

Enhancing Inclusive Learning and Communication Skills with the Aid of Educational Videos

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ABSTRACT

Cultivating communication skills has been one of the main goals set by the educational process. However, students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SLD) are usually less competent in keeping up with the rest of their classmates as they face difficulties not only in their reading and writing skills but also in their communication competence. Fortunately, educational technologies, which are readily identified as information and communication technologies (ICTs), take advantage of a wide variety of applications and devices, which have substantially affected all aspects of language teaching and learning. More particularly, educational videos are powerful pedagogical tools that expose students to real-life language use and thus help them develop their comprehension, improve their linguistic skills and eventually build their confidence. The main focus of this study concerns the benefits gained when inclusive education is technically assisted by educational videos in an attempt to reinforce communication competence both for children with special needs and their typically developing peers.

Keywords: Communication skills, inclusion, Specific Learning Difficulties (SLD), videos.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Communication refers to the transmission of information, thoughts, feelings and ideas with the assistance of language (DeVito, 2014). Communication competence is considered to be an important skill that not only fulfills the needs of daily life but also represents the preeminent tool for creating and establishing human relationships (Gaseesai & Cha, 2012). Moreover, it is believed to be the fundamental way of verbally formulating opinions and making proper choices (Davies & Jenkins, 2004, pp. 31–32). In parallel, it serves as a means of expressing one's feelings, which sustains and reinforces every communicative act and, finally, contributes to defining social roles and identities.

However, students with SLD, such as dyslexia, often experience difficulty in relation to communication skills (Jackson *et al.*, 2018) due to some expected listening (receptive language) and speaking (expressive language) difficulties (Vandergrift, 2004). To be more specific, students with deficits in receptive language might have trouble processing and remembering spoken and written language. They might also misunderstand words, sentences and more

complex information, as well as non-verbal information, such as body language, pictures, or diagrams. On the other hand, students who have difficulty in applying expressive language might display limited or hesitant speech, manifest difficulty in word finding or in making a point, omit critical parts of sentences and use awkward syntax (Feldman, 2019).

Actually, the more familiar students become with all those fundamental listening and comprehension skills, the more engaged they get in communicative tasks, although using academically oriented vocabulary is a complex and challenging procedure for them (Labinska *et al.*, 2020).

In this context, school dictates how to foster listening and speaking skills, auditory memory, conversational awareness, and ethics in all students, regardless of their learning characteristics, as well as contribute to the development of non-verbal communication, such as paralinguistic elements. A basic prerequisite for ensuring oral speech development involves students being supplied with incentives capable of creating a learning environment rich in language stimuli. In fact, taking advantage of ICTs and making language learning more enjoyable and engaging for all participants can assure teachers that they can

expect an increase in students' motivation regarding new knowledge acquisition (Cakir, 2006).

Integrating digital forms of expression, such as educational videos and high-tech animations, teachers motivate their students to engage more in the learning process because such digital tools make learning easier, more interesting and more appealing. Moreover, this kind of integration is consistent with the pedagogical principles of differentiated pedagogy based on the premise that teachers adapt the content, process, and final product of their teaching to the different types of students. This inclusive approach guarantees that no student is left behind in such an educational environment where every single learner can progress at their own pace.

In fact, internet-based videos enable connectivity, efficiency, interactivity and flexibility in teaching by involving teachers and learners in activities that cultivate communication skills as well as present ideas and information in ways that can actually meet a variety of learning needs (Sime & Themelis, 2018). In addition, as a source of information and means of communication, it is regarded as a powerful educational tool that facilitates access to learning and promotes changes related to pedagogical practices through sound, image and multimodal texts (Cruse, 2007).

This report aims to demonstrate that incorporating videos across the curriculum boosts children's communication skills and benefits them both individually and socially.

2. INCLUSION AND LEARNING DIFFERENTIATION

Differentiated pedagogy dictates that educators comply with the different learning profiles of their students by implementing differentiated interventions in terms of content, process and final product (Kanakis, 2007; Tomlinson, 2003). In this frame of mind, differentiation can definitely secure effective teaching and learning for all students as it helps them overcome inequality and, thus, promote social justice (Koutselini & Agathagelou, 2009).

