

Seminar: The Great War
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Teaching unit for year ten
based on the anti-war film
All Quiet on the Western Front

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All Quiet on the Western Front by Daniel Nau

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1. Introduction

“Peace education” in the English classroom can be justified by the development of various skills. In general, working with a film allows working with all language skills and does not mean a restriction on the receptive skills watching and listening.

According to the Bildungsplan 2004 for Realschule, pupils of year ten will be able to understand utterances spoken at a normal pace of speech (2004: 80-81). Furthermore, the pupils are supposed to be able to adapt to different speakers. In other words, there should be a basis for watching English language films and getting its gist in the sense of working techniques: “den Inhalt von Texten im Kerngehalt erkennen, in verschiedener Form wiedergeben, umschreiben, gliedern, untersuchen und bearbeiten“ (2004: 80).

However, working with an anti-war film goes further than just developing language skills – it also fosters the development of cultural competence. The Bildungsplan for year ten describes cultural competence in the following way: “sich eigene und fremde Verhaltensweisen, Lebensformen und Wertvorstellungen durch den Erwerb interkulturellen Orientierungswissens bewusst machen” (2004: 81). Apart from numerous other features, the “Intercultural Speaker” according to Byram has a “critical cultural awareness (savoir s’engager): an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries” (Byram 1997: 101). This required “critical” perspective is automatically part of the analysis and interpretation of an anti-war film. The pupils are supposed to reflect on the motives of different “countries” for entering a war. Therefore they have to develop an “interest in discovering other perspectives on interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena both in one’s own and in other cultures and cultural practices” (Byram 1997: 92). In this case the phenomenon is ‘war’. The anti-war film which was produced in the United States could be referred to as a “document”. Hence, the function of all possible tasks within the teaching unit is to train the “ability to interpret a document [film] or event [war] from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one’s own [culture]” (Byram 1997: 98).

Schulze refers to an official paper by the UNESCO to justify war as a topic: “zur Legitimation der Behandlung von Konflikten im Fremdsprachenunterricht [kann] die UNESCO herangezogen werden, die die Notwendigkeit der Friedenserziehung im Fremdsprachenunterricht als ein wichtiges Lernziel hervorhebt” (2004: 329).

To sum up, working with anti-war films is an up-to-date form of peace education because it fosters intercultural competence and study skills as described in the ‘Bildungsplan 2004’.

2. Background information on *All Quiet on the Western Front*

2.1 The novel and the film

The film *All Quiet on the Western Front* is based on the novel *Im Westen nichts Neues* by Erich Maria Remarque. The book was published in 1929. It was a product of Universal Pictures, and the first-night performance (<http://www.remarque.uos.de/iwnnfilm.htm>, 28.03.2006) was in Los Angeles on April 20th, 1930. Eight months later, on the 4th of December 1930 the film received its premiere in Berlin, Germany. On December 11th, less than one week later, the 'Film-Oberprüfstelle Berlin' immediately banned the film from further cinema shows. The reason for this was that the Nazis considered this film to contain a provocative lie, and they were able to use their political influence in Berlin to stop it from being shown. By the end of 1930 the book had been translated into twelve languages and had sold 3.5 million copies world-wide. In the same year the film won two Oscars, namely the Academy Award for Best Picture and the Academy Award for Directing. It was not until 1931 that an extremely censored version was allowed to be shown in cinemas across Germany as a result of the censorship by the Nazis.

The director and writer of the screenplay was Lewis Milestone (Walker 2002: 86). The producer was Carl Laemmle jr., who tried hard to convince the author of the book, Remarque, to play the role of the soldier Paul Bäumer. As Remarque considered himself to be too old, the American newcomer Lew Ayres was finally found for the chief part. The other principal actors in order of importance were Louis Wolheim (Katzinsky), Slim Summerville (Tjaden), John Wray (Himmelstoss), Raymond Griffith (Gerard Duval), Russell Gleason (Müller), Ben Alexander (Kemmerick) and Beryl Mercer (Mrs. Bäumer).

