

THE A – Z OF USING VIDEO TEXTS IN MODERN LANGUAGE CLASSES

Around the text

Get students to look at other texts about the same thing. E.g., if looking at a film give activities based on the trailer and / or the official website. Provide links & activities to clips from talk shows segments about the movie. Watch the “behind the scenes” section on the DVD or hunt down interviews with the director or actors. Music from the soundtrack. If they are looking at an ad for a product, then look at other ads for the same product or similar products. Look at the manufacturer’s website or product reviews.

Alternative ending

Show a whole text, then students need to write a script for an alternative ending.

Boring & old fashioned...

Plain old “watch the video and answer the following questions” are also really important – particularly great training for Indonesian WACE courses. (This type of activity can also be made more interesting by adapting the layout of the worksheet - e.g., using Comic Life)

Celebration time

Watch a selection of advertisements for a particular holiday / event (eg Christmas, Lebaran) and then get the class to brainstorm what they learn about that celebration in the / a TL community. How is it the same? How is it different?

Characters

Some ideas to get students to focus on characters, either at a specific point in the film or as they develop.

- create a mock Facebook page for one of the characters (including interests, relevant personal details and status updates during the film) (<http://www.classtools.net/fb/home/page> could be used)
- create an online dating profile for one of the characters
- write a diary entry
- write a series of emails, texts or tweets between characters (Could also be done as a pair / small group / whole class activity with different students assigned different characters to be, and need to respond to messages sent to that character in character.
- Fish out of water. Get the students to act out how a character from the film would react if put into a totally different scenario – e.g. an ad for dishwashing liquid, The Simpsons...

Close

Close activities may be old fashioned but are still valuable in getting students to listen to texts, and are particularly useful if following the words is important. It also can be used to get them used to a variety of accents.

Collaborative Group Viewing Guide:

Divide the content of a film into different topics (how many will depend on the length and content of the video and the number of students in the class), list several comprehension questions under each topic, and divide the class into groups, one group per topic. Each group focuses on one specific topic. After the film, each group meets for 10 minutes to discuss their topic and formulate a response. Finally, groups share information with the rest of the class. From:

<http://www2.education.ualberta.ca/staff/olenka.Bilash/best%20of%20bilash/audiovideo.html>

Commentating

Another way for students to narrate a video is to “call” it as if it were a sporting match. This could be a whole class activity with people contributing randomly, or one or two people could be given different sections to commentate. This could be done in English with beginners to get them noticing details and to show them how much they understand without necessarily understanding all of the dialogue, or with more advanced students in the target language.

Compare and contrast

Look at advertisements for products that are also available in Australia – e.g., toothpaste, washing powder. Students look at similarities and differences.

Deliberate errors

Give students list of expressions/dialogue/events including deliberate errors, they view/listen and rewrite to correct language or events. (From Steven Smith, Western Australia)
Alternatively, students could be given a script for what they will see containing errors that need to be corrected. Or, don't tell them that there are errors and see if they pick it up!

Dictogloss

Select a short passage of target language, play at least twice, groups must piece together the short passage as accurately as possible. (From Steven Smith, Western Australia)

Divide and conquer

Divide the class into small groups. Give each group a text about the same topic, but with a different focus or perspective, or containing different information. Students respond to the text, then share back with the other groups (eg as a jigsaw activity) OR, give each group a different section of a film to watch, then they need to work out a plot summary or work out the correct order of the clips through discussion.

Film trailer

If students have watched a full length movie, get them to identify key scenes that could be used in a trailer to promote the movie, without giving away too much. They should select scenes that show the genre & the “feel” of the movie, perhaps make font & soundtrack suggestions. And so on.

If it were me...

Students rewrite a scene or write an alternate ending imagining themselves in the place of one of the characters.

I see a...

Students call out in the target language anything they can identify in the target language. Can be done with a known text (e.g. opening sequence to The Simpsons is great for this) as well as for new texts, depending on whether you want to focus on language production or on “noticing”. It's also a great way to get students speaking on a particular topic. Alternatively, students each write out a list of words / sentences / expressions within a time limit (e.g. 30 second commercial plus 15 seconds extra writing time). The student who has the largest number of accurate ideas wins.

Jeopardy

Like the game, the students know the answers but have to work out the questions. There are online generators such as <https://jeopardylabs.com> that can be used.

Jumbled clips

Show scenes from a text in a random order and students need to put them in order.

Last one standing

Provide / blackboard a list of words that will be heard or things that will be seen in the clip. They all select one word / item, stand at the start of the video, and when their word is heard they sit down until only one person is standing.

Listen for...

Give students something specific to listen for – particular slang words, grammar points, cognates etc. rather than trying to understand. Could be done as a bingo / first to 5 type activity.