Harnessing students' potential in productive and beneficial ways, especially when it comes to supporting them with special education needs, is of the utmost importance. In fact, taking into serious consideration all those different individual characteristics as well as the urgency for real integration into mainstream education is a research goal of modern theories such as multiliteracies (Kalantzis & Cope, 2013). As a result, differences are recognized, creatively exploited and projected as an advantage of the whole. For example, neurodiverse students may excel in areas like pattern recognition, attention to detail or unique ways of thinking. This occurs because students can learn from each other's differences, rendering it an educational asset as well as a gear for student's feeling of belonging. The more the feeling of belonging to the class/learning process develops despite their natural differences, the more efficient the transfer of knowledge to them becomes (Kalantzis & Cope, 2013).

Integrating technology and especially videos into communication language instruction improves teachers' capacity to tackle diversified linguistic competency (Wijayanti, 2024).

3. THE EDUCATIONAL DIMENSION OF EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS AND FILMS

The students of the 21st century are called "digital natives." The use of digital media in the classroom cannot only stimulate their interest because of their audiovisual content and better prepare them for the challenges of the digital world, but they can also act as a tool for developing soft and cognitive skills. Films and educational videos, in general, can expand students' interaction with the subject matter (Onu *et al.*, 2024). Given that multimedia combines listening and observation, most of the brain is engaged compared to what would happen if the same content was presented solely through text or spoken word.

Nowadays, short educational films may be easily reached and reproduced through audiovisual content repository networks, such as YouTube, or through the Web in general, via a varied number of terminals such as phones, desktops, or tablets, which motivate students so as to address a particular subject (Alhamami, 2013).

Students with developed listening skills can more easily link knowledge received at school with what is broadcast through the media mentioned above. Thus, technology can sharpen and enrich knowledge and information for the students themselves (Westera, 2015). Not infrequently, students can also cope with teachers' questions more conveniently because they have previously stored various kinds of information obtained through communication media (Westera, 2015).

Video-film literacy is part of media literacy, the objective of which is to educate children on how to become capable consumers of media and potential creators of new meanings and expressions (Herrero, 2019). Children, even when they are in their early childhood, have an unconscious understanding of audiovisual text codes on account of their great familiarity with children-oriented videos and cartoons. This is a crucial starting point for them to be taught how to cultivate film literacy. In fact, incorporating movies into learning results in students' greater engagement in the target and increases their interest in a specific subject. More interest in a particular topic or subject will make it easier for them to better understand the concepts and thus perform even better in those fields.

Film education refers to the ability to "read" and "write" motion pictures. By the term 'reading', we generally mean the understanding of explicit and implicit ideological conventions, the ability to decipher the latent meaning of videos, and the understanding of the socioeconomic parameters of their production. By 'writing', we generally mean that students become producers of media and audiovisual texts, and as a result, the syllabus is enriched while focusing on their knowledge and experiences. According to Buckingham (2003), the curriculum must be harmonized with children's extracurricular life experiences in society. As it comes from the above, the new digital forms of expression and the expansion of communication codes lead to the need to redefine the educational dimension of video film.

4. COMMUNICATION SKILLS THROUGH INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS

Language enrichment interventions are frequently divided into three tiers: specialist, targeted, and universal (Gascoigne, 2006). Targeted interventions address students who are prone to develop oral language difficulties, including children with special educational needs (Gascoigne, 2006). Universal interventions generally intend to maximize all children's likelihood of developing sufficient oral communication skills in the classroom.

The students with remarkable diversity in linguistic and cultural backgrounds, as well as with different academic needs, are more efficient in programs that incorporate the universal language used in videos and short films. Selecting an effective video is an essential component of integrating film into language classrooms (Kabooha & Elyas, 2018). When it comes to choosing a film, teachers should consider if the theme of the film fits the syllabus and if it is age-appropriate and relevant to the interests and backgrounds of their students. It is also important for teachers to take into serious consideration those factors that aid comprehension, such as dialogue with a high degree of visual support, clearly enunciated speech, only one character speaking at a time, clear conventional Storylines, titles, graphics and animation (Donaghy, 2019).

