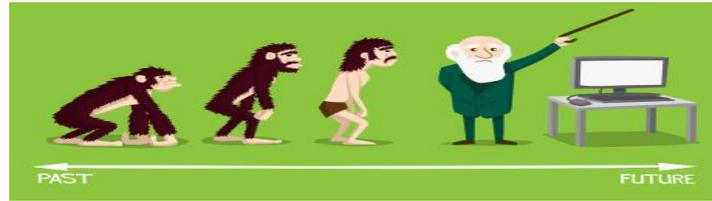


Technology in the classroom



Introduction

Today's students have grown up in an environment full of digital technologies, perhaps always having access to the Internet. Students have naturally developed an aptitude and high skill levels for using new technologies. This means your students may watch hours on a screen whether it is a TV or a computer screen playing video games. To effectively engage and teach these students we must use technology as one part of the teaching process.

1. What is technology?

In the educational context, technology is a tool that assists students learn and teachers teach. According to research conducted by Open Sources, Technology is used to.



2. It exists? What is available?

It may be a scavenger hunt but most schools student have these resources

- **Digital blackboards (TVs)**
- **Digital textbooks** (used with a projector or digital blackboard)
- **CD players** (If you used an AUX cable and connect it to the Audio In slot, you can play your music from iTunes and music from the internet)
- **Projectors** (An alternative if you're classroom cannot fit a digital blackboard)
- **Tablets/Smartphone (Apps)** (your own device, if your smartphone has tethering you can access the internet in class i.e. see more websites that are not blocked)
- **Internet cables** not all schools have them but there should be a cable connecting to the internet.

3. Why use it?

From the responses collected for the survey, we can see that students prefer teachers use technology to use. In fact, 98% of elementary schools students and over 85% of junior high schools students said they understood lessons better. Of course non technology based resources. It is a teaching process to consider using in the classroom.

These results are not surprising when you consider how students learn and social in today's world. They use the internet which has too much information both good and bad. Students play various videos games and watch many types of media. We need to keep students motivated in class and to study outside of class. **We need to adapt to their learning styles and make lessons more student centred.** So students have control and can monitor their own learning rather than relying on the teacher like in the past where teaching it was teacher orientated ("do as I say and you will pass the exam" which wasn't always the case!).

You don't have to be a tech genius or the next Steve Jobs or Bill Gates to be able to use technology effectively in your classes. From the survey we found out that how technology affects students learning and the *meaning of the results*

- Junior high school students find it easier to understand and learn the correct pronunciation. ***So we don't always have to be the tape recorder and utilise our time organising more educationally beneficial activities (like skits, games and other team teaching activities)***
- Junior High school students find it easier to understand class activities and the text introduced in the textbook. ***So using PowerPoints to explain grammar points and videos from the digital textbook have been effective teaching tool in classes.***
- Students found all resources effective; however students rated the laptop as the best resource in class. ***So students found powerpoints, presentations (Prezi), videos and the digital textbook most effective in helping understand lesson content.***
- 94% of students (answered 3 or higher) enjoy lessons more if technology is used in classes. ***So students are less likely to fall asleep, stay motivated and feel like the teacher understands how they learn.***

If you or/and your teacher says I can't use these tools because I'm not a technology professional, think again. Both Steve Jobs and Bill Gates don't have university degrees, so they technically are not qualified either. You probably are not the only person who has wants more help. I do! These results will improve when we improve our skills using technology. I'll let you read this quote by the man who created windows. (i.e. the guy behind the company who made the word pro software I used to type this document).

"Technology is just a tool. In terms of getting the kids working together and motivating them, the teacher is most important." - **Bill Gates (creator of Windows)**

3. How do we respond?

There are students who find using technology difficult. This means we have to teach them. Improve lessons so they are more student centred and targeting different students learning styles. This means using both non technology tools and technology tools in synergy. This may also mean using resources we do not have now. Some of these resources can be borrowed.

Teachers also find it difficult; we need to teach them what we know. Especially at elementary school, since we are only there about once a month. Effectively using technology means students are continuously motivated to learn English. This is important when we are not there. The digital textbook has videos that teach pronunciation and activities that help students learn about the language and culture. Resources can be limited so we need to find ways to share it

Many textbooks have supplementary materials. Hi Friends digital textbook allows you to make your own flash cards. New Horizon offers a digital teaching supplement which has video lessons explaining grammar points and videos about the dialogues in the textbook.

