Benefits and type of games in an English lesson


According to Byrne (1995), a game is a form of play governed by rules.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GAMES

- Games are governed by rules which our students will respect.
- Games imply an objective, games are played to achieve something and it arouses children motivation.
- Games involve competition.
- Games have a ludic element; they are fun and increase kid’s motivation.

According to Tyson (2000) a good second language game is something enjoyable for all participants, competitive but friendly, keeping participants involved with the English language, helping students focus on the use of the language, and of course, allowing students to learn.

BENEFITS OF GAMES

Current researches state that the more fun a child is having while learning, the more likely it is that he will be able to remember the new words and structures.

Games are an innate necessity in children. They help children to organize their thinking, to interact with reality and to build up their knowledge. When playing, children are developing their imagination and creativity playing different roles, creating new situations....

Games encourage social integration in class because most of games are played in group, in a cooperative way. Games encourage unconscious learning of language because they provide spontaneous and meaningful communication. Games help memorize items and provide frequent repetition of patterns. With the help of games we can practice all skills and in all stages of the teaching-learning process.
Games create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom. It is vital to have a pleasant and friendly atmosphere in the classroom.

Games develop positive attitudes towards the foreign language, motivate students and encourage their participation in class.

The importance of creativity in language learning is an aspect to consider. Chomsky talked about language and its creativity to use it and the capacity to generate new sentences because of the innate and creative ability that all learners have.

We can conclude that games and creativity play an important role in foreign language learning because games develop children’s imagination and creativity.

TYPES OF GAMES

Once we know what a game is and its several benefits in the English class, we are going to see a classification of games according to their nature, to the timing in the lesson planning and to the linguistic aspect to be developed.

1. **According to its nature**

   - Competitive versus cooperative games.
     
     Competitive games are played in teams and the objective is to finish first or with more points. For example: trivial or Pictionary
     
     Cooperative games require the cooperation and collaboration of all the members. Are good games to encourage shy students.

   - Communicative versus accuracy games.
     
     Communicative games develop fluency and reacting to messages. For example the game who is who.
     
     Code control games focus on producing accurate language. For example “Cross and noughts” creating the right sentence to get the cross or the nought.

   - Error provoking versus error avoiding games
     
     Error provoking games are those games where you have to say the correct word to go on playing in the game.
     
     Error avoiding games are games where you can choose among several possibilities of correct answers.

     For example: “Tabu” in an error provoking game.
2. **According to its timing within the lesson**

   - **Warm up and introductory games**

     The initial stage of the lesson is essential to have a positive attitude and to motivate students.

     We can review previous knowledge and introduce new vocabulary or structures they will learn.

     For example: flashcards games, posters, crossword...

   - **Developmental games**

     In this stage we have to develop the hard work. We can do interaction games such as drama or cloze exercises. Drama games such as “going to the shop and buy something”...

     Cloze exercises are all kind of material in which we delete some words. You can play and the first team saying the correct word wins.

   - **Ending the lesson.**

     To reinforce and consolidate contents. For example quizzes and hangman.

3. **According to the linguistic aspect to be developed.**

Games played to make a special emphasis on specific elements of the language.
• Communication games: when students use the language in realistic situations. As “listen and touch” game.

• Pronunciation games: to practice sounds for example with tongue twisters.

• Vocabulary games: to practice words. For example: bingo.

• Structure games: to practice structures. For example: “What's the time, Mr Wolf?”

• Spelling games such as “hang man”.

Bibliografía

• Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de la Educación –BOE de 4 de mayo.

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