CLERA workshop: Using digital video in the Modern Languages classroom

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Why use video in the foreign language classroom?
- add an audio-visual experience for the students
- get them more actively engaged in the learnin process
- adapt the learning environment in the classroom to the students' world outside of university (multi-media is an important feature in the students' lives)
- illustrate the content covered
- train students' listening skills
- give students a multimedia insight into a foreign culture using authentic materials featuring native speakers
- provide input for group discussions
- provide an alternative / addition to written materials
- encourage and develop the students' creative skills and personal involvement
- …

What type of videos?
There are many different types of video that can successfully be used in foreign language teaching:
- feature films (or clips from them)
- short films
- documentaries (or clips)
- historical footage
- tv programmes (anything from news programmes to talk shows or soaps)
- music videos
- amateur videos (e.g. found on Youtube)
- materials designed for teaching (e.g. as part of a course book or provided by institutions such as Goethe Institut, Cervantes Institute etc.)
- …

Sourcing videos:
- find materials online:
  - Youtube
  - national equivalent of BBC world service (e.g. Deutsche Welle for German)
  - national equivalents of iPlayer, Channel4OD etc. (often accessible abroad, sometimes downloadable)
  - BoB (Box of broadcasts, British tv only, not downloadable)
- off-air recordings
- dvds library and LIS
- use videos produced by other students

Downloading videos:
- Please be aware that you might be breaching copyright law when downloading video files.
- If you do download video to save and/or edit you can use the download helper in Firefox (https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/video-downloadhelper) to save videos from sites such as Youtube. Realplayer offers a similar feature, or you can use websites like http://keepvid.com/ or streaming and recording programmes such as StreamTransport.

Screencasting:
- programmes such as http://www.screencast-o-matic.com/ allow you to capture video that is playing on your screen and/or voice record comments (talking over powerpoint presentations, commenting on videos, narrating over them etc.)

Adapting sourced videos for teaching purposes:
- editing
- subtitling
- dubbing / narrating

Editing software:
- There is a variety of free and easy to use software available.
- MAC: If you are a MAC user you should have iMovie or Final Cut or similar pre-installed on your computer.
- Windows:
  - Moviemaker: If you're using Windows you will find that Windows Moviemaker comes free with all versions of Windows. (Use Moviemaker 2.6, designed for Windows XP even if your system is Vista or Windows 7, the functionality is much better than on the new Windows Live Moviemaker.) The programme is very easy to use and has all the functions you're likely to need but it can cause serious problems such as crashing, not saving your project files etc.
  - VideoPad: An alternative to Moviemaker with similar features and it's free to use in a basic version (download from http://www.nchsoftware.com/videopad/index.html, when trial period expires, click "uninstall" in the Windows control panel (under "add/remove programmes") and choose: "keep free version").

Video based tasks for language learners:
- Listening exercises
- Language work based on vocabulary, grammatical structures etc. used in the video (e.g. use of slang)
- Responding to video
  - discussion
  - text production (e.g. creative writing, essay on topic treated in video)
  - producing response videos (examples on Youtube)
- Video without sound: delete the audiotrack and ask students to speculate what is being said (dubbing exercises, subtitling) (Works well with interviews / talking heads, e.g. "these people have been asked what they think about immigration/nuclear power/euthanasia etc. – what was their response?")
- Audio without picture: save the sound as a separate file (VideoPad allows you to do that) and ask students to speculate what is happening in the video, works best with dialogues. (They can then film their own version.)
- What happens next? Find a video with a surprising ending (e.g. Veit Helmer's *Surprise*

(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Nbe6R2Rsf8) or Pepe Danquart's *Schwarzfahrer* (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFQXcv1k9OM) or N. Buse's *Incubus* http://vimeo.com/6315959, delete the end and ask students to discuss / write about / make a film about what will happen next

- Ask students to make a film about a topic discussed in class (can replace or enrich presentations)
- Set students the task of producing an advert for a product (can be linked to intercultural marketing or discussion of topics such as body image, commercialisation, consumer society etc.) – again the films can also be video responses to existing ads
- …

- For beginners or intermediate level:
  - o Use video production for show & tell exercises or video cvs: students can produce little films about themselves, their home town, their hobbies etc. using a mixture of pictures, filmed footage, narration and music. They can subtitle footage shot in their native language. (For intermediate level: Discuss lonely hearts ads in magazines and ask students to make a lonely hearts video - parodies are allowed!)
  - o Ask students to produce video diaries, discuss them in class and/or link them to text production exercises.
  - o …

Try not to use video for video's sake – often students will respond more positively to a video production task than a text production exercise but you should always have a rationale for using video. Also consider linking video tasks to more conventional exercises ensuring that written skills are not neglected.