

# BUILDING CLASSROOM GAMES VIA MULTIMEDIA

Trần Thị Thơm

Danang Architecture University, Vietnam

[thomfiat@gmail.com](mailto:thomfiat@gmail.com)

## Abstract

For a teacher, an effective and successful lesson plan is the one that can help students not only master their knowledge, create new skills but also develop their own interest in learning. Therefore, teachers must always invest a lot of their time and effort in building interesting lesson plans. One of the ways of creating such lesson plans is using games in teaching process. Thanks to multimedia, teachers themselves can design competitive and challenging games that make students feel fun when engaging in their learning activities. As such, “Building classroom games via multimedia” has been chosen as the topic for this paper. This paper aims at presenting some useful sources of materials especially from the internet that teachers can use for reference when preparing their lessons. Then, it shows the flexible combination of multimedia in class. Finally, it makes productions of some techniques in using multimedia through PowerPoint such as using Macros, Visual Basic Editor etc. We believe that the findings of this paper can bring positive effects in teaching and learning English.

**Keywords:** CALL, Classroom games, multimedia, websites

## 1. Introduction

According to Ur (1988), *the actual language production is in hands of the learners, the teachers merely providing instructions and materials and acting as a monitor and helper*. It means that learners need to participate actively in class; in other word, it is active learning. When we discuss active learning in the classroom, it is understood that lecture is still important – the foundational knowledge required for students to be able to engage in higher level thinking is essential. However, *for the sake of maintaining student interest, and facilitating meaningful, and eventually self-directed learning, it can be very helpful to vary the teaching and learning activities you employ in the classroom* (cited from CELT Teaching Tip Sheet, p.1). There are a wide range of activities used both inside and outside the classroom that promote active learning and one of them is using games. Furthermore, nowadays, with the aids of multimedia, it seems easier for teachers to create effective activities in order to make learning fun and interesting both for the learners and teachers. As such, in this paper we will deal with the factor of building classroom games via multimedia so that it can support teachers in their language teaching.

## 2. Roles Of Classroom Games In Language Teaching

In the introduction of the book “*Games for Language Learning*”, Andrew Wright, David Betteridge and Michael Buckby (1984) states that *language learning is hard work. One must make an effort to understand, to repeat accurately, to adapt and to use newly understood language in conversation and in written composition. Effort is required at every moment and must be maintained over a long period of time. Games help and encourage many learners to sustain their interest and work*. In addition, Wright et al also affirm that *games also help the teacher to create contexts in which the language is useful and meaningful. Games provide one way of helping the learners to experience language rather than merely study it*.

Moreover, Lee Su Kim, writing in *Forum journal* in 1995, sums up the perception that the classroom is considered by many to be no place for games. These ones think that all learning should be serious and

solemn in nature, and that if one is having fun and there is hilarity and laughter, then it is not really learning. However, Su Kim asserts that *this is a misconception*. He states *it is possible to learn a language as well as enjoy oneself at the same time. One of the best ways of doing this is through games*.

Furthermore, he reasserts the points: there are many advantages of using games in the classroom:

- ❖ *Games are a welcome break from the usual routine of the language class. They are motivating and challenging.*
- ❖ *Learning a language requires a great deal of effort. Games help students to make and sustain the effort of learning.*
- ❖ *Games provide language practice in the various skills- speaking, writing, listening and reading.*
- ❖ *They encourage students to interact and communicate.*
- ❖ *They create a meaningful context for use.*

In short, there is no doubt that using games in class brings a lot of benefits for language learning and teaching. Therefore, when teachers prepare language activities for their lessons, games should be taken into account. Nevertheless, they should keep in mind that *games are used not only for mere fun, but more importantly, for the useful practice and review of language lessons, thus leading toward the goal of improving learners' communicative competence*. (Nguyen Thi Thanh Huyen and Khuat Thi Thu Nga, writing in the *Asian EFL Journal* in 2003)

### **3. What is multimedia?**

According to Tannenbaum (1998), “multimedia” is derived from a shortening of the two words “multiple” and “media”. In addition, Alan Cutting (2011) asserts that *the term “media” have been long used in the field of education. However, it sometimes only referred to “audio-visual aids”, to help our teaching.*. Also, Fenrich (1997) defines that *multimedia is the exciting combination of computer hardware and software that allows you to integrate video, animation, audio, graphics, and text resources to develop effective presentations on an affordable desktop computer*. As a result, when concerning about using multimedia to build classroom games, this paper will focus on using applications of computer software especially Microsoft PowerPoint to achieve this.

