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The PhyEmoC Method Manual

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Introduction

The PhyEmoC (**Phy**sical – **Emo**tional – **C**ultural) Method is based on a combination of principles, including:

- Humour
- Creativity
- Artistic expression
- Physical activity
- Music
- Empathy
- Interaction

Learning a new language does not have to be a chore. It ought to be a fun experience, bringing you closer to the culture and language and drawing you in, making you curious to learn more. This can be done in many ways.

The most important is to capture the students' interest through different methods such as drama, music, use of imagination and generally by keeping an energetic pace in the classroom at all times. It is essential that the students do not get bored. They must be kept alert at all times, so as to be immersed in the topics. To keep students alert, it is imperative that a certain amount of spontaneity is present in the teacher's methods of teaching.

To sit down all day is boring. The occasional bout of physical activity will therefore automatically increase the students' level of interest. In addition, it can be used to help in the learning process.

This "liveliness" generates an ambiance that encourages the students to become engaged in the activity, consequently facilitating learning and memory. In other words, along with the good old fashioned pedagogic concepts and tools that we already have at our disposal, additional more lively elements should be employed.

Language learning has many barriers; one of these is the student's self- consciousness. Many students are afraid to be heard, or of making mistakes in front of others. This fear may come from a competitive atmosphere in the classroom, embarrassment or even insecurity. It is therefore important for the teacher to create a classroom atmosphere in which the students feel secure, and to eliminate their fear of slipping-up or losing face in front of fellow class mates. Involving the students' own life experiences, thus creating a sense of familiarity and security in the classroom, can be one way of doing away with this barrier.

Another barrier may be the student-teacher relationship. If the teacher is unable to attract the students' attention, then the objective will most likely not be reached. Also, if the teacher-student relationship lacks empathy there cannot be a warm eye to eye relationship, and without this, there is no easy interaction. Obviously the way these various components are used and intertwined will depend on the age and level of the target group.

Below you will find some examples of how some of these concepts can be implemented in the class-room situation.

I - Dialogues

Some examples of typical dialogues are provided below.

According to Julia M. Dobson[1] there are six common dialogue types:

- **Type one** focuses on a common, everyday situation, such as buying clothes, discussing sports, or going to a movie. It simply shows what people would say when involved in such a situation.
- **Type two** revolves around a specific grammar point.
- **Type three** clarifies the meaning of a specific word or expression.
- **Type four** expresses very strong emotion.
- **Type five** collects related vocabulary items.
- **Type six** highlights specific cultural features or customs.

Examples of these can be found in appendix 1.

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[1]Julia M. Dobson – Effective Techniques for English Conversation Groups – Newbury House Publishers, 1974

The use of dialogues in the communicative phase of teaching a new language seems to decrease when students are ready to use language more creatively. There are, nevertheless, some ways to use them as important means to free communication and to help the students to develop fluency in the new language. Some examples are shown below:

- alteration of typical dialogues to make them conform to the reality surrounding the teacher and her/his students; the teacher must insist that students give answers consistent with reality; “reality exercises” such as these, while still manipulative to a great extent, are a good start toward free expression;
- logical additions to dialogues; this kind of exercise challenges the students to express themselves in an imaginative way, while remaining true to the spirit and general form of the dialogue;
- paraphrases of the lines of dialogues; the students are stimulated in this way to use their own words and structures within the framework of the dialogue situation; the teacher must ask a student to say something similar to the first line of the dialogue, then have another student respond with something similar to the second line of the dialogue but pertinent to what the first student said, and so on;
- after the students have become adept at paraphrasing, they can be asked to ad-lib a paraphrase of the dialogue, each taking one of the parts and using the appropriate motions and gestures;
- improvisations; the teacher outlines a situation similar to the one in the dialogue and has two or more students perform the conversation completely on their own; this kind of exercise is most challenging and is therefore a good test of the students’ competence; situations must be written down or presented in a language the students will readily understand; for example: you are in a good mood but your friend is in a bad mood; you try to cheer him/her up but he/she remains unhappy; or: you order soup in a restaurant and when the waiter brings it you see a fly in the soup; you are very annoyed and ask the waiter to bring you something else;
- as an alternative to using situations, the teacher can ask the students to imagine their own situations and perform them afterwards;
- use a situation as an assignment for each student to write his/her own dialogue around this situation.

Question-answer patterns allow students to pose questions. They must be used regularly because students are tempted to spend too much time answering questions and relatively little time asking them. This often results in the development of a certain degree of psychological passivity. There are four major types of question-answer sequences that can be used for directed conversation practice:

1) One Question- a Single Statement Answer

When somebody asks a question, s/he often receives just a single statement in reply. This statement can be as short as “yes” or “no”, another single word, or a statement almost as long as the question itself. Many textbooks give the impression that “long”, “complete” answers are the best and students are encouraged to give such answers for drill purposes. However, most languages have a natural tendency to use short answers. Students must therefore be encouraged to use short statements as much as possible.

The variety of short answer forms specific to the new language must be taken into consideration. Students must be encouraged not to come up with the same sort of short answers all the time.

