

## **Designing Media Exercises for an ELT Classroom**

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**Abstract:** *Using various kinds of media has always been an exciting venture in a language learning atmosphere. But how to bring this into the classroom is more than a challenge. Media provides an excellent spring board for a broad spectrum of skill building activities. Students and teachers should be able to use media creatively, innovatively and productively. It provides learners' with lots of language practice through activities which develop listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. The paper aims at analyzing the importance of using Audio visual media in classroom teaching. It stresses on three aspects of language learning- narrative, report and creative writing. It is based not only on literature review but also on long personal experience. It has a brief description of some practical examples and some tips for novice teachers. The experiment conducted gives a base for selection of exercises, evaluation and assessment procedure using rubrics.*

**Keywords:** *Media, Challenge, Narrative, Listening, Report writing, Creative writing, Evaluation, Rubrics.*

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### **I. Introduction**

Media entertains students, encourages language skills and presents information inside and outside the classroom. It promotes extensive listening and speaking by giving the students confidence, motivation and ability to react in a creative manner in any outside the classroom situations.

The idea of creating a new pedagogy for me was an exciting one. In a repertoire of a technical environment the activity took its base in-" The Direct Method ", which advocated that learners' will communicate in the target language only if they "think" without involving L1. The audio lingual method also confirmed the learning of vocabulary within the given context by use of tapes, video recording, visual aids with very little use of the mother tongue.

"Media can inform, amuse, startle, anger, entertain, thrill, but very seldom leaves any one untouched"(Shirly Baggy 1996). Keeping all this in mind, the idea to use news and video clippings positively in class to promote enhancement of teaching and learning English took shape. Often activities using television news, debates, panel discussions, increase visual and critical awareness, reporting, and drawing visual images through words. These can be explored further in a variety of ways such as:

- a. Framing questions on the clippings shown.
- b. Promoting discussions in small groups.
- c. Asking the learners' to critically comment.
- d. Stimulate the learners' to think what could be in sequence next by stopping the video in the middle.
- e. Predicting and speculating the dialogues by turning down the audio of the clipping.

### **Planning the Experiment**

As Ernest Boyer-President of the Carnegie Foundation for the advancement of teaching states that-"It is no longer enough to simply read or write. Students must also become literate in understanding visual images". The host of learning opportunities, media provides, is a double benefit for educators. When we try to monopolize on these gamut of resources we enhance the critical skills, their productive ability, both written and spoken. There is no limit to the kind of pedagogies one can discover, but as with any new discipline, educators will benefit from educating themselves first.

All learning depends on the procedure the teacher decides to follow. In order to accomplish this, the following questions have to be in the realm of information:

- a. What should be the objective of the language learner?
- b. How can classroom media presentations help learners' speak fluently without inhibitions?
- c. How can we exploit a piece of learning material offered by media to improve fluency and accuracy?
- d. What additional advantages can the teacher put forth through media?

TV programs may be used as warm up activities, pre activity for any forthcoming learning, as supplementary material, for a certain topic. Documentaries are also educational. Those on wild life, on civil wars on discovery channel open windows to the students. Learners' can learn about languages, cultures and science. Some of these documentaries if carefully selected by the teachers may be successfully introduced as

part of the curriculum. In the Indian scenario it is not always possible to bring TV channels live into the classroom, hence it is better to record such programs for teaching. The sequence could be as follows.

