

VIDEO LESSONS FOR SEN STUDENTS

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Introduction

Video is a part of how students communicate with each other in their everyday lives, and teachers know that it is becoming a vital component in maintaining students' interest and focus in the classroom, which is especially important for kids with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD.) In order to achieve greater integration of video into an EFL course in SEN (Special Educational Needs) schools, we need to get away from the traditional idea that video is too complicated for understanding or it is a way of just closing a gap in the lesson when kids give up studying. Although it is sometimes the only way to keep SEN kids in class and to prevent them from leaving a "boring lesson" and getting into trouble, it has a great educational effect.

Learning with the help of videos engages two senses: sight and hearing. This in turn enhances general understanding of the material and enlarges SEN students' passive and active vocabulary. Making their own videos with digital cameras and smart phones is not only a great way for students to create innovative products using technology but also a powerful tool to increase their motivation, creativity and autonomy. Keeping SEN students focused for 45 minutes demands patience and creativity from their teachers. So with the help of videos "lessons become student-centered and offer the possibility of new classroom management and new relationship between teachers and learners" (Fazinic, 2015, p. 142).

Video lessons are very effective in heterogeneous classes, especially in junior high and high school. Teenage students with any learning disabilities (LD) and level of knowledge "are engaged in collaborative projects where learning becomes the result of released creative power, involvement and participation in a positive and motivating environment where teachers become partners and assistants rather than instructors" (Fazinic, 2015, p.142).

Creativity in SEN Classes

As Einstein once said, "Creativity is intelligence having fun". So it should be an important aspect of teaching and learning. However, it depends on us, teachers, to find a place for creativity in our classrooms. Creativity has multiple interpretations and can be judged from different perspectives: creative teachers or creative students. First of all, creative teachers should design creative tasks and develop creativity in their students.

Using creativity in the SEN classroom is important

because it increases motivation, empowers learners, helps them to create a sense of excitement and self-esteem (Griffin, 2014-2015). Without the latter, SEN students cannot believe in themselves and give up learning. Some perceived barriers to creativity are routine, close-end tasks, fear of being wrong or making mistakes, tight rules and perception that fun is not conducive to learning. As a result, SEN students, especially with ADHD, become inattentive and misbehave. According to Davis (1992), those who have dyslexia and dysgraphia, complain that they cannot read and write without mistakes, are tired and have no energy, etc. However, there are many possible reasons for this type of behavior. If we can try to understand the underlying reasons and identify the needs of the learner, we can find teaching strategies to support them. So varying what we do in the classroom, going for open-ended tasks, creating a safe environment for risk taking, having flexible rules according to aims and allowing for experimentation are some ways of creating an atmosphere where creativity can arise more easily.

If you work with pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD,) who easily take offence, lose their temper or get upset, make sure that your instructions are clear, so that everyone will understand them. Moreover, you should give only one instruction at a time (Hadfield, 1992). This is useful for everyone, but people with ASD can find it particularly difficult to hold more than one instruction in their head at a time. Many people with Asperger's or high functioning autism have difficulty in starting conversations with others, so they prefer working alone. On the one hand, they can be creative and good at making their own videos and other visual aids. On the other hand, they can often be sensitive to noises and get absolutely exhausted. So you can allow them to use their own devices while doing video tasks rather than participate in frontal lessons.

While for students with dyslexia and dysgraphia video lessons are very useful because they require little to no writing, students with ASD sometimes find them difficult because of the noise. Nevertheless, if they have special interests, such as certain subjects, topics, films or songs, let them talk about them. In this way, they will get an opportunity to express themselves. Besides, you can consult with them regarding which film or video material they would like to watch in the next lesson, so that you will be able to prepare specific language activities about it, for instance:

- Vocabulary
- Grammar

- Writing activities
- General comprehension
- Story telling
- Class presentation

The last option can be done by themselves because many SEN students are good at technology and may be interested in preparing presentations. That way you can allow them to express who they are in different ways. In order to practice it, you should find new ways of doing in-class activities and teach them differently. On the one hand, you still can use traditional textbooks and exercise books; on the other hand, encourage them to learn with the help of modern technology, video games in particular. Video can be used as a part of opening activities, the main part of the lesson or concluding activities.

Traditional and Modern Multisensory Teaching

“Multisensory techniques entail a simultaneous use of all sensory channels – visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile” (Kaldonek-Crnjakovic, 2017, p. 17). This is highly recommended while teaching SEN children. It means helping them to learn through more than one sense. Most remedial teaching techniques are done using sight, hearing and touching. The latter can be done while playing traditional table games and it is useful especially while the students are learning reading rules and spelling. For instance, a learner sees the word, says it aloud and practices spelling (e.g. by tracing the spelling pattern on the flash card or with their fingers on the table.) It is a part of mnemonic techniques, which help SEN students to memorize difficult words. It is especially important for kids with dyslexia who need to use sight, hearing, movement and touch. The SEN child’s sight is also used in reading instructions from the board and textbooks, looking at pictures or reading comprehension.

The explicit instruction is based on an analytical and synthetic approach to language. This involves comparing the language patterns of the foreign language to the mother tongue of the learner and storing information by categories (Schneider, 1999). The structured approach requires the material to be introduced in sequence, i.e., a topic that is more complex is built on an easier one, and the teacher should present the material in a logical way and refer to the information that was previously taught (Schneider & Crombie, 2003). For example, if you have already taught Past Simple, you can start teaching Present Perfect. Your students with different sorts of LD will understand it better if you show them both grammar structures on YouTube together with short films, e.g. “Which countries have you been to?” and “When did you go there? What did you do?” Afterwards you can get them to work in pairs, so that they will ask each other similar questions.

