

TEACHING AND LEARNING TECHNIQUES TO TRIGGER STUDENTS IN AMUSING LEARNING ACTIVITIES

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Abstract

The main purpose of English learning for junior high school students is to prepare them in mastering communicative competence. The thing that teacher can do is preparing situations in which the students possible to learn. Creating situations to trigger the students to learn in amusing activities is the teacher's duty rather than focusing the students to do tasks without preparing good situations. Group work is considered an essential feature of communicative language teaching. It increases language practice opportunities, improves the students talk, helps to individualize instruction, promotes a positive affective climate, and motivates the students to learn. The students working in small groups produce a greater quantity of language and also better quality of language than the students in teacher-fronted lockstep classroom setting. The writer creates some techniques to trigger students in amusing classroom activities as well as creating short cut strategies to master the basic of English grammar which will facilitate them on learning further.

Keywords: techniques, teaching, trigger, students, amusing, learning, activities.

A. Introduction

The purpose of English teaching and learning process in junior high school is to prepare the students in mastering the communicative competence. Students have to be able to use English for the daily communication.

In line with the English teaching and learning purpose, based on the curriculum teachers should build students' language skills; listening skill, reading skill, speaking skill, and writing skill. However, it is not a simple matter. Some teachers complain that their students are reluctant to learn. Some others justify that their students are too stupid to learn English. If we say so, it is not a wise statement and it will determine our expectation. How will we believe that we are going to be successful while we feel uncertain?

The most important question is "Who are unable in this case: the students or the teachers?" It is not important to blame who are unable but let us see what the scholars say. Von Humboldt in Van Lier (1988) says, "Actually there is no teacher who can teach a language. The thing that teacher can do is preparing situations in which students possible to learn." Creating situations to trigger students to learn in amusing activities is teachers' duty rather than forcing students to do tasks without preparing good situations.

Some scholars suggest classroom activities in group works. Group work is considered an essential feature of communicative language teaching (Brumfit, 1984). It increases language practice opportunities, it improves the students' talk, it helps to individualize instruction, it promotes a positive affective climate, and it motivates learners to learn (Long and Porter, 1985). Long, Adams, McLean and Castanos (1976) report that students working in small groups produce a greater quantity of

language and also better quality language than students in teacher-fronted, lockstep classroom setting.

The definition of education based on *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 Tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional*: '*Pendidikan adalah usaha sadar dan terencana untuk mewujudkan **suasana belajar dan proses pembelajaran** agar*' indicates that teachers should have prepared efforts to create any situation in which students are able to learn. The definition is in line with some scholars thoughts on the field of education.

B.F.Skinner (1968) says that teaching is accelerating learning process. Students learn without teaching, and teaching creates any conditions in which students are able to learn more effectively and faster. Jean Piaget (1932) suggests, classroom learning process should be done in many ways include group learning and learning by oneself. Learning oneself is important to avoid the unthinking conformity. L.S.Vygotsky (1978) cites the ability of achieving the potential improvement determined by the assistance of adult or working together with more knowledgeable peers. B.S. Bloom (1980) discusses about the ability of learning. He says students' learning ability, learning level, and motivation to learn further almost the same if they are given helpful learning conditions.

Meanwhile, Muijs and Reynolds (2005) conclude that effective teachers should: have a positive attitude; develop social/psychological climate in the classroom; have high expectations of what pupils can achieve; communicate lesson clarity; practice effective time management; employ strong lesson structuring; use a variety of teaching method; use and incorporate pupil ideas; and use appropriate and varied questioning.

B. Discussion

The scholars' findings support the writer to create techniques to trigger students in amusing classroom activities as well as creating short cut strategies to master the basic of English grammar. The basic of English grammar will facilitate students on learning further.

1. The Rising Flag

It is a small groups teaching technique. Students are grouped in small groups to solve and do tasks. The groups should be permanent groups with special names, flags, and anthems or yells. Every member of the group will defend his or her group in doing task competitions because none of them want to be the looser. They will try hard to be the champion. Therefore, all students will learn actively in amusing learning activities.

a. Preparation

Before applying, we need to do some steps of preparation, as follows:

- 1) Setting permanent groups
 - a) Make groups of four
 - b) Suppose you have 36 students in class. Choose nine faster and nine slower learners.
 - c) Distribute the nine faster learners and the nine slower learners into nine groups.
 - d) Let the other students become the additional members of the nine groups.
- 2) Naming the groups
 - a) Let every group discusses and creates a name for the group.
 - b) The name must be good, polite, and proud.

