PART 1    INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale of the study

English as well as other foreign languages has come into its own as a profession in Vietnam, and so far a great many efforts have been made to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Using video in the language classroom is one of these efforts, and it is proving to be advantageous.

The advantages of using video in the language classroom have been recognised by many researchers in applied linguistics, some of which are listed as follows, while more details will be discussed later in chapter 2.

Firstly, video motivates students; that is, it can maintain their attention longer and at the same time lengthen their retention. Secondly, video enhances the meaning of the messages trying to be conveyed by the speakers through the use of paralinguistic cues; meanwhile, students are able to see body rhythm and speech rhythm in the second language discourses through the use of authentic language and speed of speech in various situations. Video benefits students by providing for real language and cultural information. Thirdly, using video in the classroom allows differentiation of teaching and learning according to students’ abilities, learning styles and personalities. Finally, teaching foreign languages with video may meet students’ needs in their daily life. That is, people want to access to the world of English-language media: they want to be able to view the news, get information from advertisements and from other TV programs, films included – in short, to use these language products like normal consumers. This well is one of students’ major goals in learning English and in all fairness they ought to be able to get a ‘glimpse’ of their goals.
I enjoy video and television myself, and my students are interested in them, too. I have tried out video for teaching and found it promising; hence, I would like to use it more. I feel that it is fun and effective, but generally difficult to make the best use of. This question of difficulty is indeed important and provoking; therefore, I would like to carry out the study on ‘designing a listening and speaking syllabus using video for English language non-majors at pre-intermediate level.’ With this study, I mainly aim at building up a suitable syllabus with audio-visual aids to improve students’ listening and speaking skills. Not only does the syllabus consist of ‘what to teach’, but it also discusses ‘how to teach’ - fundamental techniques and video activities in the language classroom will be provided and discussed.

2. The scope of the study

The syllabus limits its scope to two communicative skills – listening and speaking, and to its participants of English language non-majors at pre-intermediate level.

Among various aspects of language teaching, I choose listening and speaking skills to deal with. Firstly, these two skills are the most demanding to most students, even to those with many years of learning. They require and are worth the biggest efforts, in terms of both teaching and learning.

In addition, listening and speaking activities in the classroom derived from the use of video are the most abundant and interesting.

The choice of participants will be further discussed in Chapter 3. In fact, it is quite a matter of convenience – for I, as a teacher in the School of Graduate Studies – VNU, mostly deal with such students at this level of English proficiency. Using video in the language
classroom proves effective to all students’ level of language proficiency. On the other hand, it has been also pointed out that what determines the difficulty of a teaching material is not just the material itself but also what the students are asked to do with it (Underwood, 1989).

Materials to be used as language input for the course mostly involve authentic videos that are all the kinds of programmes one normally sees at the cinema, on (cable) TV, or on VCD/DVD products: films of all kinds, documentaries, commercials, game shows, etc. This video resource is a wonderful base that opens up the English-language world and can be used with great pleasure and profit – and very little sweat (Sherman, J. 2003).

3. The aim of the study

The study aims to reach the following targets:

- To investigate and claim the advantages of using video in the language classroom, especially in improving students’ listening and speaking skills.

- To design a syllabus for an English speaking and listening course with the use of video for English language non-majors of pre-intermediate level.

- To suggest some techniques of using video in the classroom to improve speaking and listening skills for students of pre-intermediate level of English proficiency.

4. The methods of the study

The strategic method is qualitative; that is, comments, remarks, comparisons, suggestions and conclusions are based on factual research, observation, experience, discussion, as well
as reference books. Besides, discussing with my enthusiastic and helpful supervisor and colleagues enables me to complete the thesis.

A survey on actual situations of several language classrooms using video in Hanoi was carried out. Classrooms to be studied included those for English non-major students of pre-intermediate level. Questionnaires were sent to students; and a certain number of interviews were conducted with the teachers as well as several students in such classrooms. The aims of the survey is to reveal the teaching and learning conditions of such classrooms, their problems when working with video, if there might be, and their needs for better use of video in the classroom. Based on the results of the survey, data analysis was done in order to perform the first step in designing a syllabus: needs analysis.

Finally, a number of sample units were tested on two classes with 15 students each of pre-intermediate level of English. The remarks of the teacher of the classes and his colleagues based on their direct observations helped adjust the units of the whole course.

5. The design of the study

The study consists of three parts: introduction, development and conclusion. The Development part consists of three chapters titled literature review, syllabus design, and teaching techniques with video in the classroom. Chapter 1 – Literature review involves two key areas: (1) general concept of syllabus in comparison with curriculum and basic steps of syllabus designing; (2) advantages of using video in language teaching, and particularly in improving listening and speaking skills. The next two chapters – syllabus design and teaching techniques with video in the classroom, are the central parts, where the content of the course, the participants, the teachers and equipment of the course are respectively described. The content of the course is introduced followed by time allocation
and more importantly by suggesting video techniques, classroom activities and other
general guidelines. The study ends in part three—Conclusion, which briefly summarizes
what has been written and suggests further study.
1. Syllabus and curriculum

Syllabus and syllabus designing have been no longer new in the context of education. Teachers, including those of foreign languages, not only have been fascinated in this field, but must also take it on fundamental importance.

In spite of its essentiality, it is not an easy task to give out a thorough definition of syllabus in current literature. Besides, it is sometimes used and/or misused interchangeably with curriculum. The clarification of these two terms is not just for the sake of naming or the act of definition, but for the benefit to designers themselves. On well knowing what a syllabus or a curriculum is, designers should have better guidelines and therefore, is more likely to conduct their tasks more effectively.

A syllabus is more specific and more concrete than a curriculum, and a curriculum may contain a number of syllabi. A curriculum, hence, may specify only the goals – what students are supposed to be able to do at the end of the course; meanwhile a syllabus specifies the content of the lessons used to help students reach their goals. A curriculum includes several syllabuses, but not vice verse (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986).

One of the most widely repeated definitions of curriculum is given by Roberton (1987): “The curriculum includes the goals, objectives, content, processes, resources, and means of evaluation of all learning experienced, planned for students both in and out of the school and community.”
Syllabus, as defined by A.M. Shaw (1986), is “a statement of the plan for any part of curriculum excluding the element of curriculum evaluation itself.” It can be interpreted that a syllabus is, said as W. R. Lee (1986), some sort of guide to the teacher: it tells the teacher what to teach; and it tells others what the teacher is supposed to be teaching.

2. Two major strategies in syllabus design: Synthetic-Analytic syllabus planning

There are different ways in which syllabus proposals of one sort or another might be analysed. One dimension of analysis which has been the subject of a great deal of discussions and comments is the synthetic/analytic dimension.

Wilkins (1976), who was first to draw attention to the distinction between these two strategies, described the synthetic approach as follows:

“A synthetic language teaching strategy is one in which the different parts of language are taught separately and step by step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure of language has been built up.”

Though not restricted to grammatical syllabuses, synthetic approaches are apparently recognised in these types of syllabus, which are specified as discrete lists of grammatical items and in which the classroom focus is on the teaching of these items as separate and discrete.

In contrast with synthetic syllabuses, analytic syllabuses are “organised in terms of purposes for which people are learning language and the kinds of language performance that are necessary to meet those purposes.” (Wilkins, 1976)
Situational syllabuses are among various examples for analytic approaches, where students are presented with chunks of language including structures of varying degrees of difficulty. The starting point for syllabus design is not the grammatical system of the language, but the communicative purposes for which language is used.

3. Three principle types of language syllabus

3.1. Grammatical syllabuses

This has been the most common syllabus type (McDonough, 1981), in which syllabus input is selected and graded according to grammatical notions of simplicity and complexity.

The most rigid grammatical syllabuses supposedly introduce one item at a time and require mastery of that item before moving on to the next. According to McDonough, “the transition from lesson to lesson is intended to enable material in one lesson to prepare the ground for the next; and conversely for material in the next to appear to grow out of the previous one.”

A sample syllabus of this type is given by McDonough as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1      | Has drilled copula and adjective combinations:  
She is happy. |
| 2      | Introduces the _ing form:  
She is driving a car. |
| 3      | Introduces existential there:  
There is a man standing near the car. |
| 4      | Distinguishes between mass and count nouns:  
There are some oranges and some cheese on the table. |
| 5      | Introduces the verb like and want: |
Lesson | Content
-------|--------
I like oranges.
6 | Introduces *don’t*:  
I don’t like cheese.

(McDonough 1981, 21)

It is generally assumed behind most grammatical syllabuses that a language consists of a finite set of rules which can be combined in various ways to make meanings; and further that these rules can be learned one by one. Rutherford calls this the “accumulated entries” view of language learning.

This point of view, however, presents a problem: it is difficult to isolate and present one discrete grammatical item at a time, particularly if a context for language needs providing.

Another problem involves in grading syllabus input in the sequence of complexity in terms of grammar notions. According to Pienemann and Johnston’s research in 1987, “the acquisition of grammatical structures will be determined by how difficult those items are to process psychologically rather than how simple or complex they are grammatically.” They illustrate this with the third person ‘s’ morpheme. Grammatically this is quite a straightforward item. However, it is notoriously difficult for students to master. The difficulty is blamed for fact that the form of the verb is governed or determined by the person and number of the noun or noun phrase in the subject position. In effect, the students have to hold this person and number in working memory and then produce the appropriate form of the verb. Thus the difficulty is created, not by the grammar, but by the constraints in short-term memory.

Finally, the assumption that knowledge of grammar equals the ability to use language is quickly found out to be false by students and this may lower their learning motivation as they do not see what being taught corresponds to their needs.
3.2. Situational syllabuses

In situational syllabuses, the content of language teaching is the collection of real or imaginary situations in which language occurs or is used. These syllabuses tend to consist of unit indicating specific situations, such as ‘At the station’, ‘At the check-in’, etc.