## **4. Building classroom games via multimedia**

### **4.1. Preparation for building games**

First of all, it is really important for teachers to determine the stages of the lesson in which games will be used. They just need a warm-up game – game used to activate students at the beginning of the class, a practicing game- game used after each part of the lessons, or a lesson game – game used together with the lesson being taught. When keeping this in mind, they can choose suitable games for their lessons. The next step is that teachers need to gather all the materials related to their lesson. It is essential that teachers equip themselves with variety of materials. Materials can be taken from textbooks, from reference books or from the internet. Last but not least, how to tie all these materials together to make a fun game should be taken into account.

#### *4.1.1. Useful sources of materials*

Apart from the materials teachers can take from the textbooks, teacher's books, from the school library; there is the internet, this is, without a doubt, the biggest resource of all, and is capable of providing a wealth of learning experiences to all students. With only Google search tool, teachers can catch a huge source of materials such as video files, audio files, word files, portable files, picture files etc. Therefore, in this part of the paper, there will be the introduction of useful books and websites which teachers can use as reference materials.

First, there are some good game books which help teachers to have the ideas for building games.

1. *Fun with Grammar, Communicative Activities for the Azar Grammar Series* by Suzanne W. Woodward, Prentice Hall Regents, 1997.
2. “Games for Language Learning” by Andrew Wright, David Betteridge, Michael Buckby, Cambridge University Press, 2006.
3. “Grammar Games, Cognitive, Affective and Drama Activities for EFL Students” by Mario Rinvolucri, Cambridge University Press, 1998.
4. “Great Ideas, Listening and Speaking Activities for Students of American English, Teacher’s Manual” by Leo Jones & Victoria Kimbrough, Cambridge University Press, 1987.
5. “Ready-made English, Multi-level Activities” by Kurt Scheibner, Heinemann Publishers (Oxford) Ltd, 1995.
6. “Reward, Resource Pack, Communicative Activities for Students of English” by Susan Kay, Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1998. (Five levels)
7. “Speaking Extra, A Resource Book of Multi-level Skills Activities” by Mick Gammidge, Cambridge University Press, 2004.
8. “The Great Big Book of Games and Puzzles” compiled by Anna Amari-Parker and edited by Rebecca Gerlings, Arcturus Publishing Limited, 2006.
9. “Word Games with English, Teacher’s Resource Book” by Deirdre Howard Williams & Cynthia Herd, Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1998.
10. “Zero Prep, Ready-to-Go Activities for the Language Classroom” by Laurel Pollard and Natalie Hess, Alta Book Center Publishers- San Francisco, 1997.

The above books contain interesting games as well as interactive activities that can not only help students to practice different skills such as speaking skills, listening skills, reading skills and writing skills but also make them sustain the interest in their learning. There are many other game books, but as for me, these above books are easy to use and applicable to various kinds of lessons with different levels of students.

Second, some useful websites that provide printable and interactive games and activities are listed below so that teachers can use as sub-materials for their lessons.

1. <http://www.michellehenry.fr/default.htm>
2. As for me this is one of the best sites for ESL materials and this link is for the huge collection of games and other links. Busy teachers can find various multimedia with different topics that they can choose for their lessons.
3. <http://www.esl-lab.com>
4. This is a wonderful site for listening practice, teachers can choose any topics they like with different levels.
5. <http://www.eslbase.com>
6. This site has a lot of free, downloadable, ready-to-use activities, lesson plans, ideas and worksheets for your classes.
7. <http://bogglesworldesl.com>
8. This site contains printable teaching resources for language arts, TESOL, TEFL and ESL.
9. <http://baladre.info/english/sedaviwebfront/index.htm>
10. This site is a very easy way to refresh structures and exercises seen in class. It also has many listening exercises, some with interesting songs.
11. <http://www.eslprintables.com>
12. This website is the place where English language teachers exchange resources: worksheets, lesson plans, activities, etc. Their collection is growing every day with the help of many teachers. Teachers can find useful worksheets or PowerPoint lessons available for their lesson plans. If they want to download they have to send their own contributions. It means that in

order to download available files, teachers have to upload their own files to get the points. The more people download your files, the more points you can get.

