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1. What is meant by “visual aids”?

Pictures, objects, things for the students to look at.

2. Why are they so important?

- Showing visuals focuses attention on meaning, and helps to make the language used in the class more real and alive.
- Having something to look at keeps the student’s attention, and makes the class more interesting.
- Visuals can be used at any stage of the lesson – to help in presenting new language or introducing a topic, as part of language practice and when reviewing language that has been presented earlier.

Good visuals are not just used once, but again and again, and can be shared by different teachers.

3. The choice of medium and visual style is affected by:

Many media and many styles of visual presentation are useful to the language learner. There is no general rule to indicate which medium and which visual style are appropriate at any one time.

The choice is affected by:

- the age, interests, type of intelligence and experience of the student.
- the physical circumstances of the classroom or laboratory.
- the cost and convenience of the materials available.

The teacher’s own experience will help him to judge the relevance of these points.

4. Five basic questions (Five basic criteria for deciding whether to use pictures or not).

It is very common to hear people say that pictures are all right for beginners and for young people but not for advanced students or exam classes. This generalization is unhelpful and untrue. Any activity done in the classroom must be efficient in achieving its purpose. Pictures should certainly be subjected to some practical criteria for assessment of their value, but such criteria should apply to all activities whether they involve pictures or not. The five criteria below provide a way of deciding whether to use an activity or not, whether the activity is a conventional drill or a game making use of pictures.

✓ Easy to prepare.

Is it easy to prepare? If it is difficult to prepare in relation to what you will get out of it, then don't do it. If it takes you an hour or two to prepare an activity which you can then use many times with different classes, then it is worth it. Once you have built up a picture library it is usually not difficult to prepare the activities suggested in this work.

✓ Easy to organize.

Is it easy to organize in the classroom? If it is difficult to organize in the classroom, then don't do it. Opening a textbook is not difficult to organize, but most of the activities do require organizational time and energy. The teacher has to decide whether the effort of organizing a more complicated activity is worth while in terms of the three points which follow.

✓ Interesting.

Is it interesting to the students? Is it interesting to you? The textbook may be interesting but, on the other hand, you and the students might like to have a change from it. And, of course, the textbook may not be interesting at all! If the activity you are considering is unlikely to interest you and the students, then you will question whether it is worth doing.

✓ Meaningful and authentic.

Will the language and the way you want the students to use it be authentic and intrinsic to the activity? Would native speakers be at least reasonably happy to use the language in the same way? Students are going to gain more if the language they use

is vital to the situation; there should be some reaction or result if they use the language appropriately, or indeed inappropriately. Many conventional language teaching techniques fall down heavily at this point! It is also probably true that many activities which appear to be communicative are little more than empty drills, in the sense that no one really cares about the meaning.

✓ Sufficient amount of language.

Will the activity give rise to a sufficient amount of language in order to justify its inclusion in the language lesson? If not, unless point 3 above is sufficient for you.

These five criteria can be applied by any teacher: teachers of advanced adult students or teacher of exam classes, or teachers of beginners. The aim is to offer a store of activities involving pictures which can pass all five criteria and be valid for teachers of all kinds of students.

5. Types of visual aids

- a. **The teachers themselves:** the teacher can use gestures, facial expressions, and actions to help show the meaning of words and to illustrate situations.

Eg. If the teacher wants to teach the meaning of adjectives expressing feelings, he / she can use facial expression to represent the meaning because it is easier than to make a draw.

- b. **The blackboard:** the teacher or students can use it to draw pictures, diagrams, maps, etc.

When using the blackboard, we have to take into account the following general points:

- Many teachers use the blackboard only for writing. But simple pictures drawn on the blackboard can help to increase the interest of a lesson, and are often a good way of showing meaning and conveying situations to the class.
- Blackboard drawings should be as simple as possible, showing only the most important details. It is not necessary to be a good artist to draw successfully on the blackboard – a lot of information can be conveyed by means of very simple line drawings and “sticks figures”, which are easy to draw.

- It is important to draw quickly, so as to keep the interest of the class. It also helps for teachers to talk as they draw: in this way the class will be more involve, and will understand the picture on the board both form seeing it and from listening to the teacher.

Eg. Teaching a new structure: *“has been.....-ing.....for.....”*

How many time has she been waiting the bus?

What is the woman doing?

What time is it in the first clock?

Where is she?

What time is it when the bus is coming?

- c. **OHP:** projector transparencies onto a screen or a white wall. Transparencies come in two forms: as continuous rolls of acetate or as separate sheets and can be written or drawn on with felt pens during a class. It is also possible to photocopy texts, pictures or activities directly from any material on to the transparencies. Text corrections can be presented by placing one transparency on top of another.

We can make faces which express different feelings and moods throught the use of objects such as paper cut outs.

