

ICT, A MOTIVATING TOOL: A CASE STUDY WITH PADLET

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Abstract

In recent years ICT has become indispensable tool in language education. This study analyses success of a learning activity designed with Padlet, a software. The participants are EFL secondary school students studying at the Japanese School in Singapore. The objective of the study is to empirically examine how Padlet activity could be used in motivating students to take ownership of their learning and become autonomous learners. The 15 participants in the study are secondary three students, between 14 and 15 years old with upper-intermediate level of proficiency in English which corresponds to B1/A2 for CEFR. Along with Padlet, the students are also required to use Chromebook for research and preparation for their presentation. In this group activity, all the students are expected to use KWL (know, want & learned) chart to help in learning, and to choose either org chart or storyboard from the templates for their presentation at the end of this unit. The findings suggest that when students use learning softwares such as Padlet along with Google documents or slides that are already familiar to them, they achieve better learning outcomes because Padlet highly motivates them to connect the use of technology with the content of class.

1 Introduction

Firstly, I will introduce the target students in Singapore Japanese Secondary School in details and the institution itself briefly. Secondly, I explain what Padlet is. Thirdly, I discuss and analyse how the learning activity with Padlet in English class is designed by indicating each learning steps. Fourthly, I evaluate the activity with the TPACK lens. Finally, I explain and suggest how Padlet could be used in ICT education along with the feedback from the students as the relevance of my analysis to English language teaching as a conclusion.

2 Target Students and Institution

2.1 Students

Firstly, I present a specification of all relevant information about the students. The number of students in a class is 15. All the students are Japanese who are between 14 and 15 years old and belong to secondary three at the Singapore Japanese Secondary School (SJSS). Their English language background is that they have been learning English since they were twelve years old as a foreign language or even younger depending on their educational background. Moreover, most of them are educated in a monolingual society. Some of them have lived outside Japan from three to twelve years and others just came to Singapore a few years ago from Japan. Their English level is upper-intermediate, which is around B1/A2 for CEFR, 42 for TOEFL (IBT). These students are highly motivated in learning English as well as interested in the target

culture. They are also familiar with using Google documents, slides and charts.

2.2 Institution and School Facilities

Secondly, I give a brief overview of the institution where the project is held. The Singapore Japanese Secondary School is a junior high school located on the West Coast of Singapore and has a student body of around 550 students aged from 12 to 15 years. The school offers Japanese curriculum to the Japanese expatriate community living and working in Singapore. The school has been running a successful English immersion programme involving all students for over 20 years. This school is well-equipped in terms of Internet connection and classroom facilities such as projectors and screens. Since 2015, the school has started to allow the students to use Chromebooks for learning. All the students are required to have their own Chromebook in April 2017 because the installation of Chromebooks was successful after the trial period in 2015 and 2016.

3 What is Padlet?

Padlet (formerly Wallwisher) is a free application which you can create an online bulletin board. It can be used to display information for any topic. While internet access is needed when writing on bulletin boards, Padlet is very easy to use. Currently, there are five different types of board; wall, canvas, stream, grid and shelf. You can choose one of them or pick a template which is already designed. In this English class, all the students are expected to use KWL (know, want & learned) chart to help in learning, and to choose either org chart or storyboard from the templates for their presentation.

4 Learning Activity with Padlet in English Class

In this part, I discuss and analyse how learning activity with Padlet in English Class is designed by indicating each learning steps. Firstly, I explain the setting of the activity. In New Horizon English Course 3, influential people who contribute to the world are introduced in Unit 6 'Striving for a Better World'. The new grammar point in this unit is relative clause, which is one of the most important and challenging grammar points in secondary three. As an overall summary, this group presentation is set at the end of this unit. The students can choose their group mates to work in groups of three. Each group selects one famous person who helped and contributed to the world of his own country. Then, students assign the roles amongst themselves with each group.