This sort of syllabus aims at ‘real language’, which leads more directly to the learner’s ability to communicate in specific settings. However, the meaningful conversational interchanges in specific contexts are responsible for haphazard arrangement of language patterns in the dialogues, which tends to limit the effectiveness for teaching the patterns. A solution is to combine the structural and situational syllabuses, resulting in structured dialogues, directed discourses, or situational grammar skills.

3.3. Functional-notional syllabuses

During the 1970s, a syllabus known as ‘functional-notional syllabus’ was given rise to as a landmark for a large scaled attempt to incorporate a broader view of language systematically into the language syllabus.

Notional-functional syllabuses, placing the students and their communicative purposes at the centre, are aimed at making communicative competence the goal of language teaching/learning and at developing procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication (Canh, 2004).

In general, the term ‘function’ may be described as the communicative purposes for which we use language (e.g. agreeing, warning, etc.), while ‘notion’ refers to the conceptual meanings (e.g. objects, entities, states of affairs, etc.) expressed through language.
According to Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983), “functional-notionalism has the tremendous merit of placing the students and their communicative purposes at the centre of the curriculum.”

The benefits of adopting a functional-notional orientation are listed as follows:

1. *It sets realistic learning tasks.*
2. *It provides for the teaching of everyday, real-world language.*
3. *It leads us to emphasise receptive activities before rushing the students to premature performance.*
4. *It recognises that the speaker must have a real purpose for speaking, and something to talk about.*
5. *Communication will be intrinsically motivating because it expresses basic communicative functions.*
6. *It enables the teacher to exploit sound psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, linguistic and educational principles.*
7. *It can develop naturally from existing teaching methodologies.*
8. *It enables a spiral curriculum to be used which reintroduces grammatical, topical and cultural material.*
9. *It allows for the development of flexible, modular courses.*
10. *It provides for the widespread promotion of foreign language courses.*

(Finocchiaro and Brumfit 1983:17)

Despite those advantages, this approach, like others, provokes designers with the same two central issues: the selection of items for the syllabus, and the grading and sequencing of these items. Furthermore, these issues turn out to be even more complex. Decisions about which items to include in the syllabus can no longer be made on linguistic grounds alone, and designers need include items which they imagine will help the students carry out the communicative purposes for which they need the language. The grading of these functional items becomes much more complex because there are few apparent objective means for
deciding that one functional item, for instance *apologising*, is either simpler or more difficult than another one like *thanking*, for example. (Widdowson, 1979).

### 3.4. Conclusion

There is just in theory such a solely synthetic or analytic syllabus. In practice, courses tend to be typified as more-or-less synthetic or more-or-less analytic according to the prominence given discrete elements in the selection and grading of input.

The two central issues for syllabus designers to concern: the selection of items for the syllabus, and the grading and sequencing of these items, are found problematic in any types of syllabus. Nevertheless, each type has its own merits that are worth considering. This is partly why syllabus designers tend to combine more than one type of syllabus together, which results in such a more-or-less grammatical syllabus, more-or-less situational syllabus, or more-or-less functional-notional syllabus.

The strategy of syllabus planning employed in my syllabus is more-or-less analytic one, where the communicative purposes for which the language is used are the very first to deal with, and where suitable structures are provided in relation to such purposes. In terms of type, the syllabus of mine tends to be more-or-less functional-notional syllabus, in which the students and their communicative purposes are placed at the centre of the course.

### 4. Using video in the language classroom

Balatova (1994) suggests that unlike students, who listened in sound-only conditions, the use of audio-video conditions were more consistent in their perception of the story, in the sense that difficult and easy passages formed a pattern. In addition, her research also notes, "It is also interesting to point out that students in the sound-only conditions in the two
experiments were less successful in maintaining the interest and concentration in listening” (Balatova, 1994, p.521).

Heron, Hanley and Cole (1994) also hypothesize that the more meaningful an advanced organizer is the more impact it can have on comprehension and retention. Their results of using twelve different videos with foreign language students indicates that scores improved when advanced organizers, such as a pictures and/or visual stimuli, are used with the video. Perhaps the findings from these studies can be attributed to the fact that video offers contextual support and/or helps students to visualize words as well as meanings.

4.1. General benefits of using video in the language classroom

The benefits of using video in the language classroom can be listed as follows:

Firstly, it is quite easy to notice the compelling power of video in the classroom, a power that is even enhanced by concentration on short sequences. The eye is caught, and this excites interest in the meaning of the words. Video, in other words, stimulates students’ motivation, and maintains their interest and concentration better than sound-only learning environment (Balatova, 1994). Empirical evidence has shown that attention spans are lowered when watching video. “The first signs of distraction in the groups (of sound-only conditions) appeared after the first minute, and by the end of four minutes, distraction spread all over the groups; while in the video conditions several students became distracted after six minutes, some students lost concentration after ten minutes and around a third kept watching until the end.” (Balatova, 1994)

Secondly, using video in language teaching can enhance students’ understanding and retention of information (Herron, 1994). Video offers contextual support and helps
students to visualize words as well as their meanings. Canning-Wilson suggests that images contextualised in video can help reinforce the language, provided the students can see immediate meaning in term of vocabulary recognition in their first language.

Video provides visual stimuli such as environment and this can lead to and generate prediction, speculation and a chance to activate background schemata when viewing a visual scene re-enacted (Canning-Wilson, 2000). The use of visuals overall helps students predict information, infer ideas and analyse the world that is brought into the classroom.

Another benefit of video concerning comprehension enhancement is the fact that it brings students all kinds of situation, with full contextual back-up. Many students find it rather difficult to communicate with other people whose voices are different from those they have got used to in their course-books, where most of the listening is ‘built up’ in a studio with ‘standard’ voices.

Thirdly, on the one hand “video is used to help enhance the meaning of message trying to be conveyed by the speakers through the use of paralinguistic cues”; on the other hand, “it allows students to see body rhythm and speech rhythm in second language discourse through the use of authentic language and speed of speech in various situations”. (Canning-Wilson, 2000). To this extent, video adds benefits of providing real language and cultural information.

Fourthly, video is a window on English-language culture. A small amount of showing is worth hours of telling from a teacher or a course-book (Jane Sherman, 2003). For instance, it shows how people live and think and behave – local culture with the small letter c.
Fifthly, video can be used as a stimulus or input for discussions, for writing assignment, projects or the study of other subjects. The ‘film of the book’ is particularly used in the study of literature, and work-based scenarios and training films are useful in special-purpose language teaching.

Sixthly, video, as a moving picture book, gives access to things, places, people, events and behaviour, regardless of the language used, and is worth thousands of picture dictionaries and magazines.

Seventhly, using video in language teaching allows differentiation of teaching and learning according to the students’ abilities, learning styles and personalities (Burn and Reed, 1994). Teaching with video can widen the range of activities in the classroom (Arthur, 1999).

Individuals process information in different ways; the strategies used by one student are likely to differ from those used another learner. However, Canning-Wilson (2000), through his survey, found that most students find it comfortable to learn languages through the use of video.

Another advantage of the use of video language teaching is that the method is also accessible to those who have not yet learned to read and write.

Eighthly, according to Olson’s theory in instructional means, “... the content of the medium is related to the knowledge acquired while the means employed is related to the skills, strategies and heuristics that are called upon and developed” (Olson, 1976). Thus, perhaps the function of using video aids that presents a new symbol system is not so much to convey old knowledge in a new form but rather to cultivate new skills for exploration an
internal representation (Olson, 1974). Researchers found that the students dealing with video in their learning improve a range of social learning skills, including communication, negotiation, decision-making and problem-solving.

Last but not least, people want to access the world of English-language media: they want to be able to view news, get information from advertisement, see films – in short, to use these language products like normal consumers. In addition, video is today’s medium and is more familiar to them than the world of books and papers. Print may still be powerful but many people spend more time with audio-visual media. Thus, enjoying video in English may well be one of our students’ major goals in learning English; and in all fairness they ought to be able to ‘get a glimpse’ of their goals.

4.2. Using video in developing listening and speaking skills

On enhancing students’ comprehension in general, video facilitates their listening with illustrations, visuals, pictures, perceptions, mental images, figures, impressions, likenesses, cartoons, charts, graphs, colours, replicas, reproductions, or anything else used to help one hear and see an immediate meaning in the language.

According to Rick Altman (1989), body language is not something that naturally springs to mind when we think about developing the learner’s listening skills. While being ‘unheard’, it does, however, play a key role, especially at the subconscious level, in communication and an awareness of it and how it can vary from culture to culture, can be particularly important in helping students to develop their ability to understand in a real environment.
He finds video and particularly video with the sound turned off the most useful to deal with body language and help the students to interpret it. The following is a number of different tasks that he often uses:

- Playing the clip though and getting students to speculate about the relationships of the people in the scene. Such questions are asked, ‘Who is emotionally closest or involved with which other characters?’, ‘What's the relationship between characters?’, ‘Who is feeling angry?’, ‘What is each person feeling or thinking?’

- Trying to get students to predict what they think characters are talking about or even what they are saying. If their level is low then they can predict what kinds of things they would be saying in their mother tongue.

- Getting students to try to act out the scene using the script before they hear it. Just let them watch first and think about what the character they have to play is likely to be thinking or feeling. This gets the students attempting to interpret their body language and express it through the way they read the script.

- Getting students to view silently before they listen to a scene or video clip can also help them to look for 'subtext'. It is often the case that things are being implied which aren't stated in words. Getting students to focus on these factors can help to raise their awareness of the non-verbal communication, which is happening.

Whatever kind of silent viewing to be done and whatever to focus on are believed to ultimately help the students to understand when it comes to listening. They will at least have developed a conceptual framework for what they need to understand and will have
built up some expectations of what they will hear. Listening should not be an activity we do divorced from visual context.

Video is also applied to drilling pronunciation. There is a tendency for the students to pick up a ‘reading pronunciation’, especially when their major learning materials are textbooks. On meeting new words in their written form, they quite reasonably pronounce them as they are spelt. A simple and effective activity for the pronunciation of new words, especially those with irregular spelling is for the students to notice how they are pronounced when they are viewing. This makes students depend upon their ears and more importantly, realize how important to do so. This activity can also be done with audio, but imitation is improved with video, since the students can see how mouth and movements fit with voice.