Lewis Milestone (Lev Milestone) was born in September 1895 in the Russian city of Kishinev. As a soldier he was wounded in Belgium and could not participate in the war anymore. For this reason Milestone interviewed soldiers who had been on the front about their experiences. Considering this diligent preparation it is no surprise that he won the second Academy Award in his life for his screen adaptation in *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

2.2 Short summary of the film

The setting of *All Quiet on the Western Front* is mainly the front between Germany and France. At school, nineteen-year-old Paul Bäumer and his classmates are driven by their teacher to join the army in order to fight for their country. They euphorically decide to take this step and land in a training camp where they are supposed to de-

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velop fighting skills. However, the drills of their instructor Himmelstoss give them a taste of what war can be like, and the recruits begin to suffer from his rather sadistic treatment.

The young soldiers come to the front and have to witness how their comrade Kemmerich is hit and dies of wounds in a hospital.

Bäumer and his comrades experience life in the trenches and he makes friends with Katczinsky. The company tries to kill time. The sound of machine-guns and bombs never stops. There is no comfort at all and even rats are present.

One day, the allied forces start an offensive which ends in a big massacre as the Germans use machine-guns. The trenches are stormed; soldiers fight and stab each other.

Bäumer survives and is given leave. He goes home where he discovers that his mother is suffering from cancer and is going to die. Faced with this tragic situation he is not really able to recover during his leave.

Back at the front he has to hide in a shell-hole from an attack and so does a French soldier. Bäumer stabs him immediately. Waiting for the attack to finish Paul discovers personal belongings in the pockets of the Frenchman and realises that he has shot a family man and he starts to reflect about what he has done.

On a quiet day, some time after Bäumer has also lost his good friend Kat he is sitting lonely in a trench when he is shot by a sniper.

3. Historical and cultural background

3.1 The outbreak of war

Before the outbreak of war, the power in Europe was primarily represented by six countries. Firstly, there was the 'Triple Alliance' of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy. Secondly, the 'Dual Alliance' consisted of France and Russia. A third big independent force was Great-Britain. Basically, tensions between these nations had existed throughout the 19th century and they kept on growing due to "nationalism, militarism and imperialism" (Martel 1996: 5). An active diplomacy consisting of countless mutual visits was capable of preventing the nations from putting strategic considerations into military practice until one month after the assassination of an Austrian heir to the throne.

On July 28th, 1914 Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. The consequence of this decision was that other countries also entered the war due to the already mentioned diplomatic network. In fact, there were several reasons for Austria-Hungary to enter the war. Firstly, the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife were murdered one month earlier on June 28th, 1914. The heir to the throne of the Habsburg monarchy was attacked twice that day by members of a revolutionary organisation. This group consisted of young students and apprentices but none of them had a military education. Nedeljko Cabrinović threw a bomb at the car, missed it and as a result, of that the pedestrians were wounded (Strachan 2003: 26). Later that day the royal couple was shot in a second attempt by the nineteen-year-old Gavrilo Princip. It did not take much time until the government "discovered that the assassin and his compatriots were Serbian nationalists, [...] whose ambition it was to incorporate all Serbian peoples within the Serbian state." (Martel 1996: 2). This event is counted among the most important ones which finally lead to the point that Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia on July 28th, 1914.

The next country to officially enter the war was the German Empire when it declared war on Russia on August 1st, 1914 and on France on the 3rd of August (Ploetz 1998: 715). On the same day it also invaded Belgium, which led Britain to declare war on Germany. Still within August 1914, Montenegro and Japan entered the war. Numerous declarations of war were to follow throughout the war years, and countries like for instance Montenegro, Turkey, Italy, Bulgaria, the United States, etc. joined the war.

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In fact, the German Empire acted according to the “Schlieffenplan” (Müller 2002: 208-209). The geographical structure of the war can be described as a ‘war on two fronts’ or a ‘two-front war’: the Eastern front and the Western front. The main idea of the dead Field Marshall Alfred Graf von Schlieffen had been to quickly attack France in the West and profit from the surprise effect in comparison to a rather defensive warfare in the east.

After the first battles between French and German troops, the French were more and more pushed back towards the river Marne. On the 3rd of September 1914, the French government took flight to Bordeaux. Then General Joffre started a counter-attack along the whole front. The Germans withdrew behind the Aisne. Heavy battles followed, until around November the situation came to a standstill. The static warfare began and it would last until the end of the war (Ploetz 1998: 718).

3.2 Summary of major war events between 1915 and 1917

Certainly one of the most poignant facts about the first year of war was the Christmas truce in 1914. The so-called ‘fraternisations’ took place at certain sectors of the front between Christmas 1914 and Easter 1915. These events have for instance recently (December 2005) been illustrated in the film *Merry Christmas* by Christian Carion.

