

## Using Media Effectively in English Lessons

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### Abstract

This article discusses the use of media in education in today's fast-paced and technology-driven world. When it comes to teaching English as a second language, incorporating various forms of media – such as videos, podcasts, music, and digital resources – can greatly enhance the learning experience for students. In this article, we will explore the benefits of using media in English lessons, share strategies for integrating media effectively, and highlight some best practices for maximizing its impact on language acquisition.

**Keywords:** authentic language input, strategies, pre-viewing and post-viewing activities, adapting content, multiple modalities, critical thinking.

### INTRODUCTION

When used effectively, media can make a significant positive impact on English language learning. Especially, nowadays classes without the usage of media are usually seen as boring. With the rise of modern technologies imparting knowledge and receiving education has become easier and convenient than ever before. Here are some of the key benefits of incorporating media into English lessons.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Media offers students exposure to authentic English language input in a wide range of contexts, including real-life conversations, news reports, films, and music. This exposure not only helps students improve their listening comprehension but also exposes them to different accents, intonations, and language variations. Moreover, Visual and Auditory Stimulation should be provided. By engaging multiple senses, media can help students retain and recall vocabulary and grammatical patterns more effectively. Visual aids and audio enhancements can also make complex concepts more comprehensible and engaging. The learners' sensory register is involved in paying attention (Ormrod, 2006).

### DISCUSSION

Given that paying attention requires mental processes, organizing an efficient learning assignment, keeping track of comprehension, and assessing the process in relation to a task's completion and keeping up the urge to finish a job could significantly help students' attention spans grow. Children who practice conscious attention management learn that different tasks need different levels of focus, and they may modify their attentional focus accordingly. This sensation of personal control is linked to completing tasks effectively and, thus, focusing while working on the assigned task.

Cultural understanding plays a big part as well. Through media, students can gain insight into the customs, traditions, and cultural nuances of English-speaking communities. This can be

particularly helpful for learners who may not have regular exposure to English-speaking cultural contexts. Apart from this, motivation and engagement are key components of effective language learning. Media can spark students' interest and enthusiasm for learning English, making the lessons more enjoyable and relevant. Engaged students are more likely to retain information and demonstrate improvements in their language skills.

### Strategies for Using Media Effectively in English Lessons

To fully harness the benefits of using media in English lessons, educators should employ deliberate strategies to ensure that the learning experience is optimized. Here are some effective strategies for integrating media into English language instruction:

1. **Selecting Relevant and Engaging Content:** Choose media that aligns with the students' interests, linguistic proficiency, and learning objectives. Ensure that the content is age-appropriate and culturally sensitive. For example, younger learners may respond well to animated videos and songs, while older learners may appreciate news reports, documentaries, or TED talks.
2. **Pre-Viewing and Post-Viewing Activities:** Before showing a video or playing an audio clip, incorporate pre-viewing activities such as predicting content, brainstorming related vocabulary, or discussing the topic. After viewing, follow up with activities that reinforce comprehension, such as discussion questions, vocabulary building exercises, or role-plays based on the content. EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers should incorporate pre-viewing, viewing, and post-viewing activities into the lesson in order to fully utilize films and videos in the classroom. The type and duration of these exercises vary depending on the movie or video that is chosen, the needs of the students, their ages, and the learning objectives. While merely planning two for a different session, a teacher may decide to incorporate all three activities into a particular film or video lesson. The instructor should pique the students' interest in the task at hand and give them the tools they need to complete it successfully before showing the film. The teacher should stay in the classroom with the students while they watch the film in order to see their emotions and determine what puzzles, intrigues, and concerns them.
3. **Incorporating Multiple Modalities:** Integrate a variety of media types, including visuals, videos, audio recordings, and interactive digital resources. This allows students to engage with the language through different modalities, catering to diverse learning styles and preferences.
4. **Adapting Content to Learning Levels:** When using media in English lessons, ensure that the content is adjusted to suit the varying language proficiency levels of the students. Provide additional support, such as subtitles, transcripts, or vocabulary lists, to aid comprehension and reinforce learning. In the field of education, it is widely recognized that students learn at different paces and have varying levels of proficiency in different subject areas. This presents a challenge for teachers, who must find ways to adapt their teaching methods and materials to meet the needs of all students. Nowhere is this challenge more apparent than in the teaching of English as a second language. English is a complex and nuanced language, and it can be difficult to tailor instruction to students at different skill levels. In this article, we will discuss the importance of adapting content to learning levels in English lessons, and explore some effective strategies for doing so. The first step in adapting content to learning levels is to accurately assess the proficiency of each student. This can be done through a combination of formal assessments, such as standardized tests or language proficiency exams, and informal assessments, such as observations and conversations with students. By understanding where each student is in their language learning journey, teachers can tailor their instruction to meet the specific needs of each individual. One effective strategy for adapting content to learning levels is differentiation. Differentiation involves modifying the content, process, and product of instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners. For example, in a mixed-ability English class, a teacher might provide different reading materials for students at different levels of proficiency. Advanced students might read a complex novel, while intermediate students might read a simplified version of the same novel, and struggling students might read a short story with a simpler vocabulary and

