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Outside the Box: A Multi-Lingual Forum

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*Special Section:
Lessons from OkiJALT*



Utilizing the Pecha-Kucha Format for Presentation Activities

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Quick Guide

- Keywords: presentation, pecha-kucha
- Learner English level: beginner to advanced
- Learner maturity: elementary and above
- Preparation time: 10-30 minutes
- Activity time: 6 minutes 40 seconds
- Materials: Projector, PowerPoint,
- Pecha-Kucha slides

As the media buzz surrounding a number of sensational presentations held in the TED Talks venue continues, a renewed interest in the mastery of public speech seems to have taken hold. In the crevasses of public speaking lurks a relatively less-known form of delivery known as *Pecha-kucha*, appropriately named from a Japanese onomatopoeia meaning chit-chat. Pecha-kucha events are often held at local venues with interested spectators attending to learn something new and participants simply wanting to share their insight with the public. The sharing of information is more freely available with the inclusion of everyone, and this is one aspect that distinguishes Pecha-kucha from TED Talks – the absence of a rigid screening process. Admittedly, quality issues are in question at times. One could even critically describe Pecha-kucha as being an amateurish version of TED Talks with its informal approach to public speaking. Nevertheless, the magic of Pecha-kucha is in its basic presentation format. The delivery of presentations, most often via PowerPoint, is limited in one important respect – time. Presenters are given a limited number of

slides, 20 in total, and they are given a time limitation of 20 seconds per slide. These are welcomed restrictions for any audience member who has ever sat through a dreadfully long speech. Another peculiarity with Pecha-kucha is a rule that slides must contain only images. Texts are not allowed. This forces the audience to focus exclusively on the presenter's speech for key information.

Pecha-kucha is not only an attractive option because of time efficiency; additionally, it offers a multimodal dimension to teaching with the utilization of auditory, visual, and tactile sensory modalities (Tomsett & Shaw, 2014). However, it could be argued that the creativity often prevalent in many Pecha-kucha presentations may cover the full-range of multiple intelligences, as each presentation is unique. As Gardner (1983, 1999) pointed out, each individual has at least seven – and quite possibly eight intelligences – at their disposal. Gardner's multiple intelligences categories include linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal. The distinctiveness of our individuality ultimately effects the way we utilize these intelligences. In essence, the basic framework of Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) presupposes that all of us are wired somewhat differently.

It is recommended that educators create conditions in the classroom that are ideal for developing these intelligences and a balance in introducing these intelligences could maximize the benefits of strengthening underutilized intelligences for all learners (Haley, 2001). In order to promote success in learning, teachers must present material to students in ways that are most receptive

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(Beckman, 1998). Nolen (2003) states that material used in a foreign language class should be presented in ways that address all or most of the intelligences since these are available to every learner. Providing students with more variety leads to more accessibility to understanding and learning. As Pecha-kucha presentations may ultimately provide more presentations in a shorter time span, learners would likely be exposed to multiple delivery styles and content. In using Pecha-kucha in the language class, students are provided with a wider array of input to stimulate their interests and learning, a shared concept with MI theory.

The basic format of Pecha-kucha may be ideal as a class presentation activity. Due to differences in time availability and language proficiency levels, teachers may adjust the number of slides and the number of seconds per slide. Essentially, there are an unlimited number of ways to carry out class activities based on the Pecha-kucha framework. For instance, students could create their own slideshows for class presentations, or they could choose from thousands of slide sets available on the official website, www.pechakucha.org. One time-saving strategy for teachers is the use of in-group presentations that can be done simultaneously. For instance, one main Pecha-kucha slideshow could be displayed from a class projector while students in their respective groups engage in separate in-group presentations. Below, the basic instructions for such an in-group Pecha-kucha activity are outlined.

Preparation

Step 1: After determining the amount of time available and student proficiency levels, set a time limitation for each slide and decide on the number of slides for the entire slideshow.

Step 2: Choose the theme/content of the slideshow. Original slideshows may be

created with software such as MS PowerPoint. A collection of slideshows are also readily available on the website [pechakucha.org](http://www.pechakucha.org).

Step 3: Provide slideshows to students in advance, especially to English language learners at the beginner to intermediate proficiency levels.

Step 4: Encourage students to prepare and rehearse their presentations before class.

Procedure

Step 1: Divide the class into groups.

Step 2: Explain the procedure to the students, i.e., number of seconds per slide, etc.

Step 3: Play the slideshow and let the students perform their presentations.

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Call for abstracts: The next issue of the *OTB Forum* is planned for the summer of 2015. The review process is ongoing, so authors are encouraged to submit a short abstract (about 200 words). Please send abstracts to editor@otbforum.net