In April 1915 the Germans used chlorine gas for the first time which was a military success. In the hierarchy of German military interest Western front found itself on a higher place than the Eastern front. Nevertheless, severe fights took place and for instance by the end of August 1915 750,000 Polish had been occupied and 750,000 Russian had become German prisoners after four months of fighting. Finally, at the end of September 1915, fourteen French and six British divisions lost altogether 242,000 men in a concerted offensive whereas the German side only lost 141,000 soldiers. This was considered to be a military disaster by the Allies (Enc. Britannica 2001: “The Western and Eastern fronts, 1915”).

The year 1916 saw three of the biggest battles that were fought throughout the war. A big German offensive on Verdun in February 1916 cost the lives of 335,000 Germans and 360,000 Frenchmen. In the following Battle of the Somme 104 divisions was began and lasted until July. Only in this battle about 400,000 German, 400,000 British and 200,000 French soldiers died (Ploetz 1998: 718). The Battle of Jutland during the summer of 1916 was considered the biggest naval battle during WWI.

In 1917 the Third Battle of Ypres took place with both German and French casualties exceeding 850,000.

3.3 The outcome of the war

On November 11th, 1918 an armistice was signed by the French Marshall Foch and a German delegation. At the end of war approximately 1,808,000 Germans, 1,700,000 Russians, 1,385,000 Frenchmen, 1,200,000 Austrian-Hungarians, 947,000 Britons, 460,000 Italians, 325,000 Turkish men and 115,000 US-Americans lost their lives (Ploetz 1998: 730). Altogether, the First World War had cost the lives of about ten million people, and around two million had been injured.

Finally, on the 29th of June 1919, the “Treaty of Versailles” was signed by Germany and all members of the entente. The content of the treaty considered most of US President Wilson’s “14 Points” (<http://www.historicaldocuments.com/WoodrowWilsons14Points.htm>). For example, Germany had to commit itself to “open covenants of peace” (P.I) and respect “absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas” (P.II). The “evacuation of all Russian territory” (P.VI.) was required. Furthermore, Belgium had to “be evacuated and restored” (P.VII) as well as “all French territory should be freed and the invaded portions restored” (P.VIII), “Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro should be evacuated”(P.XI) etc.

On a financial level, the allies imposed payments, the so-called ‘Reparations-zahlungen’ on Germany to profit from the economy. Big parts of the German population did not consider them to be unfair. Historically, this can be seen as an additional factor to create an atmosphere of hatred in Germany in the after-war years, especially against France, which Hitler was able to canalise and exploit in the 1930s.

France’s distrust of Germany was deeply rooted because it had historically grown due to both the Franco-Prussian War and the First World War. More than a decade after WWI, this massive distrust of the French side – embodied in the French WWI veteran and Minister of Defense André Maginot – resulted in the edification of a line of bunkers on the border to Germany between 1930 and 1935. The “Maginot Line” was built for the theoretical scenario of Germany attacking France despite the “Treaty of Versailles”. In this case the concrete fortifications would allow the French side to hold the position even if they were outnumbered and it would give additional time for the mobilisation of other troops.

4. Analysis of the genre

4.1 Definition of “anti-war film”

Generally speaking, an anti-war film can be described as a film which shows war events that have taken place in the past in a very realistic way and “insofern gehört der Antikriegsfilm rein formal dem Genre des Kriegsfilms an” (Schmitt 2004: 111). Stiglegger differentiates between “Abenteuerfilm” and “Historienfilm” which nearly always refer to antique battles or battles of the Middle Age whereas with the category “Kriegsfilm” primarily refers to the illustration of battles of the 20th century: “die Darstellung der Schlachten des 20. Jahrhunderts und deren Auswirkungen” (Stiglegger 2004: 322). Although Milestone’s film *All Quiet on the Western Front* focuses on a battle which took place in the 20th century (WWI), it does not fit into the mentioned categories because it shows a critical distance to the war as it describes the disillusionment of a soldier:

“Aus dem zunächst euphorischen Schüler wird ein desillusionierter Frontsoldat, der seine Kameraden sterben sieht und schließlich in den letzten Kriegstagen einen banalen Tod findet. Die deutlich wertende, erzieherische Position dieses Films brachte ihm das [...] Etikett des ‘Anti-Kriegsfilms’ ein” (Stiglegger 2004: 323).