Regarding speaking skills, Jiang Hemel, an English teacher at the Shanghai College of Petrochemical Technology in China, reports that ‘video is now widely used for oral practice in English teaching in China. The video course offered to college and university students of a conversation class is called *shiting shuo*. In Chinese *shiting* means “watching and listening” and *shuo* means “speaking.” As listening and speaking are the two major skills students should acquire, the video course not only teaches English through video but gets students to use the English they have learned in talking about the video’.

Video brings real-context to the classroom, which is an ideal condition to drill communicative skills, particularly oral practices. These contexts not only motivate the students to participate in speaking activities, but they also create the naturalness in their utterances. In addition, using video creates a great number of tasks and activities that stimulate communication and particularly spoken language among the students.
CHAPTER 2 SYLLABUS DESIGN

1. The participants

The participants that the syllabus aims at are English language non-majors of pre-intermediate level of language proficiency. Provided that video benefits almost students, the choice of the participants of the course is more-or-less of convenience. As an English teacher in the School of Graduate Studies - Vietnam National University, Hanoi, I am supposed to deal with a wide range of students with different level of English proficiency, and particularly those of pre-intermediate level. In addition, I have experienced two years of teaching English for the students of the same level, in May School, at 36 Ly Thai To, Hanoi, where most teaching materials were aided with audio-video. At present, I am participating in an English intensive course of pre-intermediate levels, in which teaching and learning with video is also a part of its requirements. As a matter of fact, choosing such students for the course should bring me a great deal of convenience in carrying out the study, including needs analysis, experimenting some sample units, etc.

The participants are supposed to have experienced 120 hours with Lifelines Pre-intermediate by Tom Hutchinson, or other equivalent course-books or programmes. Students at this level have got used to such grammatical aspects as basic tenses, verbs and verb patterns, nouns, conditionals, comparatives and superlatives, passive voices, etc. that are included in Lifelines Pre-intermediate by Tom Hutchinson, or other equivalents.

2. Equipment requirements

The requirement of equipment for a language classroom with video aids is quite simple and inexpensive. A classroom of more or less than 20 students requires a 21 to 29 inch
television set and a videodisk player. The television should be hung from one to one and a half metres above the students sitting at the first table row. It is normally fixed to a corner of the classroom to spare space for a blackboard in the middle, and more importantly for such activities as role-play, or other group activities in front of the class.

The television set will be connected to a VCD player or a computer, particularly a laptop, which is placed right on the teacher’s desk for his/her easy of controlling. The teacher can conduct several basic and simple operations directly on the VCD player (or computer) at his or her desk or with a remote control while moving around the classroom.

3. The teachers

Those who enjoy video and television themselves, having access to some English video materials and a video player, having tried out video for teaching and found it promising, and would have some ideas of using it more, can well be the teachers of the course. The teachers’ interest in working with such audio-video aids in their classroom are the key of their success – for the required techniques are of ease and might be mastered within several hours of practice. Furthermore, video provides the teachers with a great many activities that most of them feel it amazingly interesting and effective to adapt for their lessons.

4. Needs analysis and goal setting

4.1. Needs analysis

Needs analysis and goal setting are the very first step among seven ones in designing a syllabus, said as Hughes in his book *The teacher’s role in curriculum design*:

1. An agreement on aims and objectives
2. A selection of content

3. A selection of learning experiences

4. The organization of content

5. Choice of an evaluation strategy and process

6. Development of curriculum materials

7. Implementation

(Note: in The teacher’s role in curriculum design, ‘syllabus’ and ‘curriculum’ are used alternatively.)

In order to analyse the needs of students in the prospect of learning a foreign language with video, a small-scaled survey was carried out last year – 2004. The studied students included two second-year classes of English for Business (24 students each), at Phuong Dong University, located at 58 Vu Trong Phung, Hanoi; 30 students of two English intensive courses for staff of Fishery Ministry, and 18 students of a Communicative English course in Viet Anh Education Company, 43 Nguyen Binh Khiem, Hanoi. All of them were English non-majors at Pre-intermediate level, and were using the Lifelines series by Tom Hutchinson as their main course-book.

The questionnaires and interviews mainly focused on the following topics:

- The frequency of video lessons in a month. What video materials they were working with.

- What sorts of video or TV programmes in English they like most and spend most of time on in their daily life.
• What sorts of activity in the classroom with video they liked or disliked most.

• Their attitudes to and assessment opinions on teaching and learning English with audio-video aids.

As for the first topic – the frequency of lessons with audio-video aids, 5 percent of the studied courses carried out one video lesson per month, 35 percent four lessons per month, and 60 percent eight lessons per month. Related to this issue, as many as 77 percent of the asked students agreed to increase the number of video lessons from 10 to 12 per months; several of them even considered video as the main material instead of their existing course-book. However, 23 percent accepted it as extra activities, and felt it enjoyable to work with once a week.

Video materials to be used were found to vary from one course to another. While the teachers at Dong Phuong choose *The Lifetime* level 1 and 2 by Tom Hutchinson as its main materials for their first and second year students respectively, those of other schools/centres choose either *The Headway Video* by Tim Falla or others self-designed or collected by themselves.

A small number of asked students had available access to English TV programmes at home; and these students spent averagely one and a half hours a day watching some certain English programmes (with and without Vietnamese subtitles). Up to 71 percent of the students had no cable TV at their living place; however, amazingly half of them spent their weekends watching films on their personal computers by hiring VCD or DVD, most of which were subtitled in Vietnamese. Several students said they often bought a number of their favourite films so that they can watch them again and again. Normally, they just had
to read the subtitles of these films for the first time of watching, while they could turn them off or ignored them afterward.

Those without cable TV often chose films as their favourite English language produces. These films ranged from classical dramas to more popular entertaining action, adventurous, and comedy films.

The students who had access to cable TV had more choices, including films, documentaries, news, sports, fashion, music, and game shows. Films, chosen by 97% of the students, ranked first; documentaries (New Discovery Channels), 50%, ranked second; and entertainment programmes (sports, music, fashion, game-shows), 45%, was in the third place. Several students also chose news programmes their favourite, though most of them were far beyond their level of English.

The question of which activities the students liked most while working with video received a wide range of answers. This partly indicated a wide variation of class activities that these audio-video aids could provide with, and that the students are mostly attracted by almost all of video activities. However, six of the following were the most to mention: role-play (65%), pause – prediction (43%), pause – description (40%), sound-off (32), watching-listening comprehension (25%), and post watching – discussion (22%). Those preferring role-play said that they felt more self-confident after ‘playing’ a role successfully – for they found their English more fluent, natural and ‘a sort of closer’\(^1\) to the native’s while ‘playing’ this game. Furthermore, they could get used to and practice some of the ‘foreign’ gestures: twisting two fingers as a sign of good luck, for example. All in all, the class

\(^{1}\) students’ words
would always be fun with this sort of activity; the students, hence, felt it easier to learn their lessons.

When asked about their attitudes to studying English with video, most of the students revealed their excitement and relax. 86 percent of the students found it ‘very interesting’ to work with, from which they could not only learn the language but also the cultural background of the target language. Over all, video brought them fun and an active learning condition. 10 percent of the students found video ‘interesting’, and 4 percent ‘rather interesting’.

Through interviews, however, several students showed their disappointment from time to time. ‘Video is not always as joyful as it should be;’ said one of the students, ‘and the teacher should let us relax while watching the episode rather than give us such a hard task as note-taking, which can well be done with the tape.’

Another idea implied through the interviews with a number of second year students of Phuong Dong University was that the video materials should be more ‘real’ or ‘closer to life’ rather than those created in a studio. Besides, more documentaries such as New Discovery Channels should be added, so that not only the target language would they be able to study but they also might have more chances to achieve more ‘updated’ knowledge.

The findings remarkably contribute to the writer’s designing of the syllabus in the sense that they inspire him to a syllabus that matches the majority of student’s interest and needs, and avoids such problems found in the studied classrooms.
4.2. **Goal setting**

The main goal of the *Listening and speaking syllabus using video for English non-major students of pre-intermediate level* is to show natural interactive English in a wide range of everyday situations, through which student’s listening and speaking skills as well as their background knowledge on the target language should be improved.

In addition, introducing spoken language through several popular scientific documentaries is the secondary goal of the course. This language input, to some extent, matches students’ needs. On the other hand, it is essential in broadening student’s vocabulary, structures, and other aspects of language.

The language focuses on two key areas:

- Structures are based on the structural syllabus of the Lifelines course-books by Tom Hutchison. The structural content of each unit is carefully graded, but the emphasis throughout is on the natural use of those in spoken interaction.

- Language in use: a very important feature of the syllabus is to show natural English in everyday use. Useful idiomatic expressions are made use of in each unit.

From what considered, the objectives of the syllabus are as follows:

- to improve students’ listening and speaking skills (from Pre-intermediate to Intermediate level for English non-major students)

- to help students get used to a wide range of natural spoken language in various English TV programmes and video produces.
- to broaden students’ vocabulary and structures following the *Lifelines* by Tom Hutchinson, one of the most popular course-book series for English non-major students.

- to broaden general knowledge for students, including certain aspects of language, intonation, body language and gesture, cultural behaviour, scenes of places in the world, etc.

5. Selecting and grading the content of the syllabus

As mentioned above, the selecting and grading content of the syllabus are based on one of the most widely used course-book series – the *Lifelines* by Tom Hutchinson.

However, being a syllabus with its focus on listening and speaking skills, *Listening and speaking syllabus using video for English non-major students of Pre-intermediate level* suggests a great number of activities in order to improve students’ listening and speaking skills, including listening for gist, listening for detail, understanding implications through intonation, etc., and talking about a certain topic, expression feelings and emotion through intonation, sharing information, giving imperatives, discussing, etc.

The main grammar points cover the follows:

- the use of tense: the Present simple, continuous, perfect simple, perfect continuous, the Past simple, continuous, perfect, the Future forms of *Will*, *going to*, and Present continuous with future meaning.