13. <http://www.isabelperez.com/songs.htm>
14. This site contains a list of songs with related activities to practise vocabulary, grammar, sounds, etc. Most of them are popular and some others are old songs, but nice and useful. The students can feel fun and relaxed when practicing English with songs.
15. <http://www.eslcafe.com/idea/index.cgi?Games>
16. This is a well-known excellent site that offers alphabetically listed games and how to play them. Besides, it also has a forum where teachers can find and share ideas for teaching.
17. <http://www.eslflow.com/games1.html>
18. This is a must visit site as it has a superb collection of games and downloadable activities for most occasions.
19. <http://www.esl-galaxy.com/lessons.htm>
20. This is an excellent site with games for all levels. It offers over **2368 free printable worksheets** for ESL lesson plans and ESL activities; and there are more additions every other day.

#### *4.1.2. Choosing suitable types of multimedia used in each lesson*

Choosing suitable types of multimedia used in each lesson is a very important step for teachers themselves because this is the key to effective teaching and a critical factor in achieving positive student outcomes. Therefore, teachers should pay much attention to selecting applicable multimedia. They should bear in mind if they need to use any movies, videos, audio files, flash files, graphics, animations or they just need a worksheet, or even with only a chalk and a blackboard to build a classroom game or they need to combine all of them. With the reference books and websites recommended above, I think that they will find it easy to create a good game for their class.

### **4.2. Flexible combination of various multimedia**

#### *4.2.1. Using available worksheets and board games in game books and from the internet*

As suggested above, there are a wide range of reference materials available on the internet and in activities' books that teachers can be ready to use in their lessons. These are printable worksheets and board games. It is to say that teachers can make some copies or print them out.

#### *4.2.2. Using slides in PowerPoint*

Using slides in PowerPoint file is a time – saving, visual and interesting way to build a game. Teachers can combine multimedia effectively and flexibly. They can insert video files, audio files, flash files, pictures or charts etc. in a PowerPoint file.

- a. Using simple and available animations in PowerPoint to have a beautiful and useful slide  
In order to review the previous lesson, teacher can use a *definition game*. In this game, teachers can check students' vocabularies which they learned from previous lesson. One member in each group has to define the word and the rest of his or her group has to guess the correct word. The more words they can guess, the more points they can get.



*This slide show the example of list of the vocabularies a group has to define.*

In order to save the time of designing slides before class and the time used during language lessons, teachers can design simple slides by making some copies of one or more shapes and animations. It means that they just need to make some basic shapes, add animations for these shapes and then make copies.

b. Using some more complex functions in PowerPoint to make games more interesting

Apart from simple slides, teachers sometimes also need to make more elaborate ones in order that their slides can fulfill more functions, look more beautiful and especially can be useful for language lessons. For example: when teachers would like to create a warm-up game both to review the previous lesson and to start their new lesson, they can use a *guessing game* to let students review their knowledge and guess the topic of the new lesson. Some macros will be used in these slides to change numbers into letters that show the topic of the new lesson, and to set the scores for each team.



*Each number has a question and each group will choose the number they like to answer the question. If they have correct answer they get 5 points. Click on the name of each group to add their points. (A macro will be run on labels Group 1 and Group 2 to set the points for each team.*

Besides, in order to practice reading skills, a careful design of slides can help students feel more fun and relaxed with difficult reading lesson.



*Students read the statement and choose "True or False". Click on the number to see the statement. Each group has 5 sentences. If their answer is correct, their ball will go one step. The group getting to the finishing line first wins the*

c. Using picture, audio, video and flash files in slides

Teachers can combine various multimedia in PowerPoint slides to make their games more exciting and attractive. Using pictures in slides is a simple and powerful way of getting students' attention. When seeing imaginable, decorative, descriptive, informative, contrastive and attractive pictures, students can achieve the goals their teacher wants them to get easily and sometimes feel fun and relaxed with these pictures. In addition to using pictures, teachers can also use sounds in their slides. When inserting audio files in their slides, they don't need to use the CD player because it's ready to use in their slides. Furthermore, teachers can take a video from class CD ROM or download from the internet to use in their class. When watching the video, students can practice listening skills with real situations. More usefully, Flash games downloaded from the internet are ready-to-use activities which save a lot of time for teachers. They just need to insert into their slides and ask students to practice the language points they are

learning. Three of the following flash games are taken from the website:

<http://www.michellehenry.fr/default.htm> to help students to practice saying the time.



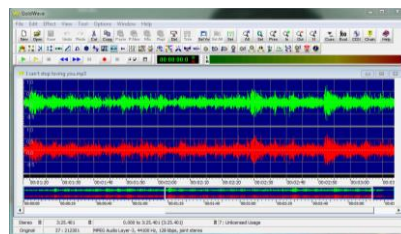
In short, with various multimedia in hand and with the use of them flexibly, teachers can find it easy to design interesting, challenging and useful games in their classes.