Audio-video activities make lessons much different from the traditional ones and provoke the students’ interest. Besides, it is also a sort of learning autonomy that makes each student busy and motivated. Teenagers with LD need a highly structured, cumulative, phonic-based program, using multisensory teaching techniques. Video stimulates two out of five senses at the same time. Based on cognitive theory and research evidence, learning courses should include words, vivid pictures and graphics, rather than just the words alone - especially for SEN students. They will more likely understand the material and memorize it better when they are engaging in active learning. Video encourages your students to represent the material in words and pictures. Words may be subtitled or just narrated, depending on the level of your students. This significantly improves their general comprehension and fosters creative thinking.

Video also helps SEN students visualize a concept that is difficult to grasp. This means using short videos to explain a piece of new material, for example, vocabulary or grammar. Short videos, made by students, also demonstrate their skills in giving presentations and active speaking. This modern method is a proven one of fostering deeper cognitive processing in students, enabling them to make sense of the material they have learned and to think logically.

Teaching with Mobile Devices

Mobile learning refers to the use of personal iPods and mobile phones in education both inside and outside the classroom. The ELT world is becoming aware of the potential of learning via mobile technologies, and teachers need guidance in implementing and using mobile devices effectively in the classroom. When we conceive of mobile learning, we tend to limit our focus to apps and YouTube. The latter can be used as a tool for video materials.

For the last three decades technological education in Israel has offered a range of educational frameworks, including EFL courses, designed to meet the needs of both low-achievers and high-achievers. The use of technology in teaching and learning of a foreign language like English has made the process more effective and dynamic. It has many advantages for developing the EFL learners’ language skills, such as:

- listening comprehension
- reading comprehension
- speaking
- writing

Research studies show that good computer software and personal mobile devices enhance learning in the less motivated student. Almost without exception, LD students enjoy such sessions. The aims of EFL classes in

special education schools are:

- To help them understand what the material is about
- To develop students' listening skills
- To develop their vocabulary
- To improve their spelling and grammar
- To develop their writing skills
- To improve teaching literary texts

While televisions and computers are usually for frontal work, personal devices are for individual work. Thus after watching the class material, students can perform some tasks on their mobile phones. When teachers design tasks for mobile devices, there are a number of considerations to keep in mind. These include ensuring that mobile device-based tasks are staged from simple to more complex. Besides, teachers are usually working to a syllabus, so tasks need to relate to that, either in terms of topic or content area and/or language focus. An important consideration is to remember that the focus of a task needs to be on language practice and language production, and the technology needs to be secondary to that. Mobile devices need to support language aims, not replace them. Finally, it is worth remembering that mobile devices can bridge work in and out of class, by encouraging situated learning.

Digital Storytelling and Video Documentaries

When SEN kids can organize their thoughts logically and find just the right words to express them, teachers can see that their students are demonstrating the ability to think logically, so it is time to help them improve their thinking skills. Teachers can do this by encouraging their students to write creatively and express themselves visually. An effective way to do this is with digital storytelling, using free photo-editing tools. Many SEN students are creative and find it easy to add visual elements to their stories, design their own websites and share them with others.

Teachers use videos to demonstrate topics to students, so that they will learn how to create their own. "When students create knowledge from information, collaborate with others, and do hands-on learning, they engage with the subject matter and learn, understand, and remember it" (Solomon, 2010, p. 104).

Using smartphones in both regular and SEN classes not only makes kids focused and busy in the classroom. It also enables them to shoot, edit, and immediately publish mini-films. In this way, students demonstrate their individual strengths and master the skills of researching, reading, writing and speaking. In contrast to traditional textbooks and notebooks, video tools work better to develop skills of problem solving, collaboration, and the ability to gather and analyze data. With such project-

based learning, SEN students can be motivated to do their best work and be proud to share what they have created – such projects are practiced in Beit Ekshtein and some other SEN schools in Israel.

The audience is also very important. If students care about who sees their work, they will put more effort into making it the best work possible. While teachers like to think we are an important audience, the truth is that the opinions of peers are often far more important to our students than a teacher's grade. Therefore, videos enable them to give a class presentation as a part of the project and the following results can be expected:

- A student with autism spectrum disorder (ASD,) who never talks in class, is motivated to comment on his video project or tell about his work.
- A student with dyslexia is not afraid of making mistakes while writing some subtitles to his video work.
- A student with ADHD gets focused on his work and interested in the results.
- A student who is physically challenged and selectively mute tells a story and makes a breakthrough by recording the voice-over.
- A student with Asperger's syndrome actually tells a story about his favorite hobby.

Conclusion

Since technology is heavily influencing education, teachers are becoming more interested in the value it can add to teaching and assessment. With the help of computers, televisions and personal mobile devices it has become possible not only to conduct successful video lessons in SEN classes, but also to get your students involved in making their own video materials as well. Making videos with digital cameras and editing software is not only a great way to create innovative products using technology, but also a powerful tool to enhance language learning and to increase motivation and autonomy in students with different disorders and other health problems. Teenage students with any LD are engaged in collaborative projects where learning becomes the result of their creative power, involvement and participation in a positive and motivating environment.

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