STEPS IN INTEGRATING VIDEO INTO THE SECONDARY FOREIGN LANGUAGE CURRICULUM

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Recent surveys on the use of foreign language instructional technology indicate that teachers use video more often than they use computers. The Instructional Technology Committee of the Arlington (VA) County Public Schools surveyed all Arlington teachers in 1988 about their use of technology in the classroom. Of the 24 foreign language teachers surveyed, 45% were using computers with their students while 62% were using video cassette recorders (VCRs). These results reflect the situation nationwide. During a series of 1988-89 workshops given by the Center for Applied Linguistics in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, the greater Los Angeles area, and the Iowa City area (with the assistance of the PICS staff at the University of Iowa), participating foreign language teach-

ers were surveyed about their current use of technology. As illustrated in the chart below, more teachers reported having access to video than to computers; more said they have training in the use of video; and a greater number stated that they use video more than computers. The frequency of use was not always reported, so it is not possible to make any generalizations.

A number of factors may make computing less attractive to teachers: there has been a

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VIDEO	ACCESS	TRAINING	USE	FREQUENCY OF USE
CA (N=27)	88% (24)	70% (19)	63% (17)	1x/week to 3x/year
DC (N=24)	92% (24)	77% (20)	81% (21)	1x/week to 1x/month
IA (N=9)	100% (9)	77% (7)	77% (7)	1x/week or less

COMPUTERS	ACCESS	TRAINING	USE	FREQUENCY OF USE
CA (N=27)	55% (15)	41% (11)	15% (4)	1x/day to 1x/month
DC (N=26)	77% (20)	54% (14)	31% (8)	1x/week to 1x/6weeks
IA (N=9)	77% (7)	66% (54%)	11% (1)	rarely to 1x/month

CA=Los Angeles area/ DC=Washington, D.C. area/ IA=Iowa City area

dearth of genuinely useful software; it takes less training to operate a VCR than a computer; and it is easier to roll a VCR into the classroom than to reserve a computer lab. In addition, the high cost of software and computers has hindered the widespread use of computers across the curriculum.

There are pedagogical reasons for wider use of video as well. Foreign language teachers are often not convinced of the effectiveness of computer-assisted language learning, but rarely do they have to be sold on the value of video. They recognize the power of video to improve listening practice for their students, to provide up-to-date cultural information, and to reinforce classroom instruction.

Nevertheless, using video well in foreign language instruction is not as simple as pulling a video cassette off the shelf. Video which is poorly used or poorly selected can turn students off to the class, the language, and the medium. What does it take to make the use of a video successful for second language learning? If video is to become an integral part of the curriculum, rather than supplementary "entertainment," much thought and preparation is needed. In this article we have outlined some steps which can assist the teacher in integrating video into the foreign language curriculum.

Sources of videos and reviews

The quantity and variety of video sources has increased dramatically in recent years. Sources of videos for foreign language instruction include commercial textbook publishers, mail-order video distributors, special projects such as PICS (the Project for International Communication Studies, which distributes authentic foreign language television materials) and LAVA (Latin American Video Archives) which provides videos produced by community groups in Latin America), and camcorders, which have allowed teachers to produce their own video here or abroad. In

addition, cable television sources for foreign language programs in the U.S. are increasing (e.g., the Spanish International Network and Canadian broadcasts), and satellite transmissions are vastly expanding the availability of foreign language video. One example is "France-TV Magazine" (University of Maryland at Baltimore County), which provides weekly broadcasts via PBS stations.

The abundance of available videos makes previewing and selection a difficult task. With so many materials to choose from, teachers need assistance in wading through catalogs in order to decide which videos to preview and use in their classrooms. No single teacher has the time to review everything, so where can help be found?

• Many school districts are creating "video review committees" that establish evaluation guidelines to select materials and share information and ideas. Some states have published lists of recommended materials selected by a state-wide committee. States need to share their resources further.

• Video special interest groups are springing up within professional organizations. These groups sponsor special presentations at conferences and disseminate information through newsletters (e.g., TESOL's Video Group and Video Newsletter).

