

Visual Aid as an Effective Tool in Teaching Learning Process

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***Abstract:** Visual Aid is one of the most effective methods of imparting knowledge of any kind. It is an accomplished fact that, what one sees he learns faster than what one hears and therein lays the importance of visual aid as a medium of instruction. For this reason, with the passage of time, visual aids have come to take a very prominent place in the system of education. Visual aids thus make teaching more effective. If visual aids used in the lecture, the listeners feel stimulated and they take more interest in the topic. Keeping students motivated and actively engaged in their classes can be a challenging task. However, there are some simple strategies we can use to help enhance our students' interest and keep them involved. By using visual stimuli we are more likely to maintain student attention and encourage active participation. We can also cater for different learning styles. This paper presents the effective ways to clarify messages visually by selecting the appropriate visual aid to make the instruction meaningful for students.*

Key Words – Visual Aid, Knowledge, Learn, Effective, Education, Messages

“It has been estimated that 11 percent of what we learn is through hearing, 83 percent through sight and the rest through the other senses.” Nobody can deny the fact that visual aids make teaching more effective, if the presentation is made with the help of the visual aids the listeners feel stimulated and they take more interest in the presentation. Maps, pictures, charts, slides and overhead projectors and a black-board are some visual aids which not only grip the attention of the audience but also make it understandable.

Visual aids help us reach our objectives by providing emphasis in a different way than speaking. Visual aids attract teachers to use them in learning. There is a positive impact in the use of visual aids on teacher's attitude for using them in their teaching classrooms especially in communication skills. Visual aids can provide practical solutions to the problems of an ESL teacher whose equipment, as a rule, consisting of nothing more than a verbal textbook. Visual aids are used to increase the effectiveness of classroom teaching-learning process. The use of audio-visual aids enhances learning. It is true that the availability of teaching aids is a pre-requisite for their use in teaching. The use of visual aids helps better teaching; and a variety of teaching aids brings about stimulus variation that is essential to sustain students' attention. Visual aids help make our instruction meaningful for students. Visual aids help us reach our objectives by providing emphasis in a different way than speaking. Clear pictures, graphs, or models

multiply our students level of understanding of the material presented, and they can be used to reinforce your message, clarify points, and create interest. Visual aids engage our students and require a change from one activity to another: from hearing to seeing and sometimes touching.

Visual aids help make our instruction meaningful for students. Visual aids help us to reach our objectives by providing emphasis in a different way than speaking. Clear pictures, graphs, or models multiply our students level of understanding of the material presented, and they can be used to reinforce our message, clarify points, and create interest. Visual aids engage our students and require a change from one activity to another: from hearing to seeing and sometimes touching. They enable us to appeal to more than one sense at the same time, thereby increasing our student's understanding and retention level. With drawings, posters, transparencies and other visuals, the concepts or ideas we present are no longer simply words - but words plus images. Many low-cost options exist for visual aids, including the chalkboard or whiteboard, overhead transparencies, flip charts, photographs and flannel boards. Demonstrating a process or simply passing around a sample of some equipment or model are also effective ways to clarify messages visually. If visual aids are poorly selected or inadequately done, they will distract from what we are saying. The tips listed below will help us in the selection and preparation of visual aids.

A Background on Visual Aids

The use of visual aids for presenting, coaching, and teaching has been around since the 1920s and 1930s, consisting of film strips, glass slides and physical pass-around objects. Several universities have amassed catalogs of visual aid products that trace the history of using visual literacy and visual education to reinforce main content. The appeal of the aids is that they address additional learning styles. Not all people are auditory learners who can synthesize information from lectures and speeches. Many learners are visual learners who respond better to still or moving images. In an oral presentation, information is often said too quickly for some audience members to grasp. Even if some listeners can grasp some points, their ability to retain these points after the speech may be faulty. Therefore, a primary goal of visual aids is to organize and punctuate the key take-away points that a speaker wants an audience to remember. Retention of specific facts and details can be enhanced by visual aids that show relationships between facts by using tables or graphs; these deliver synthesis at a glance. Statistics show that three hours after a presentation only 70 percent of people can remember content presented verbally. The retention of information reinforced with visual content, however, is much higher after three hours: 85 percent, according to California State University data. The impact of visual aids on the retention of content in a speech is even more impressive after three days. Sixty-percent of listeners can remember visually

enhanced content, compared with only 10 percent remembering exclusively verbal presentations.