Step 1 Introduction to Padlet is done by the teacher as an entry by using KWL chart, org board and storyboard. This applies to technological pedagogical knowledge (TPK), which is represented using the five-level continuum for technology integration according to Mishra P, Koehler MJ (2006). These levels are (a) entry, (b) adaption, (c) adaptation, (d) infusion, and (e) transformation. (a) to (c) needed to be guided by the teacher and the students watch and learn how to use the new software for the next step. This is the entry level activity.

Step 2 I pay attention to KWL chart for better brainstorming by making them realise what they already know and making them think about what they want to know at the beginning of the project. This is identified to be low-demand tasks before moving on to high-demand tasks known as a pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) (Mishra P, Koehler MJ 2006). This

brainstorming helps students to organise their ideas to analyse and create their presentation as a learning outcome. This step is (d) infusion, which is one of the five-level continuum for technology integration according to Mishra P, Koehler MJ (2006). This is still considered to be the entry level activity right before getting into the transformational level.

Step 3 Org chart and storyboard in Padlet are introduced for their presentation. This is to organise and write their findings and information from their research based on their KWL chart, 'Want to know' section. Students are expected to put the information in appropriate columns in this chart or storyboard in self-directed way. This step is finally considered to be the transformational level high demand activity. Students make use of this Padlet flexibly to reach their goal which is to create their group presentation by talking about what they learned in the end. It is by all means essential for the students to use other technology in combining various tools. At this point, the teacher is nothing more than a guide in the use of technology. Without other software such as search engines, this part cannot be done easily.

Step 4 The teacher guides them to go back to the KWL chart which was used for brainstorming at the beginning and have students write what they have learned briefly in the end as a learning journey.

Lastly, the final presentations are carried out, and the students write their comments on the Padlet wall as a feedback and reflection after all the presentation (See Appendix; Teaching Plan, Lesson 8).

5 Evaluation of the Activity with the TPACK lens

In this part, I would like to evaluate the activity with the TPACK lens. At first, I will define each component of the lens, which are TK, PK and CK. Secondly, I will analyse and describe the evaluation of the activity qualitatively with pros and cons.

5.1 Definition of the lens

5.1.1 Technological Knowledge (TK)

As stated in Part 1, SJSS students are familiar with using Internet browser, PowerPoint Presentation, Word processing/desktop publishing, spreadsheet, Google documents, slides and charts. As a new software, Padlet is introduced to the students for their brainstorming and group presentation of the unit. (See Appendix; Teaching Plan, Lesson 4) I, as a teacher and a facilitator, would like them to try out other softwares which can be useful for their learning. In fact, it is up to the teachers to decide how to guide the students in using TK. This means that teachers need to explore and be familiar with these softwares to utilise them effectively and appropriately.

5.1.2 Pedagogical Knowledge (PK)

Regarding this lens, it is mostly all about assessment. On the one hand, students can carry out peer, group and self-assessment before and after the presentation to recognise what students need to improve. The teacher is to proceed performance-based assessment with rubrics and observation as PK. On the other hand, rubrics need to be shown to the students at the beginning of the project to clarify what is expected.

5.1.3 Content Knowledge (CK)

Content knowledge is represented as an overall objective in the teaching plan, which are 1) Grammar point: To be able to make sentences of relative clause (noun & objective clause) and 2) Contents: Learn & research influential people who contributed to the world. The teacher first asks students to independently think about famous and influential people in the world, then introduces famous figures such as Aung San Suu Kyi afterwards. This is to engage their prior knowledge (EPK) and use of real-world contents (RWC) in their own group project.

Lastly, I would like to illustrate the qualitative evaluation stating pros and cons briefly. As a good point, students experience meaningful learning by engaging their prior knowledge (EPK), use of real-world contexts (RWC), learning by doing (LBD), collaborative learning (COL) and self-directed learning (SDL) in this group project through the teacher's guidance only at the beginning. As an improvement, students and teacher would not know who edited the Padlet they are working on unless they write their own names separately, while we can see who edited on Google documents, spreadsheets and slides.