## 5. Some techniques in using multimedia through PowerPoint

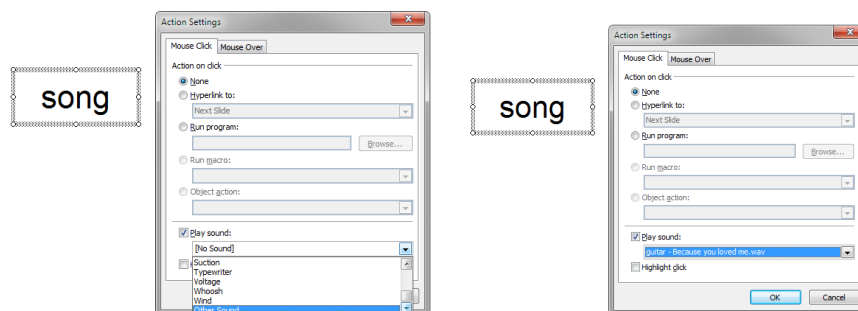
### 5.1. Using audio files

Audio files are means that are often used in slides. However, teachers sometimes have some problem when using these files. One of the frequent trouble is that teachers cannot play the sounds because there is no source of these files. This problem is because when making a copy of a PowerPoint file, they don't remember to copy the media files with them. Therefore, the following techniques will help to show this problem.

First, the audio files you need to use in your slides have to change their extension into “\*.wav” files because only this file type is accepted when using this action. There is some software that can help to change the extension of audio files and the software commonly used is *GoldWave*. You only need to open the file that you want to change the extension, then on the **File** tab, click **Save As** and choose “\*.wav” extension.



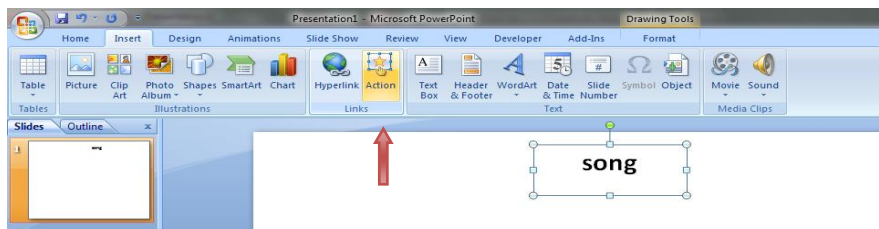
Second, insert this file into your slide and add action. If you use Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2003, choose the shape you need to add an action, then right click on this shape and choose Action Setting. On **Mouse Click** tab, check the box **Play sound**, select **Other Sound** then choose the file you need to insert, click **Ok**.



From then, whenever and wherever in your file you need to insert this media file, do the same process, because at that time, in the **Play sound** box, this sound is available for you to choose. It means that if you





forget to copy the source file, it is not the problem anymore because this sound is always available in this PowerPoint file. Furthermore, if you use Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2007, in order to turn on the tab **Action Setting**, choose the shape you need to add an action, then on the **Insert** tab select **Action** function, the tab **Action Setting** will appear and do the same process as in Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2003.



## 5.2. Using video files

When inserting a video file directly on a slide, teachers cannot pause at any places of this file. The question is how to solve this problem.

First, you need to display the **Developer** tab. To do this, click the Microsoft Office Button , and then click PowerPoint Options. Click **Popular**, and then select the **Show Developer tab in the Ribbon** check box.

Second, on **Developer** tab, click symbol **More Controls**  in Controls group, in the list of controls, click **Window Media Player** and then click **Ok**, after that drag on the slide to draw the control. Next, you can resize the Window Media Player on this slide.