Basic points which should be kept in mind for better results are:

1. If possible keep the chart, picture or map hidden until we need to refer it. When in use, the visual aid should be displayed where everyone in the audience can see it.
2. Interpret it to the listeners and draw their attention carefully to what we want them to note.
3. Stand on one side and use a pointer, if necessary while interpreting it.
4. The aid should be sharp, emphasize only those aspects which we consider significant.
5. If there is a black-board behind us see that it is clean. Write on it rapidly and legibly in large letters.
6. Integrate the aid with oral presentation and use it when we reach the relevant point.

In selecting visual, there are various things which ought to be considered listed below:

1. Visual are to be selected according to the message which is to be communicated because no one type of visual can ever be best for all occasions. The presenter should have a flexible attitude toward the type of visuals.
2. Another factor which determines the type of visual is the size of audience.
3. Cost of preparing visuals should also be kept in mind.
4. Time required for preparing visuals should also be one of the considerations.
5. Durability of the visual aid should also be kept in mind.
6. Presenter must have knowledge about that specific visual aid.

Tips on Preparing Visual Aids

Make sure your visual aids support your objectives before selecting the visual aid(s). Remember that visual aids are only tools for instruction. Too much emphasis on visual aids can distract from instruction. Asking our self how visuals will help our students learn what we want them to learn will help us plan their incorporation.

Each element of a visual aid (a single transparency or a page of a flip chart) - **must be simple** and contain only one main idea. Placing more than one idea on a single image confuses our students and decreases the impact of the visual. **Keep visual aids BRIEF.**

Determine the **difference between what we will say and what the visual aid will show.** Do not read straight from our visuals.

Ask our students to read or listen, not both; visual aids should not provide reading material while we talk. Rather, use them to illustrate or highlight our points.

If possible, give students paper copies of various graphic aids used in our presentation. They will be able to write on the paper copies and have them for future reference.

Remember the importance of variety. Using the same form of visual aid for every lesson decreases the effectiveness of that tool. Use variety to maintain student interest.

Use **local photographs** and **examples** when discussing general problems and issues. While a general problem concerning welding safety, for example, may elude someone, illustrating with a photograph or example of local welding practices can clarify the issue.

Use **charts** and **graphs** to support the presentation of numerical information.

Develop **sketches** and **drawings** to convey various designs and plans.

When preparing graphics, **make sure they are not too crowded in detail.** Do not over-use color. See that line detail, letters, and symbols can be seen from the back of the room.

If you have handouts, don't let them become a distraction during the presentation. They should provide reinforcement of our ideas and we should create opportunities for our students to refer to them during instruction. Handing them out after our lesson, decreases the likelihood that our students will actually read them unless required doing so.

Different types of visual aids

The Chalkboard or Whiteboard

Always face the classroom when we use the board – even when we write. Rather than turning our back to the class while we write, and talking to the board, we should learn the skill of standing to the side and writing. Write clearly and legibly. Use large letters and be sure those in the back can see. Give our students time to take notes. Pause periodically to let them reflect, to ask questions, or simply to copy down what we have done. Plan how we will use the board. Students use our work to take notes (if we do not believe this, ask to see one or two notebooks

after a class), so poor organization hurts them. Will we put our agenda to one side and then build an outline on the rest of the chalkboard? Can we erase details while leaving the main points visible? Structure our work. We can use headings, colored chalk, circles, underlining and different styles of writing (block letters, all caps, etc.) to help students see different sections and concepts. If, in working through a problem on the board, we make an error, do not just erase it. Stop, alert our students that we have made an error, and ask them to find and fix it.

