

The Role of Communicative Games in Teaching English to Younger Children

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Abstract: *Games can usually be modified to suit students of various ages, there are certain characteristics in games that appeal to children within specific age groups. For children age 6–8 repetition is very common in games, rules are often few, and the games usually do not take a very long time. When it comes to children age 9–11 they have patience for longer games, which often include much more suspense. Also when children reach this age they start to be able to augment the games themselves, for example to bend the rules to make the game more suited for their group. For children older than 12 games are often much more planned and they often emphasize teams and teamwork.*

Keywords: Games, pupils, students, lessons, repetition, school, teachers, develop.

Introduction

Teachers can help sustain diversity in a variety of ways, for example by using activities that require students to be creative in thinking and by emphasizing individual learning and cooperative learning equally. A more specific way that teachers can use in order to keep diversity within the classroom is to not be afraid of using games as a teaching method along with other methods. According to the national curriculum games can be a good teaching method and games, such as role playing games, imitation games, theatrical expression and problem solving activities are especially fitting for all stages of language learning. There are a number of reasons that games deserve a place in the language classroom. First of all, they are fun, which is extremely important, because they can help activate students who may have been inactive before, due to lack of interest. Keeping students active is vital because teachers will never be able to actually teach students anything unless they can get them to participate in their own learning process. Second, games also play a big part in helping participants build relationships, and to feel equal. Playing games in the classroom can also help create a friendly and positive atmosphere where seat arrangement can differ from game to game, and thus cause diversity from the norm which can be extremely helpful in keeping an exciting learning environment. Third, the reason most people want to learn a language is to be able to use it in real situations, for example when travelling. Games can be a very good way to practice this skill because they can easily be used to reenact various situations from real life and provide students with practice in their fluency. Also, by using games in the classroom the teacher is giving his students a bigger role, and he himself is stepping out of the frontline which is a positive thing because it allows students to take on more responsibility. Also that allows students to do more on their own, and that can very well result in an increase in their confidence level [3]. Early language learning will produce successful language learners, where an early language start is often seen as an advantage. There are indications that young learners are more open to and engaged in learning a new language — and that early beginnings may give them a head start on learning — issues such as pedagogy, teacher education and feedback, exposure, distribution of lessons and progression are also significant. This supports the idea that the design of learning material for young learners that address several of these contextual issues is of great significance to the quality of learning. Unlike most other school subjects foreign language learning has a long history of integrating different games into learning, using paper, cards and classroom games. Generally, games in language learning are associated with intrinsic motivation, meaningful exposure to the target language, as well as perceived associations between children's language play and second/foreign language learning.

Materials and methods

Games are often difficult to integrate into formal learning. However, a recent study (Egenfeldt-Nielsen 2011) concludes that «foreign language teachers believe that there is a larger potential for pupils to learn more from games in their subject compared to teachers of other subjects». Almost everybody loves playing whether they are young or old. From early childhood playing is an enormous part of most children's lives and it plays a big part of their development as well. Children start playing as early as infancy but as they develop throughout their childhood they keep playing, and as they grow up and mature the nature of their play changes. When children enter middle childhood (6–12) their play starts to change into games which are different from play in the sense that they are more organized and planned, and they usually include a variation of rules and a specific objective. When playing most games participants are almost forced into communicating with each other in order for the game to work. The need for communication during games, and the informal setting games provide encourages students to be unafraid to talk, which practices their fluency, a valuable communication skill. The national curriculum for foreign languages in Kazakhstan emphasizes the importance of learning languages and especially the importance of communication. Because of this fact it is vitally important for

teachers to create a positive learning environment, and to try to spark interest amongst their students both in the foreign language and culture because that is important to a successful language learning process. Games help achieve these goals as they help satisfy the requirement of the national curriculum that language learning should be enjoyable for students. Teaching today has changed a lot over the past years. Once it was all about learners being passive and listening in the classroom, but today learners are usually much more active in the classroom, and what better way to be active than by playing games [2]. The national curriculum in foreign languages in Kazakhstan talks about the importance of keeping teaching methods diverse in order to light and sustain interest amongst students. Early foreign language teaching is a widely discussed phenomenon. Its importance increases in the Kazakhstan context and with the ideas of multiculturalism and multilingualism. Despite many positive sides to standardizing early English language teaching in Kazakhstan many problems still remain to be tackled.

Conclusion

The necessity of using communicative games in teaching English to primary school children is substantiated in the article. Complex of games for different stages of learning are described. Factors affecting communicative competence development are analyzed. The teaching of English is a growing focus of many nation states as English is considered to be a key competence in the information society. Consequently, many nation states focus on teaching English to children at the early stages of schooling, a strategy that may create both competent citizens and competitive nation states. This calls for new learning designs and new learning materials for primary school levels.

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