Look Ma, no eyes

Play an AV text without the visuals (sound only). Students use what they hear (including music, & sound effects as well as any dialogue that they understand to guess what is happening.

Narration

As they watch students narrate the video, calling out what is happening. This could be done in English with beginners to get them noticing details and to show them how much they understand without necessarily understanding all of the dialogue, or with more advanced students in the target language.

New ad

Show students one or more ads for the same product, then get them to write or create a new ad for the same product with a similar theme (or perhaps a totally different approach to the same product...?)

Paraphrase / retell

Get students to retell the same story in a different way – e.g. as a comic strip, as a diary entry, from another character's perspective.

Predictive script-writing

View intro with sound, view next part without sound, students to script the dialogue in Language B. (From Steven Smith, Western Australia).

Re-enactment

Students need to re-enact a scene, complete with body language as well as spoken language, as closely as possible. Great to get students noticing what body language is used and how people interact non-verbally (depending on the clip selected) and how the body language may be different from what might be used in Australia. Also to focus on intonation. Or, get them to re-enact it as if the same scene was happening in their own environment (school, home, etc.) – what would be different?

Reverse storyboarding

Storyboards are created before a film / video clip etc. is made, and are similar to comic strips in appearance. They are basically a map of what a film / video will look like. Show students an ad or very short text a few times, then get them to create the storyboard.

Same same but different

Get students to discuss / explore how the dialogue / body language / interaction would be different if the scene was to have taken place in their own environment. - e.g., **Cinta di Perth**. Imagine it is Australian students in Indonesia rather than Indonesian students in Australia. What parts of your own culture would you take with you (e.g. Lola praying)? What things would you have to adapt to?

- From watching the film, what strikes you as particularly unrealistic (other than the car crash)? What does the film show us as Australians about Indonesian perceptions of Australians/ westerners?
- Imagine you are making a sequel / alternative version in which the movie focuses on Australian students are studying in Indonesia - What are possible conflicts? What are possible locations?

Screen shots

Take screen shots from film, randomise and students put in order and tell story, conflicts, relationships, then watch to confirm. (From Steven Smith Western Australia)
(*This can be done after one or more viewings, or alternatively as a prediction exercise*)
Or give students screen shots from the text and recreate the script with storyboard.

Sight & sound match

Play a couple of different scenes without the sound, then the audio from the same scenes without showing the visuals and students need to match up the sound & the images. Could also be done with a variety of ads instead.

Speech bubbles

Give the students a series of screen shots from the film with added speech bubbles, and get them to fill in the speech bubbles.

Spicks & specks – (Please, Please Tell Me Now)

Show a short clip, then afterwards ask “noticing” questions: How many spoon were on the table? What colour clothing was the main character wearing? Was the girl wearing a skirt or pants? Where was the flower? Reshow to check correct answers. Another Spicks & Specks game that could be adapted is “**Videomania**” – where students are shown 4 to 6 ads one after the other without taking notes and have to identify all the products advertised – or there could be questions related to some of the ads – e.g., which product is useful if you are concerned about germs?

Spotto

Provide students with a list of things that they need to watch and / or listen for. While watching the text, each time they notice something from the list, they need to call out “spotto” (or identify something in the TL for them to call out – e.g. “nonton” & “dengar”)

Stickies

Write key ideas, quotes, scenes etc on sticky notes – the students work in a group to put the sticky notes in the right order.

Subtitling

Students need to add their own subtitles to a clip (e.g. <http://www.grapheine.com/futeboltv/> or the “classic TV” or Bollywood sections of the same site) Alternatively, a lot of students are tech savvy enough to know how to do this)

Trailers

Show / get students to watch trailers for a number of films (e.g. using cinema websites from a TL speaking country – but preselect which trailers they should watch), then identify key points –
e.g., genre, release date, name of key people (director, stars, producer etc.). Students predict what will happen in the film, predict points of conflict & possible resolutions, or just say which film they would prefer to watch and why.

Tweet the film.

In very short sentences (140 characters if being true to the text type), students write about keyevents, either from their own perspective or from one character's point of view, in order and preferably "live" (as it happens in the film)

Using the mind's ear.