(seven differences) (and the scheme)

- d. **Flashcards:** cards with single pictures which can be help up by the teacher. They can be used for presenting and practising new words and structures and

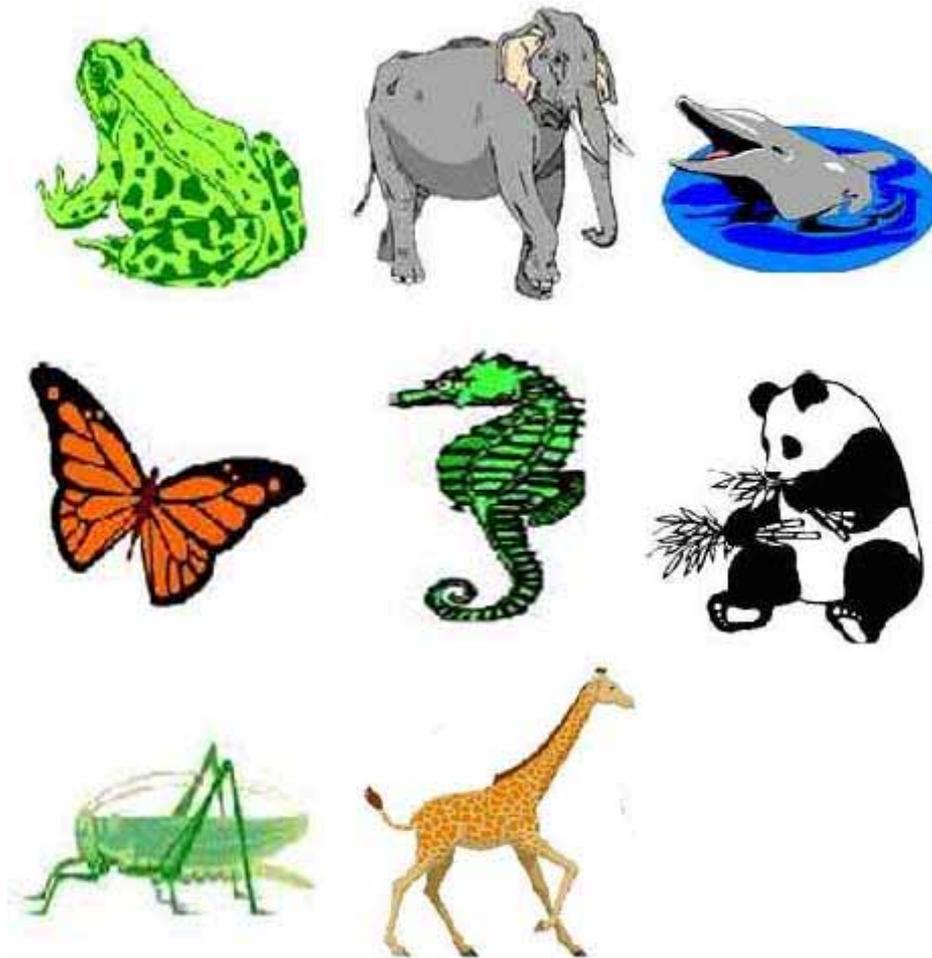
for revision. The teacher can draw a picture on the flashcard, or stick on a picture from a magazine; flashcards can also be used to show words or numbers.

- They should be large enough, half a piece of typing paper.
- Pictures can be drawn using a thick pen so that they are clear, or they can be cut from a magazine; pictures from magazines are often more interesting to look at, but it is difficult to find pictures which are the right size and which are simple enough.
- If possible, flashcards should be made on pieces of white card – then they can be kept and used again.

Eg.

I SPY

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 1. I Spy... A Horse that lives underwater | SEAHORSE |
| 2. I Spy... an animal with an arm for a nose | ELEPHANT |
| 3. I Spy... a bear that loves eating bamboo leaves | PANDA |
| 4. I Spy... an insect with coloured wings | BUTTERFLY |
| 5. I Spy... an animal with a long neck | GIRAFFE |
| 6. I Spy... an insect that jumps a lot | GRASSHOPPER |
| 7. I Spy... an animal that plays in the water
and likes children | DOLPHIN |
| 8. I Spy... an animal that jumps a lot and eats flies | FROG |



e. **Wallcharts:** When teachers want to display more complex visual information they use charts: a large sheet of paper or card which the teacher can either hold up for the class to see or display on the wall or the blackboard.

i. The advantages of showing pictures on a chart:

- The teacher does not have to spend time in the lesson drawing on the blackboard.
- As the chart is prepared in advanced it is possible to draw the pictures more carefully and also to make them more attractive.
- The chart can be kept and used again with the same class, or used with other classes and by other teachers.

ii. Displaying charts

- The teacher can hold the chart up.
- Two students can come out to the front and hold the chart.
- The teacher can pin the chart to a wall or to the blackboard.
- The teacher can hang the chart from a piece of string tied across the blackboard: using two nails, string and clothes pegs.

(poster Aladin) (Calendar)

6. Why using pictures? (the use of visual materials help to create situations).

It is not enough for students to have a competent ability in a language if they cannot develop a conversation or discussion. In this sense, language teachers have a role as communication teachers and, indeed, as teachers in the broadest sense. It is important to have as wide a range of resources as possible in the classroom so that the students can have a rich base and stimulus for this development. And the resources must include pictures. After all, verbal language is only a part of the way we usually get meaning from contents. Things we see play an enormous part in affecting us and in giving us information. We predict, deduce and infer, not only from what we hear and read but from what we see around us and from what we remember having seen. Pictures are not just an aspect of method but through their representation of places, objects and people they are an essential part of the overall experiences we must help our students to cope with.

