

## POWERTOON CLUES

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**Abstract:** Reading is an important learning area which ESL learners should master for interaction and academic purposes. However, ESL students are facing many difficulties in English reading skills particularly contextual clues. Hence, this product aims to ease the teaching and learning of inferring word meaning – contextual clues, to enrich the students' vocabulary bank and to motivate the students to engage in reading. The challenge in teaching contextual clues is that the current technology-integrated teaching method has lost its way to cater students' interest in reading. This product is believed to allow the students to enjoy meaningful language classes. The emergence and usage of PowToon in today's classroom has helped to ease the process of teaching reading skills to the students. The features of this product include captivating graphics, lively animation, concise content and attractive background music. This product is user friendly as it is accessible to everyone; online and offline. In addition, it is suitable to be used in language classes with limited technology support. Thus, this evolution in teaching pedagogy will encourage paperless teaching aids in language classrooms.

**Keywords:** Contextual clues, Reading, PowToon, Animation

### 1. Introduction

Being a competent reader is one of the skills that language learner should master in order to become a proficient language user either for interaction or academic purposes. However, the learning process of reading comprehension skill is not easy especially to learners with low English language proficiency or those who are lacking of language repertoire (Parilah & Empungan, 2015). In addition, most teachers are unaware of the best and suitable approach to teach reading lessons which may cause the learners to show disinterest in learning (Marzilah & Sharifah Nadia, 2010). Due to this, there is an increasing interest and application of information and communication technology (ICT) in the teaching and learning process to ensure it is on par with the 21st century education. This approach is parallel to the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 which specifies the maximum usage of ICT for distance and self-paced learning in order to expand the capacity and allow for more customised learning (Ministry of Education, 2012).

The application of ICT into the teaching and learning activities is viewed as an enhancement tool that permits the students and teachers to allocate information needed for the lessons and subsequently increase their classroom productivity. Among the ICT technical media that could be utilised in teaching and learning activities is presentation software application as presented in Table 1 which is categorised according to canvas or slide-based, availability of the product (online or offline) and its subscription fee.

Table 1 Comparison on presentation software applications

Application	Canvas-based	Slide-based	Online	Offline	Free subscription
Adobe Flash	✓		✓	✓	
MS PowerPoint		✓	✓	✓	
Prezi	✓		✓	✓	
Google Slides		✓	✓		✓
PowToon		✓	✓		
SlideShare		✓	✓		✓

Source: Avsar, Aliabadi, Aliabadi &Yousefnezhad (2016)

In selecting the appropriate presentation software application, teachers should also consider whether the resources being used would lead to a high level of students’ engagement. Figure 1 depicts the technologytools that have a high level of engagement for user community as presented by Alexander (2016).

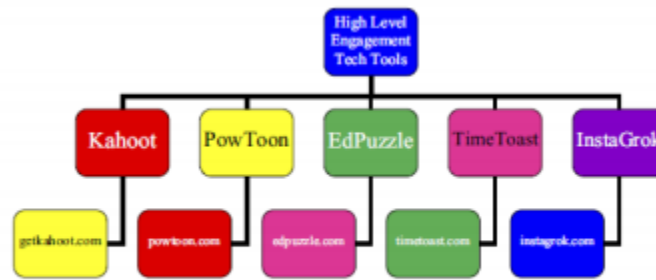


Figure 1: High level of engagement technology tools

The increasing level of digital literacy among teachers and students has led to the increasing usage of videos in teaching and learning activities. According to Kaltura (2015), videos are considered as the future educational tool since its role is not just limited to the delivery of content which could replace the usage of textbook, but videos could also enable innovative type of learning like e-learning, flipped learning and distance learning. One type of videos is PowToon which permits the creation of animated presentations that are rather short and apply the techniques of rhyme, repetition, catchy music and relatable characters (Powtoon, 2016). A study by Guo, Kim and Ruby (2104) found that students are more engaged to shorter videos combined with instructor’s talking along with the slides which display a more personal touch of interactive process. In relation to that, this technical paper presents the innovative way of teaching and learning activities using Powtoon software application.

**2. Problem Statement**

Reading comprehension is one of the activities conducted in classroom to assist the students on the ability to read and understand the meaning of text. Proficient readers have the ability to comprehend words effortlessly which suggests that text comprehension could be improved by enhancing the reader’s vocabulary and utilizing a number of reading strategies. One of the comprehension reading strategies is planning and monitoring which allow the reader to preview the text and use contextual clues to clarify the ideas (Wikipedia, 2017). According to Ahmad Azman and Rafizah (2012), contextual clues approach is a good strategy to improve reading skills as it is considered as a reading-improvement strategy.