2) One Question – Multiple Statement Answers

The multiple statement reply is a common occurrence in normal conversation. Unfortunately, if students are left to their own devices, they frequently attempt to respond as briefly as possible. The teacher must avoid the short cuts that students want to take, and ask them to answer a question with one statement and add another one which is factual and related to the first one. As the students become more competent in their replies, the teacher can change the instructions with each question. Student A must give a two statement reply to the first question, student B must give a three statement reply to the second question, student C must give a four statement reply to the third question and the number of replies can decrease with the next questions. This provides students with more of a challenge, and soon they may be able to reply with multiple statements even when the teacher sets no controls. Dialogues such as the following may occur:

3) One Question Deduced from Answer

A useful variation is to give students a factual reply and have them deduce the question that would have produced such a reply. For example, the teacher or one of the students may say:

"Mary has a new pair of glasses."

Possible questions:

"Who has a new pair of glasses?'

"What does Mary have?"

"What kind of glasses does Mary have?"

"Mary has a new pair of glasses, doesn't she?"

"Are Mary's glasses old or new?"

"What is special about Mary today?"

4) Multiple Questions Drawn from a Single Statement

Students usually spend more of their time answering questions than asking questions. These exercises correct the imbalance in students' syntactic habits and promote facility in question formation. To set up such an exercise, the teacher writes a true-to-life statement on the blackboard and asks the students to produce as many questions as possible that are answerable by the information contained in the statement.

As an additional part of the exercise the teacher can have the students practice questions that require judgement of the situation described in the statement.

Dialogues can also be used creatively, by introducing certain activities which contain some interaction and physical activity.

An example of a simple dialogue exercise is:

The Fruit and its Tree

The teacher thinks a number of different fruit trees and their corresponding fruits. Each student is given a card telling them if they are either a fruit tree or a fruit. The card gives certain directions and words which they may use. The amount of help received may vary according to the age and level of the students. The instructions given to the students are that they must find their matching fruit/tree. They do this by going around the class, not disclosing the name of their fruit/tree, and giving a description of the fruit/tree to each student they meet, until they find their match.

The purpose of this exercise is for the students to find their partners through communication. They use their listening skills, and also repeat words and sentences, thus strengthening their language skills. This exercise can also be used with other themes; the fruit tree is just one possibility. This type of exercise contains the following elements: interaction, physical activity and creativity.

Another simple dialogue exercise, also incorporating the aspect of humour, could be:

The Joke Puzzle

This exercise combines the use of humour and interaction.
The teacher finds a suitable joke or funny short story and then cuts it up into lines/sentences. Each student is given a strip with one line/sentence. There must be one for each student, for larger groups, split them up and have them do the same activity separately.

Once the students have read and understood their lines, they must walk around the classroom and read their lines to each person in the class/group.

The mission for the students is to find the correct order of the joke/story. They must then form a line in that order, and the students then read their lines one after another, for the teacher to check if they have recreated the story correctly. Obviously, the level of difficulty may vary according to the students' proficiency levels.

See also the following:

http://www.btinternet.com/~ted.power/discland.html
http://serc.carleton.edu/introgeo/roleplaying/
http://www.cc.gatech.edu/~megak/7001/Roleplaying.html
http://webtools.cityu.edu.hk/news/newslett/learningwithrole.htm
http://www.darkshire.net/~jhkim/rpg/whatis/education.html

II - Plays

While dialogues usually involve two students, a play is the interaction of several people in a role-playing situation. When the teacher has established a good group spirit, the students may be more willing to try this kind of activity, and role-playing may turn into a great source of satisfaction for everyone, once the initial reserve has been dispelled. Such activities require sufficient time to devote to the study, practice, and staging of a play. Generally speaking, plays require too much time to be covered in just one class hour.

A good mastery of the new language is also necessary. However, role-playing helps students overcome the inhibitions of self-consciousness, which, more often than we may think, are the underlying obstacles in reaching the completely communicative phase of the new language. The "seriousness" of this topic would of course depend on the age and intellectual inclination of the target group, so this method could be used for both contemporary and classical topics

It would appear that, through impersonation, students temporarily divest themselves of the responsibility for personal mistakes. One might say that, as they improve their ability to converse in the new language, students gradually acquire almost a new personality. Julia M. Dobson[2] suggests the following steps in choosing and working with a given play:

1) "Select a short modern play – one that is a simple comedy or family drama.

2) See that each student receives a copy of the play. They can read it and look up any unfamiliar words at home.

3) Discuss the play in class. First make sure that everyone understands the structure and vocabulary. Then, with the students, analyze the setting of the play, the characters, the plot, and the author's message.

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[2] Julia M. Dobson – op. cit. p.5

4) Seat the students in a circle. Assign roles and have them go through the play using the talk-and-listen system. In this system only the person who is going to speak looks at his script. The speaker looks at the script and reads the line to himself. Then he looks at the appropriate character – the person to whom he is supposed to be speaking – and says as much of that line as he can remember. While he speaks he must be making eye contact with the other person, and that person must be looking at him, not reading the script. This will develop the interlocutor's comprehension. Eventually, it will also give the interlocutor a clue as to how s/he should respond. All the other people in the play should be listening too, rather than reading. When the speaker finishes, everyone can then look to see who should speak next. This method is extremely important because you can't be a good actor without listening to what the other person is saying and understanding the way s/he is talking to you.