In other words, the disastrous plot itself is a decisive feature of the anti-war film. However, the warning is not explicitly stated, it must be read between the lines. Even in his foreword Remarque does not use the word “warnen”, he uses “berichten”. But he clearly points out the aspect of destructiveness when he speaks of “eine Generation [...] die vom Kriege zerstört wurde” even though they may have escaped its shells (Remarque 1971: 5). Furthermore, Stiglegger ascribes to *All Quiet on the Western Front* a formative influence on the genre of the anti-war film in that sense that with its publication the taboo of illustrating the cruel side of war was broken: “der Antikriegsfilm [veranschaulicht] sowohl das Grauen der körperzerreißenden Explosionen im modernen Bombenkrieg, Feuer, Splitter und Staub [...] wie andererseits die Verletzlichkeit der Soldaten, deren Tugenden oder Tüchtigkeit nicht für dieses ‘Schlachten’ geschaffen sind” (Stiglegger 2004: 324).

Von Gottberg’s features of an anti-war film correspond to Stiglegger’s in many ways and he additionally adds different ones.

Firstly, he also describes the motivation for soldiers to enter a war and lists patriotism (“Liebe zum Vaterland”) and obedience (“Gehorsam”) as reasons for the soldier to enter a war. Men who stick to such values and risk their lives are considered to be ‘heroes’ but anti-war films focus on the disillusionment of these young soldiers

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by showing them as broken men after their friends have been killed. In most cases these soldiers are killed as well.

Secondly, in contrast to the anti-war film, the action film does not evoke any empathy among the viewers concerning the victims - "seine Vernichtung erzeugt beim Zuschauer kein Mitleid, sondern Genugtuung" (Von Gottberg 2004: 93) whereas the anti-war film does. From a psychological point of view 'empathy' and the related phenomenon 'identification' are the key to fascination and therefore are the most powerful instruments the filmmakers and authors have. The action film uses this effect by offering the identification with a hero that is caught in a situation in which brutality seems to be justified. The viewer enjoys empathising with this powerful protagonist: "der Zuschauer findet darin sein Vergnügen" (Von Gottberg 2004: 101). Although the anti-war film uses the effect of 'identification', too, it still is an anti-pole to action films or war films:

"In Antikriegsfilmen agieren keine Helden, sondern ausschließlich Opfer. [...] Antikriegsfilme stellen die Gewalt nicht als lustvolles Erlebnis für die Zuschauer dar, sie konzentrieren sich auf die Opfer und erzeugen so bei dem Rezipienten einen erheblichen Einfühlungsstress." (Von Gottberg 2004: 102-103). This 'stress', which is caused by the anti-war film, is intended to affect the viewer in a way that he develops a critical distance, begins to reflect and starts to question the justification of war.

4.2 The topos "puer senex" in anti-war films

Curtius defines topos the following way: "Im antiken Lehrgebäude der Rhetorik ist die Topik das Vorratsmagazin. Man fand dort Gedanken allgemeinsten Art: solche, die bei allen Reden Schriften überhaupt verwendet werden können. [...] Bescheidenheitsformeln, Einleitungs- und Schlussformeln" (Curtius 1969: 89). Curtius exemplifies several topoi like the "Schlusstopik" and also refers to the „puer senilis" or "puer senex" which became a topos in the Late Antiquity (Curtius 1969: 108-112). Actually, the term brings together the two opposites "young" and "old". These antipoles cover a field of associations such as 'maturity', 'wisdom', 'astuteness' etc. Erll points out that Remarque applied this literary technique in *All Quiet on the Western Front* and indicates that a young adult which loses all easy-mindedness and hope when entering the war stands for the pervert effects of war: "die gealterte Jugend [ist] Teil einer pervertierten verkehrten Welt des Kriegs" (Erll 2003: 270). Looking at it from the meta-level, the perversion is that this young man was just about to enter the adult life. He could have become a happy responsible citizen in his society which had educated him for nineteen years but before he has the chance to give something back he is killed.

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However, this topos can still be found in recently produced anti-war films where it is inseparably linked to a certain script, for example in Jack Gold's *Aces High* (1976) or in Christian Carion's *Merry Christmas* (2005).

