Making the most of the Interactive Whiteboard

(2nd & 3rd cycle Primary, 8-12 year-olds)
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It looks like a normal whiteboard, but offers so much more. This session will introduce teachers who are new to IWBs to some easy activities that will spice up their lessons. In particular, we will look at how you can use images, text and games to make learning fun. We will also look at what makes an activity successful and things to avoid when using this exciting new tool.

A. IWB Preliminaries

What are the implications of having an IWB in your classroom? The interactive whiteboard is a powerful teaching tool when used effectively, but don't let it dominate your teaching. Here are some initial tips to help you make the most of its features:

- IWBs are enhanced board tools for teachers that bring us advantages.
- Use the IWB to enhance the way you teach – don't let it dominate.
- Training and reflective practice : the key to using the IWB successfully.
- With an Internet connection the IWB is extremely powerful – use this.
- Build on what others have done already.
- Don't hog the board – let the students use it too!

Hardware

Things to consider:

- Don't use normal board pens!
- *Calibrate* the board.
- Turn off the projector / not the PC.
- Use projector features (*freeze* / *blank*).
- Use a range of different colours.
- Ensure easy access to IWB, keyboard and mouse.

B. IWB Materials

There is now a lot of ready-made digital support that has been produced by publishers, but there will be times when you want to prepare something for class. Here are some things to keep in mind when you do so:

Design of materials – general guidelines

- Clear communicative purpose
- Learner-centred and learning-centred
- Motivating for learners
- Clearly defined language learning goals
- Is the IWB the best way to do something?
- Make use of visual, audio and tactile input
- Take care with colour contrasts and font sizes – check from back of class
- Cognitive and physical interactivity (drag-and-drop, hide and reveal, etc)
- Allow space for pupils' contributions

Using images

One of the advantages of the IWB is the ability to display full colour images on the board. We will be looking at how you can use ready-made images or find others using the Web. Then we will be looking at some ways you can make use of these in your own classes:

- **Illustrations.** Make use of pictures to better illustrate language points or vocabulary. Using images to do this will help some pupils remember language. You can also supplement / personalise course book images by finding similar ones that better represent local culture.
- **Photographs**. Use photos of your students for a visual classroom register or to help you organise groupwork. You can also use these for counters for classroom games. Take photographs of classroom work and create IWB displays. Another idea is for the pupils to share their own holiday photographs or to send you a photograph of their favourite toy to talk about in class.
- **Matching exercises.** Pictures can be easily imported for word-picture matching games (using drag-and-drop) and to use in class 'memory' games. You can also hide a picture beneath a block of colour and play a 'guess what it is' game, slowly revealing part of the picture as the pupils guess. Alternatively, use the IWB Spotlight or screen tools to only reveal part of the picture at a time.

- **Stories.** Make use of stories that have been created by other teachers, or make your own that illustrate popular fairy tales, etc. We will look at how you can use these scenarios not only for repeated storytelling, but also for specific language work.

- **Daily routines**. Find a collection of pictures that represent your pupils' daily routines and ask them to put them in order and talk about what time they do them.

- **Maps**. Find a section of a simple city map or make one and use this to give directions. Ask the pupils to take turns being tourist and local and to choose locations to direct each other to. An alternative activity is for you and your pupils to create your own town first, with the pupils suggesting where the various buildings are placed on the map.

- **Comparing people.** For this activity, you need pictures of two children and other pictures illustrating the things they like and don't like (sports, hobbies, food, etc). The pictures are then used as speaking / writing prompts by the pupils who compare the two kids. This can then be followed by the pupils talking about themselves and comparing each others' likes and dislikes.

- **Pre-Listening**. Use pictures to set context in the pre-listening phase when using audio or video. If you are showing a video, then take *screenshots* of different parts of the video and display these, asking the pupils to order them or to guess what the video is about.

