

Using Video in the Classroom

In an effort to improve instruction, educators increasingly turn to multimedia materials, such as video, to enhance student motivation and learning. However, how those media are used often determines their effectiveness. Unlike when reading a text, students usually get only one exposure to a film. To focus viewing, promote understanding, and enhance learning, we couple videos with strategically planned viewing activities. Here's an overview of the ways we combine active learning with viewing multimedia materials.

Understanding and analyzing content

- *Traditional Viewing Guide:* Create a list of comprehension questions that match the informational sequence of a film. Give students a few minutes to study questions, start the film, and then ask students to complete the guide as they view the movie. The strategy requires students to actively respond to the material and prepares them for a richer post-viewing discussion.
- *Graphic Organizer:* Prepare a chart with topical headings, leaving empty space for students to record main ideas as they watch a movie. This strategy effectively focuses students on steps in a process, helps them organize large amounts of data, and provides a structure for analyzing relationships. For example, in Kim's Language and Literacy class, as they view the film, students complete a chart that has five rows and three columns, one row for each step in the guided reading process and three columns to record description of the step, purpose of the step, and length of time allotted for each step.

Learning through collaboration

Collaborative viewing strategies allow all students to see an entire film but require certain individuals to narrow their focus to one topic and become "experts" on one section of the film. These strategies introduce an element of choice, thereby making the task more interesting. All students actively participate, including those reticent to participate in full class discussions.

- *Collaborative Group Viewing Guide:* Divide the content of a film into five topics, list several comprehension questions under each topic, and divide the class into five groups. Each group focuses on one specific topic. After the film, each group meets for 10 minutes to discuss their topic and formulate a response. Finally, groups share information with the full class.
- *Jigsaw Viewing Guide:* Divide the content of the film into five main topics, divide the class into five home groups, and have students within each group count off one to five. Form new groups by number, that is, all number ones move and sit together to view the film and focus on topic one, all twos sit together and focus on topic two, and so forth. After the film, individuals discuss

their topics and then return to home groups to teach their topic to that group instead of reporting to the full class.

Applying and synthesizing course content

- *Critical Point Variation Strategy:* Show a video to a critical point, stop the film, and pass out a graphic organizer. Students analyze events up to the point viewed and predict what comes next. Before showing the remainder of the film, discuss their predictions or examples. Then show the remainder of the film and compare their predictions with what transpired. This strategy works well with films that present problem/solution situations or define constructs followed by multiple examples.
- *Illustration and Identification Strategy:* Show a film that illustrates concepts studied in class, and ask students to identify specific examples of various constructs. For example, after students study infant development, Fay shows a film that presents seven babies interacting with their families. Each student watches a specific baby, identifies examples of behavior indicative of a specific developmental stage, and records observations on a graphic organizer. Students then share observations in a full-class discussion or collaborative group.
- *Partner Motivation Strategy:* Pair students and ask them to discuss and record their ideas on a specific topic. Show a film and ask them to meet again with their partners to compare their responses to the concepts presented in the film.

Conclusion

These strategies can be used with multimedia material in many different kinds of classes. In addition to developing critical thinking, they transform video viewing, a relatively passive activity, into a dynamic and interactive event. They focus attention on the content, increase the depth and quality of classroom discussions, and promote collaborative learning. Finally, we recommend using a question from the viewing guide on quizzes or exams to fully integrate the audiovisual elements with the text and lecture elements of the course.

This tip was written by Kim Richardson and Fay Glosenger, Juniata College, Pennsylvania for the Teaching Professor newsletter.

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