VIDEO ONLINE

by **Elizabeth Hanson-Smith**

Computers for Education/Command Performance Language Institute

Sacramento, CA, USA

http://www.geocities.com/ehansonsmi/

and

Michael Marzio

The Marzio School/Real-English.com

Istres, France

http://www.real-english.com/

Abstract

As media on the Internet becomes cheaper, faster, and easier to use, teachers are increasingly turning to video as a means to enhance the experience of the language classroom. This paper focuses in particular on two important areas of video-based teaching and learning: authentic content and student productions, and the approaches that work with collaborative multimedia projects. The convergence of technology and pedagogy is producing highly motivated students who can express their creativity and stretch their higher cognitive abilities.

Introduction

Language teachers are increasingly finding video of importance in language instruction, both as a resource for authentic input and as a technology to foster interaction. As video recording has gone digital, it has become ever cheaper and ever simpler to operate cameras, create movies, and mount them on the Internet for easy access by learners. Although video is still largely thought of as the viewing of major motion pictures by the whole class (which is relatively passive input), teachers are discovering a wealth of readily accessible authentic materials on the Internet, often in very short recordings, that may be repurposed for language learning, and even created by students themselves through collaborative learning projects, thus providing significant interaction with and through language. (On the need for interaction and output, see Long, 1983; Pica & Doughty, 1985; van Lier, 1998; etc.; for more on input and interaction in multimedia distance learning, see Ariza & Hancock, 2003.) The convergence of tools, technologies, and pedagogies is producing highly motivated students who find themselves stretching their

cognitive abilities. This presentation will consider some of the many ways that teachers are using Web tools and software to bring video to their students.

Among the many advantages of video online are:

- *Authenticity:* Learners may observe and listen to native speaker input with genuine accents, posture, and gestures, talking about situations, emotions, and activities that interest them.

- *Individualization:* As tagging of audio and video objects develops, thus allowing a means to more easily find multimedia content, learners may search video databases for subjects that appeal to them personally.

- *Autonomy:* Learners may access videos online at any time and as frequently as they wish, obviating the necessity for teachers to cart equipment around and take up time for viewing only once by the whole class.

- *Culture:* Learners can learn to understand others' cultural assumptions and question their own as they are revealed visually through authentic, and in the best instances, spontaneous, activities.

- *Collaborative communication:* With the addition of student productions, interaction can be encouraged both formally (for example in script-writing and project presentation) and informally (team work within project groups)

It should be made clear from the outset that *authentic materials* are those where interlocutors are talking as they would in true settings about ideas that genuinely interest them, thus representing how speakers of a language would communicate with each other naturally or spontaneously. *Semi-authentic materials* would include those prepared in Special English, that is, slower and simpler than native speaker usage (as for example, in a VOA radio broadcast), or professional films, where actors pretend to speak and behave in an authentic manner, even though the language and behavior observed may not be totally true to life. Both authentic and semi-authentic materials have value, of course, for language practice.

Among the ways language teachers generally use videos for classroom or independent practice are the following:

1. Showing videos in class, perhaps trailers or small segments of a major motion picture, with accompanying grammar and comprehension activities. In most instances, teachers will have to prepare the lesson plans and exercises themselves. However, some archives of ready-made lessons related to feature films may be found by Googling "movie lesson plan" and/or searching for "lesson plan" plus the name of the specific film. (See *English-Trailers* for a site with pre-made lessons.)

2. Asking students to go online to watch content news or informative shows on the Internet, for example at:

- *VOANews.com* (Voice of America)

- PBS's *Video Search* (Public Broadcasting Service, with related help in lesson creation at *TeacherSource*)

- *BBC Home* (British Broadcasting Corp)

- the Discovery Channel's many content branches, which include natural science (*Discovery School*) and culture (*Global Education Partnership*)

- The History Channel's *History.com*, which includes links to other sites for biography and the entertainment arts

- Major national TV channels in other countries also provide a good source of video for learning a wide variety of foreign languages, and many news stations (for example, CNN San Francisco's *Learning Resources*) prepare lessons based on their broadcasts. Most news and information stations will have a searchable archive.

- Travel sites are another content source, as many have video travelogues, for example, *Tourism Australia*.

3. Using "canned" online lessons with video support, e.g., with actors and scripted content (for example, at *English Bites* or *Living English*), which are based on TV series broadcast on the Asia Pacific Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

4. Using authentic content video online, e.g., real people talking about themselves in video blogs (vlogs), where students may interact with the authors by commenting in writing on their productions; or in reality videos, e.g., the BBC's *Video Nation*, whose archived high quality contents have been created by amateur videographers. However, only a very few sites offer authentic video with prepared lessons, e.g., Marzio's (2006) *Real English*.