- types of verbs: stative verbs, modal verbs, causative have, make, let, get

- Mood: conditionals, subjunctive moods
- Direct and indirect speech
- Voice: Passive and active voices

6. The organisation of the syllabus content

The content of the syllabus is distributed into twelve units and four stop-and-check sections. The course is timely divided into two sections, marked with two achievement tests: one in the middle of the course, the other at the end. In the following table, emphasis is solely put on selecting and grading language input in terms of their communicative functions followed by related grammar points; while skills and suggested activities shall be discussed further in the next chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Topic (function)</th>
<th>Grammar points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Talking about your life</td>
<td>Talking about the present: the Present Simple, Continuous, and Perfect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stative verbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Catching upon news</td>
<td>Talking about the past: the Past Simple, Continuous, and Perfect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Making plans</td>
<td>Talking about the future: Will, going to, and the Present Continuous with future meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Stop-and-check</td>
<td>Revision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Reporting an incident</td>
<td>Reported statements;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Passive voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Making polite requests/enquiries</td>
<td>Reported questions; question forms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Modal verbs; have to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Agreeing and disagreeing</td>
<td>Verb patterns: V_ing or Infinitive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit</td>
<td>Topic (function)</td>
<td>Grammar points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Stop-and-check</td>
<td>Revision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Achievement test 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Dealing with problems</td>
<td>Causative have, make, let, get</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Talking about a holiday</td>
<td>Conditionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Bargaining</td>
<td>Comparatives and superlatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Stop-and-check</td>
<td>Revision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Viewing a documentary (1)</td>
<td>Relative clauses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Viewing a documentary (2)</td>
<td>Noun phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Viewing a piece of news on TV</td>
<td>Time clauses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Stop-and-check</td>
<td>Revision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Achievement test 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Unit description

7.1. General unit description

Each unit involves a topic that is conveyed by one or two ten-minute video clips extracted from various kinds of authentic video resource base, such as feature films and drama programmes, documentaries on subjects which interest students, the daily news, and other popular entertainment programmes like sports, game-shows, music for instance.

The very first criterion to choose a video clip is the function of the language used in it; for example, talking about one’s life, making plans, and so on. Then comes grammar - that is, the most often repeated structures that can be found in the clip.
Other criteria of selecting video resource will be further discussed in chapter 4 Teaching techniques with video in the classroom.

After a suitable video clip has been selected, a wide range of related guiding questions, exercises, and activities are designed in order to guide and facilitate students’ comprehension, as well as to stimulate further oral discussions on the topic aroused in the video clip.

Main drilling exercises and activities are distributed into three parts: Pre-viewing, While-viewing, and Post-viewing. Pre-viewing parts serving as warm-ups are certain selection of pictures from the video clips that arouse students’ interest and evoke their concerns toward the topic. A picture, for example, of a person with complex facial expressions can well serve as warming-up trigger, from which relating vocabulary and grammatical structures might be provoked.

While-viewing is main part of each unit, where various exercises and activities are carefully adopted and designed to guide students constantly from general comprehension to detail or vice and verse. In this part, not only meanings but also forms of the language will be achieved. Besides listening and speaking skills, other skills such as recognising and understanding body language, identifying objects, etc. will be built up and developed.

Post-viewing is mainly to enhance students’ retention, that includes various reviewing and drilling exercises and activities for vocabulary and structure, etc.

Another important section in Post-viewing is certain questions as stimuli for further discussion, either in spoken or written form, or both.
7.2. Sample unit

The primary goal of the syllabus is to show natural interactive spoken language in such video resource as feature films and drama produces. However, this sort of video materials has been quite available in popular courses such as the Lifetime by Tom Hutchison, the Headway Video by Tim Falla, and the like.

Meanwhile, adding documentaries to the syllabus is one of its new features; on the other hand, understanding a documentary is a requirement to the students of this course.

As a result, I chose a unit with a video clip of a documentary as a sample. (Appendix 2)

8. Time allocation of the syllabus

The syllabus consists of 12 units, four stop-and-checks, and two achievement tests. Each unit needs eight 45-minute periods to finish. Each stop-and-check takes four 45-minute periods to complete. Two achievement tests (four periods each) add in another eight periods. Therefore, the total duration of the course is 120 periods, which is equal to 30 four-period lessons. (Appendix 3)

9. Evaluation and testing

9.1. Achievement tests

Evaluation and testing are the final step but equal in importance with the other steps of syllabus designing. Not only does this step help assess students’ achievement during and after the course, but it also allows the designer evaluate his syllabus’s quality to the participants.
The tests to be used here are achievement tests, which according to Tim Mcnamara (2000) cover and aim at measuring what language the students have learned as a result of teaching. Achievement tests are associated with the process of instruction. They accumulate evidence during, or at the end of the course of study in order to see whether and where progress has been made in terms of the goals of learning. An achievement test may be self-enclosed in the sense that it may not bear any direct relationship to language use in the world outside the classroom. Therefore, achievement tests are more easily able to reflect progress aspects of the syllabus.

The *Listening and speaking syllabus using video for English non-major students of pre-intermediate level* consists of two achievement tests, one in the middle and the other at the end of the course. The first test covers the content of the first eight units, and the result of the test accounts for 30 percent of the total score. The second one measures students’ achievement of the whole course; however, its focus is more on the last eight units. The second achievement test called *the final test* takes 70 percent of the total score.

**9.2. Testing content**

The tests consist of two parts: listening and speaking, corresponding to the aims of the course.

The first part – listening comprehension, lasts for 25 minutes with three pieces of video clips of any type and any topic that students have dealt with in the earlier section of the course. The length of each video clip is more-or-less than two minutes.

Total number of questions is 20, distributed in correspondence with the length of the difficulty of video clips. The question types include:
• Gap filling: students are required to fill no more than three words in a gap to complete an utterance extracted from the video clip.

• Missing summary: students are given a certain summary of the video they have seen; however, the summary contains several missing information. They are supposed to complete the summary by adding what missing that they may find in the video.

• True/false/no information: students are supposed to decide whether the given statements are true, false or unmentioned in the video.

• Multiple-choice: students are given a question with four optional answers underneath. They are supposed to choose the option that best answer the question.

• Open question: students are supposed to answer an open question with no more than three words.

• Matching: students are given several images extracted from the video and corresponding comments on these images in a random order. They are supposed to match the images with their correct comments.

• Titling: students are given several images extracted from the video. They are supposed to give a suitable title for each image.

• Narrating: students are shown a piece of video in which two or three characters are taking part in a conversation. They are supposed to write a summary of the conversation within a limited number of words.
The second part of the test – speaking, is carried out between the teacher and each student. The student views a random piece of video of any type and of any topic that they have learned before. The teacher helps him/her understand the video, and then gives certain guiding questions to lead him/her to an oral discussion. Through the discussion, the student is supposed not only to show his/her understanding of the video, but to present his/her ideas on the issue brought up in the video.

### 9.3. Testing procedures

The listening part of the test is carried out on paper with the whole class, in the following procedures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Examiner’s activity</th>
<th>Students’ activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hands out the test papers. Allows 5 minutes for the students to read the question.</td>
<td>Write their name on the correct space of the test paper and spend 5 minutes reading the questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Plays the video clips, twice each with a 30 second pause after each.</td>
<td>View the clips and answer the questions on their test papers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Allows 5 minutes for the students to check their answers.</td>
<td>Check and confirm the answers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Collects the test papers.</td>
<td>Hand in their test paper.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The speaking part of the test is conducted between the examiner and each student, and last from 15 to 20 minutes.

**Procedure:**

The oral test has four phases which are described in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Introduction</th>
<th>The Examiner and student introduce themselves. The student is made to feel comfortable and ready for the next part of the test.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Viewing</td>
<td>The student views an approximately 3-minute video clip of a similar topic to those during the course. On watching, the student is allowed to ask for a pause, and give questions to clarify any image that he/she is not clear. The video is displayed twice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Discussion</td>
<td>The candidate is encouraged to talk in length about the topic mentioned in the video, or about his/her impression in and attitude to the issue aroused in the video. The student does not need specific knowledge to complete the test, but is supposed to give adequate supporting ideas for his/her opinions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Conclusion</td>
<td>The examiner gives a brief remark on the student’s performance, showing the weak points in his/her speaking, if there are, and some advice to improve them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**9.3. Marking**

The evaluation of listening comprehension is rather convenient, based on the number of correct answers to the given questions. On the other hand, assessment on oral test is more
likely to be rather subjective, which results in greater deviation between different examiners’ assessment.

The deviation in evaluation might reduce if teachers base themselves on a list of explicit criteria, one of which is given by Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate – Cambridge University, 2000. (Appendix 4)
CHAPTER 3  TEACHING TECHNIQUES WITH VIDEO IN THE CLASSROOM

This chapter provides teachers who are interested in using video in their language classroom with methods of selecting and collecting video materials as well as with a wide variety of techniques and activities to adopt for their lessons.

1. Selecting video materials

In general, the obvious elements of a video resource base are popular feature films and drama programmes, documentaries on subjects which interest students, and the daily news; in other words, whatever is interesting, attractive to the eye and linguistically easy on the ear.

Teachers who enjoy watching video themselves will make use of their inspiration: they will not only remember sequences when they need them, but their senses will be sharpened, particularly in spotting usable material.

There is a wide range of types of video recording; for example, we have:

- Drama video (films, soaps, etc.)
- Documentaries
- TV news and weather
- Interviews
- TV commercials
- Sport programmes
- Talk shows
- Game shows
- Educational films

And we can use them:

- As complete recordings or short extracts
- For their own sake – just exposing students to the records and letting them enjoy them.
- For the sake of the encounter with the culture
- For listening comprehension
- To provide models of the spoken language

1.1. Authentic or structural videos

Authentic videos, as listed above, are produced as entertainment for native English speakers. They generally present real language that is not simplified and is spoken at a normal speed with genuine accents.

Instructional videos are such productions that have been created for use in classrooms or in other educational settings.

