

Students of today, who have grown up with and become accustomed to visual stimulation of television, computers, and video games expect technology to be used effectively as part of their learning experience. As a result, faculties are continuously challenged to hold the attention of these learners from high-tech generation. Through the thoughtful use of computer presentation programs, faculty can create professional looking presentation to enhance the effectiveness of classroom lectures. As an instructor, I can emphasize main points and key announcements and I can enhance my presentation with graphics. My presentations become more organized and flexible, and are easily updated or rearranged. From a student's perspective, class material is far more legible and interesting than hastily-scribbled notes on an overhead or chalkboard.

What is PowerPoint?

PowerPoint is a type of presentation software that allows one to show colored text and images with simple animation and sound PowerPoint is the most popular because it comes bundled with Microsoft packages. PowerPoint will run on either Macintosh or Windows PC's. The files are easy to create and can be e-mailed as attachments. They can be posted on or downloaded from websites, and can be converted to html WebPages. Not only can PowerPoint presentations be traded and exchanged, they can also be modified to fit any individual classroom setting. Although other presentation software may have the same capabilities, PowerPoint is the most common, and it is user friendly.

Why PowerPoint?

The need to improve the world's educational system is more evident than ever. But two points are clear: everyone would benefit from better prepared teachers and more inspired students.

Teaching is a time-consuming task faced mostly alone by every teacher throughout history. No tradition of sharing in teaching has evolved, as its value would have been limited.

Students, even in underprivileged areas, are distracted more and more by flashy alternatives to education, including video games and the Internet. Watching a teacher in front of the duller possible object, a plain black board with at most some white chalk, is clearly an even more tedious experience now than ever.

In terms of the first point, PowerPoint offers a solution especially for EFL teachers. As EFL teachers teach two aspects of Target Language (TL) i.e. the information (the meanings, functions, certain issues a given text may convey) and structure (the rules used when target language perception and production take place), they need to care a lot about timing and effort. Teaching the information takes EFL teachers 60% of their period timing whereas teaching and practicing the structures 35% of their period timing in addition to 5% spent for classroom management, dealing with misbehaviors, coming late for class or school etc.

Using PowerPoint for TEFL objectives offers longer time for practice as it presents the information easily and effectively in a shorter time all in an enjoyable atmosphere. Thus, pupils can gain more time for pupil – pupil interaction (group – pair work) and teacher – pupil interaction. (Figure 1, 2, 3)

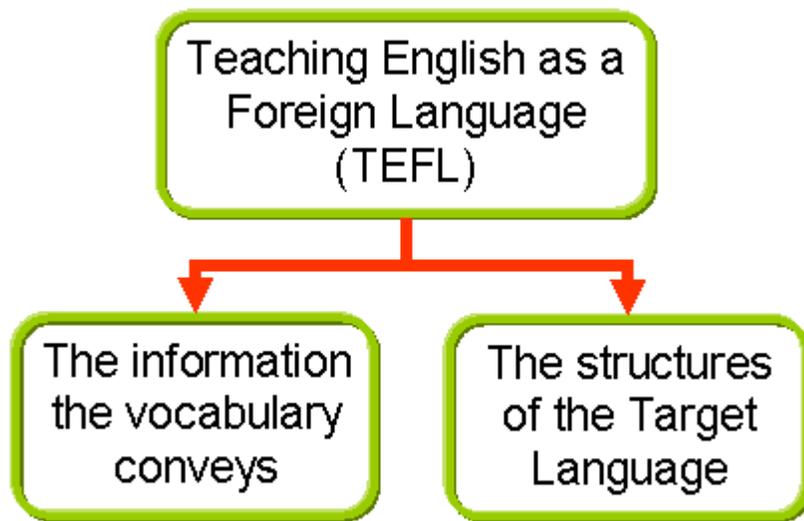


Figure 1: An EFL teacher has to work on introducing two aspects of TL.