5. Assisting students in creating and editing their own videos for class and community presentations or vlogs. The online community *Real English Online* participates annually in a workshop during the Electronic Village Online in order to help teachers with various aspects of video technology; the group also serves during the year as a place for students and teachers to access video on the Internet and discuss its uses. (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. The *Real English Online* Yahoo! Group offers help to teachers and students using video (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Real_English_Online).

The last two of these approaches are of the most interest: *Authentic content video* accurately presents how people speak and manage discourse and social interactions in a variety of dialects and idiolects, and has the additional fascination of "reality television," that is, hearing real people talk about themselves and their lives. Students require a wide variety of input beyond "teacher talk" in the classroom to form the underlying associations that lead to language acquisition and ultimately mastery. Conversely, the last item on the list, *student video production*, offers the opportunity for output well beyond the stilted practice sentences of typical grammar drills. Scripting, storyboarding, rehearsing, filming, editing, and presenting videos all offer students the opportunity to interact verbally and practice a wide variety of cognitive as well as language skills. This type of task-based or project-based learning appeals to a range of learning preferences, presents the necessity for collaboration (and thus further communicative practice), and replicates the kinds of skills—social, cognitive, linguistic, and technological—that students in the digital age will need. In the following two sections, this paper will concentrate in further detail on these two approaches to using video online.

Authentic video content online

As with feature films, authentic video content online needs to be parsed for its pedagogical usefulness and applicability to the curriculum.

· One very interesting archive of authentic video is the BBC's *Video Nation*, which is searchable by content areas. Videos in the archive are produced by amateurs on such topics as quitting smoking or mountain boarding as a hobby, but the quality is high because the videos are submitted to an editorial staff who make suggestions for revision and regarding appropriateness.

- The *Internet Archive* (IA) and its related vlog, *Ourmedia.org*, accepts contributions from all registered users and allows free use of their searchable archive under Creative Commons copyrights.

Other important sources of authentic video are the hundreds of thousands of vlogs being developed by private individuals around the globe. Among the commercial vlogs and archives (in addition to IA) that provide free storage space are

- *YouTube*, which has important blog features, such as RSS feed, commenting, and searchable tagging;

- *Revver*, which takes a direct advertising approach, attaching commercials to the end of each video;

- *vBlog Central*, an educational non-profit site;

- *filmedworld.com* (see Figure 2), hosted by Nicolas Gromik (a member of *Real English Online* and moderator of a recent Electronic Village Online offering in *Video & Editing 4 ESOL*, which has now become a teachers users group), also offers space to store student-produced video as well as online tutorials and training for video-using teachers and students. Gromik holds an annual contest for the best student videos.

Figure 2. *filmedworld.com* hosts student videos commercial-free and offers an annual contest. http://www.filmedworld.com/. (by permission of N. Gromik.)

As server space becomes cheaper, however, we can expect to see a proliferation of such free resources, and tagging conventions are gradually being established that will allow video searches by content across the Internet. Use of RSS (Really Simple Syndication) with vlogs means that once a good source is found, teachers and students can be updated when new videos appear. At present, searches for video often turn up primarily commercial feature-film Web sites, pornography, advertising of various sorts, or home video so experimental that it has little language learning value, so it is best for teachers to examine sites carefully before deciding to use them with their students.

Naturally, the problem with using authentic video is that teachers will need to develop a set of lesson plans and exercises to make students aware of the semantic and grammatical elements they need to acquire. One relatively easy solution to this problem is to learn how to create Hot Potatoes exercises, which can embed video as the prompt for a variety of quizzes, crossword puzzles, cloze passages, etc. (see Martin [2005] for a good example of a Hot Potatoes cloze exercise using an online trailer for *Lord of the Rings*). The relatively expensive Dreamweaver program also has a course extension that provides a similar utility, but Hot Potatoes is free if the teacher shares the product, and a large community of language teachers uses this resource (see the *Hot Potatoes Users* group). Marzio has used both software programs extensively and has examples of them at his *Real English* site (see Figure 3). His videos are mainly interviews with native English speakers from all over the world and are a delight to watch for their freshness and spontaneity, even for such simple activities as reciting the alphabet. He has developed a progression of exercises that include vocabulary flashcards, video cloze, and prediction activities. In addition to beginner level social expressions (for example, "Hello. How are you?" and "What's your name?" see Figure 3), the videos include food for thought, such as "What is the best decision you ever made?" Marzio invites teachers to download and use his videos if they share the lessons they have created. In addition, one user group, *Real English Online*, provides teachers with help on lesson plan creation, use of Hot Potatoes, pedagogical questions, and other materials and resources online, as well as advice and assistance for students using video.

