

**Venturing beyond YouTube:
Learning the language of appraisal**

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Abstract

A major function of language is to enable the expression of interpersonal meanings – feelings, opinions, judgements, humour, and so on. Generally, however, this important aspect of language competency is not taught explicitly, possibly because such meanings are so deeply embedded in the culture that even native speakers are not consciously aware of how they employ these subtle resources. Drawing on the tools provided by appraisal theory, the paper considers the interpersonal demands made on English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) students as they learn to write responses to popular media texts, in this case, *Summer Heights High*. While recognising the value of the informal give-and-take of adolescent online banter in such environments as YouTube and MySpace, ultimately students need to deal with the demands of more formal review writing in school. It proposes that students can make that transition with explicit guidance by teachers in using the kinds of evaluative language that is valued in the academic community.