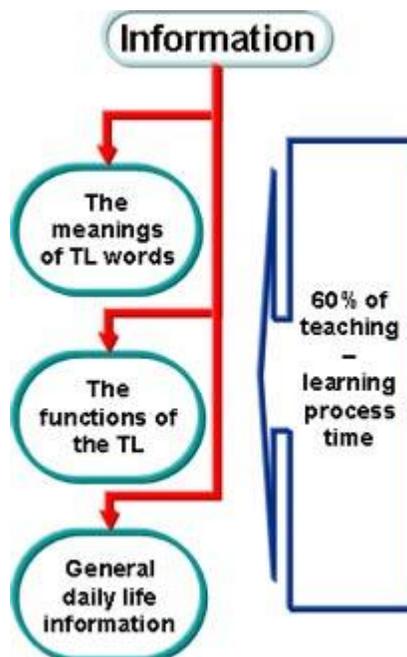


Figure 2: An EFL teacher spends 60% of period time to introduce information aspect.(1)

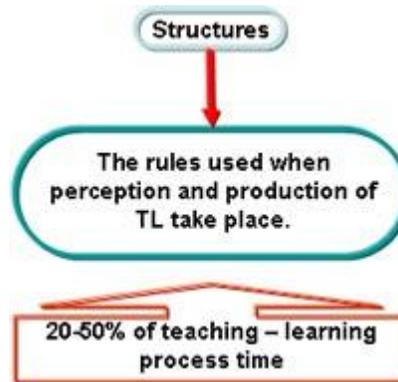


Figure 3: An EFL teacher spends 20 – 50 % of period time to introduce structure aspect.

For those flashy alternatives to education, PowerPoint can help teachers rebalance the scales. PowerPoint presentations can meet with individual differences and various learning styles. It is well known that "The combination of hearing about a concept, seeing a demonstration, and then talking about it seems to be the best way for a student to learn," A presentation with videos, graphics, sounds, music, tables, charts, graphs, animations can suit visual, auditory and kinesthetic learners (figure 4). Therefore, a class taught through out such presentations will be of great interest in the TL and make reasonable progress. The learners are motivated by the interest and enjoyment of using this technique as well as by their better understanding of the TL which has been a burden and a barrier for some of them.

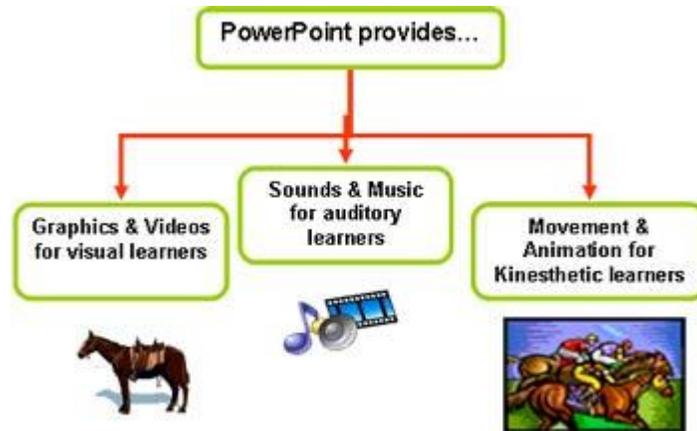


Figure 4: PowerPoint offers a variety of Multimedia aspects for EFL teachers to use.

Creating new presentations is facilitated by PowerPoint's compatibility with word processing programs. A text from online sources can be cut and pasted into a slide. Scanned images from examples of documents and images can also be inserted. The software has a large database of clip art and there are more image galleries available online. Lastly, images and text can be combined and resized for effect and animated to underscore particular points.

Varying classroom presentations with the graphical mindset of PowerPoint slides can help students shift their modes of thinking—a form of mental cross-training. It can address the needs of students with different learning styles and prepare them to practice in a world that values images to express ideas. It also introduces them to a technology that in many areas of Academic practice has become essential, and which they will need to learn.

How does PowerPoint fit?

PowerPoint presentations can be used in many ways in the EFL class as well as in other classes. Presentations can be used for initial teaching, for practice and drilling, for games, for reviews and for tests.

a) Initial Teaching

PowerPoint can be used to teach new ideas and concepts to students. In theory this sounds good; however, in practice this can be tricky. The teacher must anticipate areas of misunderstanding and difficulty. Once the teacher knows the troubles, which the students will face, he or she can create or adapt a presentation for the students. This presentation should address anticipated areas of student difficulty in orderly manner. This type of presentation is difficult to prepare, but it can be done. Once an initial presentation is prepared, it can be saved and used again and again, and it can be shared with others.

b) Practice and Drill

To do this it is necessary to have the type of material which can be repeated many times. A presentation of irregular verbs is one example of something which can be repeated again and again. Other types of material can be repeated on a weekly or biweekly basis. Presentations using correct preposition, or the correct form of an adjective, or countable and uncountable contrasts could be practiced and reviewed periodically.

c) Review and Revision

PowerPoint presentations are great for reviewing ideas which have already been taught. After the students have learned and practiced something, it is good to see a presentation. Such

presentation shouldn't be showed every day. They must be saved for a special treat something during the week or month. Not only do students find this interesting, but it is also a good way to check and see if they have mastered a concept. PowerPoint presentations are also a good way to review before a test.

