

THE ADVANTAGES OF GAMES TO TEACH ENGLISH IN LANGUAGE UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract: The following essay explores one of the most advantageous ways to acquire knowledge and learn a foreign language. Here, the author upholds the criterion that using games in the classroom brings the teaching process to life and can easily appeal to students. Additionally, learners actively participate in these activities and retain their knowledge for a long period of time.

Keywords: game, language, cognitive activity, play, goals and objectives, curriculum,

The teacher can employ games to assist him or her generate meaningful and practical contexts for the language. Despite the fact that games are frequently connected with enjoyment, their educational significance should not be overlooked, especially in the teaching and learning of foreign languages. Games are useful because they inspire kids, reduce stress, and provide opportunities for genuine communication. "A game is an activity with rules, a goal, and a component of fun," claims J. Haldfield [1]. Games are to be viewed as an essential component of language curriculum. This definition places a high value on the role that games play an important role in education. It demonstrates how games may be used to accomplish a variety of educational goals in addition to just being an "amusing activity". Games can be difficult to categorize because categories frequently overlap. Games can be divided into ten categories, according to W. Lee [2]: structure games, which give experience using specific syntax patterns in communication; vocabulary games, which focus primarily on words; spelling and pronunciation games; number games; listen-and-do games; games that involve writing; miming and role-playing; and discussion games. Let's talk about a few of the advantages that games frequently have in foreign language teaching and learning.

Games encourage student interaction. The nature of classroom instruction and classroom conduct are interactions. One of the most effective ways to foster cooperation is through pair or group work.

Many games can be played in couples or small groups, giving participants the chance to practice interpersonal skills like politely disagreeing or asking for assistance. There is no doubt that students will participate in the activities in the classroom. As a

result, when students are working in groups or couples, they are more inclined to ask questions, talk about various subjects with their companions, and come up with innovative ways to use a foreign language. Students naturally get the chance to collaborate and connect with one another a lot because of the competition in the games. Playing games helps language learners learn. Students learn more quickly and efficiently than they would through other methods because of the motivation and interaction that games foster. Students can be stimulated and encouraged to join in the activity by playing games because they are inherently competitive. Students are not only having fun, but also learning. They pick up a new tongue. Students start to grasp that if they want others to understand what they are saying, they must utilize the language. Games might also help you feel less anxious. Students retain information more quickly and effectively in games' casual, laid-back environment. Students will better recall the language they learn because they will more clearly feel the meaning of the language they listen to, read, speak, and write in a game.

The success of learners is increased by games. All four core language abilities—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—can be used in games, and several skills are frequently used in the same game. Games can enhance learning, encourage interaction among students, and boost retention. Games can thereby promote students' achievement, which in turn can lead to better exam scores, communication skills, vocabulary knowledge, and other linguistic abilities. The benefit of games for raising student achievement is emphasized by C. Riedle: "We are teaching a new generation of students, which demands unusual teaching tactics to be used in the classroom. Additionally, when games are used in the classroom, students show greater motivation to study and perform better on tests. [3].

In a nutshell, games seem to be an effective teaching method for languages. Games are designed to help people learn by motivating them and fostering a positive environment. Games can therefore inspire learners and encourage interaction among them while also enhancing learning and accomplishment. Let's review the benefits of using games in language instruction:

- Games offer a nice diversion from the monotonous language-class routine. Learning a language takes a lot of work. They motivate students to interact and communicate;
- They assist students in making and maintaining the effort of learning;
- Games lower anxiety, especially when played in small groups;
- They can involve all the fundamental language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing;
- Many games can be played in small groups, which helps students develop their interpersonal skills;

- Games involve students in active learning; and they can encourage students to use analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Let's examine some games the teacher could play with the students.

Activity 1. Running Dictation

This useful activity requires students to use all four language skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—and if carefully planned and well-controlled can cause both great excitement and exceptional learning. Pair students up. Choose who will run and who will write. (At a later stage they could swap tasks.) Print out some short texts (related to what you're studying) and stick them on a wall away from the desks. You should stick them somewhere out of sight from where the students sit. There could be several numbered texts, and the students could be asked to collect two or three each. The texts could include blanks which they need to fill later, or they could be asked to put them in order. There are many possibilities here!

The running students run (or power-walk) to their assigned texts, read, remember as much as they can and then return to dictate the text to the writing student. Then they run again. The first pair to finish writing the complete, correct texts wins.

Be careful that you do not:

1. Let students use their phone cameras to “remember” the text.
2. Let “running” students write—they can spell words out and tell their partner when they're wrong.
3. Let “writing” students go and look at the text (or let “running” students bring it to them).

Activity 2. Charades

Charades is quite similar to Pictionary, but it uses actions to communicate the secret word in place of photos. This is a great game for those days when your class is dragging and people are falling asleep. Get them up and get them moving!