- c) Every member of the group must agree and be proud of the name.
- 3) Designing and creating the flags
- a) Give the students some rules of creating the flags about the shape, the size, the logos or else.
 - b) The size and the shape should be the same among the groups.
 - c) Let the group discuss and create them.
 - d) The group must bring the flag into the English class.
- 4) Creating anthems or yells
- a) Let every group discuss and create an anthem or yell for their group.
 - b) The anthem or yell must be in English.
 - c) The anthem or yell must be short, polite, and different from the other groups'.
 - d) Every member of the group must be able to sing the anthem or state the yell fluently.
- b. The Lesson Plan

We have to prepare a lesson plan in which the students' activities are doing tasks in group. Furthermore, we also have to prepare the scoring rubric. Since the purpose of the English learning is mastering the communicative competence, the speaking skill ability must get the biggest score.

c. Applying in Class

For preparation, we have to put nails on the top of the classroom board as many as the groups existed in the class, and three nails on the left or right side of the board.

Then, the game activity is conducted as follows:

- 1) First let the groups hang their flags on the nails.
- 2) When the students must do the tasks ask them to do in their groups. Tell them to report the result directly to the teacher number by number, in turn one student after another. One member of the group comes after the other members. If there is a member comes twice before all of the other members get their turns, the second coming gets zero score. A right answer should be questioned with the reason to increase the score. A right answer gets one tally or score while a right perfect reason gets more tallies or scores. Let the student mark the tally based on the score he or she gets on the board under their flag.
- 3) Interrupting and teasing the discussion
- 4) Motivating the students by comparing their scores is very effective to stimulate their awareness of the opponents' treaty. Since no group wants to be the loser, they will try hard to win the game. The teacher could give comments such as:
 - a) Hi guys, you have done a very good job today. You are very active. It seems a special day.

- b) Who got the most scores?
 - c) Wow ‘Sponge Bop’ got the most! It’s amazing Sponge Bob defeats Superman and the others. (Suppose the groups’ names are Sponge Bob, Superman, and others).
 - d) Don’t be worry you still have 20 minutes to continue the game. Time will be up five minutes before the bell rings.
 - e) Come on! The real game must go on.
- d. Ending the game

In ending this game, there are some procedures to follow:

- 1) Tell the students to stop the discussion five or ten minutes before the bell rings.
- 2) Praise them that they all have been good students.
- 3) Count the scores to see the rank of the achievement.
- 4) Put the champion’s flag on the highest nail, the second winner in the middle and the third winner on the lowest nail beside the board.
- 5) Call the champion group to celebrate their victory in front of the class by singing their anthem or stating their yell.
- 6) Ask the other students to say congratulation to the champion, such as; ‘Congratulation Bob you are the champion today’.
- 7) Teacher’s last comment:
 - a) ‘Congratulation Bob, You are the best today but remember the others will try hard to defeat you next time.’

- b) 'Will you try to defeat Sponge Bob next time, guys?' (The others surely will).
 - c) 'For the next game prepare '(UN items or else)
 - d) 'Good bye. See you in the next competition.'
- e. Recommendations

The teacher is expected to consider these following recommendations:

- 1) The task items discussed in the game session must be in many items because students usually do faster. The teacher should be ready with additional tasks.
 - 2) Do not give any score to students who do not speak English or break the rule of the game.
 - 3) Ask every student's answer with the reason. To trigger students to speak English, give bigger score to the reason.
 - 4) To avoid drilling students with UN items all the times, tell the students to be ready with certain unit of the UN items for the next competition. Do it periodically (once a week).
- f. The Advantages

This game has some advantages, which are:

- 1) Enable all students participate in the learning process actively.
- 2) Improve students' talking time.
- 3) Trigger students to speak English.
- 4) Improve students' language skills.

5) Students can be proud of their groups and want to be success together.

g. The Disadvantages

However, this game needs special preparation and it is not very suitable for writing class.