However, ESL students are facing many difficulties in English reading skills particularly contextual clues. The challenge in teaching contextual clues is that the current technology-integrated teaching method has lost its way to cater students' interest in reading. The traditional 'talk and chalk' approach must be altered as to stimulate a more attractive and innovative teaching and learning environment. As mentioned by Wickramasinghe and Upeksha (2016), giving lectures can bore students especially if the lecturer reads powerpoint slides in a monotone way. Referring to figure 2 of the learning pyramid in traditional classroom, the average attention rate for students in lecture-based approach is the lowest with only 5% whereas audio-visual approach has a higher percentage of 20% (Wickramasinghe & Upeksha, 2016).

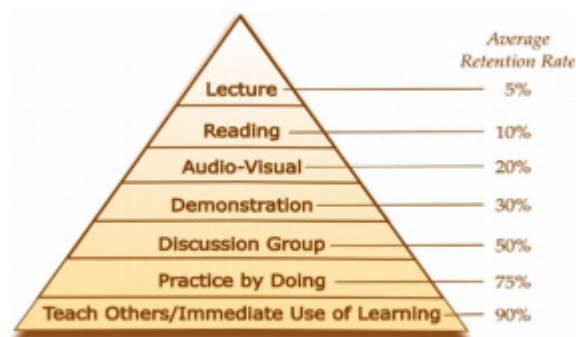


Figure 2: Learning pyramid in traditional classroom

Figure 2: Learning pyramid in traditional classroom

In addition, Wickramasinghe and Upeksha (2016) concluded in their study that students are very much interested to having video recording of lectures as compared to other teaching methods. On top of that, Ahmad Azman and Rafizah (2012) asserted that the best learning approach for contextual clues activities is that the learners complete the activity and receive immediate feedback. As such, it is crucial that teachers employ and conduct innovative teaching tools like PowToon in their classroom activities.

### 3. Objectives

The two objectives of this learning kit are:

1. To offer an interesting alternative to the traditional 'chalk & talk' or slides only teaching material.
2. To provide support materials to consolidate the lessons for reading skills.

### 4. Novelty

The novelties of this learning kit are:

1. New and improved hybrid teaching material than can be used in both slides and video presentation mode.
2. Great blended or technology based teaching and learning material as the video can be seamlessly published in YouTube.
3. Comprehensive support material mini book for added value teaching and learning.

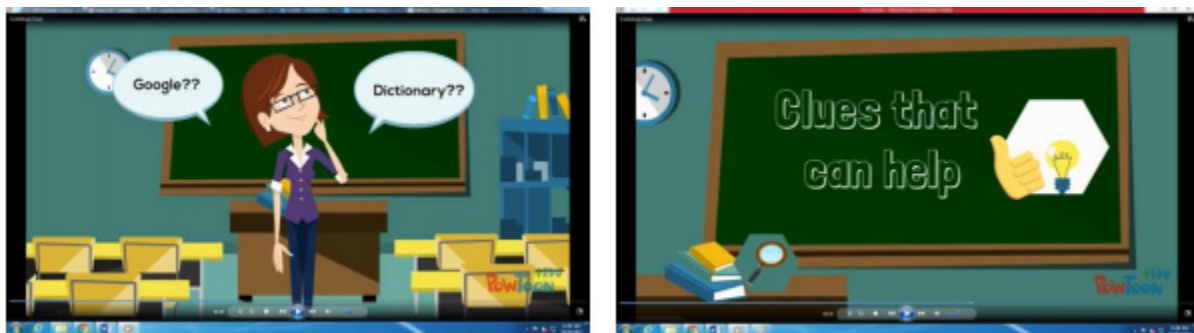
## 5. Usefulness

This product aims to ease the teaching and learning of inferring word meaning – contextual clues, to enrich the students' vocabulary bank and to motivate the students to engage in reading. This product is believed to allow the students to enjoy meaningful language classes. The emergence and usage of PowToon in today's classroom has helped to ease the process of teaching reading skills to the students. The features of this product include captivating graphics, lively animation, concise content and attractive background music. This product is user friendly as it is accessible to everyone; online and offline. In addition, it is suitable to be used in language classes with limited technology support. Thus, this evolution in teaching pedagogy will encourage paperless teaching aids in language classrooms.

## 6. Commercialization Potential Or Impact Towards Socio Economy/ Humanity

Considering the need for interesting and attention grabbing teaching material in today's world, the development of this learning kit hopefully will increase interest in incorporating video based material. The hybrid (slides/video) feature will make both teaching and learning practical and effective. Commercialization potential (once more video projects are added) includes the selling of the learning kit which includes a CD and support book. YouTube channel launched with more videos on language skills teaching should also garner subscriptions that would later generate income through advertisements and merchandising.

## 7. Images (With Captions/Explanation)



## 8 Conclusion

The challenge in teaching contextual clues is that the current technology-integrated teaching method has lost its way to cater students' interest in reading. This product is believed to allow the students to enjoy meaningful language classes. The emergence and usage of PowToon in today's classroom has helped to ease the process of teaching reading skills to the students. The features of this product include captivating graphics, lively animation, concise content and attractive background music. Besides that, the support mini book that comes with it offers added value teaching and learning kit. This product is user friendly as it is accessible to everyone; online and offline.

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