Write down words on slips of paper for students to choose. Verbs are likely to be the easiest, but you can also use more complicated words, provided you are sure most of the students know them.

Divide the class into two teams and have one person from each team choose a piece of paper and act out the word. The teams must guess the correct word before three minutes run out. For each correct word, that team receives a point. The team that hits ten points first is the winning team.

ACTIVITY 3. Pictionary

This is another game that works well with any age group; children love it because they can get creative in the classroom, teenagers love it because it doesn't feel like they're learning, and adults love it because it's a break from the monotony of learning a new language - even though they'll be learning as they play.

Pictionary can help students practice their vocabulary and it tests to see if they're remembering the words you've been teaching.

1. Why use it? Vocabulary
2. Who it's best for: All ages; best with young learners

Howtoplay:

1. Before the class starts, prepare a bunch of words and put them in a bag.
2. Split the class into teams of 2 and draw a line down the middle of the board.
3. Give one team member from each team a pen and ask them to choose a word from the bag.
4. Tell the students to draw the word as a picture on the board and encourage their team to guess the word.

The first team to shout the correct answer gets a point. The student who has completed drawing should then nominate someone else to draw for their team. Repeat this until all the words are gone - make sure you have enough words that each student gets to draw at least once!

ACTIVITY 4. BOARD RACE
This game is plain and simple—a good, old-fashioned classroom favorite for the ages.

Divide the board into two halves, and divide the class into two teams. Call out a theme or category for learned vocabulary words and have students run to the board and write as many related words as possible. For example, you might call out something like, “Animals you will see at the zoo!” and one student from each team must run up to the board and write as many English zoo animal names as they can think of within a certain time limit. This game gets students thinking quickly and creatively.

Activity 5. Call My Bluff / Two Truths and A Lie

Call My Bluff is a fun game which is perfect at the start of term as a ‘getting to know you.’ It is also a brilliant ice breaker between students if you teach classes who do not know one another.

The game is excellent for practicing speaking skills, though make sure you save a time for after the game to comment on any mistakes students may have made during the game. (I generally like to reserve this for after the game, so you don't disrupt their fluency by correcting them as they speak). With older groups you can have some real fun and you might be surprised what you'll learn about some of your students when playing this particular EFL game.

1. Why use it? Ice-breaker; Speaking skills
2. Who it's best for: Appropriate for all levels and ages but best with older groups.

How to play:

1. Write 3 statements about yourself on the board, two of which should be lies and one which should be true.

2. Allow your students to ask you questions about each statement and then guess which one is the truth. You might want to practice your poker face before starting this game!

3. If they guess correctly then they win.

4. Extension: Give students time to write their own two truths and one lie.

5. Pair them up and have them play again, this time with their list, with their new partner. If you want to really extend the game and give students even more time to practice their speaking/listening skills, rotate partners every five minutes.

6. Bring the whole class back together and have students announce one new thing they learned about another student as a recap.

Activity 6. The Mime

Miming is an excellent way for students to practice their tenses and their verbs. It's also great for teachers with minimal resources or planning time, or teachers who want to break up a longer lesson with something more interactive. It's adaptable to almost any language point that you might be focusing on.

This game works with any age group, although you will find that adults tire of this far quicker than children. To keep them engaged, relate what they will be miming to your groups» personal interests as best as possible.

1. Why use it? Vocabulary; Speaking

2. Who it's best for: All ages; best with young learners

How to play:

1. Before the class, write out some actions - like washing the dishes - and put them in a bag.

2. Split the class into two teams.

3. Bring one student from each team to the front of the class and one of them choose an action from the bag.

4. Have both students mime the action to their team.

5. The first team to shout the correct answer wins a point.

6. Repeat this until all students have mimed at least one action.

Activity 7. Hot Seat

This is one of my students' favorite games and is always at the top of the list when I ask them what they want to play.

Hot Seat allows students to build their vocabulary and encourages competition in the classroom. They are also able to practice their speaking and listening skills and it can be used for any level of learner.

1. Why use it? Vocabulary; Speaking and Listening

2. Who it's best for: All ages and levels

How to play:

1. Split the class into 2 teams, or more if you have a large class.

2. Elect one person from each team to sit in the Hot Seat, facing the classroom with the board behind them.

3. Write a word on the board. One of the team members of the student in the hot seat

4. must help the student guess the word by describing it. They have a limited amount of time and cannot say, spell or draw the word.

5. Continue until each team member has described a word to the student in the Hot Seat.

Games can be a very worthwhile teaching element. A successful game is successful because of the reason that it is based on specific time allocation, it has clear relevance to the material, there is appropriateness to all members of the class, and ultimately, the enjoyment of the learners is increased through their active engagement with the language.

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