

# **Integrating YouTube Videos in Online Teacher Education Courses**

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## **Framework**

Among other benefits, the integration of online videos in the classroom has been found to engage and educate students (Berk, 2009; Fleck, Beckman, Sterns, & Hussey, 2014; Roodt & Peier, 2013; Sherer & Shea, 2011). Furthermore, learners can pause and re-watch videos to assist with comprehension. To capitalize on the potential of online videos, educators can access YouTube, Ted-Ed., Vimeo, Hulu or any other of the many available online video websites. YouTube is among the best options due to its user friendly platform and countless number of videos which span a variety of topics. In fact, every minute, 300 hours of video are uploaded to the website (YouTube, n.d.). YouTube also provides channels which contain videos that may be dedicated to a specific topic or content area (e.g., math, social studies).

This quick hit describes how purposefully selected and integrated YouTube videos served as a tool to engage and educate students in an online undergraduate and graduate *Foundations to Bilingual and ESL (English as a Second Language) Education* class. The undergraduate course was designed for pre-service teachers, while the graduate course was designed for in-service educators. In both courses, online videos were used to support key course topics, such as first and second language development; history of bilingual and ESL education; program models used with ELLs (English language learners), culture and ELL assessment. Although I will explain how online videos were used in my own content area, it should be noted that videos can be incorporated to teach any subject in online, face to face and hybrid classes. For face to face courses, the instructor can simply play the video from the computer which is projected onto a large screen. For online courses, depending on the instructional website's capabilities, the instructor can embed a video or include a link to the video within the course website.

## **Making it Work**

### *Purposefully Selecting Online Videos*

Educators should critically select videos to help ensure their usefulness (Al-Jarf, 2012). This begins with searching for and previewing potential online videos. An effective way to do this is through YouTube's search and filtering tools. Once the videos are selected, registered users can create a playlist to save and share videos. Selecting videos for my *Foundations to Bilingual and ESL Education* courses, I looked for those that were informative, comprehensible and engaging. I generally chose online videos from YouTube that were no longer than 10 minutes in length, although there were exceptions, such as a longer documentary. I found that short videos better maintained students' attention than longer ones. I tried to find videos that were of high production value (i.e., ones that were of professional quality with clear audio and images). In

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using online videos, I hoped to achieve a variety of purposes, including gaining students' interest in a new topic, illustrating examples and providing factual information.

One way I added videos to my course was as an introduction to a topic which served to promote interest and discussion. I used short, funny videos to gain students' interest. For instance, to begin a unit on second language acquisition, students watched the YouTube video "Importance of Learning a Foreign Language Goldfish v Kitty" (Latinlord92, 2007). This video shows a goldfish scaring away a cat by barking. The video comically portrays how the goldfish has managed to defend itself by communicating like a dog. After students had watched the video, I invited them to think about the benefits of knowing more than one language.

Another way I have used online videos was to illustrate scenarios students may encounter as educators. For example, I incorporated the online video "Immersion" (Mediathatmatters, 2009) which contained a fictional portrayal of Moisés, a young, Hispanic boy who struggles to learn English and gain acceptance from his peers at school. This video was useful in giving a face to the many English language learners with which my students will work. In my course, I also included the video Dallas ISD Two-Way Dual Language which contains footage and interviews from students and teachers in an actual classroom. Media tools are useful in providing examples that can be transferred to authentic, real word situations (Liberatore, Vestal, & Herring, 2012).

Finally, I used online videos to assist in explaining content. For instance, "The Benefits of the Bilingual Brain – MiaNacamulli", (Ted-Ed, 2015) provides a summary of different types of bilinguals and why knowing more than one language can help to develop a healthy brain. The visually appealing graphics and narration assist students in grasping the information. Additionally, "History of Bilingual Education in Texas" (BilingualEducationTX, 2012) provides content through historical images and interviews to depict how bilingual education has changed over time.

### *Integrating Online Videos into the Lesson*

After viewing the selected videos, students responded to discussion prompts to assess their understanding and application of the content. In their responses, they made connections between the videos and existing knowledge (e.g., their own experiences, other resources provided during the course). For instance, after watching "Immersion", students were asked to respond on a class discussion board to the following prompts:

- a) Give at least two specific reasons you believe Moisés (the boy in the video) is struggling. Go beyond simply stating that it is because he doesn't know English well.
- b) Describe what you would do as Moisés' teacher to help prepare him for his standardized test.

When students responded, they incorporated and cited the online videos, as well as any other relevant resources. Later in the week, students replied to two or more classmates' responses. Students' initial responses were evaluated based on how well they supported their answers with resources and existing knowledge. Peer responses were assessed based on their relevance and thoughtfulness. Both initial and peer responses were evaluated based on adherence

to length requirements. Students also took quizzes throughout the course in which they were assessed on videos and other course content.

Some students shared that the integration of online videos helped to make material more comprehensible, particularly with complex or confusing content. Additionally, students commented that they enjoyed watching the videos and appreciated receiving information through this medium.

## **Future Implications**

Moving forward, I would like students to become more involved in the video selection process, and thereby better understand how to locate and access helpful online resources. I will add to and modify the videos I use in my course. I will also be selecting videos which contain a variety of viewer comments, particularly on controversial issues. The next time I teach the *Foundations to Bilingual and ESL Education* courses, I plan to use both the online video “Texas Principal Bans Hispanic Students from Speaking Spanish to ‘Prevent Disruptions’” (PoliticalNews, 2013) and its comments. This news clip contains interviews with students who were told that they could not speak Spanish at the high school they attended. I will use the viewer comments to facilitate my students’ understanding not only of what happened, but how other online viewers are reacting to the video. It is my hope that this will highlight the differing opinions and serve as an entry point into our online discussion.

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