

Hadaichuk N.M., Yakovets O.R.

Vinnitsa National Technical University

Using audio-video aids in teaching English

The chief audio-video aids that can be effectively used by a teacher in conversational sessions are radio, records, tapes, CDs, films. Records, educational CDs can be put to good use at English conversational classes. With the help of them we can

1. stimulate discussion and appreciation of vocal, literary and music selections characteristic of English-speaking cultures;
2. teach songs;
3. introduce new vocabulary and structure;
4. present a dialogue that can be paraphrased or made into an improvisation situation;
5. improve students' aural comprehension by having them listen to a prose selection and answer questions based on the selection afterwards.

When selecting records teachers must be sure that they are appropriate for the age, interests and proficiency level of the group. It is better to avoid old scratchy records, play as many times as necessary for students to profit from the experience.

The best audio-visual aid in the language classroom is, or should be, the teacher. Probably the second best is the motion picture, for in terms of total impact on the student, nothing surpasses a 'movie'. While films can be used for the teaching of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatical structures, one of their greatest potentials lies in presenting a realistic image of the culture linked with the language. Motion, sound, and color all contribute to making the culture come alive. Not even the most fascinating book portrays the foreign scene with the vivacity of a good movie.

Motion pictures are especially valuable in conversation classes where they serve as excellent stimuli for discussion. Most suitable for students are

1. films designed to teach English and the underlying cultures to non-native speakers;
2. commercial and educational films made in English-speaking countries for native speakers.

To use motion pictures most effectively at the lessons, the following steps and techniques are suggested:

1. Preview the film you have under consideration. This will allow you to choose current films suitable for the age, interests. Familiarize yourself with the content so that you can prepare the class for the showing.
2. Arrange the best possible conditions for the showing. The room should be darkened and so on.
3. Prepare the students by
 - stimulating their interest
 - discussing the background
 - anticipating grammar and vocabulary difficulties
 - indicating what is to be looked for
 - stating a number of questions to be answered afterwards such as “What is the subject matter of the film” or “If you could give the film a new title what would you choose”. Sometimes films come equipped with study guides or printed forms of the sound track which can save you much time in preparing lessons. Distribute copies before or after the showing. These will help students understand the film better.
4. Encourage the students to take notes on the film as it is being shown.
5. When showing the film you can
 - present the film as it is
 - turn off the sound track to allow students to concentrate on the visual image only and so on.

To make a video lesson most effective, all tasks should be divided into previewing, viewing and post-viewing activities.

In previewing section of tasks students discuss the background of the story, answer the questions prepared by the teacher, view the scene (mostly 5- 10 min clip) with sound off anticipating dialogues, or play the sound only predicting images, put dialogues lines in order or fill in the deleted lined in a dialogue.

While watching 5 -10 minute clip (viewing tasks) students confirm their previewing predictions, work in groups selecting characters and then maintaining a character notebook (first impression, personality traits with examples from the film), arrange lines of dialogues in proper sequence, focus on body language (hand gestures, eye contact, posture, movement, facial movements that express emotions), on cultural differences (greeting, parting, offering, refusing, entertaining), invent characters' thoughts. Also while watching students can view a short segment and then freeze the frame. After they predict what's next, repeat this several times during the whole clip.

Of great interest are also post-viewing tasks like writing summaries, inventing biographies of the characters, playing games based on the clip (pin names of the characters on the backs of students and ask questions “Am I male?” How old am I?” and so on). Film reviews, letters to a character, writing “test” questions are also very interesting for students of different levels.

Audio and video aids, no doubt, prove to be most effective and impressive in teaching a foreign language. Students realize people speaking this language, appreciate the culture. It helps to bring an outside world into a classroom lesson. It increases interest and involvement of the students.

Literature:

1. Julia M. Dobson, Effective Techniques for English Conversational Groups, English Language Programs Division Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Washington, D.C. 20547.