

USEFUL WARMERS TO USE WHILE LESSONS

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Abstract: *In this article included types of warm up activities which can be useful to start your lessons energetic, importance and benefits of warmers and famous peoples ideas about warm-up activities. The analysis of information collected showed us that the use of warm up activities increases students' attention and helps us link the processes of the class.*

Key words: *Warmers, warm-up activities, students' thinking, brain cells, students' attitudes.*

When planning a lesson particularly think about how you want it to start. A good beginning can set the tone of the lessons and get students alert and relaxed – the best condition for learning. The most useful activity is called Warmers – an activity gets students thinking in English and awakens their brain cells, and hopefully makes them feel positive about lesson. Warming up activities can foster motivation and this is, in turn, an essential component when planning warming up activities. According to Dornyei (2001), teachers need to try and actively generate positive students' attitudes toward learning. He also claims that the key issue in generating interest is to widen the student's appetite; that is, to arouse the students' curiosity and attention and to create an attractive image for the class so that they will get more involved with it and a better learning process will take place. Kay (1995) describes the stages of a lesson plan in the following way: Warm up: "It is an effective way to help the students begin to think in English and to review previously introduced material. Different types of warm ups help provide variety and interest in the lesson".

You walk into the classroom, greet your students and ask them how their weekend was. They briefly tell you their stories. After this quick welcome-to-class moment, your lesson is on, but have you planned a proper warm-up activity? The first minutes of your lesson are precious. This is the time when students are usually much more eager to learn and willing to practice their English skills. Teachers need to take advantage of the moment to reinforce some previously-taught material and make it stay in the students' memories for as long as possible. With this in mind, how about rethinking the way you start your classes? Here are some ideas.

Using the board.

Whether it be a chalkboard or a whiteboard, the board is a vital teacher's aid. And it can be used to start up a lesson with practically no preparation. You can begin by getting your students to write up vocabulary from a previous lesson. This can be done as a competition. Split the class into two or three groups, set a time limit, and ask them to write as many words as they can remember in a given category. When the time is up, count how many words they have written, see how many different words they were able to come up

with, and perhaps practice the pronunciation of these words. To make the activity go even further, have the students take turns to produce a sentence using a word from the board.

To add some fun, get them to choose the words by throwing a soft ball at the board. Each student has to make a sentence using the word they hit. Use the words to play 'Bingo'. Get each student to draw a bingo card with three rows and three columns and write one word from the board in each square. You call out the words in random order, and the first student to cross out three words in a line shouts: 'Bingo!' You can add a level of challenge by getting the winner to produce sentences using the words they have crossed out. 'Slap' is a popular game, particularly with young learners. Once the words are written on the board, you give a definition of one of them, or say what it is used for or just mime the word for them to guess. The students compete to be the first to run to the board and 'slap' the correct word. The winning student then takes your place, miming or giving a definition of another word for the others to guess.

If the range of vocabulary you have to review is not very wide or you don't have much time available, playing 'Hangman' is easy, fast and fun. It can help students remember vocabulary items and can also work as a lead-in for the activity that follows in your lesson plan.

Play a sentence-building game. Start with quite a difficult word. One at a time, the students have to add verbs, nouns, pronouns, modifiers, adverbs, etc. to make a logical and grammatically correct sentence.

Using cards, slips and flashcards.

Cards, slips and flashcards require some preparation. However, they can come in handy when you want to do some revision, and they also cater to visual learners.

Picture cards can trigger the students' memories of topics, words and contexts. The cards can be any size you like, depending on the size of your classroom and the number of learners you want to show them to. You can make them with pictures from magazines or print them out from a website.

The simplest activity is to show the students a picture and get them to tell you what it is. The great thing about cards is that you can use them any number of times to revise different teaching points. For example, if you show the class a picture of a man holding a glass of water, you can ask: What's the man doing? or What's he going to do? You can say: This is Joe at 8 pm last night. What was he doing? And so on.

Slips of paper can be used to focus on form. They are usually smaller than picture cards, and you will probably need a large flat surface to spread them out. They also require some preparation time and they are easily damaged, so, if your budget allows, printing them on card or laminating them will make them last much longer.

You can make slips with words that form a sentence. Put the students in groups and get them to put the slips in order. Once a group has made the sentence, they should shout 'Stop!' and everybody has to stop what they are doing. You can get another group to check whether the sentence is correct or not.

All in all warmers can review language from previous classes or can introduce topic ideas and language items. They can also be freestanding and have little connection with what was done before or will be done later in lesson. A warm up to prepare students for a

period of concentration may involve physical movement with activities that keep them active by standing up, walking, jumping, matching pictures with sentences or vocabulary, drawing or writing personal experiences or stories, and singing or listening to familiar songs and chants. These are, among others, enjoyable and motivating warm-ups. The activities must provide opportunities to work on a particular skill or to work integrated skill exercises.

There are many kinds of warmers which are absolutely useful to begin your lessons efficiently. It is up to you to choose the best one which fits your lesson.

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