Firstly, the script consists of young boys, often teenagers, who are recruited for the military. In the case of *All Quiet on the Western Front* this is 19-year-old Paul Bäumer and his class who are recruited by their teacher at school. The teacher Kantorek manipulates them rhetorically by addressing their pride and patriotism so that at the end of the lesson the graduates almost are ecstatic, shouting and jubilating in the classroom (see chapter 5.6 "at school").

Secondly, the recruits have to undergo certain initiation rites. In Milestone's film, the newcomers are trained by the drill instructor Himmelstoss in an inhuman way. The former pupils are trained to rigidly follow the instructions and suppress their critical thoughts.

Thirdly, they undergo a 'baptism of fire' in the sense that they come to the front and experience for the first time a battle situation where friends are wounded or die. Paul Bäumer also has to experience how he loses more and more comrades (see chapter 5.6 "manslaughter"), in the middle of the combat operation he stabs a French soldier with his knife, later he himself gets wounded and finally he loses his best friend Kat (Katzinsky). After such kind of experiences a young soldier ("puer") is not the same anymore. They become old ("senex") overnight so to speak as they are completely disillusioned and apathetic. There is nothing left of that euphoria in the classroom with which they had left just a few months ago.

Fourthly, the uncomfortable and brutal everyday life in the trenches on the Western front has become their reality. But the war never ends. Ironically, when there finally seems to be a peaceful day when Paul can watch the world go by, he is shot by a sniper when he reaches out for a peaceful little butterfly. Even when there seems to be a quiet day on the front as if the war was over, it shows its brutal face again and the soldier is killed.

5. Tasks for the EFL class

5.1 General considerations concerning a choice of tasks

When it comes to the creation of a film-task for the foreign language classroom it is necessary to differentiate between “Spracherwerb, Sprachverarbeitung und Sprachanwendung” (Schiffler 1973: 84). Furthermore, it is important to define the skill which shall be fostered and to analyse both the content and the category of the film. The main learning target is “die Lernenden zur Entschlüsselung von unterschiedlich medial vermittelten Texten zu befähigen” (Surkamp 2004: 242). Freudenstein (1972: 68), for instance, mentions the “doppelte Funktion des Films – die Darbietung wirklichkeitsnaher Sprache in echten Alltagssituationen und die Ablösung der typischen Klassenraumatmosphäre durch die Möglichkeit ‘verbal responses to non-verbal stimuli’ zu geben“. In the following teaching unit the emphasis will be put on „Sprachverarbeitung“ und “Sprachanwendung“. Surkamp also points out that it is crucial to bear in mind “dass auch im Fremdsprachenunterricht nicht nur nach dem Inhalt des Films gefragt wird, sondern, dass auch dessen spezifische Textur [...] Gegenstand des Unterrichts ist“ and that learners „Filme nur dann differenziert betrachten, wenn sie sich der spezifischen Darstellungsverfahren des Genres bewusst sind“ (Surkamp 2004: 241-242). This specific texture of the anti-war film has been described in chapter 4.1 and 4.2 and is partially integrated into the discussion part of the first post-viewing task 5.4 without explicit use of the scientific terms ‘anti-war film’ and ‘per se-nex’.

In general, the aspect of „wirklichkeitsnaher Sprache“ is considered at that point when the class deals with a ‘real’ film which automatically includes the usage of ‘authentic language’, in contrast to language teaching broadcasts and films which have undergone a ‘didactic reduction’ concerning the language. Tasks that include such real-world components provide an opportunity to the pupils to test their skills. They are crucial in the foreign language classroom because they stretch the pupils towards their individual “zone of proximal development” (Cameron 2001: 28). The challenging aspect for the students is that they have to concentrate very hard in order to filter the relevant information while being distracted from aspects such as unfamiliar pronunciation (dialects), velocity of the speaker, unknown vocabulary, redundancy, real-world noise in the background, lack of concentration and so on.

Ur (2004: 108) describes the method of “single exposure”. Single exposure definitely is a main element of real-life listening and therefore it is a desirable aim because it stretches the pupils’ language skills. Real speech according to Buck is defined by the fact that “it takes place in real time with no chance to review” (in: Müller-Hartmann/Schocker-von Dittfurth 2004: 76) In fact, depending on the film, under-

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standing an authentic language film can be a very demanding task but at the same time it is an opportunity to foster the self-confidence as soon as the pupils get the feeling that at least sometimes they can succeed.