4. How do we use it?

We can use technology to develop the four main areas in language learning.

<p>Verbal interaction</p> <p>Interactive texts that include audio, music and sound effects. The digital textbook provides these materials.</p> <p>Examples of interactive activities http://akitajet.com/wiki/Audio_Visual_Activities</p> <p>If you want to show videos from Youtube, you can save it on Vdownloader app or download it in mp4 format using the http://www.keepvid.com/ website. Eng Vid is a great resource of videos. www.engvid.com/</p>	<p>Vocabulary Development</p> <p>Visual clues in contextual situations help students remember words. So PowerPoints with pictures in situations help students learn new words. Beginners might use translation tools or online picture dictionaries to aid comprehension http://www.esolhelp.com/online-picture-dictionary.html http://www.eslgamesplus.com/irregular-past-tense-esl-grammar-jeopardy-quiz-game/</p>
<p>Reading</p> <p>Online games can promote students' skills in spelling, phonics, grammar, and sight word vocabulary. The British Council website and app is a good example. http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/kids-games</p> <p>Reading news articles in easy English <http://www.newsonjapan.com/> <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/></p>	<p>Writing</p> <p>Emailing is one activity to enhance writing skills as it uses authentic text. Students can easily edit messages and use previous messages as models for new messages</p> <p>In addition writing storyboards for videos or skits/plays.</p> <p>Participating in course components on a class discussion board. Communication via social media is another way. Interactive websites that allows students to develop skills on their own. <http://www.funenglishgames.com/writinggames.html></p>

5. The fun stuff – Making learning interactive.

Field trip, well the virtual equivalent – Skype in the classroom

Skype is a free way for teachers to open up their classroom and their students to a world way beyond their campus. With Skype, students can learn from other students, connect with other cultures, and expand their knowledge in astounding ways. This activity has been organised a few times in Kumamoto Prefecture. Skype sessions can be as small as a group of three to over 90 students. Points to consider when you are making a successful Skype session.

- Language barrier: communication is important! The ALT may be the main communicator between schools. **Find a school that teaches Japanese and a teacher that speaks Japanese.** The students outside of Japan can use Japanese to communicate in the lesson. **This factor made is so much easier my team teaching teacher did most of the work with the Japanese teacher. Nice work Ms Taraki and Ms Kubota!** It is also a reason for a communication exchange for the school overseas. Contact teachers from the languages faculty at the schools you want to Skype with.
- There are Skype forums to help find people who are interested.
 - Skype's official education page <<https://education.skype.com/>>
 - Skype in the Classroom <<http://skypeintheclassroom.wordpress.com/2008/10/31/lets-build-a-community/#comments>>
 - Around the World in 80 schools <http://aroundtheworldwith80schools.net/>
 - If you want to continue holding various Skype session check out this link for creative ideas. < <http://www.teachingdegree.org/2009/06/30/50-awesome-ways-to-use-skype-in-the-classroom/>>
- Consider the time difference. Your students may have to stay at school late or get to school early.
- You will need to discuss the lesson plan and practice the lesson. At my elementary school, the students introduced Kumamoto Prefecture (famous places), Harutake Elementary School and what they wanted to be in the future. (Hi Friends 2 Lesson 8)
- You will definitely need a good webcam and microphone/speakers to pick up the sound.



A photo of Harutake Elementary School during their Skype session with Murray Farm Public School, Sydney, Australia.

Broadway Musical, not quite but still a show - Video contest

LIGHTS
CAMERA
ACTION



In Kumamoto City, the Kumamoto City ALT's organised a video contest for Junior High School students. The goal of the contest was students to build their communicative skills through the process of making a video. The students have to make a story board and formulate lines for their parts in the video. In addition make subtitles to make it more coherent which build their writing skills and it is also makes it easier for judges to assess their English. Student teams were given a score out of 20.

