

English Language Discussion Board

<http://www.anglik.net/boards.htm>

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Content Introduction	Teachers should know how to use visual aids which are technology-based to help students learn second language, while maintaining their interest in learning. As teachers know, ESL/EFL students need a variety of skills to learn a second language. The most convenient way is to use the computer. The computer is a teaching tool and it is also one kind of social interaction within the classroom (Leech and Candlin, 1986: 11). Therefore, the purpose of this section is to show the advantages of using technology-based visual aids. The Internet is not only for entertainment, it can also be used to search for information.

Abstract

Teachers should know how to use visual aids which are technology-based to help students learn second language, while maintaining their interest in learning. As teachers know, ESL/EFL students need a variety of skills to learn a second language. The most convenient way is to use the computer. The computer is a teaching tool and it is also one kind of social interaction within the classroom (Leech and Candlin, 1986: 11). Therefore, the purpose of this section is to show the advantages of using technology-based visual aids. The Internet is not only for entertainment, it can also be used to search for information.

The online resource for students of English as a second or foreign language

There are many online learning ways, and some of the most popular are using e-mail assignments, online correction in ESL instruction, using online discussion board, and the online chat rooms.

I. E-amils/facebook

One of the resources from the Internet is open software. “Open source software is free to use, download, modify and distribute” (Kessler, 2007: 25). For example, SLAT (Software Liberty Association of Taiwan) is one kind of open source software. For many typical ESL learning environments, open source software can extend collaboration and teaching grammar rules. Technology-based software can help students learn new vocabulary easier. In addition, having some online classes attracts students’ attention. Online learning is not for entertainment, but it supplies a quick way to get opportunities to learn the target language for many students. Therefore, online learning has many advantages over traditional classroom-based learning. Technology is easier to use today and it provides a convenient way to learn the target language. This trend could prove unstoppable and has the potential for tremendous expansion worldwide.

Using e-mail assignments and online correction in ESL instruction can help students learn how to write in a number of genres, use different rhetorical patterns, and demonstrate appropriate use of grammar and mechanics. ESL students need a variety of skills to achieve success in composition courses. “Initiating an e-mail component in a composition course, teachers should identify writing tasks and skills that will help students achieve these goals” (Melby-Mauer 2003: 37). It is also useful to use online journals in which teachers put up journals online, and this can help students to gain fluency in writing and practice grammatical error analysis. In this way, students can not only compare their writing skills online, they also can learn new writing skills from their teachers’ journal. Correction is not the main focus because students can revise their journals through e-mail messages. Students can develop their writing speed and facility with e-mails, and teachers can make sure that students can revise and edit very well.

There are several steps that teachers have to ask students to follow in order to achieve a technology-based visual aid. First, teachers have to make sure students have e-mail account. Teachers can provide a list of numerous Internet service that offer free accounts such as www.yahoo.com, www.hotmail.com, www.go.com.etc. Second, teachers have to teach students how to send and resend e-mails. Third, teachers should

start to send weekly assignments by e-mail. Teachers can make a list which allows them to send the same assignment to all students simultaneously. Once students have teachers' e-mail address, they can respond electronically (Melby-Mauer 2003: 37).

II. Videos from The Internet

Youtube is a digital media player application for playing and organizing digital music and video files. Additionally, Youtube can connect to the Youtube via the internet to allow users to download digital music, videos, television shows, iPod games, audiobooks, various podcasts, and feature length films. In addition, Youtube is a resource that allows students to download audio, video, and PDF files. Moreover, Youtube evaluates the source of the content such as songs, videos, podcasts, and playlists. Youtube also can add a missing part in the content that students need them and avoid duplicates. Youtube can also transfer song-dependent data like "My Rating", "last Played", "Play Count", album artwork, etc.

There are three examples which ESL/EFL learners who can get videos on Youtube. First, Youtube allows ESL/EFL learners to watch videos directly online. If learners are using Youtube, they can also preview and download videos from the Youtube Store. Youtube also shows a TV screen icon next to each video name so learners can tell the movie files apart from the music. Videos that learners add to Youtube appear in their Youtube library and in Youtube, they also appear in the appropriate playlist (Movies, TV Shows, or Music Videos) in the Source pane.

Second, Movies from the Youtube Store transfer to learners' iPod or iPhone to watch on the go. Either device remembers where they stopped watching on their computer and picks up where they left off. When learners download movies from Youtube, they get a 640-by-480-pixel image² that's great for watching on their computer, iPod, or iPhone. And Youtube makes playing movies a pleasure, thanks to convenient onscreen controls.