Instructional videos have considerable advantages: they are likely to already have been evaluated for language, content, and length, and many instructional videos are packaged as multimedia resources that include student workbooks, teacher guides, video transcripts.

However, I choose authentic videos as the language input for my syllabus for the following reasons.
Firstly, authentic videos with the nature of their own provide with ‘real’ English, which is central to language learning. Secondly, they are lively windows on the culture of the native people. For instance, there are some settings which highlight particular sectors, e.g. American presidential elections, the stock exchange, criminal courts, Australian suburbia, army life, etc. are as good as a visit to a ‘museum’. Thirdly, using authentic videos in the classroom can provide opportunities for students to evaluate a medium that they use in their daily life. This is important because, just as students need to develop critical literacy skills in order to analyze what they read to distinguish fact from fiction or to identify an author’s position on a topic and compare it to their own, they also be to be able to do this with what they see and hear, i.e., with films and television programs. Finally, most students find it interesting to watch authentic videos, which are originally produced as entertainment.

1.2. With or without subtitling

Some films and drama series have built-in aids to comprehension in the form subtitling. Most DVDs, for example, provide with a choice of languages for subtitling.

When thinking whether or how to use these aids we must recognize that the eye is more powerful than the ear, and will dominate. If viewers are offered both reading and listening, they will read in preference to listening, unless their aural skills are much greater than their reading skills. Therefore, students, particularly those with weak aural comprehension, will tend to substitute reading for listening.
There are three possibilities of subtitled videos:

- Videos in Vietnamese subtitled in English, can be bought through big video suppliers, and is available on certain Vietnamese TV channels targeted at English speakers. It is clearly of very little use for listening comprehension and is rarely used in language teaching, but it has great potential for vocabulary extension, especially the recognition of interactive language. Provided the students can read English, the eye is drawn to the subtitles; at the same time they understand everything, fully contextualized, and can see how it is said in English.

- English videos subtitled in Vietnamese are a fairly common resource. Although the film provides a running translation, there is probably very little learning of English in this kind of viewing. The students tend to rely on the most accessible channel, the written text, and do not process both channels equally. They may indeed switch off the verbal sound completely. However, these versions do introduce the film, and the Vietnamese subtitles can be covered up and used to check comprehension when necessary. They are also useful for translation exercises.

- English videos subtitled in English are available from several sources and are much appreciated by students; it is also very useful for transcribing the script of a scene. It certainly improves comprehension, but unless the students' aural comprehension is very good they will almost certainly improve their reading rather than their listening skills. If this is what is wanted, fine; if not, cover up or turn off the subtitles, and use the subtitles only if needed, as an on-line dictionary. Such films can also be used for good close-focus listening activities matching speech and writing, since the subtitles are often only an approximation of the spoken words.
After all things have been considered, subtitles do students good to some extent. Do not ignore such video with this comprehension aid. The matter then is of when and how to use them. Subtitles generally can be used as an ‘on-line dictionary’, that facilitates students’ pronunciation (matching what spoken to what seen), and broadens their vocabulary and structures as well.

1.3. What makes video easy or difficult?

On selecting video, one always has to consider its level of difficulty compared to the participants’ level of English proficiency.

What hinders comprehension is:

- high verbal density, i.e. a lot of speech with very little action
- words unmatched to the action; or words in conflict with the action or with an ironic commentary on it
- a high degree of naturalism in the speech, e.g. everyone talking at once, mumbled asides, actors with their backs to the camera, inconsequential dialogue
- cartoons - mouths, faces and body language are not as expressive as those of real people
- too many dialect and regional accents
- period language, e.g. Shakespeare remains difficult in spite of some wonderful adaptations
What helps comprehension is:

- unambiguous action with plenty of action between speech and a close connection between speech and action

- clear conventional story lines: straightforward love stories aimed at adolescents, children's film drama, and science-fiction drama, which have simple plot lines and time-consuming special effects which lighten the verbal comprehension burden

- stylized acting: old 'canned drama' movies are acted like plays - only one character speaks at a time, always clearly and always to camera; classics like Casablanca, Gone with the Wind share this kind of clarity

- clearly enunciated speech in standard accents - this criterion rules out a lot of excellent regional films

- anything which slows down the diction: films where one of the main characters is not able to communicate very well because he or she is an alien, a foreigner, deaf, dumb, whatever it takes to produce slow halting language which has to be interpreted both for the other characters and for us, the audience

2. Recording and storing videos

A striking question might concern recording a piece of video. There are several ways to record and store videos.

The easiest and most popular method is buying videodisks (VCD) or digital videodisks (DVD) from a local video shop, where almost of all video types are available and inexpensive.
The second method of recording is with a TV cable connected to a video recorder or best with a computer supported with a video-capturing card. The TV signals will be captured and stored in videotape or in the hard disk of the computer.

The third way to search and store videos is via the Internet, where hundreds of thousands video clips are provided for free. All you have to do is to download them to a mass storage such as a USB drive, or to copy them to a VCD. (Appendix 4)

Normally we do not use the whole recording, but several usable sequences. The simplest technique is ‘time coding’, that is, marking the time (exactly to seconds) when the selected piece of video begins and that when it ends. Attaching to each time code, we add brief descriptions, notes or comments so that later searching and use of it will be much easier.

The second technique, which is more professional, is to use some software programmes on computer to cut, store and even edit pieces of video. Available programmes are listed as follows in the order of complexity:


- STHVCD 5.5 by Beijing Heroism Computer Technology Ltd. (free download at http://www.herosoph.com)

- Video Editor by Ulead Systems, Inc (free download at http://www.ulead.com)

3. Video techniques and activities

3.1. Basic techniques for using video

New technologies of digital video media (VCD, DVD), compared to traditional magnetic videotapes, allow for much greater versatility in the way films can be shown, and teachers can choose from an ever-widening variety of techniques for presenting and exploiting films in the classroom. The controls on a digital video player (VCD/DVD player) allow a variety of ways of presenting film. Here is a selection of basic video presentation techniques that less-experienced teachers can familiarize themselves with:

- **Vision on/sound off (silent viewing)**

  This technique is useful for highlighting visual content, for stimulating student language use about what they see on the screen, and for getting students to guess or predict the language used on the soundtrack. Some suggestions include:

  - present short scenes where the setting, action, props, etc., then giving clues to what is being said on the soundtrack, and getting students to guess the actual words spoken by the actors.

  - showing longer scenes and asking students to suggest the gist of the conversation or to describe the general situation. A series of questions like the following can help to focus the discussion: Who are these people? Where are they? Why are they there? What are they talking about?

  - asking students to produce an oral or written commentary on what they see.

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2 from the *Film by Susan Stempleski and Barry Tomalin, Oxford University Press, 2001*
• **Sound on/vision off (sound only)**

Teachers can use this technique to get students to pay close attention to what they hear on the soundtrack. Students can use what they hear on the soundtrack, i.e. dialogue, sound effects, and/or music to make predictions about the setting, the situation, the characters, and the action. Some ways of using the sound-only technique include:

- asking students to draw a picture, or series of pictures, of what they expect to see on the screen
- asking students to respond to a series of questions about the scene, for example: Where are the people? How many people are there in the scene? How are they dressed? What are they doing?
- asking students to produce an oral or written commentary on what they hear
- asking students to draw up a list of things (people, props, actions, etc.) they expect to see on the screen.

• **Pause/still/freeze-frame control**

Teachers can use this technique to interrupt the action at selected points. Suggestions include:

- pausing the video at the beginning of each dialogue and asking the students to predict the line they will hear
- pausing at strategic points in the action and asking the students to describe what has happened, or predict what is going to happen
- pausing at points where actors use meaningful gestures or facial expressions and ask students to suggest the thoughts and feelings of the characters.
• **Sound and video on (normal viewing)**

Ideas include:

- telling students what the sequence will be about and asking them to make a list of all the things they expect to see and hear on the video
- giving students a list of comprehension questions before viewing a sequence and then getting them to answer the questions after viewing
- asking the students to produce an oral or written summary of what they saw and heard on the video
- giving the students a transcript of a sequence and asking them to practise acting it out before viewing the actual sequence. After viewing they can compare and discuss the different performances.

• **Split viewing**

In this technique, some students, the Viewers, see a video sequence but do not hear the soundtrack; others, the Listeners, hear the soundtrack but do not see the video. Teachers use this technique as the basis for a variety of information gap procedures, for example:

- the Viewers describe what they have seen to listeners, and the Listeners describe what they have heard to the Viewers.
- the Viewers and Listeners work together to reconstruct the whole sequence from the elements they have separately seen and heard.
- the Listeners ask the Viewers questions about the scene and reconstruct it from the Viewers' answers and from what they themselves have heard on the soundtrack.
• *Jumbled sequence*

Teachers divide a sequence into sections and play them out of order. This technique is useful for stimulating discussion and getting students to focus on editing techniques and the actual storyline in a sequence:

- showing the beginning and end of a sequence and asking students to guess what happens in the middle.
- showing a number of sequences out of programme order and asking students to order them.
- choosing two short sequences each from three different films and showing them in random order; students must allocate the sequences to the films and decide on the order of the sequences in each film.

3.2. Video activities – general guidelines

Video activities may vary; however, on adopting them in his/her classroom, the teacher should be well aware of the following general guidelines:

- **Setting up:** Whatever the teacher wants to do - e.g. replaying, slow motion, freezing, covering the screen, turning off sound or picture - if it is new, or the equipment is unfamiliar, he/she ought to try it out beforehand. Also obvious, but vital: he/she must not forget to make sure the equipment is working, the tape or VCD/DVD is ready to go, and everyone can see and hear.

- **Breaks:** Viewing should not be frequently interrupted. As far as possible, comprehension activities should be done before and/or after viewing rather than in

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3 adapted from *Using Authentic Video in the language classroom* by Jane Sherman, Cambridge University Press, 2003
the middle, which breaks up the sequence. All in all, video aims at helping students relax while learning, but not annoying them with too much interruption.

- **Other activities**: Writing or reading while viewing should be kept to a minimum - it is difficult even for the native to carry out more than one of such things at a time.

