

## **Action & Cut: Using Windows Movie Maker XP® in ESL classrooms**

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## **ACTION & CUT: USING WINDOWS MOVIE MAKER XP® IN ESL CLASSROOMS**

### **ABSTRACT**

This study looks at the use of Windows Movie Maker XP® to facilitate students' presentation skills in their *English for Professional Communication* classes. In the study, students are given the task to produce a short movie based on their meeting presentations which contribute 10% to their course assessment. They are instructed to form groups which consist of five to six members. The movie has to be approximately 10 minutes long with the script written originally by the students. They also need to submit the completed version of the movie in a CD format. The study indicates that Windows Movie Maker XP® enables students to share their meeting presentation movies with their classmates and lecturers. This study also shows that using Windows Movie Maker XP® can help students' learning environment in many ways: they find that English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms can be enjoyable because of the availability of technology which they can utilize; they improve their English in the context of meeting environments which are assigned by their lecturers, and they build their confidence through the role play.

### **INTRODUCTION**

With the intention to make English subjects more appealing to students in Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP), it is felt that this endeavour needs to be integrated with the use of latest technology by learners. Most students are already familiar with most of the latest software like Windows Movie Maker XP®, Macromedia Dream Weaver, Flash and etc., coupled with their interest in exploring this latest technology, have created masterpieces that exceeded lecturer's expectations. Hazzard (2006), states that the ability of students to use English through movie making enable them to be more motivated in English as A Second Language (ESL) classes since "... they [students] can take advantage of their creativity and technology". In her study among Korean students in Pusan University, the four minute movies using students' digital cameras and cell phone cameras make them speak 'a language' [English] which they thought was difficult. Her ESL class became more than a class when students had the opportunity to incorporate as many skills as possible in an English language experience. In her experience conducting this mandatory class, she believes that creating movie is considered as an unusual project assignment seeing that it has created a sense of community that became a better learning environment.

### **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

In UMP, English for Professional Communication is a compulsory English course which students need to take in their fourth semester after completing three English subjects which are English for Academic Communication, English for Technical Communication and English for Business Communication; in the respective order. The course exposes students to public speaking skills, meetings skills and the principles of effective communication. In public speaking skills, students are exposed to learn types and purposes of speeches, methods

of delivery, and preparing, organizing, writing and delivering a speech. In meeting skills however, focus is on how to implement successful meetings as well as how to write the necessary documents for meetings. Finally, in principles of effective communication, the focus is on components of communication process and communication problems arising from poor verbal, non-verbal, listening and diversity skills. Moreover, a pedagogical principle adopted institutionally by UMP which is Student Centred Learning (SCL) which highlights that students should become actively involved in all aspects of the learning from the beginning, and in the process, it is felt that they will learn better (Mc Mahon, 1997).

In the course, students are required to be involved in a number of tasks to demonstrate their skills after acquiring the components described earlier. These tasks are delivering an impromptu speech of about 3 minutes, writing an informative speech outline using the preparation outline format, delivering an informative speech of between 5-6 minutes, writing relevant documents necessary for a meeting such as notice, agenda and minutes, organizing and participating effectively in group meetings lasting not more than 20 minutes and demonstrating (in a role play), based on communication issues or problems and how to handle them. Students are assessed throughout their semester as this is totally a coursework subject. They need to complete all the assessments either in the form of individual assessment or group assessment. The distribution of the coursework is shown in Table 1. Students have four contact hours whereby one hour is devoted to lecture and in the remaining hours students fulfil the task required by their lecturers in MMLL. In the lab, students are able to access softwares available that are Tell More Pro, Windows Movie Maker XP®, Adobe Photoshop and etc. to carry out any task given by their lecturer.