Third, the Youtube video store is unique in that it is the only video downloading service available that does not use a web browser (such as Internet Explorer or Firefox). Instead, the Youtube video store is embedded inside of the Youtube media player. Currently, the Youtube video store has more than 400 film titles for download and purchase, as well as 200 TV shows from 30+ TV networks. If learners are avid movie-goers who watch the typical commercial film at the box office, chances are it will be released on the Youtube video store. By the same token, if they want prime-time shows from any major network, they will most likely find the videos here. Youtube has

an exclusive contract with Disney, so this is the only place to find their movies. Most avant-garde, independent and foreign films are not sold by Youtube.

Moreover, Youtube is ease of use. The Youtube video store is easy to navigate and search. The front page displays the new arrivals to the store, as well as top video purchases. Synopses and previews are available for all films before purchase. The power search feature lets learners find movies by title, actor, director, producer, year and MPAA rating (G, PG, etc.). Parental controls let learners dictate what types of films they can access on Youtube.

The following are three examples of videos from Youtube which show how elementary school students can obtain benefits from Youtube. First, a famous folktale is *The dog and the meat*. The purpose of this activity is to teach listening. In this activity, teachers can give out the pictures first and have students look at them. Then the teacher should ask are there any questions. Next, the teacher should divide students into small groups, and have the prediction what the story will be about and what order the pictures should go in. This helps further prepare them for what they are about to hear. After the reading is done, the students should put the pictures in the right order. The next step is that teachers show the videos from Youtube and have students listen to and look at the story. In this activity, students read the folktale by looking at pictures before viewing the folktales on Youtube.

The teacher can use Youtube to make an interesting comparing and contrasting the story. In groups, the students read this story and make sure they understand this folktale. Each group also creates an activity or a presentation to accompany this folktale and shares it with the class. The students then create a listening library of folktales using Youtube.

Another famous folktale is *It could always be worse*. The purpose of this activity related to the folktale is to teach speaking. Before this activity, the teacher shows the video from Youtube. In this activity, the teacher tells the story to the students first and involves students as much as possible in repeating refrains, predicting what will happen, and helping tell the story. Then, the students move cut-out pieces (small pictures to help students use the target language to retell a story and to help students who learn best with hands-on involvement) to the right places on the blackboard as the teacher tells the story, to help reinforce the story. Next, using the copies of the background picture and cut-out pieces, have each pair retell or act out the story with them. If a story has two main characters, each student can take the part of one character, or students can take turns

telling scenes. Finally, if tie allow, have one pair of students retell the story to the whole class to review the material again.

Teachers can use Youtube or another program to convert the audio so that they can play it on their portable music player. This may be MP3 or another format – it really doesn't matter which it is as long as their music player can play it – just upload it to their device and they can carry their language course wherever they go. That brings about great flexibility and teachers will be able to follow their course in anywhere. Teachers can even take it to anywhere so that students can study the target language during lunch break.

While listening to the target language will help students improve their listening skills, they really do need to practice speaking to help with their conversational skills. While students could try it anywhere for just 10 or 15 minutes every day, they will see an improvement. The real key here is regular practice to keep reinforcing the information that their brain absorbs. Although teaching the target language is no substitute for actually living in a speaking country and forcing themselves to use the language in their everyday life, you will gain some benefit all the same.

The final famous folktale is *The Fox and the Stork*. The purpose of this activity is to teach writing. In this activity, the teacher preteach vocabulary if necessary. Then depending on the clarity of the pictures, the familiarity of the story, and the students, the teacher may need to tell some or all of the story. For each picture, have students answer the questions who, what, when, where, and why. Once students have answered these questions for each picture, have them see the videos from Youtube and write a story based on the information then they have generated.

Using Youtube as a quick writing Tools as a handy reference. The following are the steps: 1) begin sentences with subjects and verbs; 2) order words for emphasis; 3) activate verbs; 4) watch nouns and prepositions; 5) take it easy on the Youtube; 6) fear not the long sentence; 7) establish a pattern, and give it a twist. There are some special effects. 1) prefer the simple over the technical; 2) give key words; 3) play with pictures and videos, even in serious stories; 4) get the name of the Fox and the Stork; 5) pay attention to details; 6) seek original images; 7) riff on the creative language of others; 8) set the pace with sentence length; 9) vary the lengths of paragraphs; 10) choose the number of elements with a purpose in mind; 11) know when to back off and when to show off; finally, climb up and down the ladder of abstraction.

Reference

English Language Discussion Board. 2007. "The online resource for students of English as a second or foreign language," <http://www.anglik.net/boards.htm>.