- **Explaining**: Teacher should find the right balance between explaining too little and explaining too much. Too little help beforehand will leave students perplexed and frustrated; too much will rob them of the surprise and pleasure video should bring.

- **Sound only**: If sound is solely focused, teachers can block viewing by turning down contrast and brightness to zero; more dramatic ways are to turn the screen round, drape a coat over it or a newspaper to it. Alternatively, they may persuade students to sit back and close their eyes: this is more soothing and less frustrating than staring at a blank screen; it also makes them listen really hard and is good for imaginative activities.

- **Choice**: As far as possible, students should be given choices, e.g. they can choose which sequences to study from longer programmes, how often to view in order to understand, what roles to take in group activities, what favourite scenes to present to the class, what vocabulary to note down, etc. Personal choice is not only motivating, it is part of learning: it encourages independence and focuses on real needs.

- **Recycling**: Language focus activities which encourage independent learning strategies should be repeated frequently: learners need to build up the habit of noticing the details of language use in real contexts.
Modelling: Students usually do an activity better if they have seen an example of what they are supposed to do or have tried out the activity under the eye of the teacher. Ways of 'modelling' an activity are:

- doing an example of the activity (or the first part) with the class as a whole and then getting students to continue independently
- giving a 'worked example' for students to refer to when working on their own.

Narrative tenses: Students usually have good instincts about what tenses to use in telling the story of a film or TV programme but it is a good idea to give some advice before they launch into an activity.

3.2.1. Activities for drama video

Drama video includes feature films, drama series, sitcoms, and drama clips. Feature films are long, while teaching hours are short. Teachers, therefore, have to be able to fit films into a classroom schedule. There are several possibilities, here are two of them: One, telling the first part of the film, illustrating it by showing three or four key scenes chosen for their comprehensibility and impact. Afterwards, teachers can select certain classroom activities to deal with the rest of the film, or offer the video materials to whoever wants to see the whole films; they should come back home and report to the class on what happened in the end. Two: slicing up the film into several episodes and doing it over several lessons. This approach is time-consuming but worth it for a very good film which everyone wants to see.
Drama series are popular and shown once or twice a week on (cable) TV. Well-known examples are *Star Trek*, *The X-files*, and the older series *Sherlock Homes*. These are based on short stories with the length of 30-45 minutes each, which are good for class use.

Sitcoms (situation comedies) are like drama series but funny. Pleasure in the classroom, perhaps owing not only to cultural differences in humour, but also to the nature of comedy is the advantage of this type. If a comedy is good enough, students enjoy re-viewing the parts they have already covered and laughing again; what is more, they get more fun out of telling a sitcom story than they do with straight drama.

However, sitcoms are rather difficult: comedy plots are often complicated; the language, even if standard, is often fast, plays with words and puns, uses formality and informality to exaggerate situations, and uses idioms, colloquialisms and slang, which again enhance the ‘in’ feeling.

Drama clips are short sequences from drama film - single scenes or single shots, e.g. two people leaving work together and deciding to go for a cup of coffee. Since all film drama has moments of verbal simplicity as well as great visual wealth, drama clips are a rich field for language learning. They are the simplest paths into authentic video: they can easily be integrated into a normal teaching programme for illustration or inspiration; and they have high potential for teaching grammar.

**Activity 1: Before and after**

*Aim:* Reviewing the action so far.

*Preparation:* Choose three or four short visually striking sequences which represent important moments in the plot (or get individual students to do this).
Procedure: After viewing part of the film, go back and play each short sequence, freeze, and pose the questions: Who? What? Why? What has just happened? What next? Get an oral report using an appropriate spread of tenses as in the following example given by Jane Sherman.

An important moment in Shine

A middle-aged man is burning a scrapbook in his back garden.

Oral report: This is David’s father. He’s burning the scrapbook about David’s music career. David has decided to defy his father – he’s going to leave home to study music in London. As a result his father has rejected him. The next thing we see is the Royal College of Music in London.

Source: Cambridge University Press 2003

Variations:

- Choose sequences randomly by fast-forwarding the film, stopping it every few minutes and viewing ten seconds of film. Or fast-forward on Play, so everyone is reminded of the events: individuals decide which are the important moments, freeze them and explain why they are important.

Activity 2: Chases

Aim: Oral narrative and present simple verbs; predicting events; temporal conjunctions.

Preparation: Prepare lists of the main people in the chase, their actions, the things involved and the settings.
Procedure:

1. Give out or write up the lists. Discuss the vocabulary.

2. Ask students to speculate on possible connections between actions and things.

3. Explain the situation and ask them to guess who does what to whom. Correct dependent structures of verbs (this is important for step 4).

4. Play the clip, then recap on who does what to whom with what and where, ticking off the elements on the lists. This will thoroughly exercise third-person present tense verb forms, singular and plural. View again, getting students to report pairs of events joined by while or when, and to say what happens before and after what.

An example by Jane Sherman:

**The chase from A Fish Called Wanda**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the lawyer</td>
<td>check-in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the woman</td>
<td>go on board (something)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the stammerer</td>
<td>shoot (someone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the American</td>
<td>lock (someone) up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>throw (something) away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fall down (something)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>get stuck in (something)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>roll over (something)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>drive (something)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>steal (something)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Things
- a steam-roller
- wet concrete
- a gun
- a cupboard
- a key
- the bag with the diamonds
- a boarding pass
- a luggage chute
- a cosh

### Places
- a check-in
- the tarmac
- the plane

### The open situation

At the beginning of the chase Otto is taking Wanda to the airport. They are planning to fly to Rio with the stolen diamonds. Otto has a gun. They are purchased by Archie (who is in love with Wanda) and Ken (who hates Otto because he killed his pet fish). Otto and Wanda arrive at the airport a little before Archie and Ken ...

### Activity 3: Culture

**Aim:** Focusing on everyday language and cultural differences.

**Procedure:**

1. After viewing three or four episodes of soap, choose one aspect of the culture (e.g. family, food, entertainment and leisure, personal relationships, work, homes, speech, dress, traditions, education) and ask students to identify three or four things which are obviously different from their culture (e.g. *they eat a lot of chips; they don't have family meals*). They should give each thing they list a rating (e.g. +2 = I
like this very much, 0 = I am indifferent to it-, -2 = I really don't like this) and explain why.

2. Students (individually or in groups) choose another aspect of the soap culture which interests them, work on it independently in the same way and then present their conclusions to the class.

Activity 4: Summary

Aim: Comprehension, to recap the action.

Procedure:

1. To recap the introduction of drama films, after viewing the first 15-20 minutes, students produce a summary of the action (using the present tense). They can either do this individually in writing or work in groups and do an oral round-the-table recap with a secretary to write it up. If there is time, they will read each other's summaries and suggest improvements. They then re-view and revise their accounts.

Sample guidelines for an advanced introduction summary:

Your summary should:
• be less than 150 words
• contain all the essential information
• contain no unimportant details and no repetition
• indicate where and when the events take place
• introduce the main characters/players by name
• bring out important reasons, causes and connections
• indicate the time sequence clearly
• be clear, correct and coherent

Source: Cambridge University Press, 2003
Activity 5: Word hunt

Aim: Focus on language.

Procedure:

1. After understanding a short sequence well, students view it again several times searching for just one type of word or sound (e.g. all the _ed endings), and writing the words down in order as they hear them. Students will need to use both their ears and their grammatical sense to do this, especially for unstressed words, which are often difficult to hear or identify.

2. After viewing several times, students compare notes on what they have found. Then they explain what the words mean and how they are used, e.g. whether the _ed endings are full past tense verbs (e.g. He decided to stop), parts of a verb group (e.g. They've opened a shop) or adjectives (e.g. baked beans).

Example of a Wordhunt list:

Students search for one of these:

- all the words ending in _ed
- all the words ending in _s
- all the words ending in _ing
- any contracted words
- all the unstressed words (for, than, the, that, are, of)
- all the third-person pronouns, possessive adjectives or demonstrative pronouns (she, he, it, they; his, her, their; that, this, these, etc.)
- modal and semi-modal auxiliary verbs (e.g. *might, can, could, must, have to, supposed to, likely to*)

- all words with a phoneme or pair of phonemes that give problems, e.g. all the schwas, /O:/ and /3:/

- all the words with a particular stress pattern

- all the words beginning with or containing a given sound

- all the adjectives or adverbs

- all the proper names

- all the infinitive verbs

- all the prepositions

- all the conjunctions

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*Source: Cambridge University Press, 2003*

**Activity 6: Subtitles**

*Aim:* A close-focus listening on interactive language.

*Preparation:* A scene with good subtitles in English, and a short scene with useful interactive language from an unsubtitled English film; strips of paper for the final subtitles.

*Procedure:*

1. Explain that students are going to be subtitle writers.

2. View the first scene to see how subtitles are formatted, i.e. the number of words, the number of lines, when the subtitle appears, and how long it stays visible.
3. View the second scene once or twice to understand the interaction, the words and
the tone. Students transcribe the utterances.

4. Compare different versions and produce a final version with a felt pen on strips of
paper.

5. Replay the scene, holding up the subtitles against the screen.

Activity 7: Interactive language

Aim: Focusing on interactive language.

Preparation: Use short scenes which students already know well and which contain useful
interactive language:

• functional expressions

• colloquial multi-word verbs

• close colloquial collocations, including expressions with made, do, go, get, have, take

• expressions of doubt/certainty/opinion

• modifiers and hedges (e.g. a bit, pretty, rather, really, sort of)

• fillers (e.g. um, ah, well, er, yes)

• talk about talk (references to/reports of other talk, past, present or future)

• question tags

Procedure:

1. Before viewing, study some short scripts (see the example below) so students can
get an idea of 'interactive language'. Use one scene to establish the idea, and
another for students to hunt through on their own.
2. Students view a well-known scene, pick out some interactive language and say whether they use such language themselves.

3. Students play roles along.

This activity should be done regularly to get practice in noticing interactive language.