Figure 3. Video, "What's your name?" from *Real English*, which offers Hot Potatoes and Dreamweaver vocabulary and grammar exercises based on video interviews on the street with real people. Materials are free, share-and-share-alike. Authentic language and gesture help the learner acquire language. http://www.real-english.com/. (By permission of M. Marzio.)

For a very simple use of authentic content, students may also be asked to view videos without dialogue and write their own or to transcribe dialogue they hear and see. However,

authentic content may require a variety of supplemental tools to assist learners in accessing oral texts that are, at least some of the time, beyond their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky's term, 1978); or *i* + 1 (Krashen's terminology characterising linguistic acquisition, 1982). Luckily, such tools are readily available on the Web. *VoyCabulary*, for example, will open a URL as a new page in which all the words are hyperlinked to a dictionary pre-selected by the user, while *Babel Fish Translation* will translate individual words or a block of text pasted into a Web form, an effective way to get a rough idea in one's native language. These tools are helpful at vlog sites where a transcript is available. In addition, as closed captioning of Web-based video becomes more prevalent, we will see a further need for such support tools.

Producing student video

Almost any higher-end digital "still" camera on the market today offers a digital movie feature with recorded sound. Some cell phones are even able to record short movies and transmit them to the Internet wirelessly. Most computers come with software to edit movies (e.g., Windows Movie Maker for PCs and iMovie for Macs), or the software may readily be downloaded from the Internet. Thus, the technological tools are available to make mini-movies easily. For more extensive projects, digital or tape camcorders are preferable, but in starting with smaller, more familiar tools, teachers can begin the process of project-based learning with their students. (See *Project-Based Learning with Multimedia* for examples of how to set up projects, combine curriculum with technology, and assess projects, as well as find links to other PBL sites.) Teachers should always experiment with the technology beforehand, even if technical staff are expected to help. Generally, the following pedagogical model is employed, with each step entailing class and/or group discussion and review by the teacher in order to maximize language learning:

- Viewing a model, e.g., a scene from a film or a news program (*iMovie Examples*, created by students in Illinois, provides excellent models for learners at all levels to examine.)
- Assigning roles (e.g., editor, production manager, sound engineer, etc.) within the project team
- Writing and revising a script
- Creating a storyboard to clear up production problems before taping (see Schulman, 1999, for an online storyboard, to help students get the idea)
- Building a set, collecting props, arranging costumes, etc.
- Rehearsing and taping (without an audience is usually best, and technology is discussed during the process of taping)
- Editing (arranging and cutting scenes and adding transition effects, subtitles, music, voice-over, etc., and editing software is explored during the process)

- Presenting the finished product to an audience of peers and/or community (for example, saving the video to CD or DVD and/or mounting the video at a website or vlog for the purpose of creating an archive for future productions)

- Creating a rubric for formative as well as summative assessment for self, peer, and teacher evaluation

As can be seen from the variety of tasks, video making speaks to many different learning preferences: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, etc. However, productions can start very small, so that both students and teachers can become accustomed to the types of tasks involved. Roger Drury (2006) describes the process in an intermediate oral skills intensive English class where he has pairs of students write and film a 30-second script that "dramatically defines a phrasal verb":

> I start the activity by showing them a conversation from The Godfather [the feature film] to demonstrate editing, they write their script, and I then I check the script for accuracy. I let them film and edit it as they wish; some use [Windows] Movie Maker and some use [Visual] Studio, depending on whether they use their own little cameras or our digi-cam. (Drury, 2006, 5, see Figure 4 and the *Phrasal Verb Video Dictionary*)

Figure 4. "Pick up the Tab" (http://web.li.gatech.edu/~rdrury/600/oral/video/pick-up-the-tab.mpg), a student skit to explain the expression, from the *Phrasal Verb Video Dictionary*. http://web.li.gatech.edu/~rdrury/600/oral/video/dictionary.html. (By permission of R. Drury).

The films are then published on Drury's Website as part of the *Phrasal Verb Video Dictionary*, thus reaching an authentic audience who can repeatedly access the reuseable learning objects. Follow-up and self-evaluation are very important parts of video production. At the end of the course, Drury creates an Academy-Awards-style ceremony in which students vote on the best video production and prepare speeches to present and accept the awards, all of which is also

filmed. Watching each other's videos is further practice in the target items, and all participants receive a CD record (Drury, 2006). Other teachers mount student productions to a Web page (using a free HTML editor such as Mozilla's Composer), or to vlogs (such as those mentioned above), where others can view and make comments on them. As with other creative projects, it is important to develop - with student input - a rubric to detail desired assessment criteria. (See, e.g., *RubiStar* for online rubric makers for creative projects of various types.)