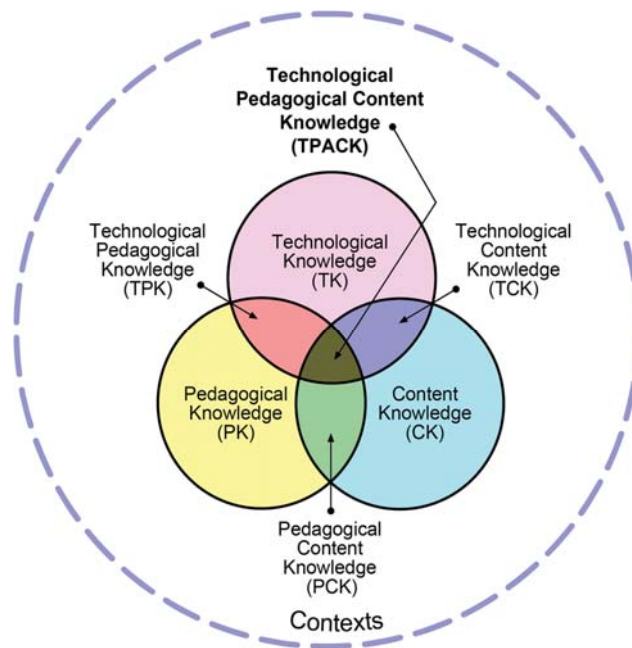


Fig. 1. TPACK model [Mishra & Koehler, 2006]

6 The Relevance of My Analysis to Language Teaching

Finally, I would like to explain and suggest how Padlet can be used in ICT English language education as a motivating tool. Padlet can be used for English language teaching in many ways. For example, KWL chart would be very helpful to arrange what students know easily. By spelling their ideas out in the chart, learners can put their ideas and thoughts together. In this paper, although Padlet is used for the group presentation, padlet can be useful for brainstorming in individual writing activity.

In summary, I believe that it is meaningful for learners to try out new softwares such as Padlet

apart from the Google documents or slides which they are already familiar with. The use of technology highly motivates the learners with content of learning for the better outcomes.

References

- Mishra P, Koehler M. J. (2006). Technological pedagogical content knowledge: a Framework for teacher knowledge. *Tech Coll Rec 108*(5): 1017–1054.
- Pringle, R. M., Dawson, K., & Ritzhaupt, A. D. (2015). Integrating Science and Technology: Using Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge as a Framework to Study the Practices of Science Teachers. *Journal of Science Education and Technology, 24*(5), 648–662.

Appendix

Teaching Plan

Subject: English

Teacher: Masami KIMURA

Level/Class: Secondary 3 Upper Intermediate

Topic/Lesson: New Horizon English Course 3 - Unit 6 Striving for a Better World

Overall Objectives:

- Grammar point: To be able to make sentences of relative clause (noun & objective clause)
- Contents: Learn & research influential people who contribute to the world.

Sec 3 Unit 6			
Striving for a Better World			
Lesson	Objective	Procedure/Activity/Tasks	Notes/Materials
Lesson 1	Introduce & use new grammar points 1 (relative clause)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tell students that they are learning a new grammar point emphasising it is one of the most important and challenging ones. - Introduce relative clause (subject clause: who & which). - Listen to part 1, answer the questions and dictation (if time permits) - Watch a short video, “Ig nobel prize” to know about a Japanese researcher who is a scientist. - Drilling activity using digital textbook: Grammar practice - Make a card game 1 	Digital textbook Video: “Ig nobel prize” Grammar slides & worksheet Small card (colour paper; cut-up) English & Japanese dictionaries (hardcopy)