5) Do not ask students to memorize the play. Using the talk-and-listen system, students can look at the beginning of the sentence and know what the line is. Eventually, they will put the script down, because they have already learnt the play. Although this method may take longer than traditional memorization, in the end the students benefit because they are not just reciting words. They are saying something meaningful to themselves and to the audience.

6) Encourage the students to speak their lines with feeling. To do this, they must get involved in the situation. They should ask themselves, "How should I feel when I speak this line?' and "What do I expect the other person to do after I speak?"

7) Stage the play if you and the students can devote time to the project. Be prepared to contribute many hours and much effort to the undertaking, but there will be ample reward in terms of both language practice and the development of group spirit.

See also the following:

http://www.realistatheatre.com/body.html
http://www.santamonicaplayhouse.com/educationaltheatre.html
http://www.jimmybrunelle.com/theatrelinks.html
http://www.ucsm.ac.uk/cacs/drama.php

III - Debates

Debates can be organized with groups of students who have reached fairly good level of knowledge and mastery of the new language. It is essential, however, for everybody to understand from the very beginning that such activities are not meant to improve the debating skills of the participants, but to practice speaking the language. Students, on the other hand, will speak more fluently during a debate if they can represent their true feelings on an issue. Therefore, the teacher must have them defend their actual sentiments – everyone will find the debate more satisfying this way. The following suggestions may prove useful for the teachers in organizing a debate:

- describe the debate topic and ask which students would like to be “pro” and which “con”;
- select an equal number of students to speak on each of the debate “teams” (two to four students on each team usually work best);
- allow the students sufficient time to prepare their arguments; they can speak from notes but they should not read their whole presentation;
- have the two teams sit in front of the class so that everyone can see them;
- appoint one member of each team as the “captain”; the captain will give her/his presentation first and summarize the team’s views at the end;
- set a time limit (three minutes, for example), for each presentation; alternate a presentation by a team A member with one by a team B member;
- after everyone has given her/his presentation and after the captains have summed up team views, class members in the audience can question students on either team. The teacher may also want to direct questions to team members;
- end the debate when the subject has been exhausted or if the students get involved in heated argument;
- it is best not to have the audience vote on which team they found most impressive since this might touch on speakers’ sensitivities.

In choosing the debate topic, the teacher should find a subject that has elements of controversy but does not arouse uncontrollable passions. You may find some of the following subject appropriate for debates or find more suitable ones:

1. Television does more harm than good.
2. It is better to marry for love than for money.
3. No family should have more than two children.
4. The younger generation knows best.
5. Money is the most important thing in life.
6. Examinations are unnecessary and boring.
7. Living in a city is better than living in the countryside.
8. Computers are better than teachers.
9. Travel is the best education.
10. Fashion contributes much to my social success.
11. Civilization brings progress.
12. Experience is more important than education.
13. Old music is better than modern music.
14. Mobile phones are useful in the classroom.

See also the following:

http://www.btinternet.com/~ted.power/dis00.html
http://www.youdebate.com/EDUCATION.htm

IV – Cultural orientation

We are seldom aware of it but culture is often taught implicitly. It is just a part of the linguistic forms that the students are learning[3]. To become aware of those cultural features which are reflected in the language, the teacher can make clear to her/his students how to interact in a culturally acceptable way. For example: subject pronouns and verbal nuances in French. It would help the students to understand when, in the French language, it is appropriate to use an informal form of address *(tu)* instead of a formal form of address *(vous)*. Another example: What is socially appropriate communication when speaking English? Do you say "Hey you, come here" to a teacher? Linguistically, it may be a correct request, but it is a culturally inappropriate way for a student to address a teacher. For a person to master a language completely, he or she needs to understand the linguistic and cultural norms.

Another example would be how the expression "No, thank you", may have different meanings in different countries. In Romania and in other Romance language speaking countries like Italy it is customary for a host to offer food or drink to a guest several times, because s/he knows that politeness requires the guest to decline initially, even though s/he may be very hungry or thirsty. Finally, the guest may either accept what is being offered or s/he may make it clear to his host that s/he really doesn't want to have anything. In England or the United states, however, people usually take a guest's first refusal as final so the Romanian guest who courteously refuses according to the Romanian custom may find her/himself starving or thirsty.

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[3] Krasner 1999

The reverse situation, where an American, unfamiliar with Romanian or Italian etiquette, may say “Yes, please” immediately when offered something to eat or drink will be considered ill-mannered by the hosts, must be also discussed.