- 1. Design:** Teachers should carefully design exercises keeping the following in mind:
  - a. Will the learners' find the material interesting?
  - b. Are the levels of material appropriate for their levels of language learning?
  - c. By comparing dated samples of the work of learners' to earlier samples, teachers should be able to access their development.
  - d. Teachers should develop a set of criteria to evaluate the learners' performance.
- 2. Plan:** The teachers may ask the learners' which TV channels they like the best and work on it. They need to have the following considerations based on a questionnaire as to whether the material has:
  - a. A lot of information.
  - b. It is powerful and trust worthy.
  - c. It is attractive, entertaining, informative and serious at the same time.
  - d. It gives quick and exact information in different fields.
  - e. News is of high quality.
  - f. The news presenters are professionally qualified.
  - g. Uses advanced technology.
- 3. Organize:** In the classroom the teacher needs to organize the video clipping based on the difficulty/performance level in the following way:
  - a. The learners' may be in groups or work singly.
  - b. The learners' may be made to listen to the headlines as they are short, but convey a lot.
  - c. The learners' may be asked to identify the key issues of the clipping.
  - d. The learners' could be asked questions such as: "what happened?", "where did it happen?", "how did it happen?"
  - e. The learners' must be made to identify the key vocabulary.
  - f. Learners' may transcribe certain phrases.
  - g. They may compare the language of print as against the video.
  - h. Learners' may report what they have seen or listened to.
  - i. Learners' may predict a future happening.
  - j. Learners' can paraphrase and present orally what they have heard and understood, using voice modulation.
  - k. Learner may understand some nuances through body language.
- 4. Evaluate:** The evaluation is done keeping the following evaluation criteria as the basis:
  - a. Does the text make sense?
  - b. Does the text have a bend?
  - c. Is there a logical sequence?
  - d. Does the learner include all necessary details?
  - e. Does the learner use appropriate language structures and words?
  - f. Is there use of appropriate punctuations and capitals?
  - g. Are the words spelt correctly?
  - h. Is the handwriting legible?
  - i. Is the learner able to read between the lines /understand the body language?
  - j. Is the learner able to develop another speech or a write up on similar lines?

### **The Experiment**

Three methodical and sequential activities have been devised for the B Tech 3<sup>rd</sup> year students as part of their Advanced English Communication Skills Lab. These learners', with their heavy deadlines and schedule, have little time within the lab to refine their language skills. This had an effect on their development of soft skills. They need maximum inputs in minimum time, hence they are highly motivated learners' who need quick learning results. Their concentration skills are also put to test. Each of the activity varies in its objective in evaluating productive skills namely – listening, reading, writing and speaking.

#### **Activity 1:**

**Clipping chosen:** An action oriented video clipping can be subjected to various interpretations when kept on mute. (Only visual, no audio played)

**Writing skills:** Narrative writing.

**Objective:** To evaluate the initial performance level of the student in terms of expression, language use and presentation based on their own perception and understanding of the visuals shown.

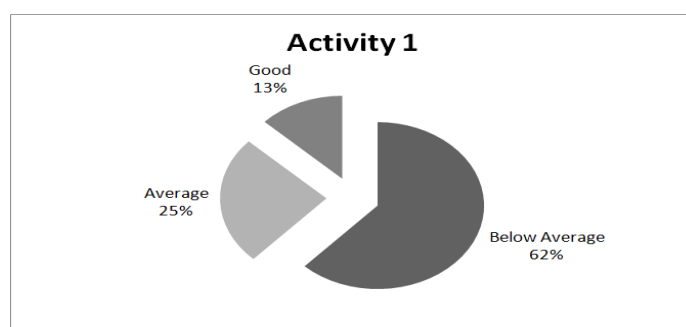
**Procedure:** A video clipping 'Killer Whale', of 25 seconds ( <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCJ-rK4byXE> ) was shown to a class of 20 students.

1. The visual was shown 2-3 times.
2. Learners' wrote a narrative of 100 words using correct grammar structures and vocabulary.
3. The beginning was given to them.....In the video clipping we see.....

**Evaluation:** The student's performance was evaluated based on the following rubric  
a.: Vocabulary b. Language fluency