The Overhead Projector and Transparencies

If possible use laser printers or copiers to produce transparencies, allowing us to directly copy graphs, charts, diagrams and photos and bring them to class to illustrate important points and enliven discussion. If we prepare our transparencies ahead of time, we can usually make them neater and more organized than if we were writing on a board. Use “bullet points” rather than full paragraphs. We will avoid falling into the trap of reading to our class. This also helps students take notes in outline form. Avoid putting too much information on any single transparency. Each transparency should be used to illustrate a basic concept. If we have a more complicated concept, use multiple, simple transparencies. Avoid using too many transparencies. More than 10 or 12 transparencies during a one-hour class can overwhelm students with information. Write on blank transparencies during class occasionally as an alternative to the chalkboard. The overhead projector allows you to face your students during instruction. Make sure the image is focused correctly and check occasionally that the image is aligned with the screen. Each letter should be 1-2 centimeters tall to be visible in a typical classroom

Flip Charts

Each sheet of paper should contain one main idea, sketch, or theme. Words, charts, diagrams, and other symbols must be penned in a large enough size to be seen by people farthest from the speaker. **Use and vary the color.** Also, check from a distance to make sure the color works well and is not distracting. Completed flip chart sheets can be hung around the room for reference at later times. Prepare headings on individual sheets before class as a way to structure instruction.

Objects and Models

Bringing an actual physical object (tools, plants, soil, feed, etc.) into the classroom can greatly increase student interest and understanding. When actual objects are too large for the classroom or too small to see, try to find or create models that approximate the actual object. When using objects and models, keep the activity as interactive as possible. When we find that we're spending a majority of your time lecturing to the students about what to do or how things work, try to think of ways you can get them working through ideas in groups, lab, interactive lectures, etc. Create opportunities for students to touch the model as appropriate. If we choose to pass the model around the room, wait until it has made its way to all students before moving on with the

lesson. Students can't explore with their hands and eyes and listen at the same time. Include students in the development process and/or provide opportunities for them to experiment with the model or modify it. This can increase students' understanding of the model and its relationship to the physical world.

Photographs

When actual objects or models are not available, photographs work well. If passing photographs around the room, follow the same guidelines as with models and avoid advancing instruction until all students have seen the photograph. If possible, enlarge the photograph into a poster or on an overhead transparency so all students can see the photograph while the teacher describes it. Avoid trying to support too many concepts with the same photograph as this can become confusing for students. Photographs can be effectively used to do the following:

1. Compare historical events or practices with current ones.
2. Illustrating concepts or ideas that are unobtainable locally.
3. Bring local images familiar to students into the classroom to make instruction more real
4. Ask students questions about what they think caused the situation they are viewing
5. Ask students to predict what they think will happen next in scene represented
6. Point out safety hazards that cannot be replicated safely
7. Pictures of diseased plants or animals are excellent for making preliminary diagnoses.

Black Board

A big strong piece of wood, called black-board, is the oldest associate of the teacher but an essential teaching aid. It is used to reading and writing to the pupil. Anything to which the teacher wants to draw the attention of the pupil, is written on it, e.g. difficult words, phrase patterns, structure patterns, grammar works, questions to test Comprehension. In this way the teacher finds his lessons more interesting, lively and effective. It is an important means of picture composition.

Charts and maps

Since all diagrams cannot be drawn on black-board, they need to be made on charts. A good number of sentences illustrating some points can be written on the chart with some diagrams. Besides sentence chart, we may have substitution table charts and vocabulary charts. Different colors should be used to bring in variety, decoration and effect. It should be big enough to

accommodate the necessary materials with words written in bold letters. Charts are very useful for presenting and practicing structures, vocabulary items and compositions. Maps may be used for displaying the location of places, mountains, rivers, etc. The advantages of this aid are that items can be prepared beforehand, can be moved about on the flannel and preserved for use on further occasions.