Lesson 2	Introduce & use new grammar points 2 (relative clause)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduce relative clause (object clause: whom & which). - Listen to part 2, answer the questions and dictation (if time permits) - Drilling activity using digital textbook: Grammar practice - Practice & Review on relative clause (who, whom, which) with Kahoot. - Make a card game 2 	Digital textbook Chromebook Game software: Kahoot! Grammar slides & worksheet Small card (colour paper; cut-up) English & Japanese dictionaries (hardcopy)
Lesson 3	Introduce & use new grammar points 3 (relative clause: who, whom, that, which)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Warm-up: Elicit two functions in relative clause - Tell students to explain what's the difference between 'who' and 'whom' and so on. - Introduce exceptional cases in using relative clause, 'that'. - Drilling activity using digital textbook: Grammar practice - Play the card game students made in Lesson 1 & 2. 	Digital textbook Grammar slides & worksheet Cards to play games using relative clause English & Japanese dictionaries (hardcopy)
Lesson 4	Listening comprehension, review of the new grammar point & brainstorm for the presentation with Padlet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Warm-up: Play the card game students made as a review of relative clause. - Listen to part 3 & 4, answer the questions and dictation (if time permits) - Ask what students know about Aung San Suu Kyi. - Pick up the keywords; democracy, human rights. - Ask and think about what human rights mean. - Ask who is an influential person to them. - Introduction of Padlet (KWL chart) - Split into a group of 3 and brainstorm to choose an influential person for their group presentation next class 	Digital textbook Q&A Worksheet Cards to play games using relative clause Padlet (KWL chart) English & Japanese dictionaries (hardcopy)
Lesson 5	Learn how to use KWL chart & Students get time to choose an influential person and research their own group topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Warm-up: review for relative clause (card game) - Explain what the goal & outcome of the presentation is. - Choose an influential person (each group). - Explain what needs to be done with using KWL chart on Padlet. - Work on only K & W parts for brainstorming (tell students L part will be done after the research). 	Guessing game using relative clause Padlet (KWL chart & Storyboard) Chromebook English & Japanese dictionaries (hardcopy)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research on their group topic according to what they want to know in KWL chart - Allocation for the storyboard in each group 	
Lesson 6	KWL chart to be checked and keep working on their research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Warm-up: review for relative clause (card game) - Remind what is the goal & outcome of the presentation. - Teacher checks KWL charts on Padlet. - Keep working on their research on their group topic according to what they want to know in KWL chart. - Start working on the storyboard. 	<p>Guessing game using relative clause</p> <p>Padlet (KWL chart & Storyboard)</p> <p>Chromebook</p> <p>English & Japanese dictionaries (hardcopy)</p>
Lesson 7	Finish storyboard & KWL chart, feedback on good/bad work & practise for presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Warm-up: review for relative clause (card game) - Keep working on their research on their group topic according to what they want to know in KWL chart. - Finish working on the storyboard. - Teacher checks the storyboard on Padlet. - Practise and prepare for the final presentation. 	<p>Guessing game using relative clause</p> <p>Padlet (KWL chart & Storyboard)</p> <p>Chromebook</p> <p>English & Japanese dictionaries (hardcopy)</p>
Lesson 8	Presentation & Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Warm-up: review for relative clause (card game) - Practise the final presentation briefly. - Presentation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Steve Jobs 2. Gandhi 3. Nightingale 4. Donald Trump 5. Dr. Shinya Yamanaka - During the presentation, students take notes and give comments. - Teacher gives evaluation and assessment for each group. - Feedback and reflection on Padlet wall (incl. what it was like to use Padlet as a new software, self-reflection etc) - Everybody sees the Padlet wall on the big screen for sharing. - All the KWL charts & storyboards to be printed and displayed in the classroom. 	<p>Padlet (KWL chart, Storyboard & Wall)</p> <p>Chromebook</p> <p>Screen</p> <p>Projector</p> <p>English & Japanese dictionaries (hardcopy)</p>