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ОСВІТА, НАУКА ТА ВИРОБНИЦТВО: РОЗВИТОК ТА ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ

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USING FILMS AND VIDEOS AS ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

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Today's world is a visually oriented world. Films and videos capture audiences not only in the field of entertainment but in the business and corporate world, in government and public-service organizations, and in education. The benefits of utilizing these powerful media have recently gained wider recognition in the context of learning English.

Films and videos are flexible instruments for language learning and instruction. They diversify a curriculum, they add an extra dimension to course design, they provide a rich variety of language and cultural experiences, they simulate real-world language demands.

Another special value of films and videos lies in providing students with natural exposure to a wide variety of authentic speech forms of the target language, speech forms not normally encountered in the more restricted environment of the classroom. Finally, these values, combined with the inherent compelling nature of the visual experience, have a powerful motivational impact on students during both the actual viewing and the accompanying activities.

With a carefully planned lesson the teacher can ensure that students gain confidence and feel in command of the medium.

In order to exploit films and videos fully in the classroom, one should integrate pre-viewing, viewing, and post-viewing activities into the lesson. A teacher may choose to integrate all three activities in a given film/video lesson while planning only two for another lesson. The activities presented below are, for the most part, standard communicative activities that have been adapted for use with films and videos.

Pre-viewing Activities.

The primary purpose of pre-viewing activities is to prepare students for the actual viewing of a film/video. The activities listed below should be viewed as possible suggestions for pre-viewing activities.

1. Student Interviews/Polls. Students can interview or poll other class members about issues related to the film/video. Ideally, the question(s), generated by the instructor, should highlight an issue, concept, and/or problem that will surface in the film/video. The discussion that accompanies the interviews/polls helps prepare students for the content of the film/video, thereby aiding comprehension.

2. Problem Solving. Students can be presented with a problem that highlights issues from the film or video. In small groups, students can discuss and attempt to solve the problem, later reporting possible solutions to the class.

3. Discussion of the Film/Video Title. Students can examine the title of the film/video in order to hypothesize its content. This quick activity can be done as a class or in small groups, the latter allowing for more student participation.

4. Brainstorming Activities. The teacher can pose questions or elicit information that link students' past experiences with the film/video.

5. Film Summary. Students can skim a written summary of the film/video for the main idea(s) and/or scan the summary for specific details. Teacher-generated questions help students locate that information deemed most important for viewing comprehension.

6. Information-Gap Exercises. After introducing students to the topic of the film/video, they can fill in a grid similar to the one below:

What I know about the topic	What I am unsure of about the topic	What I hope to learn about the topic
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7. Dictionary/Vocabulary Work. Students can be introduced to important words/phrases needed for better comprehension of the film or video through dictionary or vocabulary exercises.

Viewing activities.

The primary purpose of viewing activities is to facilitate the actual viewing of a film/video. More specifically, these activities help students deal with specific issues and focus on character or plot development at crucial junctures in the film/videotape. The activities listed below, by no means an exhaustive list, should be viewed as possible options to be used while showing a film/video.

1. Directed Listening. Students can be asked to listen for general information or specific details considered crucial for comprehension. Similarly, students can be asked to consider a particularly relevant question while viewing the film.

2. Information Gathering. As in directed listening, students can be asked to gather pertinent information while viewing the film or video.

3. Film Interruptions. The film can be interrupted in progress to clarify key points in the thematic development of the film. In addition, a film can be interrupted so that students can discuss the content of the film up to that point or predict what will happen in the remaining portion(s) of the film. The latter exercise is especially effective in dramatic films/videos.

4. Second Screening. Films can be shown in their entirety a second time. However, the length of the film and the pre-viewing and post-viewing activities may make this option undesirable.

Post-viewing Activities.

These activities stimulate both written and oral use of the target language, utilizing information and/or insights from the film/video.

1. In-Class Polls or Interviews. Students can interview classmates to find out reactions to the film or to explore issues raised in the film. Students can report findings orally (either to the entire class or to a small group) and/or in a written essay.

2. Film Summaries. Students can work alone or in small groups to identify the main points of the film/video. Students can then summarize main issues raised in the film in written and/or spoken form.

3. Alternative Endings. Especially with dramatic story-lines, students can work together to come up with an alternative ending and report it in an oral and/or written activity.

4. Discussion. Film-related questions focusing on issues, personal experiences, and/or cultural observations can be raised to stimulate small group discussion.

5. Comparisons. Students can compare what they knew about the film/video topic before the viewing with what they learned as a result of the viewing.

6. Agree/Disagree/Unsure Activity. Students can react individually to a series of statements related to the film/video.

7. Ranking/Group Consensus. By ranking various characters, issues, etc., of a film/video, students can attempt to reach a consensus.

8. Paragraph Organization. A number of exercises will help students with paragraph organization:

a. After eliciting the main ideas of the film/video, students can list details that

support those major issues; these main points and supporting details can be used to write a paragraph or composition.

b. Teachers can cut printed film summaries into “strips,” comprising one sentence or an entire paragraph. Students can practice organizing paragraphs or parts of paragraphs by assembling the strips into logical order, thereby reconstructing the summary.

c. Based on a close examination of an introductory paragraph, focusing on certain features of the film/video, students can identify ideas to be developed in subsequent paragraphs. Once the main ideas of subsequent paragraphs are identified, students can compose those paragraphs.

9. Speed Writing. After introducing a topic related to the film, students are asked to write about it for a short period of time.

10. Using Notes for Writing Practice. If students have taken notes while watching the film/videotape, students can pool their notes to obtain a more complete set of notes. Then, using these notes, students can write a brief summary or examine a particular aspect of the film/video.

11. Roleplays/Simulation Games. Students can roleplay characters or a situation from the film/video.

12. Debates. Students can hold a formal debate concerning an issue raised in the film.

The pre-viewing, viewing, and post-viewing activities listed above represent a sampling of the types of classroom activities that can be utilized with films and videos. Teachers who recognize the needs of their students and have clear instructional objectives should be able to make productive use of these and other activities.

Films and videos, widely recognized as powerful communication media, can greatly enhance and diversify a second-language curriculum. With careful selection and purposeful planning, films and videotapes can motivate students, thereby facilitating language learning. Moreover, the integration of pre-viewing, viewing, and post-viewing activities into the film/video lesson encourages natural language use and language skill development, making films and videotapes valuable teaching tools.

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