Other ideas

- Email exchanges – An activity which practices students written communication skills. Students can look back at previous emails as templates or models for future emails.
- Feedback for speech and recitation contests – In these contests students must mimic what a real English conversation is like not just reciting words, so it is an easy way to give feedback.
- Video pen pals - Use a video recording device to record the students' responses. You can organise a class where students take a picture of them and then describe it.
- Creative writing (story telling)/Presentation – Using images or applications like Powerpoint, Keynote.

6. Student survey results

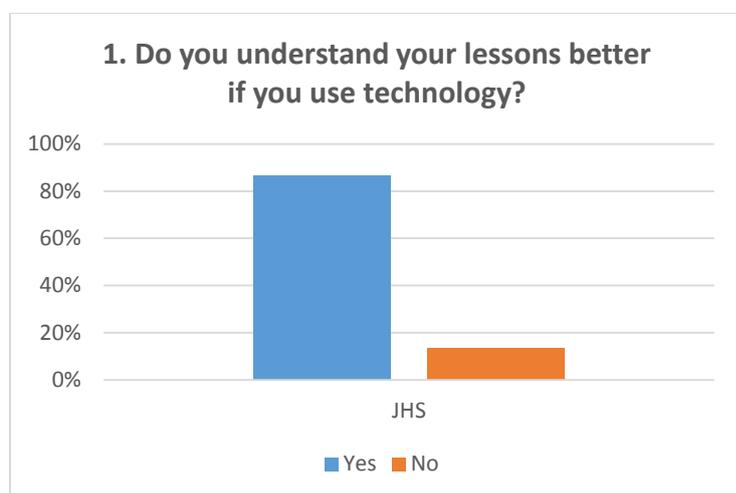
The survey responses were from junior high school students (330 students) and elementary school students (255 students). The results are presented below.

1. Do you understand your lessons better if you use technology?

もっとテクノロジーを使った英語の授業なら、あなたはもっと理解できると思いますか？

Yes (はい) No (いいえ)

Grade	Yes	No
Junior high	87%	13%
Elementary	98%	2%



2. Why? (Please choose your reason)

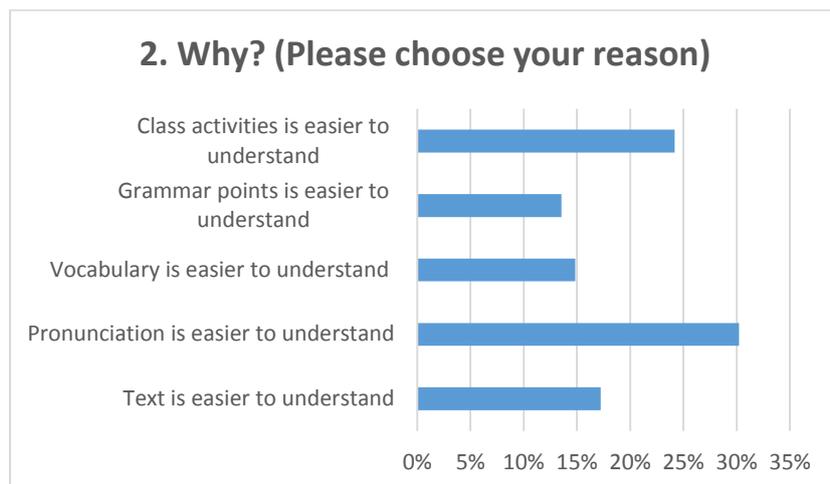
なぜ？(理由を選んでください。)

- A) 本書が分かりやすい (Powerpoint / デジタル教科書) Technology makes it easier to understand the text.
- B) 発音が分かりやすい Easier to understand pronunciation
- C) 言葉が分かりやすい Easier to understand words

D) 文法が分かりやすい Easier to understand grammar points

E) 英語の活動が分かりやすい (ALTのゲーム・デジタル教科書) Easier to understand class activities

Grade	Text is easier to understand	Pronunciation is easier to understand	Vocabulary is easier to understand	Grammar points is easier to understand	Class activities is easier to understand
Junior high	17%	30%	15%	14%	24%



3. Out of the following list, what are the TOP 3-5 classroom techniques/technologies.

右の中から、テクノロジーに一番いいと思う方法を、この中から三つを選んでください。

- A) Laptop ノートパソコン (Powerpoint)
- B) CD Player (音楽・本書)
- C) Digital Textbook デジタル教科書
- D) Videos ビデオ (Ipad, Youtube、デジタル教科書、DVD)