Nowadays, there are a number of applications that integrate videos into their function. Coencas (2007) takes advantage of movie scenes in an attempt to help special education students improve both their visual and auditory skills, gain confidence in their speaking skills, analyze the components of a narrative, and feel comfortable while participating in communication and writing tasks in class. Technology also encourages students to pursue their interests in subjects they have learned about in movies. Actually, in a program in the East Midlands where videos were introduced to school curriculum in 8 districts for 1 year, 2/3 of the teachers also reported a rise in their enthusiasm for teaching. 100% of the teachers also claimed that videos helped them approach the so-called "difficult" students (UK Film Council, 2010).

Moreover, one of the most prominent platforms nowadays is "YouTube," which is reported to have two billion subscribed users, which stands for one-third of all the users on the Internet (YouTube, n.d.). "YouTube" has become very popular for its educational videos and has been established among students as a supportive learning platform which fosters learning on demand (Rat für Kulturelle Bildung, 2019). Kabooha and Elyas (2018) mentioned that carefully selected videos allow students to enhance language competency by further motivating them to put the target language into practice. In addition, the survey indicated that along with students' motivation needed for effective language learning, participants' confidence, on the other hand, increased. Brook's (2011) study also concluded that "YouTube" as a tool facilitates the language learning and teaching process. Particularly, he highlighted that such digital tools boost learners' confidence by offering authentic material. Similarly, research findings by Meinawati *et al.* (2020) showed that watching YouTube videos helped students speak more fluently and

more confidently. Additionally, according to Watkins and Wilkins (2011), using YouTube by students both inside and outside the classroom gives them the opportunity to enhance conversation, listening, and pronunciation skills without time pressure since they watch a video as many times as they need.

It is actually quite important for teachers to realize that it is better when audio and visual perceptions go simultaneously since, as Albahiri and Alhaj (2020) mentioned, "listening comprehension is reinforced by watching comprehension". Moreover, the attractive units in videos keep learners more concentrated and attentive in the process of learning the language materials, as compared to audio ones (Albahiri & Alhaj, 2020). Alwehaibi (2015) claims that many people consider videos more interesting than audio technologies since viewers are more familiar with watching television and video than listening to audio material other than music and songs. For example, "Kiwi" integrates multimedia like video, and thus, it can provide more engaging and effective ways to cater to students' diverse needs and styles of learning. Students who have previously watched the "Widow" can immediately start interacting with artificial intelligence by posing questions concerning the video. After that, they can be provided with a summary and a quiz so as to check their listening comprehension. In the meantime, they can be offered real-time feedback and enlightening explanations while chatting with artificial intelligence.

Finally, incorporating videos in the educational process is still the subject of discussion as videos are taking new forms and can be adapted to multiple learning scenarios. As new immersive technologies such as augmented, mixed, or virtual reality arise in behalf of education, instructors have endless opportunities to design more effective scenarios that pave the way for active and experiential learning (Galatsopoulou *et al.*, 2022).

5. CONCLUSION

Taking advantage of appropriate educational videos and films on behalf of teachers greatly stimulates students' sensory organs and thus allows them to memorize vocabulary and speech patterns more effortlessly. As a result, they can respond more spontaneously to different communicative situations and contexts (Labinska *et al.*, 2020).

Videos are associated with producing multiple active learning scenarios capable of enhancing students' motivation as well as catering for a joyful, collaborative and hospitable learning environment. Besides, nowadays, students are very familiar with digital tools and technologies and seem to consider audiovisual material indispensable in the learning process (Galatsopoulou *et al.*, 2022).

Systematic and meaningful integration of ICTs into school curricula will certainly offer a unique opportunity for the greater inclusion of students with learning difficulties into the educational process, and it will hopefully lead to an equivalent education for all types of students.

However, implementing educational videos in the teaching and learning procedure may provoke some challenges which should certainly be confronted. First of all, in many

cases, there exists some struggle with hardware infrastructure. In other words, the projection of videos requires appropriate lighting, good sound, and secured visual contact of all students with the screen. Moreover, there is a general and arbitrary stereotypical perception of short films or videos, considering them to be a means of entertainment and not of education (Sasseville & Marquis, 2015). So, it is essential that teachers be adequately trained when it comes to the inclusion of videos in their lesson plans.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest.

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