

Technology training for language teachers: problems and solutions

Handout

Principles for successful implementation of new technology

1. Know the respective roles of the teacher and the technology.
2. Teach in a principled way.
3. The technology is there to complement and enhance what the teacher does; not the other way round.
4. "It's not what it is, it's what you do with it". (Jones 1986) It is not the interactive whiteboard per se which could improve the learning experience, but how it is used.

Adapted from: Blended Learning - using technology in and beyond the language classroom (Sharma and Barrett Macmillan 2007)

Four approaches to using an Interactive whiteboard in the language classroom

Using regular programs

There are many pieces of software used every day by you and your learners for preparing lessons, during lessons, doing self-study and doing homework. These include word processor and presentation programs, electronic dictionaries and other interactive CD-ROMs from course books, media players, and websites. Running these familiar programs through an interactive whiteboard (IWB) allows teachers and learners new to IWBs to start using the equipment quickly and to exploit the advantages of interacting with those programs in a different way.

Using the whiteboard software

Included with each IWB is the manufacturer's own software. Part of this package is a collection of ready-made and easily adaptable lesson activities. These are stored in a gallery, library or toolkit and are activated by being dragged onto the screen. Some, such as maps, dice, clocks and timers, can be used instantly. Others require customisation such as inputting the target vocabulary for your lesson or the phonetic symbols you plan to focus on in your lesson. The result is interactive crossword puzzles, pelmanism and various types of games.

Using published materials

The course book is at the centre of many language classrooms. Increasingly, publishers are also creating IWB versions of these books. There are variations in how complex these programs are and the degree to which the teacher can customise the material. They all provide images of the pages of the book. Standard features are the ability to zoom in on the part of a page you wish to focus on, audio and transcripts that can be accessed directly, and many programs allow you and your learners to enter and check the answers to exercises via the IWB. The principle benefit is your classroom becomes a 'heads up' learning environment instead of each student bent over their book.

Creating and adapting your own materials

Once you and your learners are confident with using an IWB in the classroom you can start to employ the manufacturer's software to create your own materials. These programs allow you to use layered shapes, colour and text to create interactive exercises. These can be locked in place on the screen or dragged as part of the activity. The layering allows elements to be hidden and revealed. Text can be easily edited to suit the subject of the lesson or the levels of the learners. As you become more proficient, you can start to build up a set of materials that you can use again and again.

Further reading: articles (Pete Sharma)

Interactive whiteboards that Divide (Learning English: Guardian Weekly 17 / 07 / 09)
The rise and rise of the interactive whiteboard (ETP Issue 66 January 2010)
Ten things to do with an interactive whiteboard (MET Vol 19 Number 1 January 2010)

Books

Blended Learning: using technology in and beyond the language classroom (Pete Sharma and Barney Barrett) (Macmillan) [Shortlisted for the Ben Warren International House Trust Prize 2007] Chapter six.

400 Ideas for Interactive Whiteboards (Pete Sharma, Barney Barrett and Francis Jones) Macmillan (2011)

Interactive Whiteboards for Education: Theory, Research and Practice Thomas, M., & Cutrim Schmid, E. (Eds.) (2010). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.



Websites

iTILT (Interactive Technologies in Language Teaching) [http://itilt.eu/](http://itilt.eu)
A European project which aims to promote best practice in communicative language teaching using interactive whiteboards

Macmillan Books for Teachers' website - Blended Learning updates
<http://www.macmillanenglish.com/methodology/books/Blended-Learning.htm>

Pete Sharma Associates - blog www.psa.eu.com

Wayne Trottman Review of 400 Ideas <http://www.waynetrotman.com/wp/?p=643>

Training events

Tuesday, 8th November 2011 Macmillan Virtual conference
"If you've got it, use it!": four approaches to using your IWB" Pete Sharma

Saturday, February 11th, 2012 English UK
Getting the most out of your Interactive Whiteboard: approaches and pedagogies
<http://www.englishuk.com/en/training/training-days>

Bio

Pete Sharma is the Director of training of **Pete Sharma Associates Limited**, which runs courses in educational technology. Pete is a regular conference presenter at IATEFL, TESOL and BESIG. He is a lecturer in EAP, an ELT author and consultant. His latest book as co-author is *400 Ideas for interactive whiteboards* (Macmillan 2011). Pete is currently the joint deputy co-ordinator of the IATEFL Learning Technologies SIG.

Bibliography

Freeman, D (1989) Teacher training, development and decision making: A Model of teaching and relate strategies for language teacher education. TESOL Quarterly 23 (1): 27-45

Jones, C (1086) 'It's not so much the program, more what you do with it: the importance of methodology in CALL' System 14 / 2, 171-178

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