Screencasts (videos of the mouse movements and other activities on a computer monitor), can also present the opportunity for small-scale student productions that are beneficial both for oral skills and technological or other content development. In one semester, student teachers at the University of Ontario produced 114 *Math Educational Miniclips* to instruct in mathematical principles while learning the screencast technology. Free tools, such as the multiplatform Screen Recorder, can be easily downloaded and learned through accompanying help files.

For more elaborate kinds of productions, students may want to spend time exploring the features of digital editing software such as Windows Movie Maker or iMovie. However, the process of creating the project is far more important than either total mastery of software tools or even the final product. While the list might be endless, possibilities for productions include, for example:

- Reporting on special events or creating a newscast
- Interviewing a local "celebrity"
- Describing and touring a famous location or tourist attraction in the neighborhood
- Putting on a skit based on familiar social discourse
- Taping the dramatic storytelling of traditional tales (see *Miwok Legend Storytelling*)
- Presenting findings of research in a content/curriculum area
- Instructing in various kinds of technology or other processes, e.g. art work
- Investigating a social or environmental issue

For descriptions of several kinds of audio and video projects and links to their sites, please see Hanson-Smith & al-Othman (2006). A detailed description of video and editing as an interactive language-learning process appears in Gromik (2006, forthcoming).

Help is a click away

Teachers may assume they might be overwhelmed at undertaking a technology-rich project such as video. However, online communities of practice can offer free expertise and a "just-in-time" helping hand as one works through the technology and the processes. Among these communities are the *Hot Potatoes Users* and *Real English Online* groups mentioned earlier, the *Video & Editing 4 ESOL* group for teachers learning the technology of digital video, and the *videoblogging* users' group for those new to vlogs. However, teachers should never underestimate their students' ability to explore technology and use it creatively. Most teachers report that students are highly motivated

to complete projects of real imagination and creativity - and learn language as they use higher order cognitive skills with technology.

References

Ariza, E. N. & Hancock, S. (2003, October) Second language acquisition theories as a framework for creating distance learning courses. *IRRODL*, 4 (2), October 2003 [Electronic journal]. http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/142/222.

Babel Fish Translation [Website]. (2004). AltaVista. http://babelfish.altavista.com/.

BBC Home [Website]. (2006) British Broadcasting Corp. http://www.bbc.co.uk/.

Discovery School [Website]. (2005). Discovery Channel. http://school.discovery.com/.

Dreamweaver 8 [Software]. (2006). Adobe Systems, Inc. http://www.macromedia.com/software/dreamweaver.

Drury, R. (2006, 20 February). Intro from Atlanta [Email]. *Video & Editing 4 ESOL* [Online community], Message #538. http://groups.yahoo.com/group/video_editing4esol.

The Electronic Village Online. (2006). Computer-Assisted Language Learning Interest Section, TESOL, Inc. http://webpages.csus.edu/~hansonsm/announce.html.

English Bites [Website]. (2004). Australian Broadcasting Corporation/Asia Pacific. http://abcasiapacific.com/englishbites/.

English-Trailers [Website]. (2005). http://www.english-trailers.com/.

filmedworld.com [Website]. (2006). N. Gromik. http://www.filmedworld.com/.

Global Education Partnership [Website]. (2006). Discovery Channel. http://www.discoveryglobaled.org/.

Gromik, N. (2006, in press). Meaningful tasks with video in the ESL/EFL classroom. In E. Hanson-Smith & S. Rilling (Eds.), *Learning Languages Through Technology* [forthcoming]. Alexandria, VA: TESOL.

Hanson-Smith, E. (2006). *Video Online* [Webpage]. http://www.geocities.com/ehansonsmi/video_references.html.

Hanson-Smith, E. & al-Othman, B. (2006). *Using the Web for Oral Skills and Writing in Cross-cultural Collaborations and ESP/CBI* [Webpage]. http://webpages.csus.edu/~hansonsm/Oral_Writing_Skills.html.

History.com [Website]. (2006). The History Channel. http://www.historychannel.com/.

Hot Potatoes [Software]. (2005). Half-Baked Software, S. Arneil & M. Holmes, University of Victoria. http://hotpot.uvic.ca/.

Hot Potatoes Users [Online community]. (2002). http://groups.yahoo.com/group/hotpotatoesusers/.

iMovie Examples [Website]. (2005). Springfield Public School District 186. http://www.springfield.k12.il.us/movie/.

iMovie HD 6 [Software]. (2005). Macintosh. http://www.apple.com/ilife/imovie/.