Table 1: Division of Assessments in English for Professional Communication

Assessment	Descriptions	Percentage
Assessment 1	Impromptu speech	10%
Assessment 2A	Speech outline	15%
Assessment 2B	Speech presentation	25%
Assessment 3A	Meeting documents	20%
Assessment 3B	Meeting Presentation	10%
Assessment 4	Role play presentation	20%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

### SAMPLE IN THE STUDY

The study involved 51 students from Electrical Engineering Faculty. Their level of English proficiency is characterised by their score in Malaysian University English Test (MUET). The majority of students totalling 35 students in the class are categorised as modest users where they are able to function moderately in the language. Another 11 students are limited users in which they lack expressiveness, fluency and appropriacy using the language. In some occasions, it is also observed that they express inaccurate use of the language resulting in breakdowns in communication. However, there are five competent users of English who are able to function satisfactorily in performing tasks given by the lecturer. When tasks are given in group for instance, the mixture of language competency of these students sometimes create a boundary to perform the tasks given by the lecturer. This is because on occasion a group may consist of limited users only whereas another group may consists of three competent users, and three modest users or limited users of English. It is observed that interference from the lecturer in determining group members is not necessary since students can identify who they are comfortable working with. Hence, it is felt that having the

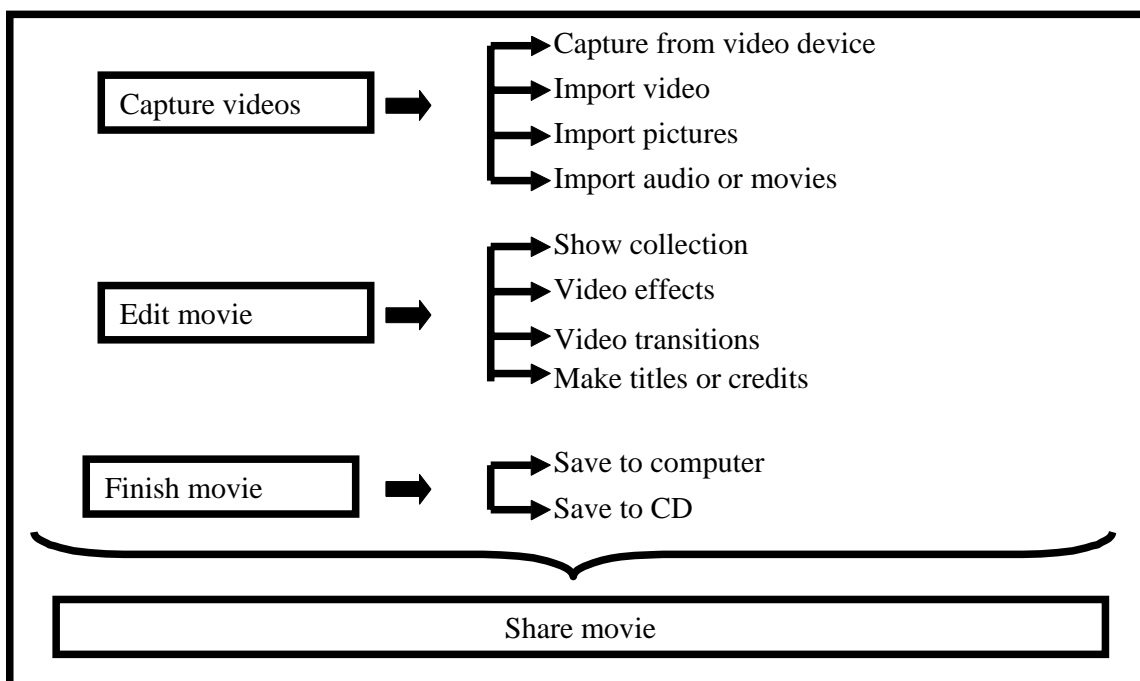
opportunity to select members in their group, enable them to be more responsible and motivated in carrying out the tasks given by the lecturer.

Since these students are young learners' in the age range of twenty to twenty one years old, the latest technology and gadgets make them take the pleasure to learn the subject despite of their mix ability using the language. This is because English classes, specifically English for Professional Communication enable them to use various gadgets and applications of Information and Technology (IT) such as video camera, video tape, internet, graphic software and etc. Blending their interest and skills in using these items enable them to create movies which can be shared with their classmates and lecturer, after they have created and edited their work.