Films

Film, which is yet another visual aid, may be supplied for language teaching in the form of fixed film strips or slides and motion picture films. The former can be used to convey meaning to teach reading on aids in oral and written composition. The advantages of slides and film strips are that they direct the attention of the whole class to the screen and to the pictures and words on it. Film strips and slides free the teacher

Handouts

Handouts are the most widely used form of visual aid. They can be a single page or multiple pages. The most effective handouts do not rely on words alone, but include colorful and informative graphics and charts. Any words included are typically in an easy-to-read font (such as Courier or Times New Roman) and imposed on a white background. An advantage of handouts is that they allow an audience member to view examples and addendums that extend the presentation and enlighten with details. Another benefit is that listeners can use the main points highlighted in a handout as guideposts for understanding and following the oral delivery. There are pitfalls to relying on handouts, however. Some audience members become overly engrossed in them to the point that they cease listening to a speaker altogether.

Tips for Using Handouts: This list of tips identifies the sections of a handout (intro, body, quotes, examples, tables, references) as well as how to make a handout more accessible to a reader.

Handout Design: The file discusses how to streamline handouts for lectures to maximize the impact of information.

There are two forms of slides that can be used as visual aids: projector slides and PowerPoint slides. Project slides are physical objects, often made of glass or Plexiglas, which are shuffled into a projector that produces the image on a white screen that must be brought to the presentation or provided by the host facility. PowerPoint slides are digital slides that are created on a computer with text, animation, video and audio. The digital slide show can be shown on a white screen

by using projection equipment or shown on a large monitor or television via an HDMI or other cable connection.

The disadvantage of the classic physical projector slide is that the presentation room must be completely darkened. While a PowerPoint presentation can often require a dim atmosphere, those shown on a television monitor can be seen effectively in normal room light. Another advantage of PowerPoint slides is that the slide show can be conveniently carried on a thumb drive or data card. A disadvantage of physical projector slides is that they cannot be embellished with animation and motion video.

Projector Slides: This list highlights the pros and cons of using projector slides.

Projecting a PowerPoint Presentation: This visual how-to list offers instructions for using a computer slide show with a projector.

Flip charts

Flip Charts are oversized bound notebooks or tablets that rest on easels and can be flipped to a new page during main points of a presentation. When used, flipcharts have to have content that is large enough to be viewed by the entire audience. They also have to be positioned at an angle that can be seen from around the room – a task that is often difficult. Using symbols, borders, and block letters often make flip charts more legible and effective.

Benefits of flipcharts include being portable, inexpensive, and easy to make. They also create an intimate atmosphere. By having one universal aid like the flipchart, the need for mass handouts is eliminated. The most common drawback is that no matter how big they are, flipcharts often cannot be seen by everyone in the audience and often require a reshuffling of seats in order to increase viewership. Another drawback is that even up-close, flipcharts are often illegible and cannot hold too much information without appearing cluttered.

Posters

Posters are a visual aid that can often convey the themes and sound bites of a presentation in clever, succinct ways. A creation of few words, a typical poster relies on images and symbols to convey ideas figuratively. Posters can be used to summarize at the end of a presentation section. Also, they can be an animated way to introduce new content. A disadvantage is that a good poster can only focus on one complete idea. So, the presenter has to make sure the poster has an umbrella

impact or has to create multiple posters to use throughout the presentation. Also, text on posters is often too small to be read from a distance. A positive, however, is that one large graphic or image on a poster can be all it takes to drive home a point and make it memorable.

Videos

Videos, with their crisp color and dynamic presence, can often captivate an audience that has grown weary from oral presentation. There are several kinds of videos that can be utilized in a presentation. Self-created videos made via camcorders, wireless phones, and movie maker software can be used from storage on a hard drive. Online videos can be commandeered for a presentation if a monitor and Internet connection are available. Film strips or whole movies can also be shown using a DVD player, projector, or computer. The advantage is that video can elevate themes and content through storytelling. Stories resonate with audiences and are more likely to be remembered. With online video networks like YouTube and Google Video one advantage is that a presenter has a global archive at her fingertips. A disadvantage is that special equipment often has to be prearranged; internet connections, monitors, projectors, and DVD players may not be available at all sites or could have electrical malfunctions that thwart their use and impair presentation plans.

Online Videos in Slideshows: This tutorial uses audio and slides to explain how to insert online videos in PowerPoint presentations.

Using Homemade Videos: This guide explains how to use a video filmed with a personal camera in a presentation.