The use of visual materials to help create situations:

- which interest the pupil.

- in which verbal communication would be a natural element to a native speaker (intrinsic language) and not an act artificially prefabricated and imposed by the teacher.

Moreover, pictures contribute to:

- interest and motivate students.
- a sense of the context of the language.
- a specific reference point or stimulus.

7. Five ways of looking at language.

Pictures can be used by teachers and students whatever the emphasis of the syllabus they are following. The examples given in this book cannot cover all possibilities and for that reason it might be of value and interest to show how one picture can be used as a reference and stimulus in order to promote five very different language teaching emphases.

Eg.

a. Structures:

- the grandfather is looking at the kid (present continuous)
- the kid is opening a gift (subject + verb + object)
- What is the day performed? (interrogative)

The picture can be used to illustrate a number of examples of each one of these structures. Although the sentences refer to the picture, there is little importance given to meaning: the emphasis is on structure.

b. Vocabulary: Christmas tree, chimney, wine, gifts, christmas turkey (Christmas vocabulary) / grandfather, daughter, son, uncle, mother, father (Family vocabulary).

c. Functions: would you pass me the handkerchief? (making a polite request) / Christmas tree is only used in Christmas (describing objects) / I like Christmas because I receive gifts by surprise (expressing likes and dislikes).

d. Situations:

This is a Christmas scene. There is a kid, who is opening his gifts, he is probably 5 years old. There is also a grandfather, who is looking at the kid nicely. There are also two female people sit down at the table, probably the grandmother and his daughter, kid's mother. And finally there is a delicious Christmas Turkey ready to be eaten by the happy family.

Grandfather: Hey dear, don't you think is very soon to open your gifts? Santa Claus hasn't come yet...

Kid: Grandpa, perhaps I'm not able to wait him... I'm so nervous to know what he has brought to me this year... I've been very good.

The Mother: Come On, little boy, don't be nervous and wait for the midnight or next year he will bring you a piece of coal!

Grandma: My Dear, could you pass me the handkerchief? I've got anyone.

The mother: Sure, mum. Come on, baby. Come here to the table and let's begin to eat this delicious Christmas Turkey!!

(Scripted situation dialogue)

The mother:

Grandma:

Grandfather:

Kid:

(Unscripted Role Play)

- e. Skills: in each of these examples fluency in a skill is developed in a situation which is reasonably authentic.

Listening: The students could be asked to listen to various statements made by witnesses of the incident. They could be asked to pick out any false statements by referring to the evidence in the picture.

Eg. The students listen to two different descriptions of the following characters and they have to choose which character fits with each description.

“Who is Who?” The students work in groups of threes. One of them choose one character and their partners have to make him / her question to guess which character his / her partner has chosen.



BUD SPENCER



MARILYN MANSON



MR. BEAN



Q. ELIZABETH II

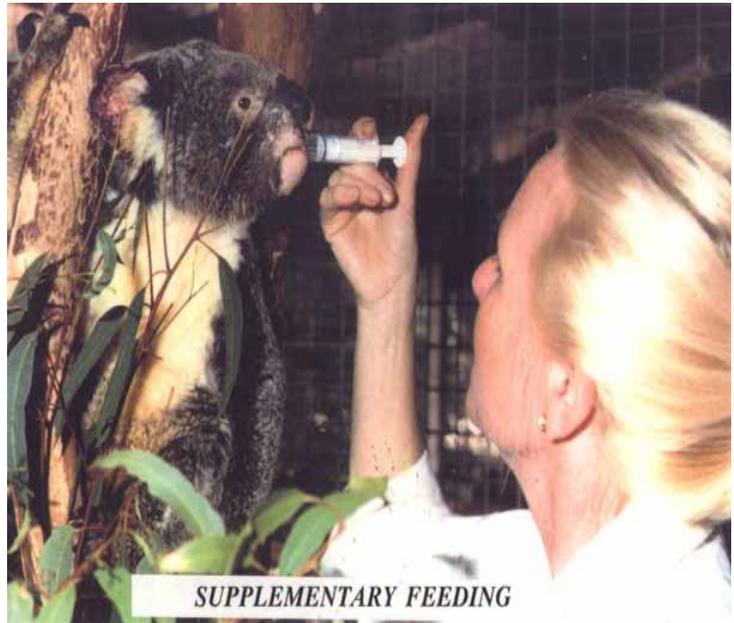
Reading: the students could be asked to compare articles about the incident taken from two newspapers and to list differences of emphasis.

Eg. Read the following text and put in order the pictures according to which the text says.

Writing: the students could be asked to write a report from the point of view of a witness.

Eg. The little Koala is Mofli. Mofli is happy because today he is going to go out with his mother.

Now, Mofli is in the doctor.



What has happened? Write a short story what has happened?

Speaking: the pictures could be hidden and the students asked to describe the picture from memory to see how reliable they would be as witnesses.

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