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USING GAMES FOR LEARNING ENGLISH WORDS AND GRAMMAR

Gamesare a funwaytopractiseEnglish – itcanbe a reallymotivatingwaytolearn a language.

Useofgamesdatesbacktotheantiquity. TheoldestboardgamewasfoundinChina – itdatesbackto 3000 BC (Faria, Nulsen, 1996). Someethnographersareconvincedthatitwaseducationthatwasthereasonforcreatingmany games. Theirtaskwastoreproducenaturallivingconditionsofhumans, shareknowledgewiththenextgenerationandpreparethemforproperfunctioninginthesociety. A goodexamplemaybechess, whichwasusedas a typicalsimulationgame 2000 yearsago.

Flashcardscanbesomuchmorethanpassive, one-wayteachingaids - they're a greatresourcethatyoucanusetoplaycountlessfungameswith students.

Songsandgamesthatencourage**action**andmovementaregreat, notonlybecausetheygetkidsmovingaround, butalsobecausetheyhelpthemclearlyassociatewordswiththeirmeanings.

Co-operativegamesencourageteamwork, problem-solvingandcreativity – andeveryonewins! Childrencanplaytogetherin a fun, supportivewayandimprovetheirEnglishatthesametime.

Speakingandlisteningactivity:

- Player 1 hides a smallobject (forexample, a pen) andPlayer 2 mustfindtheobject. Player 1 musttellPlayer 2 howclosetheyaretotheobject. Forexample: '*you'reveryclose*', '*you'regoingthewrongway*', '*that'sbetter*'.
- YoucanmaketheabovegameharderandpractisemoreEnglishbyplayingwithoutmoving. Player 2 mustsaywheretheyaregoingandPlayer 1 musttellthemhowclosetheyaretotheobject. Forexample: '*I'mgoingdownthestairs*', '*you'regettingcloser*'; '*I'mopeningthelivingroomdoor*', '*veryclose*'; '*I'mlookingunderthesofa*', '*that'sthewrongway*'.

Readingactivity:

- A scavengerhuntinvolvescreating a listofthingsforyourchildtofind. Askthemtotake a photographofeachitem. Thisis a greatgametoplaywhenyou'reouton a walk. Butyourchildcouldalsoplayiton a rainydaywithhouseholdobjectsorduring a longcartrip.

Writingactivity:

- Put 20 knownitemson a tray. Leteveryonelookatthetrayfor 30 seconds. Thenremoveit. Askeveryonetowrite a listofeverythingtheysaw. Howmanyitemsdidyoueachremember? Nowcombineallyourlists. Whenyouputtogetherallyourideas, didyourememberalltheitems? YoumightalsoliketogiveadditionalbonuspointsforrememberingtheEnglishwordfor anitemandforspellingtheEnglishwordcorrectly.

Vocabularyandgrammaractivity:

- Makesomecardswithdifferentnouns, verbsandadjectives. Theplayerstaketurnstochoosecardstomakefunnysentences. Forexample: *'mydog / hateslicking / smelly / bikes'*.

Circlegamesareanygamesoractivitythatinvolvethewholeclass, sittingin a circle. Manyofthegamesrecyclevocabularyandinvolveanelementoffun. I wouldliketooutline a selectionofmyfavouritecirclegamesthatcanbeusedinyounglearnerandadultclasses. Someoftheideasweregiventomebycolleaguesortheyareclassicchildren'spartygameswhichhavebeenadaptedtotheEnglishlanguageclassroom.Thecommunicativeapproachencouragesteacherstouse a lotofpairworkandthereforeincrease 'studenttalkingtime'. I believethatfor a grouptogelandfor a goodgroupdynamictoprevailtherearetimeswhentheclassshouldworktogetheras a whole. Circlegamesare a goodopportunitytobringthegrouptogether. I tendtousethemtostartorendof a class. Theycanbeusedaswarmersatthebeginningof a classoras a 'filler' attheend. Ifstudentsareintroducedtotheideaofworkingin a wholegroupfromthebeginningof a courseitiseasiertoestablishtherulesandacceptablebehaviourforthistypeofactivity.

They should be seen by the students as a normal part of the class and clear parameters should be set as to what is and isn't acceptable behaviour when participating in a circle game.