sentence structure. Similarly, teachers can differentiate instruction by providing different levels of support and scaffolding for different students. Advanced students might work independently on a writing assignment, while intermediate and struggling students might receive more guidance and support from the teacher. Another effective strategy for adapting content to learning levels is the use of leveled texts. Leveled texts are books and other reading materials that have been carefully calibrated to match the reading abilities of students at different levels. For example, a leveled reading program might include books labeled "emergent reader," "early reader," "transitional reader," and "fluent reader," each with progressively more complex vocabulary and sentence structure. By providing students with books at their individual reading levels, teachers can ensure that all students have access to age-appropriate and engaging reading materials, regardless of their proficiency in English. In addition to modifying reading materials, teachers can adapt other types of content to learning levels. For example, in a lesson on grammar, a teacher might provide different levels of practice exercises for students at different proficiency levels. Advanced students might complete more complex sentence-combining exercises, while intermediate and struggling students might focus on simpler sentence construction exercises. Similarly, in a lesson on vocabulary, a teacher might provide different levels of word lists and activities for students at different levels of proficiency. Advanced students might learn and practice more advanced word roots and prefixes, while intermediate and struggling students might focus on more basic vocabulary building skills. One final strategy for adapting content to learning levels is the use of technology. Many educational technology tools and software programs are designed to adapt to the individual learning needs of students. For example, digital reading platforms can adjust the difficulty of texts based on the reading level of each student. Similarly, language learning apps and software programs can provide personalized practice exercises and activities based on the proficiency level of each student.

5. Encouraging Critical Thinking and Reflection: Prompt students to analyze, evaluate, and respond to the media content. Encourage them to express their opinions, make connections to their own experiences, and critically reflect on the cultural and linguistic aspects portrayed in the media. It's common to conflate thoughtful and critical thinking. When a thinker applies thoughtful and efficient cognitive skills to a specific context and type of thinking task, they are applying critical thinking, which is defined as "...the use of those cognitive skills or strategies that increase the probability of a desirable outcome...thinking that is purposeful, reasoned and goal directed - the kind of thinking involved in solving problems, formulating inferences, calculating likelihoods, and making decisions." Because it concentrates on a desired result, directed thinking is another name for critical thinking (Halpern in 1996). Conversely, reflective thinking is a component of critical thinking that particularly refers to the processes of evaluating and assessing what has transpired.

#### Best Practices for Maximizing the Impact of Media in English Lessons

In addition to the strategies outlined above, several best practices can further optimize the use of media in English language education:

**Create a Supportive and Inclusive Learning Environment:** Foster an inclusive classroom environment where all students feel valued and supported in their language learning journey. Be mindful of the cultural sensitivities and varied backgrounds of the learners when selecting and discussing media content.

**Emphasize Active Engagement:** Encourage active participation during media-based activities by incorporating interactive elements, collaborative tasks, and opportunities for students to express their thoughts and interpretations.

**Integrate Formative Assessment:** Use media-based activities as formative assessment opportunities to gauge students' language skills, comprehension, and critical thinking abilities. Use informal methods such as class discussions, group presentations, or written reflections to assess learning outcomes.

Provide Opportunities for Personalization: Encourage students to create their own media-based projects, such as podcasts, video presentations, or digital storytelling. This not only promotes language production but also allows for personal expression and creativity.

Foster Digital Literacy Skills: As students engage with various forms of digital media, emphasize the development of digital literacy skills, such as evaluating online content, navigating digital platforms, and employing responsible online behavior.

## CONCLUSION

Integrating media into English language instruction offers educators a powerful tool to enrich the learning experience and promote language acquisition. By strategically selecting, incorporating, and leveraging media content, teachers can stimulate student engagement, enhance comprehension, and broaden cultural understanding. When used effectively, media can serve as a catalyst for fostering a dynamic and immersive English language learning environment, enabling students to develop their language skills in authentic, relevant, and meaningful ways.

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