

Travelling in the efl classroom with the help of powerpoint: which way to take not to go astray

With computers and multimedia projectors becoming more available in Ukrainian EFL classrooms, PowerPoint presentations gain the status of an ordinary rather than exotic activity. Among the popular projects done with the help of PowerPoint there are so-called virtual travels to the cities of the English-speaking countries. Such 'PowerPoint travels' have numerous advantages. At the same time some hidden pitfalls endanger their effectiveness. The aim of this presentation is to discuss these potential problems of 'PowerPoint travels' and to suggest ways of avoiding them.

When students are given tasks to prepare a PowerPoint presentation on a certain city, they are prone to: 1) concentrate too much on the information which is destined to be forgotten – like detailed information about the successive re-buildings and reconstructions of a certain edifice with lists of names and dates; 2) get satisfied with the first few web-sites they find (as a rule, such web-sites give just well-known facts) but do not search for unique information; 3) pick up some monuments from a certain city at random.

The following strategies may be employed to fully exploit the educational potential of 'PowerPoint travels': students should be 1) taught to understand and discuss a city's symbolism (*e.g.* Washington D.C. was designed to be square to embody the ideal of 'fair and square' government); 2) advised to tell stories rather than just present dates (*e.g.* the dramatic story of relationships between Lincoln and General Lee rather than the war chronology); 3) encouraged to search the Internet for: a) little known but stunning facts, b) linguistic details (*e.g.* in the USA there are statues of Freedom and those of Liberty); 4) instructed to make comparisons between information from various sources; 5) guided to organise their presentations on some principle (*e.g.* spatial proximity, symbolic identity, similar historic importance of buildings and sites).