

The role of games and activities in learning language

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Abstract— The goal of assessing fun involvement is a wonderful way to achieve classroom goals and improve language arts skills at the same time. It can be believed that students' test scores suffer because teachers include some games and other enjoyable and worthwhile activities in their curriculum.

Index Terms— games, activities, skills, terminology, learning assessment, the State Standards, Competency Evaluation, grit, Academic Intervention Service.

1 INTRODUCTION

In today's modern and sophisticated world, learning English holds an utmost importance since it has already turned into an international language which sweeps the boundaries among countries of the world. The rat race for grabbing the best and to reach the top has made the man slaves of materialistic patterns and this trend, in its turn, gave them the crave for having the highest status in the society, a lucrative job for which one has to possess special capabilities like knowing internationally-accepted languages such as English, German, Russian, Chinese, Arabic and etc. and computer literacy. Studying English may seem a tremendously time-consuming, arduous task for most people at first sight. However, if the methods that the teacher uses are eminently suitable, this process will take a turn for the immensely interesting for them. "... teaching a foreign language means first and foremost the formation and development of pupil's habits and skills in hearing, speaking, reading and writing" {1}.

2 MAIN PART

How can the pedagogue form the interest in students to learn the foreign language and to ease the difficulties for them? In this aspect, the methodology of teaching is interrelated and interdependent with the fields like psychology, physiology, linguistics and some others. It

has been observed by specialists from time immemorial that competitiveness in the inner self of a person holds a tremendously momentous position especially in terms of education and teaching languages. Before moving to the role of competitive capacity of a student, one has to identify what is effective language learning and what skills are associated with it. In studying any foreign language starting from English, six main skills such as listening, reading, writing, speaking, vocabulary and grammar should be maintained equally while memory and the interest of a student for learning the language are considered to hold a vital position in shaping these skills. Competitiveness is defined as "Ability of a firm or a nation to offer products and services that meet the quality standards of the local and world markets at prices that are competitive and provide adequate returns on the resources employed or consumed in producing them" {2}. If transformed into the sphere of education, this term can be defined as an ability of a student to implement his abilities into practice which meet the quality standards of educational system and develop his/her own capabilities in a competitive way, rather trying to be more effective, productive than others. It has been remarked that when the students are given the tasks which demand adversarial approach, the productivity and effectiveness, interest to the topic among students will increase drastically and every of them try to

possess competitive advantage which means more learning, being more efficient. If arranged properly, the spirit of friendly competitiveness in the classroom can be a driving power, stimuli to achieve more. Students are highly different in implementing their capacities since there are considered to be visual, auditory, kinesthetic learners and teachers should be aware of these while getting prepared for the lesson. The classroom atmosphere is relatively important and dividing the classroom into the groups simultaneously triggering off in them the mood of competitiveness with appropriate tasks will rise their academic interest and even hold a motivating position. After completing educational process, as an employee, they are required to have competitive strength to shine among others, to have more lucrative opportunities and to be promoted in their career life. “Productivity is important because it has been found to be the main factor driving growth and income levels. And income levels are very closely linked to human welfare. So understanding the factors that allow for this chain of events to occur is very important. Basically, rising competitiveness means rising prosperity. {3}. From psychological perspective, when the student feels that he/she has competitive ability and that he/she can complete the tasks better than others, the student feels the sense of fulfillment, self-respect simultaneously earning more energy and dynamism to continue the process. Additionally, in the process of classroom competition games, problem-solving ability of students will increase and they form competitive analysis ability which is highly valued in the career life as well.

The topic of teaching foreign languages with the latest innovative ideas and methods is becoming more and more important all over the world in this era of globalization as companies, organizations and individuals need the ability to communicate in a successful way. As a result, teachers have been bombarded with educational terminology such as “The State Standards,” “Learning Assessments,” “Academic Intervention Services,” and “Competency Evaluation” lately. While this is true that the new standards are necessary for some students who are not performing up to a specific standard, yet, through all of these assessments and evaluations, many teachers confess that the joy of teaching, the “fun in the classroom,” has been slowly disappearing. Instead, pressure and stress for both teachers and their students have appeared. While it is important that children excel in their age to become successful as adults, they must

be shielded from the mounting pressure by maintaining a balance between material and psychological growth. As a teacher, how often have you heard, or even said it yourself, “There is little time for anything else other than preparing students for all these assessments!”. In a nutshell, we need to make learning fun again—both for teachers and, more importantly, for kids as learners.

3 PLAIN AND SIMPLE

Plain and simple: Students love fun activities. Because of the many and varied skills that teachers are asked to teach students each day, the classroom is an ideal place to incorporate fun activities to introduce and review the various language arts skills including grammar, mechanics, word development, vocabulary, research, critical thinking, and creative writing, to name just a few. Fun involvement is a wonderful way to achieve classroom goals and improve language arts skills at the same time. It can be believed that students’ test scores suffer because teachers include some games and other enjoyable and worthwhile activities in their curriculum. However, studies support the fact that students retain more when they are actively involved or have “hands on” in the learning process. Through such activities, students will certainly absorb more information as they learn, review, and retain concepts in classroom. Plus, they will be enjoying themselves at the same time which is an ideal way of combination.

There are many entertaining activities which make students’ time in the classroom informative, enjoyable, and entertaining. One of them is called “Playing with Words.” In this game, students are given a word grid before imposing a few rules before they get started. They must spell out words that can be formed by letters that are touching each other. Thus, students can spell out *shut* since each letter touches the one that preceded it. The other rule is that they cannot stay on a letter for two turns. So, they cannot spell *cheese* because they would have to stay on the letter *e* for two consecutive turns. Other than these two, there are no rules to hold back their creativity. So they can get busy and, then, on a separate sheet of paper, write the words they create. By finding 25 words, the students will be impressed. They will become more word curious, “word wise,” and more confident in their everyday writing and speech.

4 CONCLUSION

It is estimated that students will look forward to these creative, ready-

to-use, classroom-tested activities. These learning activities can function as introductions, reinforcements, or homework assignments. They can be used as individual, group, or whole-class activities. Many of these activities will serve as time-fillers or extracredit assignments. Formatted as crosswords, word finds, riddles, magic squares, word generators, jumbles, and more, these learning activities will motivate students to think more astutely and want to do their best in the process. In other words, their grit to study will be improved in a logical way. According to the Kelly Keegan, who is currently an ESL Lecturer at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, the Grit Scale is a short, stand-alone measure of grit in which individuals rate themselves on brief statements about effort and interest over time. Thus, by encouraging students to learn their second languages with games, we can help them to create a powerful grit to do their best during the lesson.

Another interactive game is called “You Are Special!” This game is designed for the conclusion section. Many of these activities focus on the students and the world around them. Whether it is a personal inventory exercise, a descriptive personal writing, an autobiographical sketch, a “most important moments” list, an evaluation of various literary characters, a personal decisionmaking activity, or a look at what the students think about themselves and others, these activities are to make students think more maturely and insightfully as they assess the world around them.

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