	Laptop	CD Player	Digital Textbook	Videos (e.g. Youtube, Digital Textbook)
Junior High	32%	24%	22%	23%

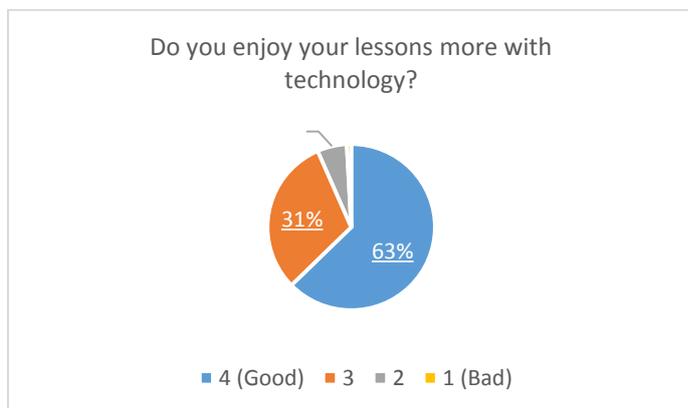
4. Are the lessons more enjoyable with technology?

上記のようなテクノロジーを使った英語の授業は、普通の英語の授業よりたのしいですか？

4 (いい) Good 3 2 1(悪い) Bad

	4 (Good)	3	2	1 (Bad)
Junior High	63%	31%	6%	1%

	Yes	No
Elementary	100%	0%



5. Other comments

授業で使われる、テクノロジーについて、あなたが思うことを何でも書いてください。

98% of Elementary school students said they preferred if both technology and non-technology tools were used in lessons.

Comments (Yes, technology does helps my understanding)	Comments (No, technology does not help my understanding)
Technology should be introduced more in classes	Pronunciation is too fast to understand
Please use it more as it easy to understand	Grammar is difficult to understand using the digital textbook
It is easy to understand because there is a video and audio	Digital TV is difficult to see and it is annoying since there is so much clicking
If the teacher writes on the blackboard some details make omitted. Also I think using a digital textbook saves class time.	I think it does not make a difference
Pronunciation is good so it is easy to understand	I prefer to learn together with my classmates
It is easier to see the TV because it is more clear and the sound is more clear	
It is easier to understand but the digital blackboard is difficult to see	
I think technology makes it easier to understand	
I think technology should be used more in class	
The lesson is smoother since there is less time spent writing on the blackboard	
It is easy to understand because it is colourful.	
I want to speak English more because I enjoyed playing the game today	

Help?

Helpdesk (know as E-net) the lab house at the Kumamoto City Education Centre. They help Kumamoto City Schools with technology issues. If you need their help make sure you call early. They are quite in demand.

If you need their help contact

- **Phone: 096-312-9828**
- **Email: inthelp@t.kumamoto-kmm.ed.jp**
- **Intranet website: <http://enetweb.int.kumamoto-kmm.ed.jp>**

Ask your teachers or ALTs. Ask ALTs from around Japan. I'm sure they are in a similar situation and finds ways around it. Ask your teachers, man have used technology in various ways to teach. You'll be surprised. Great way to start a conversation!

Useful links

- Lots of useful lessons www.engvid.com/
- A blog with pictures of explanations of English idioms and phrases <http://www.pinterest.com/gplguelph/english-for-everyone/>
- A guide for useful apps <http://mastersinesl.com/essential-esl-app-guide/>

References

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Wiseman Jeff, (2013) "English Language Learners as Digital Natives: 21st Century Tools for Sheltered ESL Classrooms", Retrieved from < <http://bit.ly/1g3AhR6> >

Questions

If you want to hear more about anything mentioned, **just shoot me an email. My email: hiroshi.f2@gmail.com**

One last thing (Steve Job's famous last words after each presentation)

"It is important to remember that educational software, like textbooks, is only one tool in the learning process. Neither can be a substitute for well-trained teachers, leadership, and parental involvement." –

- Keith Krueger - Keith R. Krueger is CEO of the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN), a nonprofit organization that serves as the voice for K-12 school system technology leaders in North America. CoSN's mission is to empower educational leaders to leverage technology to realize engaging learning environment.
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