

Teaching Vocabulary with Visual aids

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Content Introduction	Using visual aids is an essential teaching strategy in the English as Second Language classroom and English as Foreign Language classroom. Most foreign language research has recognized that memorizing language forms and words is a very ineffective strategy for learning a target language. In the ESL/EFL classroom, using visual aids can help students to strengthen and reinforce what they have learned. The reason may be that they allow students to absorb the information through an additional sensory perception.

Abstract

The purpose of this research paper is to show how to best use visual aids in the ESL/EFL classroom. Using visual aids such as pictures, posters, postcards, word calendars, realia, charts, graphic organizers, picture books, television, videos from iTunes, and computers can help students easily understand and realize the main points that they have learned in the classroom. For each visual aid, students have different responses and expressions because of their different educational and cultural background. Using visual aids can help students understand the deep meaning of a topic and realize similarities and differences between each topic. The author has included detailed a description of different visual aids as well as three lesson plans which employ many different visual aids. The intent is to guide ESL/EFL teachers everywhere in the optimal use of visual aids in their classroom.

Teaching Vocabulary with Visual aids

In second language learning, using visual aids is an essential teaching strategy in the English as Second Language classroom and English as Foreign Language classroom. Most foreign language research has recognized that memorizing language forms and words is a very ineffective strategy for learning a target language. In the ESL/EFL classroom, using visual aids can help students to strengthen and reinforce what they have learned. The reason may be that they allow students to absorb the information through an additional sensory perception.

In Taiwan, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) are often taught ineffectively. The Taiwanese English system involves a nine year system in which students have to learn English from elementary school (6 years) to junior high school (3 years). Throughout my English as a second language education, my English teachers seldom used visual aids in the classroom. As a student, I found that my learning experience consisted largely of memorizing English words and grammar forms. This could be done very quickly, but forgetting what I learned about English could also be very quick. Moreover, faced with the pressure of entrance examinations, in each semester, students have to memorize many new vocabulary words and grammar rules in a short time. Furthermore, teachers often do not have enough time to teach each topic using interesting visual aids. In addition, some parents think using visual aids in second language class is waste of time. These are some of the reasons that students acquiring a second language feel intense pressure. In Taiwan, the goal of studying English is to get a high score on the university entrance examination. As a consequence, many students stop studying English because of the entrance exam pressure, and boredom and frustration with learning a second language.

Under these circumstances, the author feels that using visual aids can improve ESL/EFL students' interest in learning a second language. I believe that if teachers use visual aids regularly, students will expect to learn the next language topic by using visual aids, because each visual aid for them is an interesting learning tool. Facilitating an interesting learning environment can enhance students' English abilities and this is a major goal for ESL/EFL teachers. ESL/EFL teachers should be aware of various language strategies they can use to teach students, as well as how to apply effective and varied instruction in Taiwanese schools. In order to achieve this goal, the author believes that using various visual aids should be applied in the ESL/EFL classroom to improve students' English ability. Using visual aids can not only stimulate students' learning interest, but students can also interact with these visual aids, and can relate them to their past experience or their daily life experience.

Moreover, using visual aids can not only develop students' literacy abilities, but also can develop their oral ability. Visual aids allow students to have a chance to brainstorm and present their ideas or thoughts. They can create their own stories in which there are no right

or wrong answers. Furthermore, they also can participate in group work such as paired reading or small group activity. They will have the opportunities to create their own stories that depend on their background experience. In group work, they can discuss the similarities and the differences between each person's interpretations of a picture.

Using visual aids makes the materials more "user friendly" Visual aids help teachers' presentations and objectives by placing emphasis on whatever is being taught. Clear visual aids multiply the learners' level of understanding of the material presented, and they can send clear messages and clarify points from teachers. Moreover, visual aids can involve the audience by providing a change from one activity to another, and from hearing to seeing. In addition, learners are more fascinated by gestures and movement in the classroom. Additionally, visual aids impact and add interest to a presentation. They can create excitement. Visual aids enable learners to use more than one sense at the same time. One picture could elicit unlimited words.

The most important reason for different perception of a visual aid is because each student has a different cultural background and past experience. Therefore, one picture can be presented and internalized by different people in different ways. Furthermore, using visual aids can increase the learners' understanding and retention level.

ESL learners can benefit when teachers give them opportunities to move beyond their stylistic comfort zone through the use of visual aids. However, they may feel uncomfortable initially. Whereas, visual learners can benefit from visual stimuli such as pictures, books, videos, charts, posters, and so on because they benefit from being shown rather than told, while analytic learners can benefit from these activities that involve understanding and improve their accuracy.