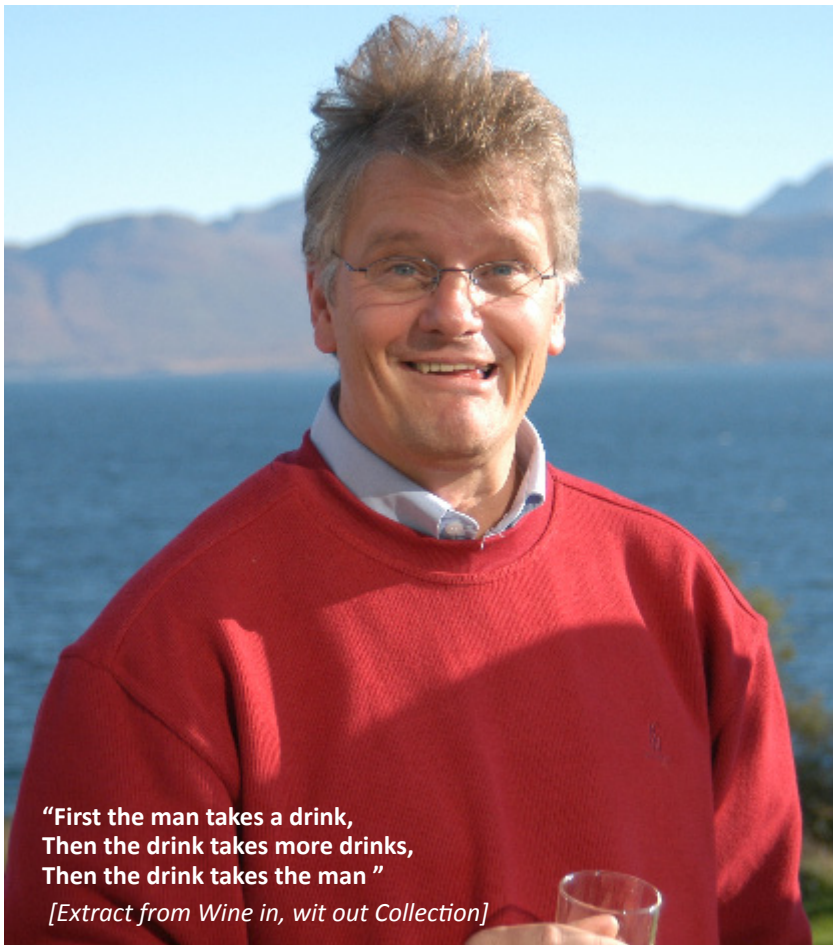
Experience has shown that teenage students are especially interested in the following aspects of life:

1. Dances
2. Eating habits
3. Standard of living
4. Professions
5. Drinking customs
6. Student – teacher relationships
7. Educational system
8. Dating
9. Films
10. Engagement and wedding customs
11. Holidays
12. Fashion
13. Sports and games
14. Festivals
15. Free – time activities
16. Goals in life
17. Superstitions

See also the following:

http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/educatrs/presrvce/pe3lk1.htm
http://www.udel.edu/sine/educ/multcult.htm
http://www-rcf.usc.edu/~cmmr/BEResources.html

V – Proverbs and sayings



Proverbs and sayings are of special interest to students of a new language and culture. They tend to retain archaic elements of language and reflect popular attitudes that have persisted throughout the centuries. One may say that a body of proverbs reveals interesting stratifications of both language development and the historical experience of the people, just as archaeological layers show stages of civilization for the trained archaeologist.

Besides, the knowledge and use of a certain body of proverbs specific to the new learned language add a specific cultural colour to the vocabulary used by the students in conversations with native speakers of that language and show good knowledge of the relative culture and civilization.

Proverbs or sayings, on the other hand, can be good conversation starters in advanced level groups. The teacher can select a body of proverbs and sayings from the new language and present them one at a time by:

- writing them on the blackboard,
- explaining the grammar and vocabulary,
- discussing them in terms of popular wisdom, historical significance, etc.,
- asking students to find proverbs or sayings expressing similar or opposite thoughts in their own language.

After students have quoted and explained their own proverbs and sayings, the teacher may lead the group in a conversation about cultural values in the new language and in the native language. Students usually enjoy cross-culture conversations of this sort and are thus motivated to use the new language in class or social discussions. If the teacher chooses a proverb as a conversation starter, s/he may develop the discussion around these questions:

1. What does the proverb mean?

2. Is this good advice? Why?

3. Is there a proverb/saying similar to this in your native language?

4. Do you know any other proverbs or sayings giving similar advice?

5. Have you ever experienced the situation suggested by the proverb/saying?

6. What were the circumstances and the results?

Finally, the fact that nothing ever becomes real until it has been experienced, and that even proverbs or sayings are not real until illustrated by your own experience, should also be taken into consideration when introducing proverbs and sayings into the language habits of the student of a foreign language.

Mindmapping activity

Another activity related to proverbs and sayings can be the use of "mindmapping". This method has proved very successful when memorizing, as the mind is not very fond of traditional linear note taking.

Give the students a set of proverbs and/or sayings, and ask them to write them in the middle of a piece of paper. They can then add branches of related ideas and words to fill the paper. Hang the mind maps up all round the class room. The students can then walk around in pairs and discuss what the others have written down.

Then ask the students to create some situations where the proverbs could be used, and ask them to "act" them out in smaller groups. The acting does not necessarily have to take place in front of the other classmates, just in their groups.