• Numerous journals publish articles and reviews of video and film materials (e.g., Northeast Conference Newsletter, ACTFL Bulletin); and several books on the use of video in second language instruction are now available (see bibliography).

• Commercial computer networks, such as CompuServe, provide "bulletin boards" of information on written and human resources in foreign language education. One example of this is the Foreign Language Education Forum (FLEFO), which is on CompuServe. Through electronic mail (e-mail) these networks allow direct communication with others in the field. Teacher-users of video should be encouraged to chat

via computer networks to share with each other about what they are using, how they use it, how well it works and the like. Perhaps it is time for a special video or technology forum on a national or international network to be established.

Selecting and using video

By what criteria should a teacher evaluate a video? Technical, linguistic, and cultural elements must be considered. The checklist appended to this article provides a convenient way to screen potential programs.

Once a teacher has determined that a video has intrinsic technical, cultural, and linguistic merit and fits in sufficiently with the regular classroom curriculum, he/she needs to evaluate the difficulty of the language used and decide the course levels at which the video will be most effective. The teacher also must decide what instructional objectives will be attained through use of the video and exactly how to use it.

In planning how to use a particular video, the teacher must first determine how the video fits into the curriculum or lesson and the specific instructional objectives to be accomplished.

- What kind of listening comprehension practice will it provide?
- Will it be used to introduce, expand, or reinforce a linguistic, sociolinguistic, or cultural concept?
- What objectives will be met? Will the video:
  —cover a specific grammar point (e.g., use of *imparfait* vs. *passé composé* in a narrative segment);
  —illustrate a particular communicative function (e.g., greetings between friends);
  —teach specific vocabulary clusters (e.g., sports-related vocabulary); or
  —demonstrate cultural situations (e.g., French table manners)?

The situations or content/context provided by the program should be appropriate to the students' language level. For example, ordering a meal in a restaurant, getting a hotel room, or making a telephone call, are useful situations for beginners, while conducting a job interview is more appropriate for advanced students. The kind of language functions portrayed by the video should also be analyzed: asking directions, giving commands, narrating and describing (for novice to intermediate students) or hypothesizing, persuading, or negotiating (for more advanced). The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines can serve as a model for this analysis. Based on his/her assessment, the teacher can set the specific objectives for use of the video. For example, a sample language objective based on a video segment could be: students will be able to understand personal information the video characters provide about themselves—name, address, nationality, language, school, etc. A typical cultural objective could be: students will be able to describe the gestural differences in greeting a friend versus greeting a new acquaintance.

Deciding specific use

An early step in planning video usage is to decide whether the video will be the basis of the lesson or supplemental to it. Will it introduce a new context or function? Will it provide additional practice on a concept already introduced? Will it serve as a final synthesizing activity? How can it be integrated into other portions of the lesson?

Different techniques for delivering the video can be considered once the teacher has determined its role in the lesson. Possibilities include:

- using the entire video or just using selected segments;
- repeated viewing of certain segments for specific purposes;

- showing segments first without sound, to focus on visual information, and
- taping the audio portion for students to work on independently outside of class.

Developing or selecting support materials

In order to effectively exploit the video medium in language instruction, teachers should plan frequent occasions for active and participatory viewing on the part of the students. Preparing viewing activities requires that the teacher be very familiar with the contents of the video. Preparation may be very simple or it may require extensive work on the part of the teacher, depending on the objectives set and the existence of supplementary materials packaged with the video. An increasing number of video distributors provide preparatory materials with the programs. Nevertheless, teachers should consider what additional activities might be needed to ensure that students get the maximum benefit from viewing the program. As noted earlier, the kinds and number of video-based activities will depend on whether the video is to be used as a supplement to a lesson or as the basis for the lesson. In the following sections we discuss a few specific examples of ways in which either approach could be used.

Videos which supplement the lesson

Many videos, such as news and weather reports, are clearly supplemental to the lesson. Useful connections can be made between the video and important facets of a lesson, sometimes without the need for the teacher to spend a lot of time developing support materials. For example, in *L'école des Fans*, an Art Linkletter-style television game show for children in France, the host asks five different children the same questions: their names, how old they are, who their parents are, where their parents work, if they like school, etc. This video could be shown to a class which is practicing question formation or to one which is reading a story about children at school. A simple listening exercise can help students focus on what is being said by the host and the children in the program.

