Video without Tears

Media in the Language Classroom

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www.teachingenglish.org.uk

The English Channel

- The British Council now offers Arts content in conjunction with self-access language learning at: https://theenglishchannel.britishcouncil.org/

- Copyright is all taken care of, so you can use the resources immediately

What we're going to do. . .

- Have a quick look at the practical basics required to use video

- Think about what our appropriate sources for video are, from copyright to genre and cultural content

- Briefly examine some common approaches for using video, and think about why they might not be effective

- Present some practical ideas on how to use video for language and skills work, which you can use in the classroom right away

- We'll examine a template you can apply to making multiple video lessons!

Some Basics: worth remembering

Many video sites use adverts which might not be appropriate for the classroom, and can often be unreliable. They also have a bad habit of playing previews of 'clickbait' content which can distract students.

In this case, consider:

Hosting the video on a file-sharing site such as Dropbox or Google Docs – both let you upload and stream video for free.

https://www.dropbox.com/

https://www.google.com/docs/about/

Some Basics: worth remembering. . .

If constant reliable WIFI for streaming is not an option,

you can store videos offline on a portable USB or hard-drive

There are many different file formats and types, and many different players: to avoid compatibility issues, you should use the player which can accommodate all formats:

https://www.videolan.org/

Some Basics: worth remembering. . .

For some activities you might need to have screenshots from your video content.

Don't struggle with video-editing technology to do this: 'print screen' is your friend! This copies the page to clipboard, and voila!

For PC: Windows logo key + Prt Sc

For Mac: Shift + Command 3

Copyright

YouTube is now widely used, and this includes a lot of content which infringes the original copyright

While this is so common it might not seem important, you could be opening up yourself or your institution to legal issues if the appropriate copyrights are not paid attention to

Steps you can take include:

- Checking the name of the uploader is the copyright holder – often this will be accompanied by a blue tick
- Exploring creative commons or public domain material
- Using a site where all copyright is guaranteed, such as the British Council's 'The English Channel'

Genre and Form

There's a lot of video material out there. Keep the following in mind:

- Context is vital for presenting language and practicing skills: short, self-contained clips can often be better than segments from a longer video

- A lot of short clips are actually adverts

- The genre and content of your clip will inform the range of your target language

- Regardless of which skill you use video to practice, if sound is used, stress from listening will be a factor for your students

Cultural Content

- Presenting new or unusual ideas in a video is a definite bonus with video content

- Websites like The English Channel can present a wealth of diverse cultural-content to complement language-learning

- Some content will not be useable in some contexts: ultimately, this is a judgement call, or will depend of the rules of your institution

- All contexts vary, but as a general rule of thumb: contemporary political content, and religious content in general, is probably best avoided

Video and Listening

Even if you're not delivering a listening lesson, how you present and use the listening text of a video is very important:

- Authentic listening texts can often be intimidating or stressful for students, regardless of level. For more info you can read about the 'affective filter'

- Coursebook-style listening lessons do not often work well in video lessons

- Authentic listening material will oblige you to grade the task, and not the text

- Semi-authentic or EFL-specific video is often very poor, and contains a lot of pedagogical assumptions which might not be relevant in your context or classroom

Video and Listening. . .

Research *(John Field, 2005)* shows traditional listening approaches are ineffective, as they are based on an incorrect model of how listening works:

Here is a format for a listening lesson that many of us would feel comfortable with:

- Lead the students into the topic of the listening
- Play the listening, answer some gist questions and check answers
- Play it again, listen for more detail and check answers
- Use the listening as the springboard for a speaking, reading or writing task

Video and Listening. . .

- Such methodology provides practice in listening but *fails to teach the skill*.
- This is because it doesn't engage in the parts of listening as a skill which will improve learners
- This is because little attention is paid to what may have gone wrong in the *process* of listening, or what learners do *during* listening: listening is not actually a *passive* skill
- A more effective approach to listening texts is not to just play something and ask ' What did they say?' and then check the answers!
- This consideration will be key to a lot of the exercises we are going to examine

Some Techniques!

Six Screens Prediction

- Take six screenshots from the video and ask students - in groups - to create a story or situation that explains what's happening in all six images.

- Students can then watch the video once just to check their prediction

- This is most effective as a pre-watching activity, but can also be used as means of practicing writing after viewing a video

Some Techniques!

Interrogate the Video

- Give students a basic idea of the video topic

- Have them write questions they think watching the video might provide answers to

- Emphasise this doesn't depend on listening, but can also be visual

Some Techniques!

- Write a summary of the video. Cut up your sentences / paragraphs and distribute to pairs or groups
- Have students read according to a gist / lexis task
- Watching the video, students arrange the texts into the correct order
- Again, 100% comprehension of the spoken text is not necessary for successful completion of the task – just make sure you tell students this!

Some Techniques!

What Would you Do?

- Detail to the students the situation a character finds themselves in the video

- Have them discuss what they would do

- Watch and compare to the character's actions in the video

- This can be used for many language points, not just the conditional!

- Similarly, pausing the video at certain points allows you to ask students what they think will happen next, and then resuming to check

About Listening Again. . .

- Depending on the level of your students, you can analyse the listening text and predict which aspects of the language they won't understand, which aspects they will have trouble with, and which aspects will be easy

- Concentrate only on the aspects they will find difficult

- Create a pre-watching / listening task which will help them to recognise and engage with this difficult language

- Subsequently watching the video and recognising such language is not only a huge confidence boost for students, but also allows you to create a variety of focused exercises specific to your students' level

- This is often referred to as a 'diagnostic' approach in listening

Top-Down and Bottom-Up

Both of these approaches should be kept in mind when writing any kind of video lesson plan: they will inform your main aim and how you get there

Briefly, these are:

- Top-Down: This uses the context and background-knowledge a viewer brings to it to anticipate what language they will encounter, and how they will need to respond. Obviously key in video!

- Bottom-Up: This approach is the more technical aspect of concentrating on structure, phoneme, lexis: the nuts and bolts of language

A Suggested Template for Video Lessons

Keeping in mind the ideas we have examined, this template will give you the basic infrastructure to create powerful and engaging video lessons, allowing for the inclusion of any specific techniques or activities you like:

- *Watching **Top-Down***: Play the video with no sound. Students discuss: what's happening? Why? What's the subject? What will happen? etc. This will require grading by level

- *Watching **Top-Down / Bottom-Up***: Play the video with sound. This is to check students answers from the silent task.

- *Pre-Watching **Bottom-Up***: Distribute hand outs with language tasks focusing on lexis or structure you have identified for the level. Students complete *before* watching again

- *Watching **Bottom-Up***: Students watch again and check their worksheet answers

A Suggested Template: Post-Watching

At this point, your students will have engaged meaningfully with a video, will be feeling more confident, practiced one (or more) skills, and completed some language work. From here you can:

- Role-play a scene: what happens next? Students must use some target language in their scene

- Group-writing: What happened before? Students write a prequel to the events they saw, again incorporating target language.

- Whether fiction or non-fiction, students can have discussions concerning the subject of the video, or create project-work if at lower levels

Any Questions or Comments?