**Table 1 - Rubrics For Descriptive Writing**

Rubric Parameters	1 Marks	2 Marks	3 Marks	4 Marks
3 Essential Structural Elements: Introduction, Content Development & Conclusion.	Lacks two of the essential structural elements.	Lacks one of the essential structural elements.	Has intro, adequate content and conclusion.	All elements are present at high proficiency level
Accuracy (Language)	No originality. Disconnected structural elements and lack of appropriate vocabulary.	Topic dealt in a cursory manner, mixes words, structural errors.	Content adequate uses well structured sentences.	Excels in creative content, mixes original ideas, good expression, adequate use of adjectives.
Appropriacy (Content)	No adequate flow of ideas, irrelevant matter & expression, disjointed sentences.	Ideas have a flow centered around the topic.	Ideas flow with cohesive devices, well organized..	Exceptional use of vivid descriptive words, good flow, well organized with relevant ideas.
Cohesion And Coherence	Has only basic ideas, lacks connectivity, descriptive terms, expresses in monologues and phrases.	Has basic ideas of descriptive words and phrases, has cohesion.	Uses descriptive terms and phrases skillfully and other modifiers.	Exceptional use of modifiers, phrases and descriptive languages.
Critical/Creative Thinking	Expresses ideas with few details, no fresh ideas.	Expresses ideas with some supporting details/opinion, reproduces the details in a report format.	Ideas are well supported with adequate descriptive details.	Exceptional perception to the visual details and the development of predicted task.
Reporting Vocab And Tenses	More than 7 error per 100 words.	4-6 errors per 100 words.	2-3 errors per 100 words.	Error free - 1 error for 100 words.



**Figure 1 - Results of Activity – 1**

**Results**

- 62% learner's performance was below average
- 25% learner's performance was average
- 13% learner's performance was good

**Analysis:**

This indicates that only 13% learners' had a good level of perception and ability to communicate with basic language proficiency. Perhaps they either had more years of exposure to good English background or were motivated learners'.

25% had the potential to improve.

62% were weak perhaps because of regional medium background/low performance abilities in terms of content and linguistic competence. They had low interest/apprehensions in expressing.

**Activity-2 :**

**Clipping chosen:** An electronic news report with headlines, reported by a news reader, was shown. (Both audio and visuals).

**Writing Skills:** Report writing

**Objective:** Having understood the basic proficiency levels of the learners', an attempt was made to enhance the performance levels in terms of using the language. Expressing with the needed vocabulary and sentence structures was observed and evaluated.

**Procedure:**

1. A video clipping, 'Nissan frontier saves plane with gear landing failure' ( <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYLppUtGyJc> ) with headlines from a news report was shown to the students
2. The visual was shown 2-3 times with a gap of 2 minutes in between so that they can make note of important key words, understand the situation and the sequence.
3. Learners' are guided to write a report on the clipping using the elements of report writing.
4. The beginning was given to them ....The visual shows that .....

**Evaluation:** The learners'' performance was assessed and evaluated using the rubrics that had been devised for report writing. Parameters Chosen for stage 2 are not just vocabulary and linguistic competence but are:

- a. Focus on the content, b. organization of the text c. methodical presentation as close as possible to the content.

**Table 2 - Rubrics For Report Writing**

Rubric Parameters	1 Marks	2 Marks	3 Marks	4 Marks
ORGANISATION	No apparent order, writing confusing to the reader.	Some attempt to order the information has been made but sequence difficult to follow.	Details are organized reasonably well, small flaws in logical sequencing, does not deviate, maintains coherence.	Details are arranged very well sequentially, clean transition step to step, overall presentation coherent.
COMPLETENESS	Lots of important info is forgotten, reader cannot understand the presentation.	Some important info is left out, some irrelevant info is included which mars the overall presentation.	All important info is included, some irrelevant info is also there but does not deter the effectiveness of the presentation.	All necessary information is included.
APPROPRIATE WORDS	Wrong and ambiguous words are used, impossible to follow.	Some words are inaccurate, vague redundant, effects the overall presentation.	Word selected indicate that they have been well thought, some misused but are not detractors.	Words are clear accurate and appropriate.
SPELLING	Many spelling errors and the reader can hardly understand the writing.	Many spelling errors spoil the effectiveness of writing.	Few spelling errors do not effect the overall presentation.	No spelling errors, use of vocabulary appropriate to context.
GENERAL RULES	Too many errors in punctuation, paper is difficult to read.	Several errors in punctuation and capitals detract the overall presentation.	Few errors in punctuation which may detract the overall presentation.	Punctuation capitals are correct.

