



INCORPORATING GAMES IN TEACHING ENGLISH IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF UZBEKISTAN

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Annotation *Teaching English has become one of the most important subjects in Uzbekistan for everybody ranging from nursery attendees to working professionals. In compulsory education, it is an essential part of the curriculum. Young learners of public schools are keen on learning, but if the lessons are not interesting the learners tend to lose interest and the effectiveness of the lessons decreases. Game-based learning may serve the same purpose to improve motivation and results.*

Keywords: *game-based learning, interest, effectiveness, motivation, effectiveness, game types.*

Introduction

This thesis consists of sections for the discussion of the benefits of games in teaching English followed by teaching vocabulary, grammar, speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Some practical games are presented followed by the discussion of creating a positive learning environment and overcoming challenges in using games for teaching English.

Making Learning Fun and Effective with Games.

Teaching English as a second language can be a challenging task, especially when trying to engage students and make the learning process enjoyable. One effective method that has gained popularity in recent years is incorporating games into English teaching. ‘Children love to have fun and play, so teachers should choose suitable teaching methods that cater to children’s nature. Games are one of the methods that could be used to avoid boredom in the classroom’ (Bakhsh, p 120, 2016). This article explores the importance of using games in English teaching, the benefits they offer, the different types of games, and how to effectively integrate them into lessons.

The Importance of Teaching English with Games

Incorporating games into English teaching is essential as it creates a dynamic and interactive learning environment. It helps in breaking the monotony of traditional teaching methods and keeps students motivated and engaged. Games also provide an opportunity for students to practice English language skills in a stress-free setting, leading to improved retention and application of knowledge. (Yacob, Yunus, p 209, 2019). ‘Traditional teaching and learning process referring to chalk-and-talk has become outdated in lessons. Teachers and learners are exposed to various task-based processes to encourage better participation among learners throughout the lesson. One of the most common and preferred teaching strategies is the use of language games to aid the teaching of various skills’. (Godwin-Jones,

p 11, 2014) ‘game playing can be a powerful agent for learner autonomy, a potential resource for long-term language maintenance, and an entry-point for gaining interest in learning new languages’.

Benefits of Using Games in English Teaching

‘Games are one of the methods that could be used in order to avoid boredom in the classroom. They have a special role in any foreign language teaching. Both students and teachers will benefit from including games during class time. Furthermore, teachers may achieve all the educational outcomes through applying the use of games, especially when teaching vocabulary’ (Bakhsh, p 120, 2016). It enhances students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning, leading to increased participation and active engagement. Games also promote a positive classroom atmosphere, fostering a sense of camaraderie among students. Additionally, they help in developing various language skills such as vocabulary, grammar, speaking, listening, reading, and writing in a fun and interactive manner.

Types of Games for English Teaching

Vocabulary Games

Teaching vocabulary allows the teachers to use games for all levels of learners as well as for different ages. Generally, in the beginning levels the game of charades can be implemented easily. One of the games that can be used without prior preparation for younger or beginner-level learners is Charades. To play the group of students are divided into two. One student from a team comes out and acts to communicate the meaning. Team members try to guess the word looking at the student's action. Vocabulary games are designed to help students expand their word bank in an enjoyable way. These games can include word puzzles, word association games, and vocabulary bingo, among others.

Grammar Games

Grammar games focus on reinforcing grammar rules and concepts through interactive activities. Examples include grammar quizzes, sentence-building games, and grammar board games. Vandercruyssen et al. (2013) outline an easy way of turning boring grammar tasks into interesting competition just by dividing the students into groups and scoring as per the speed or correctness of the task. Points are given for timely or correct answers. This ignites the students' willingness to complete the grammar tasks which otherwise seems a boring task. Matching sentence types of tasks can be turned into communicative types by cutting sentences into separate papers and letting the pupils work together to join the sentences.

Speaking and Listening Games

These games aim to improve students' oral communication and listening skills. Role-playing activities, storytelling games, and listening comprehension exercises fall under this category. Ngoc (2012) mentions a simple way of repeating words in a communicative game. Taboo is a game in which the target word is not mentioned together with some other words that make the guess too easy. If the word is snow, the words white and winter may not be allowed to be used. One student comes to the board and guesses the word. Other students describe the word by not using the words in taboo. This game is applicable for both beginner and higher-level learners. Specifically, for the intermediate or higher levels

debating is a great way to help the students to communicate using emotion. Common topics may be about the pros and cons of using mobile phones, the internet, or solutions to global problems. Students debate the methods of solving certain problems.

Reading and Writing Games

Reading and writing games are designed to enhance students' literacy skills. These can involve storytelling challenges, creative writing prompts, and reading comprehension games. When reading stories, only the first two paragraphs can be allowed to be read. After this, the students try to predict the remaining or upcoming paragraphs. This creates a communicative atmosphere. After discussion, the students read the paragraphs. The same activity can be done for writing. Instead of speaking discussion as outlined before, the students write the remaining part of the passage. Incorporating educational apps like "ABC Mouse" or "Starfall" can also make learning to read more interactive and enjoyable. These methods not only foster a love for reading but also promote language development in a fun and engaging way.

Incorporating Games into English Lessons

When incorporating games into English lessons, it is crucial to set clear objectives for each game. Teachers should align the games with specific learning outcomes and ensure that they contribute to the overall lesson plan. Additionally, choosing appropriate games that cater to the student's proficiency levels is essential. Teachers should also be adept at adapting games to suit different learning styles and abilities within the classroom.

Examples of Effective English Teaching Games

Scrabble

Scrabble is a popular word game that challenges students to create words using letter tiles. It enhances vocabulary and spelling skills while promoting healthy competition among students.

Pictionary

Pictionary is a drawing and guessing game that encourages students to express and interpret words visually. It fosters creativity, communication, and vocabulary expansion.

Simon Says

Simon Says is a classic game that can be adapted for language learning by incorporating English commands and instructions. It promotes listening skills and vocabulary retention.

Story Cubes

Story Cubes are dice with images that prompt students to create and narrate stories based on the pictures rolled. This game enhances creativity, storytelling abilities, and language fluency.

Creating a Positive Learning Environment

Incorporating games into English teaching helps in creating a positive and inclusive learning environment. It encourages active participation, boosts students' confidence, and fosters a sense of achievement (Adeng & Shah, 2012). Moreover, it promotes a sense of enjoyment and excitement about learning English, leading to a more fulfilling educational experience.

Overcoming Challenges in Using Games for English Teaching

While using games for English teaching offers numerous benefits, it also comes with its challenges. Teachers need to be mindful of different learning styles and adapt games to cater to diverse student needs (Cassidy, 2004). Encouraging collaboration and communication among students is crucial to ensure that games promote inclusive learning. Additionally, assessing learning through games requires a thoughtful approach to evaluate students' progress effectively.

Conclusion

In conclusion, teaching English with games is a powerful and effective approach to engage students and enhance their language learning experience. By incorporating various types of games into English lessons, educators can create a stimulating and enjoyable learning environment that promotes language proficiency and overall academic success. Embracing games in English teaching not only makes learning fun but also cultivates a deeper appreciation for the English language among students.

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