Fun with text

The IWB allows you to use text in many ways that are not possible using a regular whiteboard. Here are some ideas that you can do with text tools on the IWB :

- **Semantic mapping**. In these activities, words have to be matched that have clear links, are opposites or synonyms, etc. One way of doing this on the IWB is by asking pupils to draw lines between them. Alternatively, you can move the words around, dragging them into columns, etc.

- **Conveyor belt.** Use the _____ to introduce a string of words that scrolls across the screen. Play it for 30 seconds or and then ask the students to write down as many of the words they can remember. Award points and then extra points for pupils who can use the words correctly in sentence. You can make this more difficult if you don't include spaces in the scrolling text.

- **Finish my sentence.** One of the best things about text and the IWB is that you can prepare examples you want on the board in advance. This activity uses this, with you preparing the beginnings of some sentences on different screens and ask the pupils to finish them off. It works better if they all relate to a particular structure, etc. that you are doing in class (comparatives, past, etc). Add a timer, award points and you can make a game of the activity.

- **Word classification**. Use the drag-and-drop facility and ask pupils to order words into groups (fruit and vegetables, furniture in rooms,etc.) or to order them (frequency adverbs, classroom popularity, etc)

- **Sentence ordering**. Mix up words in a sentence and ask pupils to put them in the correct order. Add a timer to make this into a game, and introduce distractors to make it more difficult (e.g. Give pupils the choice between prepositions, articles, verbs in different tenses, etc.)

- **Highlighting connections between words**. When you have a text on the IWB, use different colours and the highlighter tool to draw attention to particular word families,etc. You can use this with song lyrics to show which words rhyme with each other, or ask your pupils to highlight all of the verbs, adjectives, etc in a particular text.

- **Expanding stories.** Start a story on the board and ask the pupils to take it in turns to continue, coming up to the board and writing what happens next. When you have a basic story, ask the pupils about things that need correcting, other things that can be changed, added, etc. to make the story better. You don't need an IWB to do this, but using an IWB makes it a lot easier to take out and add words, etc as you can select sections of sentences and move them.

- **Fridge magnets**. Make your own fridge magnets and use different colours (green for verbs, yellow for adjectives, etc) to raise awareness of features sentence order, etc.

Games and the IWB

Children love playing games, and as you might have seen above, it's very easy to turn what would otherwise be plain exercises into games using the IWB. Here are some other ideas for making games out of your existing classroom material and of using other types of games on the IWB.

- **Board games.** An engaging way to motivate a class is to project a board game onto the IWB. Classic board games or invented ones can be found or made and can be used in collaboration with any exercises in a course book to make a game out of it. Examples to be shown include *Snakes and ladders* and *4-in-a-row*.

- **Digital Games.** With classroom access to the Internet, a whole world of games are at your disposal. The important thing to keep in mind here is the game should be driven by the language aims. Examples shown include using a virtual classroom assistant (*Moshi Monsters*) and encouraging speaking by using a problem solving game (*Crayon Physics Deluxe).*

Other tricks and tips

The IWB take time to get to know and for you to use well. The best advice is for you to walk, don't run, and to start to explore . Here's one example:-

- **Using Layers.** There are three layers that you can put objects into on the screen (Bac, Middle and Front) and you can use this to your advantage when you are using pictures, shapes and text together on a page. One example of this is the 'Magic box', which uses a picture of a toybox. If this is in the middle layer, then anything that is on the bottom layer will "disappear" into the box when moved and anything that is on the top layer will still be visible when you move it onto the picture. You can use this in various ways, such as making only past *-ed* verbs with the */t/* ending stay visible in the box, with the other verbs disappearing.

More information:

All of the activities in this handout are supported on this wiki : http://iwb-efl.wikispaces.com/
In addition, here are some links to specific resources mentioned here:

Crayon Physics Deluxe: http://www.crayonphysics.com/
Moshi Monsters: http://www.moshimonsters.com

ITiLT European Project. A European Union funded project helping teachers to share best practice with IWBs, with guidelines and access to training resources, etc: http://itilt.eu

Crayon Physics Deluxe: http://www.crayonphysics.com/

Moshi Monsters: http://www.moshimonsters.com

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