I’m just \_\_\_\_\_, that’s all. You know, what they’re like, what they can do.

**Noah:** What they can do?

**Claire:** Yeah, \_\_\_\_\_.

**Noah:** You know, I \_\_\_\_\_ this to be condescending, even though you’re \_\_\_\_\_ say I’m being condescending, but I really do believe this is an \_\_\_\_\_.

**Claire:** \_\_\_\_\_ . That is condescending.

**Noah:** Claire, there are gonna be issues. You're \_\_\_\_\_ issues, they're \_\_\_\_\_ issues. It's very complex, emotionally.

**Claire:** Yeah, well, \_\_\_\_\_.

**Noah:** Well, exactly. Look, here's my \_\_\_\_\_ if you'll indulge me. Just \_\_\_\_\_ as long as you can, like cheerleading.

**Claire:** \_\_\_\_\_ cheerleader is \_\_\_\_\_. Hard, treacherous work.

**Noah:** Well, of course it is, \_\_\_\_\_.

**Claire:** I don't wanna \_\_\_\_\_.

**Noah:** Hey. I just don't want you to be in such a hurry to grow up, okay? Trust me, I \_\_\_\_\_.

**7. (VOCABULARY) Match the words with their possible meaning according to the context of the episode:**

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| <b>a.</b> To tap someone's phone;          | ( ) A place where you can find old/rare    |
| <b>b.</b> To butcher someone's name;       | books;                                     |
| <b>c.</b> Cab;                             | ( ) To kill, to assassinate, to eliminate; |
| <b>d.</b> To murder;                       | ( ) Kind, considerate;                     |
| <b>e.</b> Awful;                           | ( ) To pronounce someone's name very       |
| <b>f.</b> Antique bookstore;               | incorrectly;                               |
| <b>g.</b> To have a kick out of something; | ( ) To have some fun with something;       |
| <b>h.</b> Thoughtful;                      | ( ) Having extreme or irrational fear;     |
| <b>i.</b> Paranoid;                        | ( ) By now;                                |
| <b>j.</b> For the time being.              | ( ) British word for taxi                  |
|  | ( ) Terrible, horrible, dreadful           |

( ) To put a device connected to a telephone in order to listen to someone's conversations;