

Games And Singing For Teaching Children

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Many people must have experienced a class made you fall asleep due to its boredom at least once. It is quite obvious that those classes were taught in a teacher centered and lectures based way. Some of the grown up students could tolerate this type of learning. However, imagine teaching English to children in this method. It will be a perfect way to keep away their interest. How should a teacher do this? The answer is quite simple – a teacher could use activities like games and singing instead of chanting. But then when a teacher is determined to use these kinds of activities in her class, she might question herself; how will she introduce the game, how will she ensure that activities are related to the lessons, and lastly how will she guide or help the children. And the following are my opinions.

Many teachers think that games are for reviewing or rewards. This kind of system could work but it might not be a great idea to grab children's attention. Games or singing could provide the children a very friendly atmosphere. Best way to get students to remember what they have learned is to lower their anxiety. In that way naturally their retention rate will increase, and lower the fear to face new language. However these activities must not be various day by day or be the main dish of the class. In other words we need children to think that English class equals to play time. Instead of playing game whole day long, a teacher should be able to stop the game before the children want her to. In this way children will want to play the game next time. At the same time a teacher could use the same game for next class but make it a little more challenging day by day.

While children play games, teacher should monitor the class. But is that her only job? The answer is no. There are several things for a teacher to do, and one of them is called 'cheating creatively'. The meaning of cheating creatively is that a teacher helping out weaker team giving hints, giving out challenging language targets to stronger or a winning team, balancing the points so all the teams have an opportunity to catch up to other. If a child or team of children is losing, many of them will give up the game because they are discouraged. As a person who also has experienced the difficulties of learning English, I agree that this method is one of the good ways to encourage students to participate in an activity.

To use games in class, the introduction must be clear and easy. This is the first, and most important step of the activity. If I were introduce the game called "Please", I would put it in this way:

1. We will take turns telling others what to do.
2. We will start the sentence with "Please..."

I will start the demonstration maybe for two times. First time I will give them easy orders like "Please stand up." On the second demonstration I could "Please do not sit down" or something slightly more perplexing. When students do not know what to do, that is when I give them hints. After the demonstration, whomever wants to go first can tell others what to do. Errors will be corrected if a student makes mistakes.

Lecturing and reading off from books is probably the easiest way for teachers. But we all know this type of teaching is not effective to children. Stimulation and creating comfortable atmosphere is very important, so we must not think that games are unnecessary, however it must not be over-used. As long as we balance the learning and having fun children will give out their best in the classes.