See also the following:

http://www.vocabulary.co.il/word-play/idioms-game-slang-game/
http://www.fortunecity.com/boozers/bird/203/index.htm
http://www.great-quotes.com/Educational_Quotes.htm
http://www.cherrylanepillows.com/quotes.htm

VI - Humour

Use of humour in the form of jokes, puns, and riddles is appropriate in conversation; however, teachers who include items like these are sometimes disappointed by the results. The students may understand the vocabulary and grammar in a joke but they do not laugh because the joke is alien to their way of thinking. Humour does not usually travel well from one culture to another as each society has a somewhat different concept of what is funny. Nevertheless, a certain degree of success may be achieved with jokes, puns and riddles if the following procedures are followed:

- when assembling humorous material, choose only those items with elements that are known universally;
- use jokes, puns and riddles with advanced students only, since the humour in these items requires a relatively high degree of linguistic sophistication for complete understanding;
- do not use jokes, puns or riddles that are offensive to your students;
- after you tell a joke or pun, or pose a riddle, turn it into a stimulus for a brief discussion of some kind in order to get the most conversation mileage out of it;
- use jokes, puns, and riddles sparingly; three of four jokes during a conversation session will probably be all you will want to have;
- if the students want to remember the joke, pun, or riddle, dictate it for them so they can have the written form;
- do not encourage students to translate jokes, puns, or riddles from their own language, unless they feel that the others will understand or respond to the humour;
- of all humourous material, riddles often provide the most fun in language classes. Therefore, the teacher must find a large collection of riddles and choose the ones s/he thinks his students would most readily understand.

See also the following:
http://www.claritaslux.com/blog/mind-mapping-learn-language/
http://www.workinghumor.com/education_humor.shtml
http://www.naesp.org/ContentLoad.do?contentId=634
http://www.mcooper.teach-nology.com/catalog.html
http://www.humorjokescorner.com/index.php/jokes/Educational/507
http://www.dailyhumor.net/index.php/jokes/educational/

VII - Songs

Singing is a very popular activity throughout the world and foreign language students often delight in learning songs. Teaching a song has the following benefits:

- as you sing or play a record of a song, students tend to listen attentively, thereby improving their aural comprehension; the vocabulary, sentiments, and cultural background are acquired and can also serve as discussion material;
- singing gives students a chance to relax from the pressure of everyday activities;
- group spirit is fostered;
- students can take the song outside classroom and make it a part of their education;
- students' interest in learning the foreign language is reinforced;
- singing is suitable for small and large groups alike.

Songs, of course, should not monopolize didactical activities, although, students are sometimes so eager to sing that they may even demand songs when the teacher wants to schedule other activities. They are best used sparingly – once or twice a week and in ten-to-twenty-minute periods.

While most teachers usually recognize the merits of songs, some lack confidence in this area because they feel they are not good singers. There are, however, solutions to this problem. If the teacher can play a musical instrument such as a guitar or a piano, s/he can arrange to have the instrument available when teaching a song. If the teacher does not play an instrument, perhaps s/he knows somebody who does. This person can be invited to accompany the song teaching activity. Sometimes, one or more students in the group are better than average singers. The teacher must teach the song to these students first, by having them listen to a recording of the song. They can then lead the rest of the students in singing. Occasionally, however, no one in the class is a particularly good singer, so the best the teacher can do is to have everyone listen to and sing along with a recording of the song.

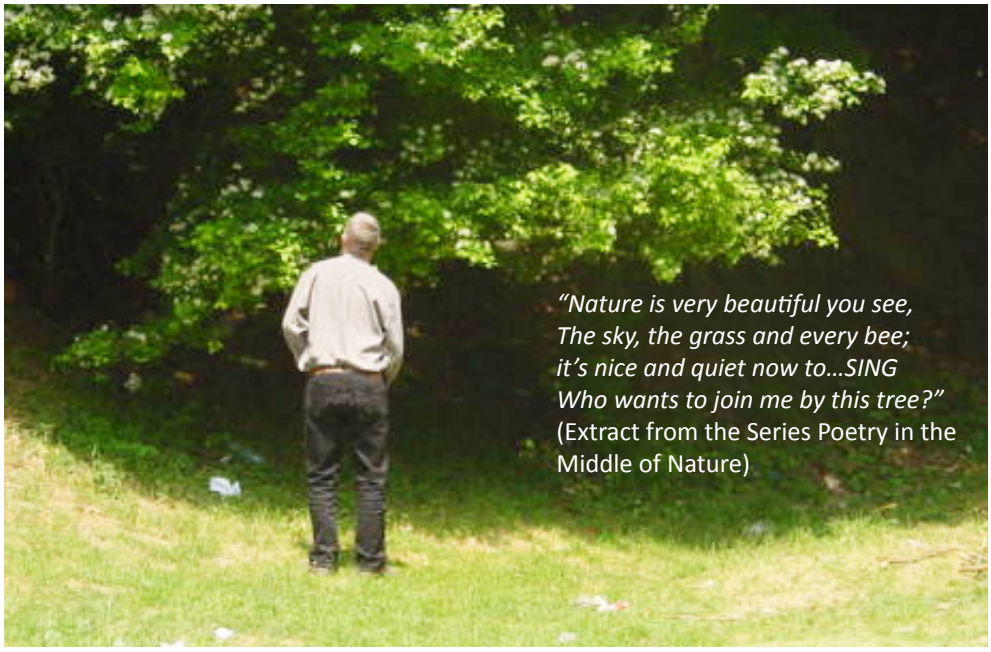
The kind of songs that a teacher chooses depends entirely on the age and interests of his student group. Teenagers and adults usually want to learn well-known folk songs or current "hit" songs. Students can usually tell the teacher the names of the songs they would like to learn. The teacher can decide upon the kind of songs the students will learn. Once the

teacher has a list of these songs, he can get hold of a copy of the appropriate recordings. To make the most of any songs chosen, the teacher may find the following procedures helpful:

- be sure that you know the words and melody if you plan to sing it yourself or sing along with a recording;
- if you do not sing well, have someone else sing the song and record it; be sure that the singer sings at a pitch and speed that will be easy for other people to follow;
- if none of your acquaintances can record the song for you, find a commercial recording of the song and either play it in class. If you have internet access in the classroom, you can look for a youtube video and show it in class;
- prepare a copy of the lyrics for each student. Lyrics to most popular songs are easily found on the internet. If you have no duplicating facilities, you can write the words to the song on the board and have students copy them; this takes valuable time, but it is very important that the students have the words;
- read each line in the song with the students following in choral repetition; correct any problems in pronunciation that may occur;
- explain the meaning of the new words and phrases and point out cases of elision and linking; have the group say each line again in choral repetition;
- have the students listen to the melody two or three times before they sing it;
- lead the students in singing the song; they should not sing so loudly as to disturb the neighbouring classes;
- correct problems in pronunciation or phrasing;
- have the students practice the song several times so that they learn it well; do not permit them to sing the song too slowly – students are likely to sing at a funeral pace in a foreign language unless you urge them on;
- once the song has been learned, make it a departure point for conversation; ask questions using vocabulary items from the song or have students use the vocabulary in original sentences;
- if it is a folk song, talk about its historical background, its particular meaning in its context, and so forth;
- review the song from time to time; students enjoy singing songs they have previously learned; it gives them a sense of mastery and enthusiasm for learning other songs.

See also the following:
http://scienceblogs.com/cognitivedaily/2008/06/does_music_help_us_learn_langu.php
www.youtube.com
http://www.illumisware.com/
http://www.songsforteaching.com/Store.html
http://www.sara-jordan.com/
http://www.jacquot.net/
http://mypage.uniserve.ca/~sus/suzee.html
http://www.lyrics.com
http://www.azlyrics.com

VIII - Poetry



Poetry is the artistic use of language that sums up its essence and unbounded versatility. It requires, however, a degree of linguistic sophistication for understanding and appreciation. Therefore, foreign poems are useful for students who are both proficient in the foreign language and genuinely interested in poetry. A poem that is short, written in clear language, and universally appealing is more likely to interest students.

Although usually more suited to the completely communicative phase in language learning, poems can nevertheless also be successfully used in the manipulative phase. Once the teacher has selected poems considered to be suitable, the following procedures maybe followed:

- read the poem two or three times to the students before they showing it in written form; students should listen for meaning as well as for rhythm in the individual words and lines;
- give everyone a copy of the poem;
- explain the meaning of words or phrases that students may not be familiar with;
- read the poem again while the students follow the written form;
- discuss the message or messages in the poem; ask the students if they agree or disagree with the poet's views; have the students restate the message in prose;
- read the poem and have the students listen to it with their eyes closed so that they can concentrate on the sounds of the words;
- have the group go through the poem with a different student reading each line, one student reading one verse and the entire group reading the next, female students reading some lines and male students reading others, or any other pattern that adds interest and varied vocal quality during the reading of the poem;

- discuss the poet – his life, philosophy, other poems s/he has written, and additional information that would interest your students;
- delineate the cultural elements that appear in the poem; have the students compare these with elements in their own culture;
- help the students memorize the poem if they are interested in doing so; poems learned by heart, as well as songs, can be recited by the group as a whole or by individual students and tend to become even more attractive with familiarity; besides, a poem which is memorized becomes the students' actual "possession", a living part of their own linguistic and intellectual heritage.

Create a collage poem

Search for words and phrases, in all fonts, sizes and colours on the internet, in magazines and newspapers, whatever you have at your disposal. Explain that you are going to make poetry art. The words and phrases will then be put together into a collage that can be any shape or size. Use an old globe or a lamp shade, or even just paper, anything really! The students can then arrange the words in any way at all. The poem doesn't have to make sense, talk about the personality of words, and find humour in words taken out of context, or combined in interesting ways.

Create a " What's under" poem

Put the students into small groups. Give the students sheets of paper with some lines already written on them, such as "Under the sky is____" "Under the shoe is_____ "Under the table is_____" etc….. You must also give them a board containing several words in large print that can be placed in the blanks, and also a ping pong ball (or something like it). The pupils then take turns creating their own poem by throwing the ball at the list of words. Whichever word the ball hits will be written into the space. This is repeated until all the spaces are filled. The poems are then read aloud to the others and the meanings can then be discussed. This activity can also be done with other sentences.

See also the following:

http://www.personal.psu.edu/users/n/x/nxs232/poems.htm
http://members.tripod.com/~Patricia_F/poems.html
http://www.mentaleducation.com/poems.html
http://www.love-poems.me.uk/a_poems_for_children_great_children's_poems.