What to Include?

Certain rules and guidelines ensure that a visual aid becomes an effective tool rather than noise. The first and most oft-broken rule is never to let the visual aid simply mirror and echo the presentation point by point. Include only specific data and ideas that are the key take-away points we want the audience to remember – not general information. Make each aid an occasion to pause and reinforce; reinforcement is different from redundancy. Visual aids with simple redundant information that has already been spoken are useless and often ignored.

Some of the most effective visual aids are numbers and statistics -- provided they are not left in numerical form. When translated into colorful bar graphs, pie charts, and maps, statistics can lend authority and substance to any presentation.

PowerPoint slide show can be one of the most effective or ineffective visual tools. Because they are so pervasive, digital slide shows can often bore an audience; many experts are starting to advise against using them. This is because most people use them to merely “walk through” the entire presentation, rather than as a punctuation tool that highlights select portions of the content. While devoid of bells and whistles, an old-fashioned paper hand-out can often be effective because the audience carries home physical reminders of key content.

Using our Visual Aids

Visual aids are enhancements to a presentation that can engage the audience, provide additional information, and reinforce key points. Years ago, equipment like overhead projectors and posters provided the common visual aids; however, with the evolution of multimedia, enhancements like PowerPoint slideshow and portable digital projectors for showing animated clips have become common. One pitfall of visual aids is that they can interfere with a presentation by causing distraction. Experts recommend limiting aids to those that are essential and powerful in order to focus and not overwhelm an audience. A pitfall of visual aids is that they become such a dominant presence that both the presenter and the audience focus on the aids instead of making human contact. Presenters must not lose the audience connection. Eye contact and talking directly to individual audience members are key actions even while presenting visual aids. The customary advice is “Never talk to your visual aids!”

Using visual aids to increase retention is the main goal of any speaker. Therefore strategies must be used to boost recall. Bullet main points on visual aids so audiences will know what should be remembered and what’s important. Use summary and repetition of key points on slides, handouts, and posters, but be mindful to repeat only the *essence* of the idea. Do not simply rehash the same statement and information over and over again with the same words as that could bore and disconnect the audience.

Use audience members or assistants to hold, distribute, display and manage visual aids. This ensures that the speaker does not lose momentum and does not interrupt the flow of the presentation too often. Assistants however should not be distracting. Any dissemination that will call too much attention to itself should be done during a break or at the beginning of a presentation. Physical relics or information designed for the audience to take home should be given at the tail-end of the speech.

Do not use any visual aids that will require turning your back on the audience. This is common when speakers are using blackboards and whiteboards. Often, this is a mistake for those using laptops and projectors as well. The audience should always be engaged, which partly means they must have frontal exposure to the face and body of the presenter.

Always arrange visual aids so that the entire audience can take part of them. This means volume on videos or movies must be pre-tested for adequate sound in the front, back, and all corners of the room. The location and angles of monitors and flipcharts must be universally appealing. Text and images should be large and easily readable. If these conditions cannot be met, it is best to avoid the use of the aid altogether.

Conclusion

Visual aids help make our instruction meaningful for students. Visual aids help us to reach our objectives by providing emphasis in a different way than speaking. Clear pictures, graphs, or models multiply our students level of understanding of the material presented, and they can be used to reinforce our message, clarify points, and create interest.

The findings of this study are not only useful for teachers teaching in the schools, but also to the lecturers with related field, especially those who are teaching trainee teachers and students of literature course in the teacher training colleges, universities and other educational institutes. The findings may be served as guidelines for teachers when implementing visual aids in teaching, as they want their students to fully concentrate on the lesson, by being aware of the expectations and needs in teaching. When the teachers know how to grab students' attention, teachers can provide a friendly and interesting atmosphere for the students to learn. This will encourage the students not to just learn by listening and writing what the teachers told and provided in the classroom, but they will find their own initiative to read what they learn in order to improve their own understanding towards the lesson. Furthermore, the implementation of visual aids in teaching is less time consuming. As a result, the teachers will have more ample time to create enjoyable classroom activities and conduct an effective teaching and learning process.

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