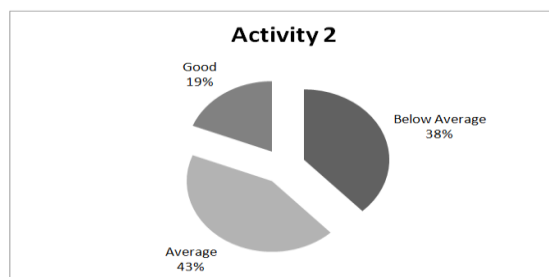


Figure 2 - Results of Activity – 2

**Results:**

43% of the learner’s performance was average.  
 19% of the learner’s were good.  
 38% of the learner’s performance was below average.

**Analysis:** It is observed that there is a steady increase in the number of performers from Average to Good and decrease in the number of poor performers. Learners’ were scoring marks between 2 and 3. This can be attributed to the fact that the audio with headlines made a difference. Learners’ could pick up new vocabulary from the headlines and the newsreader, and understand a sequence of happening. This time they displayed high levels of concentration. Picking up the strength from **activity 1** in terms of familiarity and enhancing their visual perception the learners’ showed a steady interest in taking active part in the activity.

**Activity- 3**

**Clipping chosen:** A video clipping with a captivating speech.

**Writing skills:** Creative writing.

**Objective:** To enhance the productive skills of the learner in capturing the linguistic competence and para-linguistic features through the model shown.

**Procedure:**

1. A speech delivered by Hitler in the movie ‘The Great Dictator’ was shown ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GU\\_rn1xzItk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GU_rn1xzItk)) for 3mts 38 seconds.
2. It was shown in two segments.
3. In the first segment students generate a discussion on what they have heard. They also make a critical analysis of the situation.
4. In the second segment learners’ observe and comment on the body language of the orator, the voice modulation, and understand the apprehensions of the orator.
5. Next they discussed what could be the global repercussion of this speech.
6. Lastly they created and delivered another inspiring speech on their own.

**Evaluation:** The assessment and evaluation of the learner’s performance was made using the rubrics for speaking skills.

**Parameters Chosen:** In addition to the parameters chosen for Activity 1 and Activity 2, the following additional parameters have been chosen to evaluate the performance of the learners’: tonal variations, voice modulation, gestures and facial expressions.

Table 3: Rubrics for speaking skills

Rubric Parameters	1 Marks	2 Marks	3 Marks	4 Marks
FLUENCY	Producing speech with hesitation groping for correct words , pronouncing individual words slowly.	Trying to speak continuously but frequent errors, hesitance after every sentence.	Producing connected speech disruptive sometimes. Varying speed to convey intended meaning and feelings.	Smooth flow of thoughts and speech with perfect voice modulation, effective use of good vocabulary.

ACCURACY	Pronunciation improper, voice monotone, uttering isolated words, no continuity of sentences, too many grammatical errors. No use of cohesive devices, very limited vocabulary to express ideas.	Pronunciation correct for simple words, little intonation, few grammatical errors, some cohesive devices used.	Using correct pronunciation, stress on intonation to express ideas, few grammatical errors which do not interfere with the message, connectivity use of sufficient vocab to express ideas.	Good pronunciation, Speaking clearly and flawlessly with out grammatical errors. Good flow of ideas.
CONFIDENCE	Speaking in low volume almost inaudible, no eye contact with the audience, diffident unwilling to take initiative.	Speaking in a soft voice faintly audible, some use of body language to express ideas, some time not willing to perform.	Speaking clearly and loudly, attempting to perform, good use of body language.	Good poise and confidence, speaking loud and clear with good intonation, can hold the attention of the audience.
PERFORMANCE SKILLS	Speaking without qualitative content or meaning, boring monotonous voice with no tone variation.	Making an attempt to bring content into presentation, still monotonous, very few body gestures.	Making use of body gestures attempting to vary voice, conscious effort towards eye contact.	Making good use of gestures and facial expressions to convey message, varying tone to captivate audience, good body movements.

