

IES "FRAY PEDRO DE URBINA"

MIRANDA DE EBRO

GRUPO DE TRABAJO DE LA SECCIÓN BILINGÜE

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A PROPOSAL FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASS (Jesús Ignacio del Pozo Vicario)

Video has been used in language teaching for at least a couple of decades now and it still is a powerful resource for teachers. Maybe today is not as motivating as it used to be since its availability in the classroom has made it an everyday tool for teachers of any discipline. Gone are the years when you decided to take your group, to their surprise, to the video-room. That kind of activity required time and dedication due to the lack of ready-to-use content. After careful preparation I would take my students to see news broadcasts, commercials or just a video clip from a film recorded from TV during our holidays abroad or from satellite TV if you were lucky.

Fortunately, everything became easier with the arrival of DVDs and the possibility of watching films with the original soundtrack and even with subtitles... and then the internet, which has been an incredible game-changer in every aspect of our daily lives as teachers. Suddenly, we could watch anything we want whenever we needed it.

In this brief proposal I would like to present some activities with video that can be carried out with ESO and Bachillerato students.

1. ONE-MINUTE WORLD NEWS

This is a very simple activity which requires very little preparation previous to the lesson.

OBJECTIVE: The objective of this activity is to improve our students' listening competence. The more we do it the better our students will become at understanding the news broadcasts. The

language used is normally formal and standard English is the rule. It can be used to start the lesson on a regular basis (it could be once a week, for example). It is an activity of intensive listening because the students are exposed to just a bit of authentic news.

LEVEL: It can be used with 3º ESO and upwards.

RESOURCES: We will need an internet connection in the classroom and a projector. I normally take advantage of the BBC NEWS. In the video section there are dozens of short video clips with all kinds of current events footage. The one we are going to use is “One-minute World News”. I personally like this section because it is updated more or less every hour, consequently it is always breaking news. Normally, students do not live in a bubble and have previous information about what they are going to watch, so many of them receive a boost in their confidence when they are able to understand the main facts.

Another advantage is that it can be repeated several times without spending much time as it is only one minute long. It can also be used to finish the lesson.

HOW TO DO IT: I only ask them to complete a simple questionnaire every news should fulfil.

They take notes in their notebooks answering the five questions:

- What has happened?
- Who? Who is the protagonist of the story? Who is the news about? Who are involved?
- When has it happened?
- Where? Where does it happen?
- Why?
- How? What other details/facts/figures can you mention about the news?

The clip is just one minute and includes only the headlines, usually three or four headlines which are supported by captions or titles on the screen. After viewing it for the first time, I usually start asking the weakest students so that everybody can add something to complete the story. The

students more often than not have some background knowledge about what they are watching, or perhaps they have seen or heard the same news and therefore they have some expectations to confirm.

On the other hand, we must also admit that the presenters speak fast and sometimes there are many details in just three/four sentences, which can make understanding difficult. We can overcome this obstacle by choosing just the headlines that we consider easier to understand and less likely to provoke frustration in our students.

2. MAKING OUR OWN REMAKE

The second activity I wanted to talk about is a little more complex to carry out and needs more preparation and resources. We all know that our students are, as it is usually said, digital natives and therefore far more used to media-rich learning. They watch videos all the time and they also produce their own videos with almost professional tools and astounding facility.

OBJECTIVE: to improve their listening and speaking skills using simple but powerful tools. First they will study a film scene and then dub it with their own voices. The students will also use their ICT abilities when dubbing, recording and editing a short video.

RESOURCES: We will need to go to the computer classroom or just use the students' own mobiles. They can use Windows Movie Maker or any other software or mobile applications which permits adding a soundtrack, editing images, etc.

LEVEL: It can be used with 3^o ESO and upwards.

HOW TO DO IT: First of all, we must choose a film scene we or our students like. I personally favour classic films and I take advantage of the situation to illustrate them about the director, the cast, the time and country it was filmed in... etc. One I like is Hitchcock's "The Man Who Knew

Too Much" (1956). We can use the scene in which Doris Day and James Steward are in the hotel in Morocco and she sings the song "Qué será, será". It should be just 3 or four minutes. Then we see the scene and see how much they are able to understand. After they have worked the dialogue out (maybe with the help of strips of papers with the lines of each characters to order), we can play the scene with the subtitles for them to check.

Once they have the lines, they can work in groups recording the dialogue with their own voices and then edit the original film images with their voices.

A final task would be to perform the same scene in the group and record it with their mobiles.

We can also give them the option to create a completely different scene with their own dialogues instead of using the lines in the film. Finally the different groups will show their versions to the class and a vote could be held for best video, best actor,...