*Sample short script of ‘interactive language’ given by Jane Sherman:*

Tags = CAPITALS
Doubt/certainty/opinion = small CAPITALS
Talk about talk = **bold**
Modifiers, hedges, fillers = *italics*
Multi-word verbs and other strong collocations = *underlined*

(In the kitchen, Mr Fisher's house. Shane is cooking.)

Fisher: Well, I MUST SAY, I wish all my students were as motivated as your sister, Damien.

Damien: Oh *don't worry about it.* She'll *get over it.*

Shane *(proferring a spoonful of stew)*: So what DO YOU THINK?

Fisher: *Mm. Ah.* Yes, that's, that's very distinctive.

Shane *(anxiously)*: Ah. What's wrong with it?

Fisher: Oh nothing, *absolutely* nothing.

Shane: No, it's missing something, ISN'T IT?

Fisher: Well, a *little* extra flavour wouldn't *go amiss.* Some seasoning, maybe, or *mixed* herbs.

Shane: *Oh no, there's none left. I already checked.*

Fisher *(taking out some money)*: Oh, *here you an. Go and get some.*

Shane: I'll *send Damien. He'll go.*

Damien *(indignant)*: Why me?

Shane: *'Cause I'm cooking.*

Shane *(to Fisher)*: And, uh, you won't forget to ring the cleaning lady, *WILL YOU?*

Fisher *(resigned)*: No, Shane, I won't forget to ring the cleaning lady.
Activity 8: Accents

Aim: Recognizing and interpreting major accents of English.

Rationale: Recognizing accents is important not only for comprehension but as a clue to cultural identity.

Preparation: Three short clips featuring the target accent. Two or three distinguishing pronunciation features, e.g. Standard American vs. Northern English.

Procedure:

1. Play one clip for comprehension, and then view again. Students note down all words which exemplify the special pronunciation features. Do Act along, trying to imitate the accents.

2. View two more short clips; students 'translate' selected utterances by changing the accent into the variety of English they know.

Activity 9: Lip-reading and mind-reading

Aim: Producing interactive language.

Preparation: Short drama clips (five to six utterances) with very distinct utterances and visible reactions OR (Variation) scenes with vivid non-verbal expression.

Procedure:

1. Play the sequence without sound and discuss what the characters are feeling and saying.
2. Students count the utterances in the sequences and construct a dialogue. Replay the soundless scene as often as necessary and help by providing the first utterance, several key utterances or one complete side of the conversation; or (if possible) by slowing down the film to focus on the actors' mouths.

3. Students act along with the actors before viewing with sound.

Variation:

Where characters are clearly saying one thing and thinking another, freeze the frame and discuss the 'interior text'. Write it up on paper in 'thought bubbles' and stick them over the appropriate heads (normal paper will adhere naturally to the screen).

Activity 10: Daily life

Aim: Talking about aspects of daily life; present simple tense.

Preparation: Find clips which illustrate daily activities (e.g. getting up, shopping, driving a car, cooking, looking after babies, getting taxis, using computers, catching trains or planes, etc.)

Procedure:

The procedure will differ depending on whether the teacher wants to focus on the process itself, on cultural or individual differences, on the words spoken, or on the problems.

1. Culture (if the cultural differences are interesting). Discuss any cultural differences in the process (e.g. in some countries people go out to have breakfast), and relate them to the flow diagram.
2. **Words** (if the dialogue is interesting). Discuss what is said (if anything) at each stage. Role play the scene.

3. **Conditions** (to compare the film with the norm). Ask students to think of the conditions for each stage of the process (or just one stage), e.g. what are all the possible answers to the questions in the diagram below?

4. **Personalization** (to make comparisons between students and film characters).
   Personalize the process: students tell a partner how they do it (in response to the questions about conditions in variation 3), and how this reflects their character and circumstances. The class report back on anything interesting they have discovered about each other.

5. **Comedy sketches**. Discuss the normal process (e.g. cooking and serving spaghetti, making a grant application, getting up and dressed). Warn students to expect something a little different from the norm, then play the sketch and discuss the differences. Extend by getting students to think of other wild variations, and to prepare and present sketch ideas.

**Activity 11: Adopt a character**

*Aim:* recapping whole or part of a film/programme; close comprehension and oral production of shorter sequences; really understanding the characters.

*Procedure:*

1. After viewing, individual students (or groups) each adopt one of the main characters and assume their identities. They view again and think about 'their'
situation, current mood, motivations/desires, and feelings about the other characters.

2. Students present their new selves to the whole class, covering the four aspects outlined in step 1. Students answer questions from the class and ask questions of the other characters. If working alone, students write about 'themselves' from the four points of view.

Variations:

1. Students prepare their characters in small groups then select one person from each group to sit in the hot seat and be quizzed by the audience on his/her behaviour, background, character, relationships, feelings, etc. OR students interview the 'characters' one-to-one in front of the class, asking three questions of each. (If you are dealing with documentaries, record these interviews if possible, replay them and get the class to decide what short excerpts could be included in the documentary and where.)

2. For TV ads or personal anecdotes, get individuals/groups to retell the story from the point of view of the various people involved, as a check on comprehension.

Activity 12: Advice

Aim: Stimulating discussion and producing interactive language.

Rationale: In a lot of drama there is someone who clearly needs to be advised or told what is going on.
Procedure:

Stop viewing at a suitable point and ask students to imagine that they intervene and enlighten the person who needs advising. Discuss the best way to do it and what the reactions of the person might be, then role play the scene and/or script it.

Variations:

1. After viewing a sequence where there's a lot of bad or stupid behaviour, view the scene again, pausing frequently and asking for comments, advice, suggestions for alternative replies, etc.

2. Students rerun the scene the way they think the character(s) should have played it.

Activity 13: Heard and seen

Aim: close comprehension and an overview of the plot.

Procedure:

Students re-view the whole or part of a film to find references to plot events. They write down the references; say when the events take place in relation to the reference; say whether they are seen in the film and, if so, when.

Variation:

After viewing, the students recall what 'news' is given in the film, who gives it, where/when and what effect it has on the story. Re-view scenes on which there is disagreement.
Activity 14: Missing scene

Aim: Producing interactive language; overall comprehension; creative writing.

Rationale: In all drama there are scenes which must have taken place although we don't see them.

Procedure:

1. Students identify a scene which is not seen but which must have happened. They discuss where and when it took place, who was there, what was said, what was felt and what was done.

2. Students role play or script the scene, then improve the language and do it again.

Variation:

Students recall an important conversation in their own lives and script it for homework. (Advanced students can do a proper script, but this takes time!)

Activity 15: Act along

Aim: Focusing on language forms and pronunciation.

Preparation: Select very short sequences containing useful language.

Procedure:

1. View once for students to select a speaker - one each, or one for all.

2. Play the sequence several times. Students 'shadow' their chosen speakers, i.e. speak the words a split second after hearing them.
3. When they have the feel of the sounds and stress patterns, turn the sound off and rerun the sequence. Students substitute for the actors as if dubbing.

*Variation:*

The karaoke version is for students working alone. Students choose a scene which features their favourite star, learn his/her part and then act along with the star, imitating voice, gesture, emphasis, expression.

**Activity 16: Create a new sound track**

*Aim:* Comprehension of the picture and oral production of short utterances.

*Procedure:*

1. Divide the class into small groups and tell students they are going to watch a film clip without the sound. Their task is to work in groups and create a *script* for a voice-over to go with the pictures. Explain to the students that the goal is *not* to reconstruct the original film script. Instead, they should write a completely new and original text to go with the pictures.

2. Play the film clip without the sound several times. The students in their groups watch the clip, discuss their ideas for a new soundtrack, and write a voice-over to go with it.

3. Ask groups to take turns performing their voice-overs for the class.

4. Discuss the different scripts and the process of scriptwriting with the class. Use these questions:
• Which script did you like best?
• Which one was most suitable for the pictures?
• What problems did you have when you were writing scripts?
• What problems did you encounter in performing them?

5. Play the film clip with the sound turned up. Students compare their scripts with the original soundtrack.

Activity 17: What is next?

Aim: Production and comprehension of interactive language.

Procedure:

1. Play half the scene, and then discuss what's going on, the personalities involved and how the scene is likely to develop.

2. Re-view the first half. Students write or role play the end of the scene as they imagine it.

3. View the original second half of the scene, and discuss the difference.

Variation:

Play the scene and pause at a point where the content or feeling of the reply is predictable, but not the form (it helps if there is a pause before the reply). View again up to the same point. Students guess what will be said and write up all their guesses (correct the language as they do so). View on and write up the actual response. Afterwards, ask students to try to remember the exact words which came before the reply.
Activity 18: Body language

Aim: Recognizing and describing significant reactions; vocabulary of the body and body movements

Preparation: Any sequence where gesture and body language are very clear and reveal significant feelings and reactions.

Procedure:

1. View with the sound off, then view again, getting students to observe carefully and say what the characters do with body, hands, legs, face and head. (N.B. Speeding up or slowing down the film makes the body movements more pronounced - but allow for the comic effect!)

2. Ask students to imitate the body language and then write down in two columns what the person does (e.g. He looks down at the table and runs his finger along the edge) and what this reveals (He’s suppressing his anger). Do an example on the board first.

3.2.2. Activities for documentaries and educational films

Both documentaries and educational films are quite long, highly-planned programmes which present facts and opinions about single subjects – a cloze dramatization of real-life events.

Their content, style and purpose vary enormously: famous people, institutions, events and places; history and social history; travel and other cultures; music groups and sports; the
making of other films; topical issues and social problems; work and hobbies and the lives of ordinary people; art, music, culture; science, nature and wildlife.

For the sake of language teaching and learning, they are not very difficult to understand: they are shorter than feature films; the commentary usually has a sober style with standard phraseology and a standard English accent (generally the more serious the programme the more standard the accent!); the pace is slower than the news, the information less dense and the visual element more supportive; there are generally only four or five main points.

In addition, some are useful in ESP: travel documentaries for tourist schools, management training videos for civil servants and business people, educational programmes for students of all subjects. All in all, ‘docudrama’ is good for not only learning English but also gaining more knowledge.