Unlike the film projector, the VCR allows teachers great flexibility in selecting a segment from a video and easily working with it in a lesson. In fact, research indicates that only three to six minutes worth of video should be used at a time for each college semester of study or each high school year of a foreign language. This is especially true where the use of authentic language video is concerned, since the information load is so dense. Implicit in any discussion of integrating supplemental videos into the curriculum is the assumption that the teacher will make a careful selection, not only of the video, but also of the particular segment of the video to be shown.

A short weather report, with its limited amount of vocabulary, is ideal for beginners to listen for temperatures (numbers) in various cities of the country (geography), and for weather conditions. A five-minute segment from an art-related video could provide information about 19th century art, if a class were reading poetry from that period. A commercial can be selected to illustrate a cultural point at any level. For example, students might be asked to comment on cultural information they observe in the video, e.g., how the French portray fashion. Thus, video segments can be used to expand students' understanding of the life and culture of the people who speak the language being studied.

Certain video segments lend themselves to repeated viewings. For example, students are used to seeing television advertisements over and over again; and some teachers report that their students enjoy seeing five minutes of foreign language commercials once a week. Over a period of time, they learn the jingles they hear. Rock videos can be used in a similar way. Most foreign language teachers agree that mindless repetition has many negative effects in a foreign language class. However, there is a need for meaningful repetition, in order for students to absorb and internalize new structures and vocabulary.

The challenge for teachers is to repeat vocabulary and structures in a natural way, helping students to focus on meaning while they are practicing the same or similar material. Some videos, such as *L'école des Fans* mentioned above, may contain repetitive elements because of the way the program is organized. For instance, in this program, the game-show host asks the same questions to each child. The repetition is natural and can aid comprehension. In this case the teacher would not be imposing repetition by replaying the program. Through thoughtful and conscious selection of the material, a positive video experience is provided to students.

Videos which are central to the lesson

In the case of video-based instruction, the teacher starts with the video and develops a lesson around the video by expanding upon its contents. Pierre Capretz' *French in Action* is one example of a video-based course. The lessons in this series are very carefully constructed around the video. Taken in the proper sequence and used with the accompanying supplementary materials, these lessons are complete, easy for the teacher to use, and highly motivating to students.

Video materials specially prepared to complement a textbook can also be used more centrally in language lessons. The *French* and *Spanish for Mastery* series fully integrate video into the lessons. It is easy for the teacher to exploit this medium and still maintain the pace, sequence, and objectives of the textbook.

Rewarding but more difficult to use are authentic language materials, such as television broadcasts from France, Spain, Germany, and other countries. These materials were originally prepared for native speakers rather than for second language learners. When using authentic video, teachers must stress that students are not expected to understand every word, even after repeated viewings. A major purpose is to provide various models of native speakers and cultural information. It is legitimate for the teacher to show such a video to students having set very limited objectives (that students will simply comprehend certain main points, for example, or draw conclusions from what they see). However, if the teacher hopes to exploit fully the content (linguistic and cultural) of the video, extensive pre-viewing, viewing, and post-viewing activities are necessary for students.

Pre-viewing activities should familiarize students with background about the video's contents, including cultural and linguistic information. A preparatory text/reading about the contents can set the stage for viewing as can studying a map, graph, or chart with relevant material. For example, the video viewing guide for "Fraternité Matin: La Côte d'Ivoire au Quotidien" (a documentary program from the PICS *Espace Francophone* series about an African newspaper and daily life) directs students to read an article from National Geographic, study a map, and learn basic facts about the country before viewing the video. Authentic language videos with accompanying viewing guides on less known countries and cultures are particularly useful in communicating information about regions not usually covered in textbooks.