In general, an advantage of films is that they often refer to “Alltagssituationen” and thus establish a clear setting in terms of framework (Who? When? Where? What? Why?), which is important for language learners. Films always offer a “contextualisation” and therefore they foster the skill of decoding “visual non-verbal information” (Müller-Hartmann/Schocker-von Dittfurth 2004: 75) just as the skill “reading” does. A teacher should profit from the fact that “communication can be shown in a context, and the many factors in communication can be perceived easily by viewers – and language learners.” (Lonergan 1984: 14).

To sum up, it is vital to consider the language aspect in films, and it is always a tightrope walk. Neglecting considerations about an appropriate form of providing or introducing unknown vocabulary puts at risk the motivation of the pupils.

Another main idea of Freudenstein is that the teacher „konzentriert sich auf die Ausbildung der sprachlichen Fertigkeiten des Hörens, Verstehens und Sprechens“ (Freudenstein 1972: 67). This emphasis on communication skills will be part of the teaching unit.

In terms of motivation, experience shows that pupils are always motivated to watch films. In best case “the learner will want to watch, even if comprehension is limited” because normally “domestic viewing tends to be passive” but “watching video films for language-learning purposes should be an active process by the learners (Lonergan 1984: 5-6). In other words, it is the duty of the teacher to make the most of the motivational power that the medium entails. Obviously, one possibility is to hand out worksheets with guiding questions which ensure that the pupils “participate so that the output from the video is not just one-way, to an unresponsive audience” (Lonergan 1984:6).

A few possible functions of films will not be considered in the following ‘possible tasks’. Firstly, *All Quiet on the Western Front* is certainly not suitable for the work on pronunciation due to the colloquial language that is being used throughout the film. Secondly, tasks concerning presentation or review of grammar do neither contribute in terms of “peace education” nor would they respect the principle of “vivid interaction” which fosters the autonomy of the learner.

The teaching unit integrates the following task-principles:

1. task clarity
2. principle of coherence
3. scaffolding
4. authenticity principle

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The aim of a pre-task is to create a “familiarity with the topic” (Willis 2005: 42). For a pre-task it might make sense to watch a scene of the film and use this as a stimulus to do something else, e.g. create a timeline of WWI events. But in general it should be an aim to directly ‘exploit’ and profit from the film-scenes or the film-material in a dynamic way. The following list is a mix of selected methods Stempleski suggests and of my own ideas to indicate the enormous variety:

| method | possible activities |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Freeze-Frame Control” (Stempleski 1997: 15) The film is paused but the picture is still visible. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The class describes the picture. b) The pupils have to write a possible continuation. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two scenes are shown in which the main character finds himself in different situations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The students have to invent a realistic story how the actor got from situation 1 into situation 2. b) Little groups act out the scenes in a role-play and they improvise a continuation. (A more time-consuming version would require a script and a recording of the played scene.) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Silent viewing” (Stempleski 1997: 15) The volume is switched off. The pupils have not seen the scene before. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) They have to assume what the actors are saying and explain how they deduced their ideas. b) They have to make up a conversation in the target language that fits to the lip movements of the actors. c) Maybe the pupils can think of a tune, a song or classic music that would fit to the scene but they have to justify it. |

Basically, these methods support the transition from guided language-production to independent language-production. However, these rather playful, creative and time-consuming possibilities will not be integrated in the following unit due to a focus on content and abstract thinking since it is for year ten.

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5.2 Overview of the teaching unit

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| Lesson 1 | Teacher provides background information on WWI, the author and the filmmaker & pre-task (5.3) |
| Lesson 2+3 | Teacher explains the while-viewing task (5.4) & watching the film |
| Lesson 4 | First post-viewing task (5.5) |
| Lesson 5 | Second post-viewing task (5.6) |
| Lesson 6 | Final task (5.7) |

5.3 Pre-Task

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| Purpose: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> working with an extract of Remarque's book |
| Skills/ Tech- niques | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reading translating speaking |
| Products: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> translation identification of the main point discussion in class sharing stories |
| Material: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> worksheet with Remarque's foreword in English and guiding questions (see "process"): "This story is neither an accusation nor a confession and least of all an adventure for death is not an adventure for those who stand face to face with it. It will simply try to tell of a generation of men who even though they may have escaped its shells were destroyed by the war..." introductory film-scene with foreword from 0:01:26 – 0:02:00 |
| Process: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The learners make a written translation of the foreword. The class shares their opinions and comes to a conclusion on what the main point of the statement is and what effect it does have on the reader/viewer. Therefore, pupils also discuss the impact of the film without such a foreword. The students think of both glorifying and horrifying stories about wars they have heard from relatives or know from the media and share them with the class. |