2. Texts from Rubbish Boxes

Teacher provides authentic texts found in a rubbish box for students to play guessing. Since students tend to buy snacks rather than reading materials, it is easier to get authentic texts from the wrapping paper in the rubbish boxes. Most of the snacks wrapping papers contain texts. The texts can be used to provide information gaps to create discussion or dialogue. Students are ordered to do some dialogues to get some information or data from another group. The next activity they have to write a description text based on the data they got.

a. Preparation

We should prepare ten boxes contain fifteen to twenty kinds of snacks wrapping papers in each box. Every box should have the same content (total and kinds); set the students in groups of four; and distribute the boxes to the groups. We have to make sure that every group gets one box.

b. Rule of the Game

This game has some rules to follow:

- 1) Divide the groups into the left groups and the right groups. Suppose there are ten groups. They will be group one to group five on the left and group one to group five on the right of the classroom.

- 2) Group one on the left has to do dialogue with group one on the right, group two with group two and so on.
- 3) Since each group has three or four members, the first member of the groups ask information about things the first member of the partner group gets from the box. The partner group member is not permitted to answer directly. The answers should be clues. Based on the clues the questioner concludes and guesses the thing. The second member helps the first member to write the answers or data s/he gets. Every member gets their turns. Thus, every student does the conversation and gets some data to make a description text.
- 4) The next activity is written cycle. Every student has to write a simple description text based on the data s/he got from the dialogue.

c. Scoring

The teacher gives every student's score based on the quality of the dialogue, and the writing task result to get individual score. The average of the members score can be counted to find the best group of the day.

d. Example of a Dialogue

A: "What do you get from the rubbish box, Tom?"

B: "Something nyummy."

A: "Do you like it?"

B: "Yes, I like it very much."

A: "Is it big?"

B: "No."

A: "What are the ingredients?"

B: "They are wheat flour, milk, sugar, butter, palm oil, cheese, cream, and vanilla flavor."

A: "Is it sweet?"

B: "Yes."

A: "Is it expensive?"

B: "It depends"

A: "Is it produced by Danone?"

B: "Yes."

A: "Is it black and white?"

B: "Yes."

A: "Is it Oreo?"

B: "Yes. You're right."

e. Example of the Description Text

OREO

Oreo is a famous snack. It is sweet and delicious. It is small, black, and white. The ingredients are wheat flour, milk, sugar, butter, palm oil, cheese, cream, and vanilla flavor. It is produced by Danone. Children like it very much.

f. Hints for the Teacher

The teacher should prepare score tables to be filled while the students doing the dialogue otherwise s/he will lose the score.

3. Guessing Incomplete Pictures

It is a strategy to stimulate students' curiosity by using incomplete pictures to guess. It leads students to ask the characteristic of the incomplete or hidden picture to get the conclusion and guess it. Students will

be in a custom to ask many kinds of questions such as asking kinds of things, size, colour, taste, shape, possession, ability, function, price etc.

To improve students' motivation in asking question and guessing the picture, it will be better to do in competition in groups. The rule of the game should be every member of the group has to ask a question or guess in turn with the other members. Any member who asks or guesses before his or her turn comes will be punished by subtracting one score from the group scores. This condition will trigger all students take part in the classroom activities since none of the group wants to be the looser.

a. Preparation

For the teachers who are not able to draw picture clearly on the board, they should prepare pictures. The pictures should be large enough to be shown and seen in front of the class. To write the score table of score should be prepared for every group.

Students should be prepared in permanent groups. The clever or active students and the slow learner ones have to be distributed to all groups.

b. List of Questions

1) Asking kinds of things

Is it? (an animal/ food/ drink/ vehicle/ fruit/ insect/ cloth/ building/ profession/ electronic/ cooking utensil/ eating utensil/ camping utensil/ stationery)

2) Asking size, shape, and condition

Is it? (big/ small/ medium/ long/ tall/ short/ dangerous/ safe/ tame/ wild)

- 3) Asking colour
Is it? (red/ white/ black/ blue/ yellow/
orange/ brown/grey/ purple/ etc)
- 4) Asking taste
Is it? (sweet/ sour/ salty/ bitter/ hot/
sharp/ delicious)
- 5) Asking parts
Does it have? (wings/ a tail/ horns/
two legs/ four legs/ six legs/ eight legs/ many
legs/ no leg/ engine/ two wheels/ three wheels/
four wheels/ six wheels/ many wheels/ no
wheel)
- 6) Asking ability
Can it? (fly/ run fast/ swim well/
climb/ jump/ move fast/ float)
- 7) Asking the diet
Does it eat? (meat/ grass/ fruit/ fish/
mouse/ seed/ insect/ honey/ blood/ vegetables)
- 8) Asking the function
Is it for? (public/ family)
Is it a place to? (study/ buy things/
pray/ see doctor/ buy food and drink)
- 9) Asking price
Is it? (expensive/ cheap/ moderate)
- 10) Guessing question
Is it? (a cat/ a horse/ an apple/ fried
chicken/ a school/ an plane/ a car/ a jacket)

c. Applying the Game

For a teacher who cannot draw pictures well, s/he can put a closed picture on the board in front of the class. Distribute the list of questions to every group. Let the students ask the characteristic of the picture using the questions on the list. The teacher should answer them whether the students' prediction is right or wrong by telling *yes* or *no*. Give one score to any question asked by the students and two scores for the right guessing. After a student can guess the picture, open and show the picture to the students.

