EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Language instructors strive to provide students with a language learning environment that is authentic and contextualised. This chapter encourages teachers to step out of the textbook and integrate audio visual media in language courses. It highlights the pedagogical benefits of these resources and addresses the possible challenges language instructors may face. Bringing examples from two languages (French and Italian), the chapter aims at providing guidance to all language teachers in using film excerpts and video clips in their teaching. With a focus on lower levels (A.2 to B1), it showcases how these tools can be implemented, detailing the criteria to take into consideration in planning the lessons. Three detailed examples are provided with the objective of enabling effective learning. The last section of the chapter reflects on the use of audio visual media in language teaching and offers insights from the learners as well as the teachers’ experiences.
ORGANISATION BACKGROUND

Students in contemporary societies engage with digital devices in their everyday lives, as well as in their academic life, using applications and social networks, communicating with friends and the outside world, or connecting to the internet for multiple purposes, including their studies. In turn, there is a high expectation from teachers, including language instructors, to adapt to the digital era and implement technology in their teaching practices. Blended learning is not a trend but a necessary component of higher education as it develops students’ digital literacy, expands learners’ autonomy and better prepares them for the technologically interconnected world (Kramsch, 2013; Chun, Kern, & Smith, 2016). In language courses, blended learning develops digital skills but more importantly engages students to reflect critically upon their digital practices. One of language instructors’ roles is, therefore, to guide students in applying their digital competencies to new areas such as language learning.

The Department in which this case study takes place provides courses in more than twenty-five languages to undergraduates, postgraduates and professionals. The Department employs over one hundred teaching staff, all highly qualified native speakers of the languages they teach with extensive experience in the field of SLA. The courses are credit-bearing assessed modules, evening classes, or part of a programme taught outside the Modern Language Centre (MLC) to external clients and external institutions with which King’s College is collaborating. Students who attend evening courses choose to learn a language for personal or professional purposes, but are not formally assessed on their learning outcomes. Students who take assessed modules usually attend a language class for several reasons: as part of their degree, as an elective of their major, to develop language skills needed for their PG research, or out of personal interest. The assessed modules encompass 40 hours of face-to-face teaching/learning time over twenty weeks. In addition, students are required to work independently from four to eight hours a week. On average, a class is composed of twelve to fifteen students, capped at twenty.

For each language taught, a common textbook and a week-by-week syllabus different from level to level (from stage 1 to stage 7) are used to ensure that common content is covered and standards are met across levels and languages. Each course also has an online Moodle platform used as an integrated part of the face-to-face class. Assessments are the same across levels and across languages to ensure continuity and consistency, and are in line with CEFR benchmarks. In general terms, assessed modules are more demanding than non-assessed modules as students are tested at the end of the academic year with a final exam divided into two parts: an oral exam (40% of their final grade) and a written exam (60%). In addition, students are required to take one Formative Assessment throughout the course that does