IX - Games

Language games can add fun and variety to the process of learning a foreign language because all students are fond of games. Games are especially refreshing after demanding activities. The change of pace from the serious to the light-hearted is particularly welcome. Some teachers feel that language games are more appropriate in the manipulative phase than in the communicative phase of language learning. Most teachers, however, find language games valuable in both phases. In the manipulative phase, a game is a wonderful way to break the routine of classroom drills by providing relaxation while remaining within the framework of language learning. In the communicative phase, a game can be stimulating and entertaining, and when the participants have stopped playing the game, the teacher can use it as a stimulus for additional conversation.

For the maximum benefit from a language game in either phase, the teacher should select only the best from the hundreds of language games available. A "good" language game:

- requires little or no advance preparation;
- is easy to play and yet provides the students with an intellectual challenge;
- is short enough to occupy a convenient space in the group's daily programme;
- entertains the students but does not cause the group to get out of control;
- requires little or no time-consuming correction of written responses.

The following suggestions are designed to ensure the greatest success with any of the games you select:

- Prepare the game thoroughly; read the rules to yourself several times so that you have a good understanding of how it is played;
- Gather the materials for games that require special equipment;
- Before introducing a game to a class, ask the students if they think they would enjoy this kind of activity; if they don't look interested in the prospect of playing a game, it is best to abandon the idea – at least for the time being;
- Choose a game that allows as many students as possible to participate; if the group is large, a number of students will sit as the audience during some games; even then, members of the audience may keep the score and in other ways take part in the game;
- In small groups, make sure every student has an active role in every game;
- Ensure that the game you select is within the range of your students' abilities; although language games are usually easy to play, remember that students will be greatly challenged by the fact that they are playing the game in a language other than their own;
- Do not play the game at the beginning of the learning activity; save the game for use in the middle or toward the end of the session, when the students will welcome a change of pace;
- Give the directions to the game very clearly, making sure that everyone understands exactly how to play; you may want to play a few "trial" games first, just to make sure that everyone knows their role;
- Direct the game yourself; always stand in front of the class, so that all students can see you while you act as the leader or referee;
- Be sure to follow the rules of the game exactly; if you do not "stick to the rules" and permit even one student to break a rule, you will establish a precedent that may lead to hostility among the students; it is always best, therefore, to anticipate problems of this kind and to play strictly according to the rules;
- Keep the game well under control; even though you want your students to have a good time, you cannot allow group discipline to disintegrate; establish a pleasant but firm tone, and the students will enjoy the game and learn in the process;
- Observe how the individual players react to the games; students who make an error in a game may feel a little bit sensitive, so you should soften any blows to pride;
- In team games, try to have an equal number of more proficient students and less proficient students in each team; this will balance the teams and prevent embarrassment on the part of weaker students;
- Create new teams each time you play a game, thus lending variety and interest to every new contest;

- If a game does not seem to be going well, try a different game; be flexible in your use of games;
- Always stop a game before the students are ready to quit; in other words, never play a game so long that it begins to bore the participants;
- Do not play one game too often, since this will cause it to lose its novelty;

As you read the directions of the games that follow, do not be discouraged by the length of some of the directions. Long directions might make you think that the game is a complicated one, but all the games here are easy for the students to learn.

See also the following:

http://www.teach-nology.com/web_tools/games/
http://www.eduplace.com/edugames.html
http://www.prongo.com/
http://www.learningplanet.com/
http://www.cogcon.com/gamegoo/gooeyhome.html
http://www.kidwizard.com/
http://www.primarygames.co.uk/
http://education.jlab.org/indexpages/elementgames.html
http://www.gamequarium.com/
http://sitesforteachers.com/index.html

Here are just a few examples of games that can be used:

Adjectives and Nouns

Position of adjective before nouns; vocabulary.

Procedure: Students suggest adjective-noun phrases, for example "a brown cat", "a good doctor". The teacher can contribute himself. As the phrases are suggested, ask a student to write the adjectives in a column down the left-hand side of the blackboard, and the nouns on the right-hand side, so you will get something like this:

a brown	cat
a good	doctor
an intelligent	student
a tidy	room
a windy	day
a difficult	problem

Ask the students to volunteer ideas for different combinations like, for example, "an intelligent cat", and you draw a line to join the two words. See how many the class can make. If someone suggests an unusual or strange combination, he has to justify it. The teacher may ask, "Can you justify 'a tidy problem'?"

Variation: For an advanced group the teacher may try adverb-adjective combinations: "desperately miserable", "reasonably fair", etc.

Expanding texts

Forming grammatical sentences by adding words or phrases.

Procedure: Write a single simple verb in the centre of the blackboard. Invite students to add one, two or three words to it. For example, if the word was "go", they might suggest "I go", or "Go to bed!" They go on suggesting additions of a maximum of three consecutive words each time, making a longer and longer text, until you, or they, have had enough.

The rule is that they can only add at the beginning or end of what is already written. Add or change punctuation each time as appropriate. For example:

Go
Go to bed!
"Go to bed!" said my mother
"Go to bed!" said my mother angrily
"You must go to bed!" said my mother angrily
etc.

Variation: Students can erase additions in reverse order, starting with the last addition and ending with the original word in the centre of the blackboard.