## **METHODOLOGY**

To prepare the movies, students are assigned to form group consisting of five to six members. Leaders are selected in each group to act as mediators for the group. The tasks of these leaders include updating lecturers on the progress of the movies, e mailing the complete scripts and sending the completed versions of the movies in CD formats on its due date. Members of the group as a whole are required to prepare scripts, finding suitable locations to shoot the movies (in and outside the campus) and preparing necessary equipments, gadgets and etc for the movies. Among others, they are also required to appropriately depict a meeting context in terms of setting, appearance and etc. This is relevant to the requirement of Assessment 3B in which they have to show formal meeting and informal meeting in the movie, illustrating suitable work-related issues such as lack of trust among employees, miscommunication, misunderstanding of using non verbal communication and etc. that lead members in the organisation to perform the meetings. In presenting the situations whether it takes place on or off campus, they are required to organize and participate effectively at group meetings lasting not more than 20 minutes. For the purpose of the movie however, they are allowed to maintain approximately a 10 minute movie after it is edited and trimmed. Besides that, students need to fulfil the criteria described in Diagram 1. Using the diagram as a guideline, they are required to consider all the criteria where adding other tasks are considered optional. In capturing video, they are required to ensure that they have a proper video capture devise that must be connected properly and detected on their computer by Windows Movie Maker XP®. They may also import video, pictures, audio or movies from My Video Files, My Picture Files, Audio and Video Files from their own computers or other locations. Show collection in edit movie requires them to drag and drop clip at the storyboard provided in Windows Movie Maker XP®. They can also add effect to these clips by dragging a video effect such as greyscale, water colour, smudge stick, threshold and etc. Using video transitions in their movies enabled them to choose various video transitions, for instance, dissolve, diamond, pixelate, whirlwind and etc. It is necessary for them to identify the locations of where they want to add titles to their movies. The choices vary from adding titles at the beginning of the movie or adding titles on the selected storyboard and etc. Students can also save their movies to various locations like for example to their computer, CD, e mail, web and DVD camera.

Diagram 1: Movie Tasks



Other than the requirements above, it is also compulsory for students to consider the elements of Windows Movie Maker XP® comprising of collections, clips, projects and movies. For collection they are to have 'libraries' that contain different videos, audio and pictures. Clips require them to have a small segment of a larger video file. Clips should be gathered after having several shots or 'takes' for the movies. Projects are obtained when they import audio, videos, or pictures into Windows Movie Maker XP®. A movie is the final project they saved by using the Save Movie Wizard. After all the elements are completed, they are able to save their movie to computers or to a recordable CD. This saved movie then, could be watched on the DV camera or on a TV by the whole class and lecturers in the MMLL.

## DISCUSSION

This study shows that using Windows Movie Maker XP® can help students' learning environment in many ways. It is observed that students in ESL classrooms can have an enjoyable English language learning experiences because of the availability of technology which they can utilize in the classrooms or in MMLL. For the lecturer personally, it is felt that using Windows Movie Maker XP® can promote two-way learning experience between students and lecturers. There is opportunity to learn from students who are skilful in this software as well as other technology or IT equipment. Students on the other hand, learn the language in the context of meeting in the scripts submitted to their lecturer.

In terms of improving their English in the context of meeting environment, consultations that are done on group-to-group basis helped them to identify the appropriate language used in the situation. Comments received from their lecturers are modified so as to ensure that they use the correct utterances that match with the subtitles provided in the movie. Indirectly, having their dialogue to be corrected, they build their confidence when they are able to practice it (dialogue) before the movie is prepared. On the whole, it can be said that using Windows

Movie Maker XP® has helped the lecturer to “turn a group of clock-watches waiting for the end of class into a room of dynamic English- speaking butterflies” (Hazzard, 2006).

## **CONCLUSION**

The hassle that students went through to prepare the movies is something worthy of their effort. The dynamics of the group is observed when students work late at night to edit and compile the whole storyboards to make their movies to complete the tasks. The settings were almost real where chairs and tables were arranged to give a picture where a meeting situation took place. They even ‘sweat’ to carry all the boxes and other stuffs to make the room at the back of MMLL as the location for their meeting place (after permission was granted).

## **REFERENCES**

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