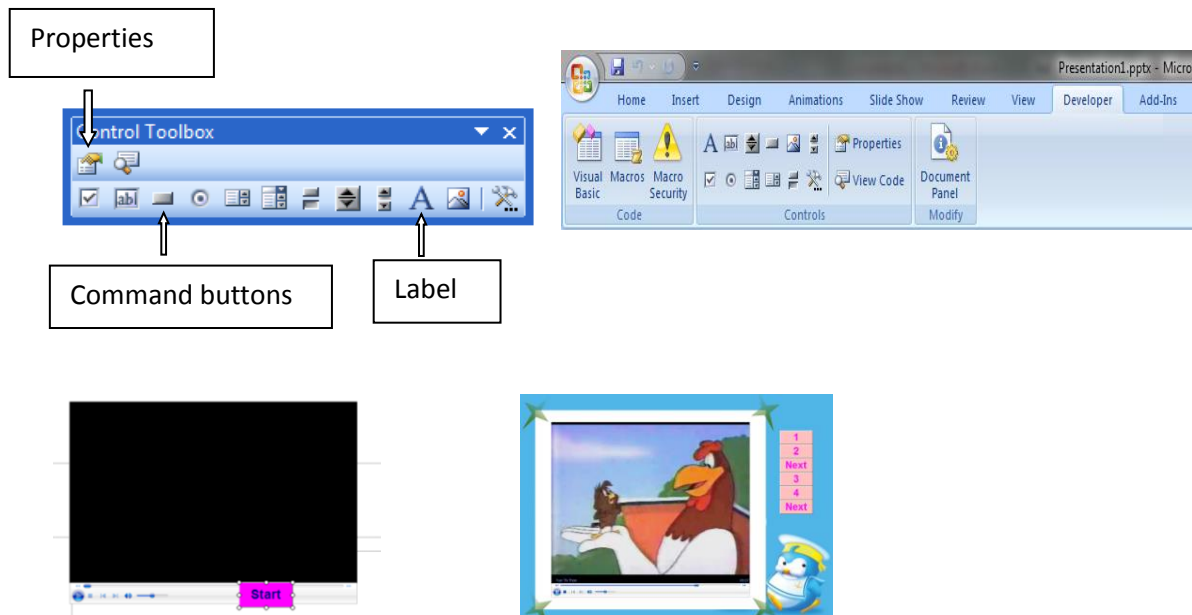
Finally, on **Controls** group of **Developer** tab, choose **Properties**, then on Properties table, copy the path of your video file. When viewing Slide Show, you only need to click on **Play** symbol to play the video.

Moreover, if you use Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2003, in order to display **More Controls symbol**, in **View** tab select **Toolbars**, and then choose **Control Toolbox**. The next steps do the same as in Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2007

More importantly, remember to change the path leading to the source files when you make a copy and use them on other computers or you cannot see the video at all. However, in order not to do this action, you need to use some commands in Visual Basic Editor. At first, on Control toolbox, click the **label** symbol or **command button** symbol, then change the name and the caption of this label or command button by selecting **Properties** on Control tool box. Second, choose the Window Media Player; click **Properties** to rename the Window Media Player. For example: you change the name of the label into "*Label1*" and the name of the Window Media Player into "*WMP*", so the command is as follows:

```
Private Sub Label1_Click()  
WMP.URL = ActivePresentation.Path + "\media\Whattimeisit.mpg"  
End Sub
```

Remember that the PowerPoint file and the folder containing media files are at the same level. This means if the path of the PowerPoint file *Time.ppt* is "*D:\time lesson\time.ppt*", the path of the video file *Whattimeisit.mpg* will be *D:\time\lesson\MEDIA\Whattimeisit.mpg*. When making a copy to another computer, you need to remember to copy the entire folder *Time lesson*. If you do so you don't have to copy and paste the new path for you video file whenever you use it on another computer.




If you want to load some videos on the same Window Media Player, you can make more labels and copy the command above, you just need to change the name of your root files on each command. For example:

```
Private Sub Label1_Click()
    wmp.URL = ActivePresentation.Path + "\\video\warm\kfc_1new.wmv"
End Sub
```

```
Private Sub Label2_Click()
    wmp.URL = ActivePresentation.Path + "\\video\warm\kfc_2new.wmv"
End Sub
```

### 5.3. Using flash files

Sometimes, teachers would like to use some flash files, so they need to do the following actions. First, on the Developer tab, in the Controls group, click More Controls . In the list of controls, click **Shockwave Flash Object**, click **OK**, and then drag on the slide to draw the control. Second, right-click the Shockwave Flash Object, and then click **Properties**. On the **Alphabetic** tab, click the **Movie** property. In the value column (the blank cell next to **Movie**), type the full drive path, including the file name (for example, D:\time lesson\MEDIA\telling\_time\_gr2.swf).

Another way is that you can install *Swiff Point Player 2.0* software. After install that software, you only need to embed the flash file you want by doing the following steps: First, on **Add-ins** tab, click **Flash Movie** in **Menu Commands** group, locate the folder that contains the file, and then double-click the file that you want to add. If you are working with Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2003, on **Insert** tab, click **Flash Movie**, then locate the folder that contains the file. Finally, resize your flash files.