D) Tests

Teachers can use PowerPoint for their tests. The best example is vocabulary test. A teacher can place graphics, videos, and movie clips of items on slides to be shown at present intervals. (The timer can be set for a reasonable number of seconds for each slide.) The students then write or say the name of the item. Using the timer feature, a teacher can design many types or tests or quizzes.

Advantages of using PowerPoint

- Appropriate use of PowerPoint can enhance the teaching and learning experience for both staff and students.
- Clarify information.
- Highlight major point for emphasis.
- Help students visualize concept.
- Summarize and organize material.
- Made material more clear, colorful and interesting
- Help students stay focused on the material and follow along more easily
- Outline goals and tasks for the day
- Help students understand exactly what exactly is expected of them.

- Absent students won't lose the chance to catch up again as you can provide them with a copy of the presentation.
- PowerPoint provides more time for listening and comprehending so that class time is used effectively.

Disadvantages Of using PowerPoint

The most common abuses in PowerPoint use for teaching and learning include:

- Including excessive detail so that students need not be active (or even present if files are made available) during delivery.
- Slides are visually poor and/or boring or even over the top – this is particularly the case when reds and greens dominate
- Too much text is put on a slide detracting from its legibility.
- Excessive use of graphics– just because you can!
- Irritating noises and slide transitions.
- Inappropriate use of multimedia options.
- Tendency to go too fast is common simply because of the ease of delivery of the material
- Not making plans for coping in event of technological failure e.g. backup overheads (expensive) or alternative activities, etc

These negative aspects are easily avoided by training and reflecting upon your approach to teaching and learning. Science subjects still tend to be dominated by the information transmission mode of teaching but this is in need of re-thinking if we are to develop the types of

student skills that tertiary education claims to foster e.g. making presentations more interactive and problem-solving orientated.

How to obtain PowerPoint presentation

- Create Your Own PowerPoint Presentations

Any teacher can create presentations if he or she has the PowerPoint software. There are many good tutorials on how to create presentations. Some of these can be found at the following links:

- <http://www.actden.com/pp/>
- <http://www.electricteacher.com/tutorial3.htm>

For PowerPoint tips and tricks:

- <http://www.bitbetter.com/powertips.htm>
- <http://www.teachers-connect.net/cc/99-00/advpp.htm>
- Get PowerPoint Presentation from Others

There are many great websites where a teacher can download PowerPoint presentations. I like to download presentations for elementary school children and then modify them for my ESL students who are older. As you become more familiar with PowerPoint, you may wish to do the same. You can find this by putting “English PowerPoint presentation” in a search engine. You might also try “ESL PowerPoint” and other such variations. Some sites allow you to preview the presentations, but most simply list them. You can download them directly. Some are read only or protected. If you want to modify such a file, simply open a new presentation and copy the read only file into it. You can then modify the copy which you made.

Tips for Using Slides Effectively

- 1- Plan your presentation structure carefully and according to the general rules of presentation. Use clear, large, legible fonts for text. This is especially important if you have scanned text or have cut/pasted text from a word processor.
- 2- Do not put too much information on the screen, only your key points. So keep slides simple and minimize the amount of information on each slide. When possible use graphics to present the same information.

For example, instead of listing four types of software use graphics of four floppy disks with the name of the software inside each.
- 3- Avoid using too many slides. Keep the slide presentations about 10-15 minutes long and then stop for some interaction or an activity.
- 4- Use slides selectively to support your main points, to provide examples and graphics and to make announcements and reminders. Try to break up the monotony of text by using pictures, maps, diagrams, and other visuals. If possible, add sound and other multimedia elements; use animation such as flying text and fancy transitions in moderation. PowerPoint 97 has great support for these multimedia elements.
- 5- Remember to move slowly from slide to slide because electronic presentations tend to make you lecture more quickly than usual.
- 6- Use traditional lecturing techniques to elaborate on key points. Most important, don't lose your normal teaching style.
- 7- A remote control device will allow you to move more freely around the room.

8- Be sure to practice using the equipment in advance because students quickly grow impatient during hardware and software glitches and feel their time is wasted.

PowerPoint presentations are easy to obtain, modify, and create. They are very versatile and a great to any classroom. Good presentations may take time to produce or adapt, but they can be shared and used year after year. They can be used for any number of purposes, and in numerous situations. Keep in mind that the computer is a tool, not the primary focus of your class. But even a tool can greatly enhance your lecture style and impact student learning and productivity.