PowerPoint Presentation and Online Teaching

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ABSTRACT

The use of PowerPoint for teaching presentations has considerable potential for encouraging more professional presentations. This paper reviews points associated with its use in a teaching and learning context and suggests some guidelines and pedagogical strategies that need to be considered where it is to be used. It summaries some of the key principles of presentation that are frequently ignored and suggests some of the approaches that need to be incorporated into good practice in Life Science teaching and learning. Its use is often limited to an information transmission mode and this paper emphasises that this is a very restricted pedagogical use of a very powerful and flexible teaching and learning support tool. The impact of technology on language learning and language teaching proves to be a fortunate thing in case of English. TELL, i.e. Technology Enhanced Language Learning, has changed the entire language classroom environment. The present review paper is an attempt to put in the picture the latest technology enhanced language learning facility made available by the use of PowerPoint.

Keywords: PowerPoint Presentation, Effective Teaching and Learning.

Introduction

Robert Frost, 'the voice of America' in his celebrated poem 'Mending Wall' made a few convincing comments on human life and demeanour. He gave two contrasting opinions of the two neighbours. One saying: "something there is that doesn't love a wall" - and the other: "Good fences make good neighbours." Obviously this is a dramatic poem about two fanners facing a problem. But just peep in words, you'll find that the poem states one of the greatest problems of our time. The question of World unity and universal brotherhood dominate the attention of the intellectuals, and Frost's poem is a contribution to the discussion held on this subject. He asks the vital question, whether the walls of nation should be made stronger for our protection, or whether they should be let down, since they obstruct man's progress towards common understanding and brotherhood.

Teaching aids in current scientific and technological advancement: The progress and prestige of every educational institution is dependent on the effectiveness in teaching. Students and society attract towards the institution having effective teaching. So, *every* educational institution struggles to improve, bring variety and effectiveness in the teaching. Different useful teaching aids have been developed from current scientific and technological advancement. Computers are useful in educational administration, organisation, teaching, research etc.

Computers can be used in teaching in two ways:

1. Computer-Aided Instruction

2. Computer-Assisted Instruction

Computer-Aided Instruction: A teacher needs various references when he teaches in a traditional way of teaching. It is convenient to refer to the encyclopedia then to see a number of books. But to use a computer and to get *the* desired information quickly is better than that. Here *we* expect the help of the computer in which the information is already stored. Hence it is used as an aid and not directly used in the process of teaching. Teacher uses it as an assistant.

Computer-Assisted Instruction: Just as a computer helps the teacher as an encyclopedia it is actually used in giving instruction to the student to be precise teaching. The features of the computer-assisted instruction are: i) This technique is dependent on the interaction between computer and the student. Its objective is learning. ii) In this technique the computer directly instructs the student. Sufficient information is stored in the computer to take the student to the expected level. iii) special provision is made in the computer to enable the student to study at his own speed. Nay, it is an aid of self-learning / study.

Increased use of PowerPoint in college classrooms: The use of PowerPoint has increased in the present decade. There is considerable decline in the attendance at lectures throughout Higher Education. However, with the help of technology enhanced teaching, such as PowerPoint there is every hope to retain the attendance at lectures. Of course, the quality of lectures in general is responsible for this. Where advanced technology like PowerPoint is provided the traditional teaching strategies get support. The teacher's command over language and Power Point can't perform magic. Power Point is becoming more commonly used in college classrooms for various reasons. Even students are now interred as they are enthusiastic to know more of presentation technologies. Use of PowerPoint is helpful for following characteristics:

1. Easy renovation and portability of materials.

2. Time and energy saving.

3. Enhancement of the teaching and learning experience on the part of teacher and student.

4. Varied learning styles can be encouraged by combination of media.

5. Can be useful in Virtual Learning Environment.

6. Polished handouts can be easily provided.

Creating a successful PowerPoint presentation: Microsoft has provided 12 tips for creating better PowerPoint presentations. These tips include selection of theme, use of video and audio, use of graphics, animations, transitions, outlining, layouts, differences between print and on-screen presentations, use of notes pages and handouts, keeping manageable size of the file, use of the tools available, use of auto correct layout options, identify the viewers' expectation etc. In addition to these important tips, we can also add some more:

1. Use the K.I.S.S. principle (Keep it short and simple)

2. Use keywords or phrases

3. Talk to audience not to Screen and Don't place yourself in front of the screen

4. Use pointer and switch off instrument when not required

Considering the tips mentioned earlier, it is necessary to prepare the slides with perfect care.

While making the slides, remember: Use minimum words as less is more on slide, use bullets, content of the slide must be readable.

l   Content of the slide must be visible so use at least 18 to 24, font size, use short sentences; restrict the content of a slide to six lines, use soft background, Contrast the text with background.

l   Use larger font size to highlight the important information, Use minimum essential animation.

l   Keep the number of slides in control to maintain proper.

Actual presentation: The impact of your PowerPoint presentation is not just dependent on technology, but your efficiency as a public speaker plays a vital role. A PowerPoint presenter must Wow: "Perfect practice makes man perfect." So he must not present directly but has to make a mock presentation. Practice enables him to mentally run through presentations. He must be able to predict likely questions and prepare for answers. The best way to practice is to evaluate and prepare in front of a mirror. A powerful presentation is not a matter of chance, a lot of preparation and practice is required. The presenter must dress smartly. He has to entertain the audience

with deliberate humour. Voice modulation converts the teacher into a 'charmer' as your enthusiasm and energy is reflected into your voice.

Crystal-clear idea of the topic and apt collection of material are must for organisation of presentation. The significance is given to the rational progression of the vital concepts. Unnecessary details and description must be avoided. A powerful presentation is near to our routine talk, so the presenter must keep his sentences short. Ambiguity, obscurity and use of unfamiliar terminology or short forms harm the comprehensibility of presentation. The picture or graphics speaks more than the text. So the presenter must not worry about adding much text or data. The presenter must stimulate and not puzzle the audience. Use of clear, simple visuals and sometimes even the clear screen can be sufficient to the requirement. When the presenter expects the audience to concentrate on his speech he can temporarily clear the screen by Pressing W or B. The presentation can be resumed by pressing the same or any key. The overall impact of the visual depends on background. Viewers have the benefit of light colour background with dark text. In projection stage colors appear lighter or even white, so care must be taken while selecting the colour of the background. Specialised impact can be brought by keeping an unvarying background.

Conclusions

PowerPoint is an outstanding aid to presentations. PPT tries to give learning experience and avoids the drawbacks of

passive knowledge communication. The use of PPT improves teaching and makes it more effective. Proper use encourages the teacher as it gives the freedom from conventional monotonous teaching activity. It improves the professionalism and quality of their instruction. Significance and flexibility of PowerPoint enhances creativity of the user. At this instant we expect every teacher engaged in utilisation of new technology in his routine task as in the words of Allan M Jones we must emphasise the dictum "Failing to prepare is preparing to fail". Right now due to the educational needs of the globalised scenario of education the use of computers in language teaching has become inevitable. Educational institutions using distance mode of education can be largely benefited by it. Particularly the students from abroad can have it like a boon. At present some Open Universities have brought out the concept of virtual classrooms into the practice. Language teachers must accept the reality of virtual classrooms as a challenge. A language teacher must get himself trained to face the challenges of teaching English in the changing scenario. Therefore, it is desirable to adopt new technology in the teaching learning process.

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