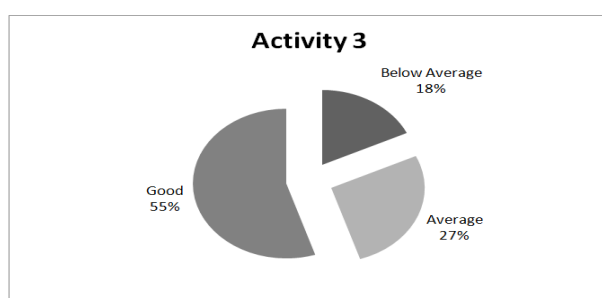


Figure 3 - Results of Activity – 3

**Results and Analysis:**

55% of the learners’ excelled in oral presentation. The scores ranged from 3-4 marks. It was found that most of the speech was absorbed and reproduced. Many learners’ seemed to be impressed by the body language of the orator and tended to dramatize their presentation by concentrating on gestures and facial expressions. 27% were average speakers. Though they tried their level best to modulate their voice sometimes they felt short of words.

Only 18% were shy and diffident. It seemed like, if they were given more exposure they may be able to overcome their shortcomings. This could be due to less exposure to English language.

**II. Combined Results**

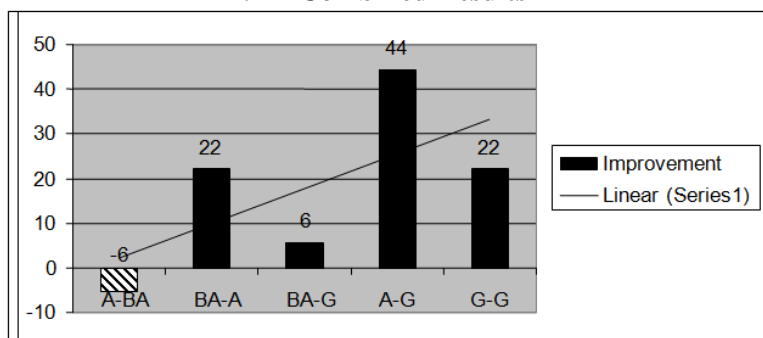


Figure 4 - Learning Graph

As a group, the combined results (ref. Fig 4) show that there was a high increase in Good ( 24 to 71%) and decline in the below average category ( 29 to 6%) from activity 1 to activity 3. Taking the individual performances into account, only 6% slipped from average to below average (A-BA). While the other 22% improved from below average to average (BA\_A), 6% from below average to good (BA-G), 44% from average to good (A-G).

### **III. Student Feedback And Recommendation**

Majority of the learners' were of the view that this was an interesting way of learning. While classroom teaching was good, they were happy that the same exercise could be done on their own at home. This activity not only had the potential to learn good English but also develop their soft skills.

There are many video clippings from YouTube (National Geographic Channel) and other channels which can be used to promote listening comprehension and reproduction. Two more videos were selected a. "snake & the mongoose" ( <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdg9gkmWsEA> ) and b. "Dynamic Architecture" ( <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RgNoLWTmsng> ) for self assessment. The commentary in these videos had words and phrases that can become a learner's active vocabulary. The girls in the class showed very high levels of concentration on these. Most of them were able to reproduce the content exactly. This again authenticates the highly dynamic concept of use of audio/video in a language learning classroom.

### **IV. Conclusion**

The paper aims to validate the fact that use of video clippings and news recordings generate interest in the learner. Reading from print is a proven methodology but audio visuals excite the learner's interest and bring innovation into the classes, promote language skills thereby proving that the eye is sharper than the ear.

The predominant aim of any language learning is to get connected to the language learning resources. The visual impact sets an innovative model for the learners' either to emulate or improvise. It motivates the learner to set a benchmark in reaching the standards of learning a language for effective communication. It provides stimulus for the learners' to work on the exercise as and when they encounter such resources. Such activities specially in techno savvy atmosphere with infrastructural facilities promote the growth of a learner's language acquisition in an interesting way. This strengthens their skills and competency to use the language on their own accord. In this context, the teacher can judiciously work on a series of video clippings to lead the learners' from their initial inhibition stage to the end result expected.

### **Acknowledgement**

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