

SOME POPULAR TECHNIQUES OF USING INTERACTIVE GAMES IN TEACHING GRAMMAR.

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Abstract: The article discusses the techniques of using interactive games in teaching and difficulties of teaching English grammar for native and second language speakers.

Keywords: techniques, methods, Inductive Teaching, Deductive Teaching, Interactive Teaching.

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English grammar is notoriously difficult to learn for both native and second-language speakers. There are so many intricacies, obscure rules, and exceptions that it comes as no surprise that different generations of teachers have used various approaches to teaching grammar to train literate English writers. In the past, memorization-based techniques that relied on repetition slowly gave way to more creative methods. Today, we live in a society that prizes literacy and is willing to adapt to more effective methods to achieve the best results in teaching grammar.

*Diagramming Sentences.

One of the older forms of teaching grammar, diagramming sentences, first appeared in the 19th century. This method involves visually mapping the structures of and relationships between different aspects of a sentence. Especially helpful for visual learners, this method disappeared from modern teaching at least 30 years ago. Different forms of diagramming are used to visualize sentences, from the Reed-Kellogg System to dependency grammar, but all organize the functions of a sentence in a way that illustrates the grammatical relationships between words. More recently, diagramming sentences has had a small pop-culture resurgence in prints of famous opening sentences and websites that allow you to diagram to your heart's content.

*Learning Through Writing

This method is often used in schools in the U.S. and Canada. Students are encouraged to explore language through creative writing and reading, picking up correct grammar usage along the way. If there are specific problems with certain grammatical rules, these are covered in a more structured lesson. An emphasis is now being placed upon language acquisition over language learning, as it has been

observed that learning grammar by memorization does not work well and that students are better able to recognize and understand grammatical rules when lessons are more interactive (i.e., they have to apply these rules in their own writing). Repeated practice is also important and easily achieved through creative or personal writing exercises. This article, posted by The Atlantic, suggests that to better equip future adult writers, teachers in the 21st century should consider dropping outdated grammar teaching techniques in early education and opt for learning through writing techniques.

*Inductive Teaching

The inductive method of teaching grammar involves presenting several examples that illustrate a specific concept and expecting students to notice how the concept works from these examples. No explanation of the concept is given beforehand, and the expectation is that students learn to recognize the rules of grammar in a more natural way during their own reading and writing. Discovering grammar and visualizing how these rules work in a sentence allow for easier retention of the concept than if the students were given an explanation that was disconnected from examples of the concept. The main goal of the inductive teaching method is the retention of grammar concepts, with teachers using techniques that are known to work cognitively and make an impression on students' contextual memory.

*Deductive Teaching

The deductive method of teaching grammar is an approach that focuses on instruction before practice. A teacher gives students an in-depth explanation of a grammatical concept before they encounter the same grammatical concept in their own writing. After the lesson, students are expected to practice what they have just been shown in a mechanical way, through worksheets and exercises. This type of teaching, though common, has many people—including teachers—rethinking such methods, as more post-secondary level students are revealing sub-par literacy skills in adulthood. As one former teacher states, deductive teaching methods drive many students away from writing because of the tediousness of rote learning and teacher-centered approaches.

*Interactive Teaching

Another method of teaching grammar is to incorporate interactivity into lessons. Using games to teach grammar not only engages students but also helps them to remember what they've learned. This method allows teachers to tailor their lessons to the different learning styles of students. For instance, each student can be given a large flashcard with a word on it, and the students must physically arrange themselves into a proper sentence. Other games can include word puzzles or fun online quizzes.

Over the years, many methods have been developed for teaching grammar and have been built upon, abandoned, or combined, all with the same goal in mind – teaching students how to communicate effectively and understand how to use the English language. Because of the grammatical complexity of English, each method has its pros and cons. Some lessons are less likely to be remembered, while others may require more in-depth explanation and practice. Regardless of how grammar is taught, a well-rounded understanding of English grammar is the most important factor in improving the literacy of students.

***Dialogue building**

This collaborative technique involves setting a scene and, with the students' help, writing a dialogue on the board including the language you want to focus on.

***Dictation**

With grammar points where the written form is already familiar to the students, but where meaning needs to be explored in more depth, a quick and effective means of introducing the language is to dictate model sentences to the class. Dictation immediately gets students working with the language and tests listening skills and spelling, as well as grammatical knowledge.

***Drilling**

To help students pronounce new language correctly, get them to say it repeatedly so you can check for accuracy. By experiencing the movement of the mouth as they say it, students reinforce their learning in a different way from when they write it down and see it. Simple drilling can be either choral, ie all students repeat the structure at the same time, or individual. A suggested order is to let students practise chorally first, but to insist on individual repetition so that you can check everyone is pronouncing it correctly. There are ways to vary drilling so that it doesn't get repetitive. Substitution drilling involves the teacher prompting students to substitute words for other words in a drilled sentence.

***Songs**

Another popular way of encouraging students to repeat structures as well as to make them memorable is through songs, eg If I had a million dollars by the Barenaked Ladies. Choose songs that contain the target language multiple times and which contain a natural stress pattern for it, too, eg If I had a million dollars, I'd buy you a fur coat. Songs can be used to present the target language through listening tasks such as gap-fills or reordering the lines or words in the lyrics. They also offer repeated exposure to the language and, if your students enjoy singing, can also offer a chance to practise pronunciation.

***Error correction**

Students want and expect correction from their teacher. Choosing which mistakes to correct, when to do so and how, are complex questions. It's important,

however, to remember that students who need the most correction may not be those that make the most or biggest mistakes. Lower-level or quiet, shy students may benefit from less correction so that they are not discouraged from using English, however imperfectly. We correct students in the hope that they won't keep making those mistakes. To encourage them to think about their errors, let them try out new language, listening out for errors of use. Then point out the errors and show them the corrections. Finally, let them do the activity again, this time with those common errors fresh in their minds.

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