**Activity 19: Drama vs. newspaper**

*Aim*: Comprehension checking.

*Preparation*: A film documentary and a newspaper article based on the same story. Cue each video at the point where there is a difference between it and article story. Choose points where the two versions present the same event or series of events, and particularly where there are obvious differences, for example, in the names, ages or sexes of the people involved, the places where the events take place, the time in which the events take place, or the order of the events themselves.

*Procedure:*

1. Explain the task: students must watch the film and compare it with the article evidence.
2. Show the film clip. The students make notes on what happens.

3. Elicit the information from the class under the following headings, for example, on the board: Name, Age, Sex, Place, Time, Events, Other

4. Hand out article. The students note any differences from the film using the headings.

5. Elicit the differences from the class.

Activity 20: Labelling and linking

Aim: A lead-in or recap; identifying topics, discourse links and discourse functions.

Rationale: Most documentary texts divide into 'paragraphs' just like written articles, hence some paragraph-based reading activities can be extended to documentary video. Links between sections may be verbal or visual or both.

Preparation: View the video, identify the separate sections, the topics they deal with, and how they are linked, and think of a suitable title or 'label' for each section.

Procedure:

Use a different procedure according to varied purpose:

1. To lead in: Write up the section labels randomly and ask students to speculate on a logical order. While viewing, students tick sections they recognize, and afterwards review the order.

2. To recap: After viewing, give or elicit the labels in the right order, then view again for students to identify where each new section starts. Or present the topics as
headings, ask students to remember what they can about each and view again to collect more information.

3. *To focus on discourse links*: After a first view, students re-view, identify points where the topic changes and say how the change is signaled. Get students to think of suitable labels for the sections they have identified.

4. *To focus on discourse function* After viewing, students recall some striking images and say what their function was in the whole (e.g. to illustrate, to explain, to provide a contrast, to introduce a person).

**Activity 21: View-share**

*Aim*: Close-up comprehension.

*Preparation*: Difficult multi-modal sequences, e.g. documentary passages where setting, events and speakers are all of importance; sequences with a mix of information channels (graphics, footage, talking heads, commentary, music and sound effects, etc.); ads with very different visual and aural messages.

*Procedure*:

1. After viewing a difficult passage, discuss what message elements are present.

2. Divide students into groups: each member is to concentrate on only one element on second viewing (e.g. only setting, only events/actions, only people, only graphics).

   View again.

3. Groups come together to recreate the whole message.
Activity 22: Parallels

Aim: Discussion; the language of comparison; oral presentations and/or writing.

Procedure:

1. For historical and biographical films, after viewing, ask students to think of parallels in their own country, past or present, and to prepare a short talk describing a comparable event/personality and making comparisons with the person or events in the film.

2. For current affairs, news and documentaries, ask students to compare the situation/events with those in their own country, looking for the factors that differ and explaining them.

3. For well-known institutions, monuments, geographical features, ask students to describe a similar well-known feature in their know.

3.2.3. Activities for interviews and talk shows

Interviews and talk shows, two of the most popular on TV, are good for language learning in many aspects: Firstly, They are topical and aim to catch popular attention. They focus on three high-interest areas: people (Tell us about yourself), issues (What do you think about that?) and important events (What happened? What was it like? Secondly, They put people under a spotlight. Character, attitudes and feelings are on display; people's enthusiasm, fury, affectations rouse our responses and there are some vivid personality contrasts. Faces and expressions are in high focus; appearance, clothing, accent and speech style illuminate personalities and interactions. Thirdly, they focus on talk. Exchanges range
from sympathetic chat and discreet probing through spirited argument to hostile grilling so there is plenty to react to and describe. Language study can deal with ways of giving opinions, agreeing, disagreeing, qualifying, hedging, etc. and many of the features of spontaneous unplanned talk. Finally, they are based on question and answer. The simple exchange of information can take many forms: questions can be roundabout, loaded, or straight, and answers can be evasive, indignant, or vague. This makes for interesting work on literal and interpersonal meaning, while the questions provide a skeleton for anticipating or recapping content.

Activity 23: Interview

Aim: Creating speaking; interview techniques; narrative tenses.

Procedure: At least two lessons will be required for this activity.

1. Explain that students are going to interview each other about important events as if they were there. Divide the class into interviewers and interviewees. Interviewees select a major historical event, decide on their role (player, onlooker) and one thing they did/saw, and record these anonymously on a slip of paper, which goes into a hat. Interviewers pick a slip from the hat - thus they know the event and the role but not who the interviewee is.

2. Look at some interview clips as models. First, students look for convincing or unexpected detail and any feelings and reactions mentioned. On second view, study questioning techniques (open questions, encouraging noises, follow-up questions), question forms and narrative tenses.
3. For homework, interviewees invent recollections (with convincing detail), and
interviewers plan three or four main questions and check their grammar. Remind
interviewers that they should introduce the interviewee and sign off at the end.

4. Run the interviews. With small classes, do them in front of the class; divide large
classes into groups and circulate; or get students to record the interviews. Give a
time limit.

Activity 24: Problem

Aim: Talking about problems; handling questions; questioning techniques.

Procedure:

1. Explain that students are going to practise giving advice about practical problems.

2. Introduce the 'problem' sequence and view, pausing at suitable moments to check
   comprehension, sum up the situation, think of questions to ask and suggest
   solutions.

3. Ask students to think of a real practical problem they have at the moment (give an
   example). It should not be psychological, emotional or very private! Students write
   a brief description of their problem (maximum 100 words); circulate to correct the
   language.

4. Explain that to give good advice students need to find out about the problem in
detail, check if they understood it and offer more than one solution. Outline an
   approach. Do a model interview with one student about his/her problem.
5. Distribute the written problems; students read, and think about what questions to ask.

6. Organize the 'advice' sessions. They can be done: one-to-one in front of the class, if it is a small one, and with or without audience participation; in groups of four, each taking it in turn to be the 'client'; by e-mail, as written homework.

Activity 25: Describing speech style

Aim: describing ways of speaking and imitating them

Procedure:

1. Ask students to list appropriate adjectives for the speech style. Discuss other vocabulary needed to describe gesture and expression.

2. Students select one utterance for imitation and try it out. Discuss why the speaker speaks like this (consider topic, format, context, purpose, audience, mood and personality). Describe the style briefly.

3. Do another utterance and compare.

An example of vocabulary list: Speech styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fast</th>
<th>slow</th>
<th>articulate</th>
<th>inarticulate</th>
<th>wordy</th>
<th>terse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>emotional</td>
<td>cool/cold</td>
<td>emphatic</td>
<td>low-key</td>
<td>colourful</td>
<td>plain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loud</td>
<td>soft</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>clipped</td>
<td>drawling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spontaneous</td>
<td>planned</td>
<td>expressive</td>
<td>flat/monotonous</td>
<td>clear</td>
<td>confused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chatty</td>
<td>formal</td>
<td>energetic</td>
<td>calm/laid back</td>
<td>fluent</td>
<td>hesitant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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PART 2  CONCLUSION

Syllabus designing is no longer new to most applied linguists; however, it still remains one of the hottest issues. It is partly because of the fact that students’ demands and needs, as well as the nature of foreign language learning keep changing all the time. Syllabuses – lists of what to teach and how to teach, therefore keep evolving to meet new requirements.

With the development of modern technology, audio-video media included, people are getting used to sound and images, and spending more time and interest in them rather than the print. Teaching and learning with more help from audio-video aids proves to be a reasonable and contemporary approach.

I would like to summarize a number of the most striking advantages of using video in the language classroom. First of all, video motivates most students of all ages, gender, interests, and level of language proficiency. Students’ motivation and particularly their intrinsic motivation play a greatly important role to their success in their study. Video not only raises students’ motivational interest in the classroom but also enhances their retention of the language.

Secondly, teaching programme using video as its main language input has great strength in introducing real interactive spoken language. Video full of accents, contexts, topics, etc. provides real learning condition where students may feel it most natural to acquire and practise the target language.

Thirdly, video is a window on English-language culture. It is believed to be the most powerful demonstration of how people live and think and behave. On the one hand, students, with knowledge of body language that they can see from the video, find it easier
to understand utterance in certain discourse. On the other hand, with background knowledge of the target language culture – local culture with a small letter c in particular, tends to consolidate their competence of language.

Finally, learning with video, or to some extent, learning spoken language in video products might well be one of students’ major goals. They might wish to get information from cable TV programmes in English, as much as do they need to write a letter or answer a phone call in English. If they are supposed to learn the latter, then in all fairness, they ought to be able to get a glimpse of the former.

One will agree that it is difficult to master a foreign language except by living in an English-speaking country – an opportunity that most learners do not have. Video, to this extent, helps substitute for this experience; it brings the English world to the learner.

The syllabus of mine consists of two main parts: the content of the course, and the teaching techniques with video involved in it. In my opinion, the strength and contribution of the syllabus lies in the second part: video techniques. Techniques and activities to exploit video materials effectively in the classroom are of essentiality, but also are one of the obstacles to inexperienced teachers. A number of teachers consider video an extra and/or ‘decorating’ activity added to the main course, just for relaxation or for the purpose of advertisement. This is partly because either are they unconvinced in the advantages of video in the classroom, or they have too few skills or techniques to make use of it.

On designing this syllabus, the writer has no purpose of proving video using superior or to replace other existing teaching programmes, but to claim that syllabuses using video have their own merits and are worth developing. Courses with audio-video aids, together with others, provide students with a greater access to English.
Teaching programmes using video can gain great further development, not just imprisoned in a traditional classroom. One of further developing trends is computerisation, which results in advanced learning software programmes. Another trend, which is more demanding but more compelling, is to build tele-educational and forum websites on the Internet. Thanks to improved transferring technology, not only can students do their lessons on the Internet, but they can also share their ideas in a forum.

The last further development, but most appealing to me, is to build up detailed video programmes for school students. That is, based on their English course-books, authentic videos are collected and graded in such a way that they are supposed to support the students to better absorb the knowledge as well as to develop their communicative skills naturally.