Title	Using a PC, Projector, Textbook Scans and Internet in the EFL Classroom
Author(s)	Hail, Eric
Citation	サイバーメディア・フォーラム. 17 P.44-P.46
Issue Date	2016-12
Text Version	publisher
URL	https://doi.org/10.18910/70415
DOI	10.18910/70415
rights	
Note	

Osaka University Knowledge Archive : OUKA

https://ir.library.osaka-u.ac.jp/repo/ouka/all/

Osaka University

Using a PC, Projector, Textbook Scans and Internet in the EFL Classroom

Eric Hail （全学教育推進機構）

Are your students bored, unenthusiastic and unresponsive in your EFL class? Do some students seem to struggle to understand how to do the textbook tasks, discussions, and other activities in the classroom? Showing textbook scans, pictures, videos and other Internet content on a large screen while setting up an EFL activity can greatly enhance the student learning experience. Showing interesting content can increase the interest and excitement level of the students, and can aid in overcoming some common problems in the EFL classroom by waking them up and getting them on the correct task, and doing it correctly. Generally speaking, the lower English level students will get the most benefit from the visual part of the explanation/instruction. Therefore, I feel the lower the level of the students, the more class time and effort should be given to visual explanation and input.

The practical methodology of using pictures in the ESL classroom

If you aren't familiar with the basic methodology of using pictures and textbook pictures to explain and introduce EFL activities, please read the teacher's manual for ideas. Most modern major-publisher ESL/EFL textbooks have very good and methodologically based explanations of how to do this. Basically, you get the students to look at pictures and ask them who, what, where questions to get them thinking about the topic before they engage in an activity.

You don't need to have a CALL classroom to use pictures in your classroom. Please consider the following when requesting the minimal equipment for your classroom.

Screen size, seating positions and corrective lenses

When it comes to classroom monitors the most important thing to consider is how well all students and seating positions can see detail on the screen. Not surprisingly, when it comes to screen size, bigger is much better. A daylight visible projector and a large screen will be easier to see than a single 50-inch monitor. I prefer a projector for the larger screen size so much that I will carry one across campus if a classroom doesn't have one.

Spotting students without corrective lenses

It is important to keep a lookout for students who need glasses or contacts but aren't wearing them. Sit them closer to the screen. They will remember to bring their glasses the next week if they are made to sit up front near the screen. Have students read something from the screen to check their vision as necessary.

Computer

Although I am a Mac user at home, I prefer a cheap Windows PC for classroom use for several reasons. Firstly, it is often less hassle to get Windows machines set up for, and connected to the various institutions' networks. In addition, the staff is generally more knowledgeable, practiced and proficient with Windows machines, making it easier to get help when needed. Finally, I prefer a cheap Windows notebook because this classroom machine gets a lot of wear and tear from being ported around, packed, unpacked, dropped, bumped, as well as being left in the classroom unattended.

The Windows Photoview app is the best PC app for showing textbook scans because it has mouse point and

scroll to zoom which makes it the easiest to use. This app was discontinued in Windows 10 but can be recovered by intermediate level PC users.

Setting up and connecting a PC or Mac to a particular classroom's Internet and AV systems can be tricky and frustrating even for a fairly geeky instructor. Don't be afraid to politely ask staff to help you set up your computer for the classroom AV and Internet system.

You will often need to visit the IT office and sign up for Internet depending on the system and policies of the particular institution. Be sure to bring all the peripherals needed to connect to that particular classroom Internet and audiovisual system.

Check the nearby administration offices if you find yourself without something you need to connect to the classroom AV system and Internet. They will usually have the more common loaner AV cables and peripherals. If you are a Mac user, be sure to bring your own Mac farkles (accessories) and peripherals! Most universities have loaner PCs available for instructors. Of course, it's preferable to bring your own customized equipment with your settings and content ready to go.

Scanner

A large, full-sized office type scanner capable of doing A3 sized scans will be able to scan most EFL/ESL textbooks laid open two pages at a time. This will both save time in scanning and result in scans that appear exactly the same as what the students see in their textbooks. Ask the office staff if there is a large scanner you can use for this purpose. These scanners are very expensive new, but a very nice secondhand one can be bought from Yahoo Auction for around 20,000 yen.

Classroom audio

Having 4 or more speakers positioned in the front and rear of the classroom will ensure that all seating positions are getting a common volume and clarity.

However, classrooms with only front speakers can suffice if the speakers are good.

Using ITunes on a PC or Mac is the easiest and most efficient way to play textbook listening exercise audio. Having a small iPod with only your classroom audio content is excellent because you can keep all the CDs and files you would ever use in the classroom in your pencil case. This IPod also serves as a backup when your PC is not working properly. Be sure to carry a charger and cables! Be on the lookout for, and considerate of students with hearing impairment.

Internet

Be aware of the general classroom network conditions when planning lessons. A reliable and fast university Internet connection is extremely important. Slow Internet wastes class time and disrupts the class. Unfortunately, currently many universities in Japan could do much better with the Internet that makes it into the classrooms. Some institution's networks might restrict YouTube or other useful internet content usage. It is rather unfortunate that some intuitions cannot seem to recognize the importance of well AV- and Internet-equipped classrooms in the university of today.

Google Maps

Being able to show a place on Google maps is an invaluable, almost infinite atlas at your fingertips in the classroom. Never miss an opportunity to show a place on the map with Google maps. Students tend to find this very interesting and listen intently when shown where in the world exactly a topic city or place is. There are also often nice accompanying images within an easy click of a Google maps screen.

Google Images

How many words is a picture worth? Google images is also an indispensable tool in the EFL classroom, especially for instructors who can't draw well. These days Google has improved a lot in keeping the content that pops up on a search 'clean', 'family friendly', and therefore 'classroom friendly'. Regardless of this, just to be safe always make a habit of disconnecting the student view feed and preview what pops up on the teacher's monitor, before showing students the results of an images search to avoid embarrassment.

YouTube

YouTube is also a great resource in the classroom. Showing a short, but fun YouTube video can greatly increase the students' interest and excitement about a topic, and aid in generating enjoyable and enthusiastic conversation between student pairs and small groups. Again, preview any YouTube videos before showing them to the class. This will allow you to find the best videos on the topic as well as avoiding embarrassing or inappropriate videos.

Slow university Internet network speeds can be more of an issue with streaming YouTube or other videos. Please test and keep in mind the speed and reliability of the classroom Internet you will be using when planning lessons with streaming video. Some institutions might restrict YouTube viewing on their networks, regrettably.

Conclusion

Using AV based audio and visual input can greatly increase the fun and excitement level in a topic among both the students and instructor when setting up activities and discussions in the ESL/EFL classroom. Don't be afraid to experiment and improve your classroom AV content and delivery. Using baby steps is a perfectly acceptable way to start using more AV input in your classroom!