For a teacher who can draw picture well, s/he should draw an incomplete picture on the board. S/he should finish or complete the picture after it has been guessed.

To let all students propose questions, the members of the groups have to do in turn one after another. Any group whose member breaks the rule of the game should be punished by subtracting one score from the score they got.

Let the champion celebrate their successfulness. The other students have to say congratulation to the champion that day.

4. The Amazing 20

It is a table that plots the 20 auxiliaries to control students' grammar. Using a language is actually creating meanings to produce a text. Within the system of discourse, grammar, and vocabulary are utilized in specific ways to create specific meanings (Hammond et al: 1992). It means that grammar takes an important role in creating meanings.

- a. The 20 auxiliaries can be added by not to make negative sentences. The word **not** must be after one of the twenty auxiliaries.
- b. To make questions, put the auxiliaries before the subject.
- c. The twenty auxiliaries are never used double in a sentence except they are used as verbs. To avoid double modals use synonym modals.
- d. The twenty auxiliaries are never separated from the subject.
- e. The twenty auxiliaries can be used to form tag questions.
- f. The twenty auxiliaries can be used to form elliptical sentences.

5. Pockets of Information Gap

It is series of pockets contain series of pictures to create information gaps for students to discuss.

a. Preparation

Prepare boards with eight to ten pockets. Prepare series of pictures. The topics can be about health, recreation, education etc. e.g. the series of recreation pictures contains the characters, places to go, transportations, accommodations, tourist resorts, duration of the tour, things they see, people they meet, souvenir, the feeling after visitation.

Put the pictures in the pockets on the boards, the characters in the first pockets, places to go second, transportations third, accommodations forth, tourist resorts fifth, duration of the tour sixth, things they see seventh, people they meet eighth, souvenir ninth, the feeling after visitation tenth.

Prepare the students to do in permanent groups. The groups are divided into the right and the left group.

b. Rule of the Game

Divide the groups into the left groups and the right groups. Suppose there are ten groups. They will be groups one to group five on the left and group one to group five on the right of the classroom. Ask every group to arrange a series of picture.

Group one on the left has to do dialogue with group one on the right, group two with group two and so on.

Since each group has three or four members, the first member of the groups asks information about things the first member of the partner group. The partner group member must answer based on the picture arranged. The second member helps the first member to write the answers or data s/he gets. Every member gets their turns. Thus, every student does the conversation and gets some data to make a recount text.

The next activity is written cycle. Every student has to write a simple recount text based on the data s/he got from the dialogue.

c. Scoring

The teacher gives every student's score based on the quality of the dialogue, and the writing task result to get individual score. The average of the members score can be counted to find the best group of the day.

d. Example of a Dialogue

A: "Who went for recreation last holiday, Tina?"

B: "Sule."

A: "Where did he go for recreation?"

B: "To Bali."

A: "How did he go there?"

B: "By plane."

A: "Where did he stay?"

B: "In Grand Hyatt Hotel."

A: "What tourist resorts did he visit?"

B: "He visited Tanahlot, Kuta beach and Kintamani lake."

A: "What did he see there?"

B: "He saw pura, beach, and Balinese dance show."

A: "How long did he stay in Bali?"

B: "He stayed there for six days."

A: "Who did he meet there?"

B: "He met Lady Gaga."

A: "What souvenir did he buy?"

B: "He bought T-shirts, paintings, and a mask."

A: "Thanks of the information, Tina."

B: "You're welcome."

e. Writing Activity

After every student gets the data, ask them to write a recount text. The teacher could give or

remind the structure of the text based on the recount genre.

D. Conclusion

Since the above techniques are mostly games and none of the students wants to be a loser, the games will trigger all students in an active classroom learning activity. As a result, all students will learn actively in amusing learning activities.

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