

THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH VIDEOS.

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Annotation: This article provides information about the importance of teaching English through videos. A well-known way to create meaningful context for teaching English is through using media, which can be delivered through a wide variety of print, audio, and visual formats. The current information age requires teachers to be familiar with media and media literacy.

Key words: videos, writing, grammar, vocabulary, EFL/ESL classroom

Integrating videos into lessons creates enticing visuals and a special interactive environment in the EFL/ESL classroom. Teaching English through videos also allows teachers to be creative when designing language lessons. As Cundell (2008, 17) notes, "One of the most powerful ways that video can be integrated into courses is for the visual representation they provide for learners on otherwise abstract concepts." This is the idea that compelled me to use a homemade video to teach a one-hour "modals of speculation" lesson for my intermediate students. Videos permitted me to provide my students with audiovisual stimuli to introduce these important modal auxiliaries in a way that made sense to my students. Rather than search for a video online, I chose to accept the challenge and make my own short video for the lesson. An important point is that I am not an expert in video recording, but I do know how to use my camcorder. The same video can be used to teach different grammar points, such as present and past simple, present and past progressive, future simple, and "going to + infinitive" without to, all by using the technique of freeze framing. In order to teach grammar, you need to play the video, freeze framing the picture after each scene, and then ask questions. For instance, freeze frame the picture and ask your students questions like, "What is s/he doing?" "What did s/he do?" "What was s/he doing?" "What is s/he going to do next?" or "What will happen next?" In this way students will be prompted to use the teaching point. Once you elicit their answers, write them on the board and highlight the structure (e.g., "to be + ing" form of the verb for present progressive, or "will + infinitive" without to for future simple). Since the video consists of a sequence of action, adverbs like first, second, finally, before, and later can also be introduced to and practiced with students.

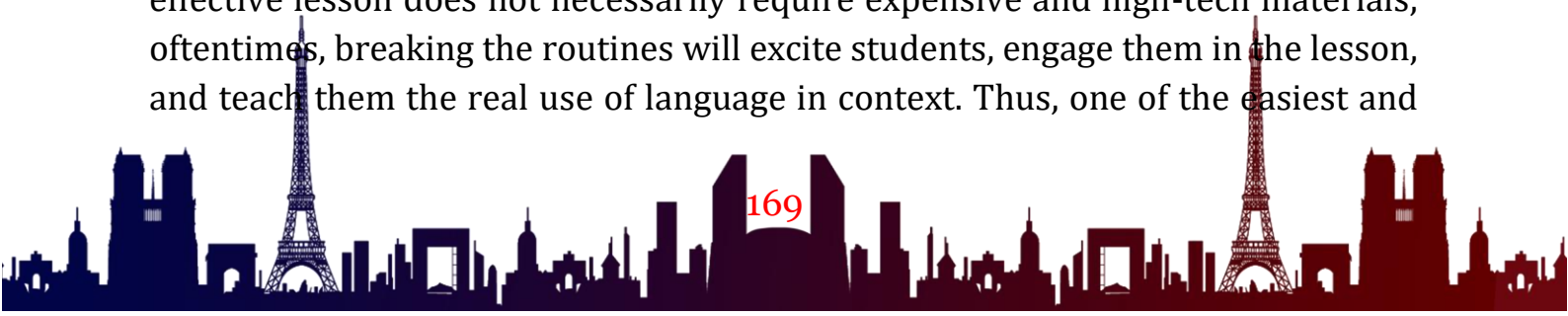


The idea behind video and sound effects lessons can be used to teach a variety of content such as grammar, vocabulary, and creative writing to a wide range of ESL/EFL students.

The same video that I used with my students can be used to teach vocabulary items on home and kitchen appliances by recording sounds and having students guess the origin. Being careful to respect people's privacy, you can also take the camera around the school, or even outside the school, and record a variety of interesting sounds. For instance, you can record the sound of students playing at recess, the period between classes, or sounds in the lunchroom and then play the video for your students and have them guess the source of the sound. Or you can record the sounds in a busy coffee shop, a nearby underground station, or a noisy shopping center and play a guessing game with students. You can even teach vocabulary about different jobs by taking your camera with you to record the butcher who is cutting or grinding meat or the cashier who opens the register and returns your change. Another interesting variation is to enlist your students to record videos. For example, you can ask them to record sounds during a picnic or some other activity they do on the weekend. These videos can become part of your repertoire to teach grammar and vocabulary. If you think your students might not have access to a camera, you can give them the option of recording sounds with their MP3 and MP4 players.

The same video that I used in my class can be used as a visual prompt for writing assignments at different levels of English. As George (2002, 12) points out, "Our students have a much richer imagination for what we might accomplish with the visual than our journals have yet to address." To use videos in the writing class, you can show the video to your students using the pictureless listening technique and ask them to write a story based on the sounds they hear in the video. You do not even have to show them the video, as the soundtrack itself serves as an effective audio prompt for writing. You can also ask your students to videotape random scenes around them and bring their videos to class. Then they can watch the videos together and create stories that match the videos.

Finding appropriate teaching materials is not that hard, as our everyday life serves as a perfect resource for creating effective lessons and activities. An effective lesson does not necessarily require expensive and high-tech materials; oftentimes, breaking the routines will excite students, engage them in the lesson, and teach them the real use of language in context. Thus, one of the easiest and



least expensive ways for teachers to prepare the most effective teaching materials is to look around and never underestimate their sense of creativity.

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