Viewing activities should encourage active viewing and listening. Questions should only focus on a short segment of the video at one time. Depending on the students' language level, activities can include: listening for the main idea, putting a check by expressions or facts that are mentioned, filling in the blank (with cities or numbers, etc.), matching vocabulary in context, or answering basic true/false questions. An activity can focus only on visual or cultural content. By turning off the sound, students can devote their attention to gestures, scenery, and so on, without linguistic interference.

Post-viewing activities should serve as a follow-up or extension of the video. Students might conduct their own interviews and tape them or write a news article or short report

based on the video. More advanced students can debate the pros and cons on the program's content. The possibilities are unlimited, but it is up to the teachers to select or design those activities which are most appropriate for their students' particular needs.

Whether or not it is worthwhile for a teacher to spend a large amount of time on activities related to one video is a matter of judgment. Using an authentic language video documentary could be compared to using an extended reading (not in the textbook) as the basis for several lessons. If the content of the video is very interesting, motivating, and of high instructional value, the time will be well-spent, just as it would be for a reading. In a high-school setting, however, where teachers must realistically focus on moving forward with a predetermined curriculum, it is difficult to treat a video adequately which requires such a commitment of time. Completely integrating extensive video material could mean having to eliminate something else from the curriculum.

In any case, teachers should try out a particular video and various accompanying activities with a pilot group of students for the first time. Student reactions to a specific video may not be similar at all to the teacher's opinion. Some segments or activities may be more effective than others. The teacher should assess the effectiveness of the different video-related activities, evaluate the desired instructional outcomes, and revise as necessary. It requires an extra amount of time to integrate video pedagogy fully into foreign language classes, but the results in improved student language acquisition and cultural understanding can be surprising.

Conclusion

There are many different ways in which video can be used effectively in foreign language instruction. Once teachers have good video at their disposal, their only limitations are imagination, understanding of the language and culture, and time constraints in developing lessons which integrate video. Integrating video effectively into the high school curriculum will require a substantial effort and time commitment on the part of teachers. It takes time to set instructional objectives, to find and choose videos, to decide how to use them, to select or develop support materials and activities, and to evaluate the effectiveness of a lesson.

Because most teachers have limited time to review and prepare activities for video, it is critically important that the profession continue to develop effective means of providing critiques about available materials. Teachers could then focus on those videos which are most likely to be genuinely useful in the classroom.

Finally, teachers need to take another look at the total curriculum and reflect about the place of video in it. Should students be given listening practice with video every day? Once a week? Should the foreign language curriculum of the future be video-based? These are some of the questions that teachers should consider as they experiment with video in their classrooms. The medium has not yet been fully exploited, but there is no question that video has the potential to greatly enhance foreign language instruction in the schools.

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VIDEO EVALUATION GUIDE

	Good	Fair	Poor	N/A
	4	**3**	**2**	**1**

Technical quality of the video:
• clear sound	4	3	2	1
• distinct picture	4	3	2	1
• picture focused on the person speaking	4	3	2	1
• voice–over narration	4	3	2	1
• acting, directing, and editing well done	4	3	2	1

Pedagogical quality of the video:
Content:
• interesting subject matter Will it attract and hold the attention of students?	4	3	2	1
• characters or situations presented which students are likely to encounter in the host country	4	3	2	1
• free from cultural stereotyping. Does it accurately represent the culture of the country where the target language being studied is spoken?	4	3	2	1

Language:
• standard variety	4	3	2	1
• regional variety	4	3	2	1
• dialect variety	4	3	2	1
• characters speak clearly and naturally	4	3	2	1
• "authentic" language — similar to that used by native speakers	4	3	2	1
• contextualized language, i.e. language used in situations which will assist students in understanding	4	3	2	1
• the language used in the video transferable to real life situations students could encounter	4	3	2	1
• language level is familiar	4	3	2	1
• language level is formal	4	3	2	1
• oral language used based on:				
- conversation	4	3	2	1
- interview	4	3	2	1
- discussion	4	3	2	1
- newscast	4	3	2	1
- commentary	4	3	2	1
- play	4	3	2	1
• the language used emphasizes:				
- communicative functions	4	3	2	1
- vocabulary	4	3	2	1
- grammar points	4	3	2	1
- cultural points	4	3	2	1