Play a section of target language. Students visualise and use the mind's ear to repeat the language in their heads silently in the actor's voice, then in their own mind's voice (silently) in their voice, then mouth the words silently, then say the words audibly. Used this technique when teaching pronunciation in ESL - theoretically and in practice, very effective. (From Steven Smith, Western Australia)

Viewing bingo

Similar to Spotto, but this time students are given (or create from a list provided) a grid of things to look & listen for. This is good to get them noticing cultural details – e.g., how can you tell it is Indonesian rather than Chinese / Thai / French / Australian etc. from what you see? When they get 4 in a line, they call out. (see example)

Voicethread

Create a voicethread using the video (URL or upload from your computer) using one or more of the other ideas here to prompt interactions.

www.voicethread.com

eg [https://voicethread.com/?](https://voicethread.com/?#e3604320)

[#e3604320](https://voicethread.com/?#e3604320) (community service announcement) or <https://voicethread.com/?#e3604350>

(Indonesian Transformers - these VT aren't finished yet!)

What came first?

Show a later section of a text, then students need to work out what happened beforehand. Alternatively, show the start and the end, students need to work out what happened in the middle.

What did they say?

Show a video segment with the sound turned off. Students need to write a script that fits.

What happens next?

Show a section of an ad, a short film (or a feature film) then students need to guess / predict what happens next. For an ad, students may be asked to predict what product is being advertised.

What's the question?

Ask students to view the text then generate questions that another student or group will need to answer when watching it.

Which text?

Give students short written texts (e.g., product descriptions, quotes, very brief synopsis, character descriptions) and show a number of very short texts (e.g. ads) and students need to match them up.

Who?

Give students short written texts (descriptions of a character, quotes, locations) and the students have to correctly match them with characters from the film.

The following are from <http://www.gestiopolis.com/organizacion-talento-2/practical-activities-for-using-video-language-teaching.htm>

1. Description: In this activity the students should work in pairs, one of the members

will watch a fragment of the video but without listening to it and should do a performance (just with gestures and body language) about what is happening in the video to the partner. So, the student who is not facing the screen should guess what is happening in the video.

Objectives: The idea of this activity is to develop the creativity in the students, and if you are a teacher trainer, this activity shows students how to teach a foreign language not only by means of the knowledge or materials as a support of it, but also by means of the gestures and mimics which highly contribute to the acquisition of a target language.

2. Description: In this activity the teacher will select a video sequence and ask students to work in pairs. One of the partners will look at the video without any sound and the other one will read the script without watching the video. Both activities occur at the same time. After that the two members will sit together and interchange criteria about the video.

Objectives: The main goal with this activity is to increase the students' motivation towards the video and forces them to be more observers due to the watchers should decode the information presented through the visual images that will be compared with the ones reported by the partner who read script.

3. Description: In this activity after students having watched the video, the teacher will ask them to create different questions related to the video. The teacher will divide the group in four small groups (A, B, C, D) and give them 5 minutes to create the questions. After that, the teacher writes the letters in different pieces of papers and put them in a bag. One student should select one of the papers without looking at it and the letter chosen indicates which team will start asking the questions and the rest should answer them. Then, this will be the methodology to follow with this activity. The teacher should correct any mistake produced by the students at the end of the activity, allowing them to feel free while communicating in the target language.

Objectives: The idea of this activity is to provide and improve the acquisition of the vocabulary related to the video and at the same time, to develop the communicative functions regarding the units previously studied, including the development of the writing and speaking skills in the students.

4. Description: In this activity the students should create a different title of the video, taking into account its content. Students will work individually and after 5 minutes, they will read the new title aloud and provide reasons about their creativity.

Objectives: The idea of this activity is to realize how much students have understood the content of the video and to develop their creativity and some skills like the writing and the speaking ones. There is often great value in watching a whole movie, but it takes up a significant chunk of time so I try to get the most out of it. I have a combined Year 11 & 12 class, and something I have found really useful when I am working with one group (e.g. working with the year 12s on orals in the week leading up to the WACE practical exam) is to give the other group a DVD with a booklet to work through with a mix of activities. A typical example would include: an analysis of setting & character from the opening minute, then a close activity to the song that accompanies the opening credits, "watch from 3.30 to 5.45 without the subtitles and answer the following questions", then watch from 5.45 to the next useful chunk with the subtitles on with some focusing questions & activities and discussion points. This means they get the "meat" from the movie, some intensive listening / viewing practice, short answer and extended writing practice (a discussion essay or a review for example) and they know the movie well enough to analyze or refer to it when looking at issues in 3B or texts in 3A. Leaving a booklet and a movie like this is also great for relief work when you are away for a few consecutive lessons. If you want some more ideas or info, here are some sites worth looking at:

<http://www.slideshare.net/ddeubel/using-commercials-in-the-classroom>

- great exploration of using commercials, why they are so useful plus a range of activities.
<http://coerll.utexas.edu/methods/modules/culture/03/>
<http://www.uiowa.edu/~pics/tips.html> (Lots of ideas - I particularly like the Expansion ideas.)
as well as <http://www.gestiopolis.com/organizacion-talento-2/practical-activities-forusing-video-language-teaching.htm>