Internet Archive: Movie Archive [Website]. (2006). [Non-profit.] http://www.archive.org/details/movies.

Krashen, S. (1982) *Principles and Practices in Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon.

Learning Resources [Website]. (2004). CNN San Francisco. http://www.literacynet.org/cnnsf/.

Living English [Web site & TV series]. (2006). ABC/Asia Pacific. http://abcasiapacific.com/livingenglish/.

Long, M. (1983) Native speaker/non-native speaker conversation and the negotiation of comprehensible input. *Applied Linguistics* 4: 126-41.

Martin, S. (2005). *El Rebumbio: Lord of the Rings* [Webpage]. http://www.elrebumbio.org/lord/lord.htm.

Marzio, M. (2006). *Real English* [Website]. http://www.real-english.com/

Math Educational Miniclips [Webpage]. (2005). R. Kay. University of Ontario Institute of Technology. http://faculty.uoit.ca/kay/courses/CURS4141/student/2005f/mc.html.

Miwok Legend Storytelling iMovies [Website]. (2003). Teaching Practice Series, Apple Computer. http://ali.apple.com/ali_sites/ali/exhibits/1000440/Introduction.html.

Mozilla Suite [Software]. (2005). http://www.mozilla.org/products/mozilla1.x/

Ourmedia.org [Website]. (2006). [Non-profit]. http://www.ourmedia.org/.

Pica, T. & Doughty, C. (1985). Input and interaction in the communicative language classroom: A comparison of teacher-fronted and group activities. In S. M. Gass & C. G. Madden (eds.), *Input in second language acquisition*, pp. 115-132. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Phrasal Verb Video Dictionary [Website]. (2005). R. Drury, Georgia Tech. http://web.li.gatech.edu/~rdrury/600/oral/video/dictionary.html.

Project-Based Learning with Multimedia [Website]. (2005). San Mateo County Office of Education. http://pblmm.k12.ca.us/.

Real English [Website]. (2006). M. Marzio. The Marzio School, Istres, France. http://www.real-english.com/.

Real English Online [Online community]. (2005). E. Hanson-Smith & M.Marzio.http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Real_English_Online.

Revver Beta [Website] (2006). http://revver.com/.

RubiStar [Website]. (2006). ALTEC, University of Kansas. http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php.

Schulman, A. (1999). *Storyboarding Activity* [Web page]. San Mateo County Office of Education. http://pblmm.k12.ca.us/TechHelp/Storyboarding.html.

Screen Recorder [Software]. (2006). http://www.unixuser.org/~euske/vnc2swf/.

TeacherSource [Website]. (2004). Public Broadcasting Services. http://www.pbs.org/teachersource/.

Tourism Autralia [Website]. (2006). Australia.com. http://australiatv.feedroom.com/.

van Lier, L. (1998). The relationship between consciousness, interaction, and language learning. *Language Awareness* 7: 128-45.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind and society: The development of higher mental processes*. Ed., M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

vBlog Central [Website]. (2004). http://www.vblogcentral.com/.

Video & Editing 4 ESOL [Online community]. (2005). N. Gromik. http://groups.yahoo.com/group/video_editing4esol.

Video Nation [Website.]. (2004). British Broadcasting Corporation. http://www.bbc.co.uk/videonation/.

Video Search [Website]. (2004). Public Broadcasting Service. http://www.pbs.org/newshour/video/index.html.

videoblogging [Online community]. (2004). http://groups.yahoo.com/group/videoblogging.

Visual Studio [Software]. (2005). Microsoft Corporation. http://msdn.microsoft.com/vstudio/.

VOANews.com [Website]. (2006). Voice of America.
http://www.voanews.com/english/portal.cfm.

VoyCabulary [Website]. (2004). Voyager Info Systems. http://www.voycabulary.com/.

YouTube [Website]. (2006). YouTube, Inc.
http://www.youtube.com/.

Windows Movie Maker 2.1 [Software]. (2004). Microsoft Corporation.
http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/updates/moviemaker2.mspx.

While the above references are to citations in this paper, a more extensive list of references and resource materials may be found at Hanson-Smith (2006) and Hanson-Smith & al-Othman (2006). Marzio continues to expand his Real English site (2006), which holds dozens of free authentic videos (a number of them with prepared exercises), based on interviews with natives from all of the major English-speaking countries.

Editor's notes:

This presentation was made as a regular session at theWebheads in Action Online Convergence on November 20, 2005.

- The session took place in the Elluminate presentation room at Learning Times. A recording was made and can be heard at http://home.learningtimes.net/learningtimes?go=1042176.