### 5.4. Some other useful Macros and Commands in Visual Basic Editor

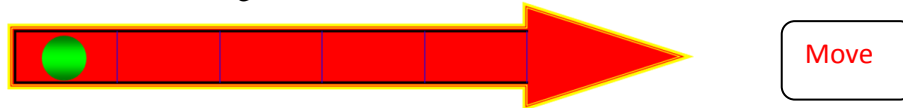
#### 5.4.1. Move a shape

When you want to create a macro or a command, the first thing you need to remember is the order of the shapes you make on your slides so that the macro will have an effect on the correct shapes.

In order to move a shape to the left or the right, up or down on your slides, you can use the following macro:



a. Move to the left or the right



Supposing that you would like to move the first shape on Slide 3 to the right 50 pixels, the shape **Move** needs to run the macro named *move* as follows

```
Sub move()
ActivePresentation.Slides(3).Shapes(1).IncrementLeft 50
End Sub
```

If you want to move this shape to the left 50 pixels, you change “50” to “- 50”

```
Sub move()
ActivePresentation.Slides(3).Shapes(1).IncrementLeft -50
End Sub
```

b. Move up or down

If you want to move your shapes downwards 50 pixels, you have the following commands:

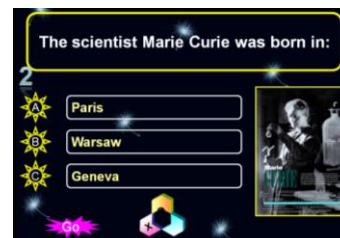
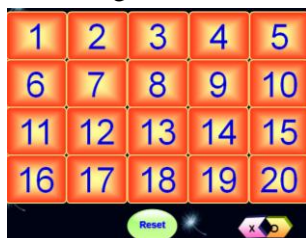
```
Sub move()
ActivePresentation.Slides(3).Shapes(1).IncrementTop 50
End Sub
```


In contrast, if you want to move your shapes upwards 50 pixels, use minus before 50

```
Sub move()
ActivePresentation.Slides(3).Shapes(1).IncrementTop -50
End Sub
```

5.4.2. *Change the text of a shape*

In some games, you need to change the text of a shape in order to check the shape chosen already, or to introduce the new contents and so on. Therefore, you need to use a macro to do this. This macro can be applied when you let your class play Noughts and Crosses game. To win this game **group X** needs to have three **X** in a row before **group O** gets three **O** in a row and vice versa. In the game below, Group **O** wins the game.



After choosing question number 2, group **X** can answer it correctly, so the teacher click on  (X symbol) and then on the home slide, number 2 is changed into letter **X**.

```
Sub MacroX2()
ActivePresentation.Slides(1).Shapes(3).TextFrame.TextRange.Text = "X"
```

End Sub

#### 5.4.3. Set scores for groups

In order to set scores for each group, teachers can create a macro, so students can see their scores on the presentation. It will make them feel more excited.



```
Sub diem1000a()
Dim a As Integer
a = Val(ActivePresentation.Slides(2).Shapes(4).TextFrame.TextRange.Text)
ActivePresentation.Slides(2).Shapes(4).TextFrame.TextRange.Text = a + 1000
End Sub
```

Although the text of a shape is a number, PowerPoint considers it a text. Therefore **Val** function is used to change a string into a number. It means that this number can function as a number itself. You can do the calculation with it. With the command above, the score of each group will be added 1000 when you click on the flower.

#### 5.4.4. Hide or unhide a shape

In memory games, one of their variations is hiding a shape, thus the following macro will help teachers to do this action.



→ In this game, teachers click on a number to hide a picture, students have to guess what picture is missing.

```
Sub bien1()
ActivePresentation.Slides(4).Shapes(11).Visible = msoFalse
End Sub
```

The slide above is the fourth slide of the file, shape 11 is the hairbrush, when the teacher clicks number 1, the hair brush will disappear. If you want to unhide this picture change **msoFalse to msoTrue**

```
Sub bien1()
ActivePresentation.Slides(4).Shapes(11).Visible = msoTrue
End Sub
```

## 6. Conclusion

Although there are some limitation due to the lack of time, of my knowledge, of my conditions for doing research, I hope that this paper might be beneficial for teachers in using multimedia to build good games in their English class. Also, teachers can make best use of multimedia in their entire teaching process so that students will be activated, encouraged to learn English actively and enthusiastically.

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