

THE IMPORTANCE OF GAMEFICATION FOR ADULT LEARNERS IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Annotation: *The article is devoted to the usage of games for adult learners to develop their reading, writing, speaking, listening skills by the game; and give clear examples for using them at each part of the lesson; to bring up their knowledge with the help of games which are suitable to their age. The aim of the article is also the use of gaming techniques as a means of stimulating cognitive activity in adolescent English language lesson. The practical value of games in language learning at all levels has been well documented. Apart from their motivational value as an enjoyable form of activity, they provide a context in which the language is embedded.*

Key words: *game, adult learners, play, pedagogy, communicate, types of games.*

A game is an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun. There are two kinds of games: competitive games, in which players or teams race to be the first to reach the goal, and cooperative games, in which players or teams work together towards a common goal. Teacher can use language games to introduce new material, to practice recently learnt language items, to introduce or practice certain themes, or to relax or energize the class. One of the best ways to get students interested in a game is to have them participate actively in its creation. It means teachers and students should create new games during the lesson. A game is a structured activity, usually undertaken for enjoyment and sometimes used as an educational tool. Games are distinct from work, which is usually carried out for remuneration, and from art, which is more concerned with the expression of ideas. Games can be used at any stage of the lesson once the target language has been introduced and explained. They serve both as a memory aid and repetition drill, and as a chance to use language freely and as a means to an end rather than an end in itself. Games are often used as short warm – up activities or when there is some time left at the end of the lesson. They can also serve as a diagnostic tool for the teacher, who can note areas of difficulty and take appropriate remedial action. For younger learners games have even greater appeal. Children are curiously paradoxical. They can be both committed to co – operation and, at the same time, fiercely competitive. They love the security of routine and the predictability of rules, yet they are often amazingly unpredictable and creative. They love to have fun, yet they dedicate themselves with deadly seriousness to the activities they engage in. It is not surprising therefore that are so popular with children; games too involve both co – operation and competition, rules and unpredictability, enjoyment and serious commitment. We are not used to considering adults as a target group for using games in language teaching. Adults are often viewed as students who like learning to be serious and difficult in order to learn. Some methodologists observe: „Adults are frequently more nervous of learning than younger pupils are. The potential for losing face becomes greater the older you get.“ This is where the role of games becomes important. With the help of a game, the adults have the opportunity to relax and freely participate, which enriches their language acquisition and makes their use of target language more natural. Therefore they can make a very good use of games in language learning. Adults are often very much aware of the mistakes they make and feel more comfortable if given

time to think their input through. Regarding such students' approach towards their production in class, implementation of games into their learning process is invaluable for both the students and the teacher. Once the students gradually get used to games being introduced, they can overcome the initial diffidence and uncertainty, which will help them to achieve goals also in different parts of the teaching-learning process. It can help them to diversify their attention from their own image and the awkward feeling derived from unfamiliarity with the language, to the language itself. A game can make the adult students to create more relaxed relationship with the target language, which will help them to be able to communicate without embarrassment.

Some games for adult learners in language teaching.

There are many types of games the teacher may make use of. They are aimed to train different kinds of skills desired for students to be acquired. Over the time, it is profitable to keep changing the types of games to ensure the novelty and a surprise effect for the students. There are many types of games the teacher can make use of. In the following part, some of the types will be introduced, coupled with examples of games, using the particular type of activity. Listening games. Listening is usually viewed as a passive part of the lesson. In fact, it is quite the contrary. Listening requires being very attentive and active, should it bring the desired result. To make students enjoy listening, the teacher needs to bring it closer to them. A good way is choosing a topic they would like to listen about or a song they like. We can use many activities using listening not as an aim of lesson, which makes it always more stressful, but as a means to accomplish a different task, be it completing the lyrics of a song, getting correct instructions for playing a computer game or obtaining information about interesting people or places. In a similar way, listening games can be used in order to maintain the students' attention and interest. Blockbusters. Draw the grid on the chalkboard (as shown on the picture above). The best way to do this quickly is to draw the five columns of horizontal lines first, and then the vertical zigzags. Then write a different letter of the alphabet in each hexagon. Divide your class into two teams and nominate a student to choose Speaking games. Used as a follow-up to the previous listening, it is an excellent way to re-enforce vocabulary and expressions heard earlier. However, speaking games can be used at any time. Once students get familiar with the principle of speaking games, it facilitates for ability to speak also in other parts of the lesson. As with the listening games, also in speaking ones, the teacher should concentrate on topics which are close to the students, their environment or interests. For instance, it serves its purpose well if the teacher avoids making students describe what they had for breakfast or describing a person without putting it into a game-like context. Taboo. Taboo is a word game, in which one player gets the other(s) guess a certain word using verbal explanation; there may also be a list of other words which the "explainer" must not mention. For example, "ladder" might be the word to describe, but without saying "climb, rungs, or fire truck" or any forms of those words. Having such a list of words makes the game more difficult, therefore such a restriction would be used in more advanced classes.

Much like with crossword puzzles, students get practice explaining words in different ways, and the taboo words make it more challenging and interesting. A method of two teams working at once can be used, seeing how many words they can get through in a set time period, rather than, say, one minute for one person to explain. Find someone who. This is a well known language learning game where students mingle and ask each other questions to find for which person the fact they have on their worksheet is true.

This activity is good for waking students up by getting them out of their chairs and is also good practice for “Nice to meet you” and introductions. It can be done with real information, or, if the students know everything about each other already, the teacher will need to give each person a roleplay card with some personal information about their “new” self, plus one worksheet with the information they should be searching for. The “Find Someone Who” worksheets can be the same for each student or different for each person. As can be seen from these examples, it is possible to add a little humour by the choice of role-play sentences. More speaking can be added to the game by students passing on all the information they have found out so far to the person they are speaking to.

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