

METHODICAL BENEFITS OF USING AUTHENTIC VIDEOS TED TALKS FOR ENHANCING STUDENTS' SPEAKING AND LISTENING SKILLS

Vasilevich V., lecturer

These days on the Internet there is a wide array of various authentic English language learning materials, which a teacher can easily get an access to and use them in a class. However, in many ways, the Internet is a double-edged sword: we can get overwhelmed by the amount of various online resources and, what is more, we may have a problem to come up with some nice ideas on how to make it more beneficial for students who are eager to study English. TED Talks is a great solution and invaluable tool for busy teachers who strive to diversify their classes and get their students involved.

TED Talks are a series of public speeches made by both notable and not so famous people. The biggest advantage of the videos is that TED Talks are totally authentic as the speakers share their own personal stories, ideas, experiences with the audience. Moreover, TED Talks are frequently delivered by non-native speakers which is beneficial for ESL students as it entails various accents and pronunciation — something ESL students can frequently come across in real life situations. TED presenters can make language mistakes, which can also teach students not to be embarrassed by this fact and learn from mistakes as only practice makes perfection. Another benefit of TED Talks is that there are so many of them. At the time this article is being written, there are more than 2000 public speaking presentations [1].

Yet, there are some possible drawbacks that a teacher should take into account before presenting a TED Talk to their students. First of all, it is necessary to ask yourself a number of questions which allow to assess the level of difficulty and appropriateness of a video. The questions can be as follows:

- Is English comprehensible?
- Is the pace too fast or too slow?
- Is the vocabulary and grammar structures too advanced for students?
- Do I need to provide any background information about the speaker or the subject of speaking?
- Does the speaker use any profanity or inappropriate language?

After having gone over the above-mentioned questions a teacher can go on to incorporate TED Talks into speaking and listening classes. However, as a rule, a lot of passionate teachers, after having found a nice authentic source of information, strive to make it easier and more comprehensible for their students and end up creating thorough and detailed worksheets which are incredibly time-consuming and ordinarily turn out to be less efficient as planned. Here are a number of ways to include TED Talks into a lesson without designing extensive worksheets.

The videos can be used as an *out-of-class listening activity*. Every month, students get a link with topical speech as a home assignment. First, students are to read the transcript translating all new and unfamiliar words. After that, they listen to the speech while looking at the text (the first listening). For the second listening, the students are encouraged to try to listen to a speaker without reading the transcript [1].

After out-of-class activities and thorough preparation at home a teacher strives to engage my students into various *in-class speaking activities which can be*:

— **Discussions** can foster students' speaking skills. Moreover, it is extremely efficient and beneficial for students to express their opinions on the subject. For instance, after watching the speech by Patricia Ryan «Don't insist on English» the students can be asked the following questions:

- How big is English's role in higher education?
- Should there be a minimum level of spoken English required for admission?
- Why do you study English?
- Is speaking more than one language always an advantage?
- Should everybody learn English? If so, would it be good or bad if everybody spoke English?
- **Debates.** While searching for a suitable topical video, it makes sense to opt for persuasive speeches which help to form different points of view. Debate teach students to take opposite sides, express their opinions and argue in favour or against, confirm, defend, support or reject, disagree and deny something.

— **After-speech interviews** enable students to develop their capability of leading conversations and dialogues. TED Talks marked as informative suit this activity best of all. One student has to pretend

to be the TED speaker while the rest of the class are asked to be journalists who are encouraged to write down questions while and after watching the videos. Then the journalists ask the interviewee their questions.

— **Critical Evaluation of Presentation Style** activity enables students to assess the presenter's delivery skills. Students are asked to analyze advantages and disadvantages of the speaker's presentation skills (tempo, distinctiveness, use of words and grammar, use of visual aids. etc.)

— **Evaluating body-language.** Choosing short 3 minute TED Talks and showing them without sound is a fascinating activity which enables student to critically assess the speaker's non-verbal behavior. It is invaluable for students as while evaluating the presenter's body language and facial expression they can transfer the feedback they give on their own presentation manner in the future.

— **In his/her shoes...** There are a plethora of TED Talks marked as courageous which contain speeches about people who are risk-takers or some adventurous things that are outside the scope of students' normal interests. Then students are encouraged to have a class discussion on what would they do if they were in the presenter's shoes. This activity does not only hone students' speaking skills but also helps them to practice various grammar structures [2].

To sum it up, incorporating TED Talks into language classes is not only an invaluable way to enhance students' speaking and listening skills but also a chance for students to have fun and spend their time meaningfully, which is very important to their growth as English language learners.

Literature

1. Mallinder, M. Teaching English using TED talks / M. Mallinder // EFL Magazine [Electronic resource]. — Mode of access: <<http://eflmagazine.com/teaching-english-using-ted-talks/>>. — Date of access: 21.11.2016.
2. Sylvester, K. J. 10 Speaking English Activities using TED.com / K. J. Sylvester // Kalinago English [Electronic resource]. — Mode of access: <<http://kalinago.blogspot.com.by/2011/09/10-speaking-english-activities-using.html>>. — Date of access: 21.11.2016.