

Using Video in Your Classroom

Why Use Video in Your Classroom?

While most people think of watching television as a passive viewing experience, video watching can be used as a springboard for student interaction. Repeated studies have shown that the use of multimedia aids in learning because it engages the learner, activates emotional states, initiates interest in a topic, and allows for absorption and processing of information.

Research also reveals that the most effective way to use video is as an enhancement to a lesson or unit of study. Students grow tired of lectures and reading. Video can be a welcome alternative way of learning, with video used as a facet of instruction along with any other resource material you have available. You should prepare for the use of a video in the classroom the same way you would with any other teaching aid:

- Determine specific learning objectives.
- Develop an instructional sequence with reinforcement activities.
- Preview all videos: No video should ever be used in the classroom until you have first previewed it.

We all know from experience that the more engaged your students are and the more interactive your lesson is, the more your students will enjoy, learn from, and retain information from your lessons. Video is a very flexible medium. The ability to stop, start, and rewind it can be helpful in any lesson. You can stop the video and challenge your students to predict the outcome of a demonstration, or elaborate on, or debate about, a point presented in the video. You can rewind a particular portion of a show to add your own review or view a segment in slow motion to ensure that your students understand a key concept. Furthermore, you can ensure interactivity by replicating activities, workshops, demonstrations and experiments in your classroom environment.

According to a summary of current research and educator surveys, educational television and video:

- Reinforces reading and lecture material
- Aids in the development of a common base of knowledge among students
- Enhances student comprehension and discussion
- Provides greater accommodation of diverse learning styles
- Increases student motivation and enthusiasm
- Promotes teacher effectiveness

(This summary is from a study by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.)

Of course, the value of video relies on how it is implemented in the classroom. Positive learning and affective outcomes are greatly enhanced and extended when the video is integrated into the rest of the lesson. However, effectively integrating video into classroom instruction involves preparation and activities before, during, and after viewing.



Purpose and Expectations for Viewing

Teachers can prepare for using video by previewing the content, establishing clear purposes for viewing, and deciding what selections will best support that purpose. In an article by Wetzel, Ratke, and Stern, the value of video “is highly correlated to its integration within the curriculum—in other words, how closely the content fits into the overall instructional sequence.”

For instance, video may be used at the beginning of a unit to pique interest, during a unit or lesson to bring demonstrations into the classroom that might not otherwise be possible, or as a means of reviewing or reinforcing content.

Film and video should not be used for non-optimal purposes, including filling time, keeping students quiet, as a break from learning, or as a reward for good behavior. Using video as “edutainment” in this way reinforces passive viewing and unquestioning acceptance of received material, which is not the goal of using video in classrooms. Videos should promote discussion, not become a lecture alternative.

Selecting Video Content

Selecting effective video is an essential component of integrating this medium into practice and realizing the promise of multimedia in the classroom. One of the most significant factors in the success or failure of an educational technology is the quality of the content. Selecting video that has strong, visually rich educational content is a critical element for maximizing the effectiveness of video.

Video is a visual medium, and optimal use capitalizes on the strengths of its visual material. Videos with closed captioning can further promote learners’ reading fluency and motivation to read.

Keep in mind the following suggestions when evaluating videos:

- variation in the presentation
- humor
- age-appropriate narration and developmentally appropriate thinking skills
- chunking, or organization in sections
- provision of meaningful examples
- posing of open-ended questions
- opportunities for students to carry out individual thinking
- opportunities for extension
- teacher guides outlining possibilities for previewing or extension activities



Effective Use of Video in the Classroom

When it is used to enhance visual memory, video can be a very valuable tool:

- Video can reach students with a wide variety of learning styles.
- It can bring fresh and timely information into the classroom.
- It can serve to expose students to people, places, and events that other learning resources cannot.

When using video in the classroom, the following ideas should be considered:

- 1. Preview each program first.** You must determine what is appropriate and what portions of the video have application to your lesson. You want to engage the learner. Pick the clips that match your objectives, are suitable, and will involve the learner in the proposed lesson. Pay attention during your preview to vocabulary, new concepts, and special areas of interest. Look for the segments that best tell the story and meet your objectives, as well as segments of the video that call for student response or interaction.
- 2. Provide a focus or reason for viewing.** Determine your purpose in showing the video—to motivate students, introduce a new concept, reinforce a previously learned concept, or enhance and expand current knowledge. Give the students something specific to look for or to listen for in the video segment. This will focus attention, encourage active viewing, and give the student an objective or reason for viewing.
- 3. Segment the video.** Instructional videos contain a great deal of information. Usually much more information than the student (or teacher, for that matter) can easily digest. By segmenting the viewing and using clips in a lesson, you offer information to students in manageable chunks. By incorporating hands-on activities, discussion, and other types of interaction around these clips or segments, the student is much more likely to meet the learning objectives of the lesson.
- 4. Conduct pre- and post-viewing activities.** Use these to integrate the video into the entire lesson structure. Previewing activities can serve a number of purposes, from checking prior knowledge, introducing necessary vocabulary, and setting the stage for new learning. Post-viewing activities should allow the student to reinforce, review, apply, or extend their new knowledge in a meaningful, hands-on fashion.
- 5. Use the video functions to enhance the lesson.** Use the pause, rewind, fast-forward, and frame-advance features of the VCR. The pause can be used to check comprehension, to allow students to point out things on the screen, or to discuss and examine information presented. One of the most versatile of all the DVD controls, this feature can truly make the medium interactive. This feature will stop the video at an individual frame. This allows the teacher to use the TV as a video blackboard. Students can point out details, analyze content, or even write on the picture using clear acetate over the screen or an overhead marker that will wash off. Teachers can pause the video for brief discussions or questions during the video.

The closed captioning feature can reinforce reading skills. Turning down the audio allows you to use a video that may include age-inappropriate narration but marvelous visuals. You may either narrate the segment yourself or have the students narrate. This is also a good technique to use for having students practice prediction and sequencing skills. You can also turn down the brightness control and have the students listen to the narration and predict visuals. When using video, the teacher is the producer / director and can manipulate the medium to fit specific needs.



6. Use the remote control. The remote control gives teachers control of the video-based lesson. Using the remote control gives flexibility of movement and presentation.

7. Don't forget the frame-advance feature. This allows you to advance the video frame-by-frame. This is a great feature to use to show students the details of an event.

The following sources were helpful in writing this article:

- www.pearsonlongman.com/teaching-tips/using-video.html
- www.libraryvideo.com/articles/article18.asp
- www.libraryvideo.com/articles/article13.asp
- cynthiasparks.tripod.com/effective_use_of_video_in_the_cl.htm
- Corporation for Public Broadcasting, *Television goes to school: The impact of video on student learning in formal education*, 2004. Available at epb.org/stations/reports/tvgoestoschool.
- Wetzel, D. D., P. Ratke, and H. W. Stern, *Instructional Effectiveness of Video Media*. Hilldale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1994. Available at www.topicseducation.com/uploads/resources/RS_Investment.pdf.