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5.4 While-Viewing Task

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| Purpose: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • getting to know the whole film |
| Skills/ Tech- niques | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • viewing • note-taking |
| Product: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. filled-out worksheet (details see below under “Process”) 2. guided conversation in class |
| Material: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • worksheet with table concerning the film • the whole film <i>All Quiet on the Western Front</i> |
| Process: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While watching the film the pupils are supposed to take notes on <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the spectrum of feelings the soldiers have and their morale both before the war and during the war. b) the food on the front. c) the hygienic conditions in the trenches. d) (weather and temperature) |

5.5 First Post-Viewing Task

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|-------------------------------------|--|
| Purpose: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spontaneous oral language production under real-time constraint |
| Skills/ Tech- niques | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speaking • summarising • analysing • arguing for/against sth. |
| Product: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discussion in class |
| Material: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notes from the while-viewing task |
| Process: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They give a first free statement right after they have watched the film (if possible also an emotional feedback). 2. Learners try to give a short summary of the film in their own words. 3. As a next step the pupils are supposed to describe the cruel scenes of the film they can remember. As a follow-up task they shall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - describe the feelings they had while they were watching the scene and if possible trace them back to elements or pictures which provoked them. - reflect whether these feelings were more or less intensive in comparison to what they see in <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) action films on TV |

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- b) news on TV

and try to give reasons why these feelings were different or similar.

 - discuss whether the warfare in WWI caused more or less cruelty than the warfare nowadays.
- 4. A next step could be to reflect on the meta-level what intention filmmaker (and author) might have had to show brutality to such an extent and in such detail ("anti-war film").
- 5. The following debate could concern how the war events in general affect the psyche of the soldiers, especially the psyche of young soldiers ("puer senex"). It is always important that the pupils support and illustrate their opinion with examples:
 - a) whether they show signs of euphoria, stress, sadness, depression etc.
 - b) whether the behaviour of the soldiers loses all humanity or whether they still show human traces like friendship or brotherhood when they are among themselves.
 - c) a final debate should be held from the meta-level – the pupils shall discuss whether they have the feeling that there are "winners" or "heroes" in this film considering psychological aspects from the previous debate and considering all circumstances of the everyday life at the front shown in the film which they noted for the while-viewing task.

5.6 Second Post-Viewing Task

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| Purpose: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "discovering other perspectives": looking at the impact of the war from the point of view of "puer senex" Paul Bäumer by the help of three selected scenes |
| Skills/ Techn. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • viewing • writing |
| Product: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • written diary: How does war affect the life of the young soldier Paul Bäumer? |
| Material: | 1. 'at school' (0:06:58 – 0:08:00) 2. 'manslaughter' (0:41:55 – 0:44:25) 3. 'butterfly-scene' (2:04:37 – 2:05:47) |

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| Process: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pupils watch the scenes and invent a diary from Bäumer's point of view. As first-person narrators they describe the change in his life through the war, his emotions during the brutal war events and his supposed daydreams for the future on "quiet days on the Western front" like e.g. when he watches the butterfly. |
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5.7 Final Task

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| Purpose: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> presenting the products and conclusions of the precedent tasks |
| Skills/ Tech- niques | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> summarising making an overview presentation skills |
| Product: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> presentation in front of the class |
| Material: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> hand-outs |
| Process: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> different groups report on different lessons; they make a hand-out and additionally use either the board, transparencies or power-point presentations. every group must mention a few basic facts about WWI they remember from the background information of the teacher; additionally they must bring in one new bit of information they have researched both in the internet and in a book and quote their sources. the groups list different arguments and positions of the people involved in the discussion; they briefly comment both on the procedure of the discussions and their efficiency. they point out ways in which both author and filmmaker influence the reader and viewer, especially concerning the aspect of 'cruelty'. the students explain their collected conclusions concerning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -everyday life on the front -the psychological impact on the soldier. -describe confirmation or change of their personal attitude to war in comparison to their attitude before the teaching unit. |

6. Sources

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