

Are you keen to use DVD or video in your lessons? This lesson highlights some of the benefits of supplementing your teaching programme with this type of material. It also lets you know what you have to think about in order to get started, and then gives some ideas for activities.

Task 1 – Rose’s DVD lesson

Rose: Everyone told me that using DVD was a fun way of learning. I showed my intermediate class a film last Friday. I thought it'd be a nice end-of-week activity. However, afterwards the students said they'd rather use the course book, so I am not sure if using DVD is a good idea after all.



What do you think?

Jot down your answers on a note pad, then check the answer key below.



Task 1 Feedback

It seems as though Rose merely let students watch a whole film. This use of DVD is quite passive and a whole film could be difficult for intermediate learners to understand. If the students are studying in an English speaking country, they could go and watch a film at a cinema. If they are not, they could probably have hired their own English-language DVD and watched it at home. As a result, the students may not have found this a motivating classroom experience.

Key Skill

Teachers can sometimes approach the use of DVDs or videos as having a kind of “babysitting” function. In other words, it is something that requires minimum preparation that easily kills 90 minutes of classroom time. This tends to put the students in a very passive role. The successful use of DVDs or videos requires much more active participation from both the teacher and students.

Task 2 – Why use DVDs or videos?



Numbers 1 to 6 provide one word reasons for using this kind of material with students. Letters a to f give more detailed explanations of these reasons. Match the explanations to the reasons.

Reasons	Explanations
1. variety	
2. culture	
3. motivation	
4. speaking	
5. language	
6. visuals	

Explanations

- a. Watching TV programmes or films can motivate students to discuss what they see and therefore generate a lot of oral language.
- b. We now live in a world of sophisticated images and students expectations are that this world can also be found inside the classroom.
- c. Using DVDs and videos makes a change from the course book and is an opportunity to include some authentic material in the teaching programme.
- d. Excerpts from TV programmes or films can provide an authentic and rich context for grammar and vocabulary. Some commercially produced ELT videos are created to target specific language structures.
- e. DVDs and videos have an association with the word ‘entertainment’ which means that students are often keen to work hard in lessons based around this kind of material.
- f. Excerpts from films and TV programmes can bring the real world into the classroom and can illustrate background information associated with language and English-speaking life.

Check your ideas in the answer key. 

Key Skill

Used well, DVDs and videos can be highly motivating and useful learning tools in the classroom. The visual support provided in this kind of material can help learners understand spoken language more easily than listening to dialogues on CDs or tapes.

Task 3 – Getting started



Before you begin using DVDs or video, there are some important questions you should ask yourself. Sort questions 1 to 8 below into one of the two categories: equipment or materials.

Questions

1. Will I be infringing on any kind of broadcast copyright by showing this material in the classroom?
2. Am I able to freeze the frame to focus on one image?
3. Does the DVD or video player work and can I operate the machine efficiently?
4. Is this topic or genre motivating for the students I am teaching?
5. Is there a trouble shooting guide to help me get out of any problems?
6. Is the level and the speed of the language manageable for my learners?
7. Is there a counter on the DVD or video player cue the segment I want to use?
8. Is the excerpt about the right length when I take into account the activities I want to do and the time I have available?

Equipment	Materials

Check your ideas in the answer key. 

Key Skill

It is surprising how little DVD or video material you need for a lesson. It is possible to plan an hour long lesson around a 1 minute excerpt from a film or TV programme. The key to using this kind of material as actively as possible is exploiting what you use as fully as possible. DVD and video have far more potential than “listening-with-pictures”. They are often a very useful source of language and can be used as a stimulus for developing speaking skills.

Task 4 – Some teaching ideas



Numbers 1 to 4 below describe some DVD or video materials that you can use. Letters a to d describe key techniques for working with video, while number i. to iv. are suggested activities. Match the techniques and activities to the materials.

Material	Technique	Activity
1. An excerpt from a TV discussion or debate programme.		
2. A short excerpt from a crime story that includes dramatic music.		
3. The same day's TV news broadcast on different channels.		
4. An excerpt from a film.		

ESOL Teaching Skills TaskBook

Using DVD or video: Unit 5 e)

Techniques

- a. Divide the class into 2 groups for split viewing and listening.
- b. Viewing with no sound.
- c. Extensive viewing and listening.
- d. Listening first with the images covered, then again with the images revealed.

Activities

- i. Students get practise at listening for gist and following the main narrative of a story.
- ii. Students listen and view trying to infer any bias in what they see, then report this to another student.
- iii. Students describe the screen they imagine to each other then compare their ideas with the excerpt.
- iv. The teacher asks students to focus on body language and gesture and what this tells them about the people they see.

Check your ideas in the answer key. 

Thinking about your teaching ...

Find a film or TV programme in a language that you are not familiar with, or have very limited understanding of. Cover or turn off any on-screen subtitles and see what you can infer about the people, the situation and the story of an excerpt from this material. How much could you understand? How successful were you at extracting some kind of meaning?

Note your findings in your *Teaching log*.

Taking it to the classroom ...

Try one of the techniques from task 4 that is new to you.

Want to find out more ... ?

The following book is full of good ideas on using DVD or video material: *Using Authentic Video in the Language Classroom* by Jane Sherman (Cambridge University Press 2003).

Related TaskBook lessons...

You may be interested in the following lessons in the ESOL Teaching Skills TaskBook series, relating to this topic:

- **Unit 3 a) Listening 1: Listening sub-skills and a typical lesson** (*looks at different listening sub-skills and how to practise them*).
- **Unit 3 b) Listening 2: Learner-friendly listening lessons** (*looks at how to make listening lessons more manageable for your learners*).
- **Unit 5 a) Using authentic materials:** (*looks at the pros and cons of using authentic materials and outlines a procedure of how to exploit them in the classroom*).

Answer Key



Task 2 – Feedback

- 1. c
- 2. f
- 3. e
- 4. a
- 5. d
- 6. b

Task 3 – Feedback

Equipment: 2, 3, 5 and 7

Materials: 1, 4, 6 and 8

Task 4 – Feedback

material	technique	activity
1. An excerpt from a TV discussion or debate programme.	b. Viewing with no sound.	iv. The teacher asks students to focus on body language and gesture and what this tells them about the people they see.
2. A short excerpt from a crime story that includes dramatic music.	d. Listening first with the images covered, then again with the images revealed.	iii. Students describe the screen they imagine to each other then compare their ideas with the excerpt.
3. The same day's TV news broadcast on different channels.	a. Divide the class into 2 groups for split viewing and listening.	ii. Students listen and view trying to infer any bias in what they see, then report this to another student.
4. An excerpt from a film.	c. Extensive viewing and listening.	i. Students get practise at listening for gist and following the main narrative of a story.