If I had a million dollars

Practice of conditionals; imaginary situations

Procedure: Tell the students to imagine that a million dollars is to be won by the person who can think of the most original (or worthwhile, or exciting) thing to do with the money. Listen to their ideas and decide, or make the students decide, who has "won".

If I weren't here

Conditional; sharing ideas

Procedure: The students note down the answer to the question: "If you weren't here, where would you be?" Share ideas. Then introduce a slight variation: "If you weren't here, where would you *like* to be?"

Variation: Other similar questions: "If you weren't yourself, who would you like to be?" Or: "If you weren't living now, when would you like to have lived?"

Rub out and replace

Changing text while maintaining grammatical accuracy.

Procedure: Write a sentence of about ten words on the blackboard.

One day, the farmer went to plough his fields.

Ask the students to suggest substitutes: one, two or three words that could be rubbed out and others (not necessarily exactly the same number or even consecutively), put in their place.

One day, the farmer went to plough her *fields*.
One day, the farmer went to see her *horses.*
One day, the queen *went to see her horses race.*
etc,

The original structure does not have to be maintained, provided the sentence as a whole remains grammatical.

Say things about a picture

Composing simple grammatical utterances.

Preparation: Select a picture from a course book, or a magazine, or a poster.

Procedure: The students look at the picture and say things about it; the teacher can say that these must be in the form of complete, grammatical sentences. How many can the class think of in five minutes? Ask the students to write down their sentence/sentences. Or, can they find at least 20 or 30 sentences?

Variation I: After the first time, students can do the same activity as a group competition: divide the class into two groups; which group can find the most sentences? Or groups can try to beat their own record: can they think of more sentences for a second picture than for the first?

Variation II: Ask students to think of as many sentences as they can that are obviously not true about the picture. Then, they can correct each other to form the true statements.

Story-telling

This game calls on the imaginative talents of each group member in composing a portion of an entertaining story.
The teacher will begin the story with the classical phrase:
"Once upon a time there was …" and complete the sentence any way s/he wishes. Then a group member supplies the second sentence to the story – a line that is a logical addition to the previous one.
Then, another group member has a chance to contribute to the story, and so on.
At a suitable stopping point, have someone add the final sentence.

Classroom twenty questions

This is a guessing game in which one person chooses a visible object in the classroom and the other students try to guess what it is by asking questions.

Each student can ask one question.

The person who made the choice must give a complete answer to each question.

After several questions have been asked, the person whose turn is next may think he knows what the object is. In this case s/he can ask:

"Is it a …?" If s/he has guessed correctly, s/he wins the game and becomes the person who chooses the object in the next game.

One student must keep count of the number of questions asked. If no one has guessed the object after twenty questions, the person who selected the object wins the game and can choose an object for the second game.

In this form of the game, only questions that take a "Yes" or "No" answer are permitted.

Visual consequences

What to do:

Students work in groups of five. Each person has a sheet of paper. Everyone is instructed to draw a head at the top of the paper, including the beginnings of the neck (human, animal or imaginary). The sheets of paper are then folded so that the head is not visible, and passed on to the next person in the group. Everyone then draws the top half of the creature (with arms, wings, or other appendages). Sheets of paper are passed on again. The same procedure is followed for the trunk, legs, and lower limbs. At the end, everyone unfolds their sheet of paper and compares it with those of others in the group. The result will be five 'creatures'. The group is now asked to discuss these five creatures, to assign them names, and to invent a character — even a history — for each of them. A dramatization is then worked out involving the five creatures, and acted by the group for another group.

Remarks:

Level: elementary upwards

There is enormous intrinsic interest in seeing what the creatures turn out to be like, and the resulting dramatizations are usually highly inventive.

Word for word

What to do:
Students sit in a big circle. One person starts off by saying a word, e.g. black. The next person on the right has to say a word, which 'goes with' this word, e.g. sheep. The next person continues in the same way, e.g. wool, etc. Here is an example of such a series: Book — worm — earth —sky— blue — sea — fish — swim — sink — dishes — food - supermarket - shoplifting - detective ... From here, if you wish, you may lead straight into a rhyming verse game. The group is asked to think of words with the same sound (this may be an internal sound, like the [o] in the examples below — but it could also be a rhyme), e.g. go, slow, soak, show, home, told. Each word is written on a slip of paper, and the slips are mixed. Each person then draws two slips of paper, which they use to write a two-line rhyming verse, e.g. She said 'Absolutely no!' " I don't like mowing, so I couldn't go. But the grass keeps on growing!"

Remarks
Level: elementary to intermediate upwards.

The first exercise is the equivalent in words of the non-verbal (physical) warming-up exercises, and it works well at all levels. The second is an optional follow-on. Both will waken the mind for more difficult tasks, and neither need take more than a few minutes.

Leading the blind

What to do:
Students are divided into two equal groups, A and B. Each group then divides into pairs. The centre of the room is filled with 'obstacles' (e.g. chairs), with passages left in between. One member of each pair from group A goes to the other end of the room. The remaining partners are then blindfolded (or close their eyes). The 'guides' then give directions to their partners to enable them to walk through the obstacles without touching them. Anyone touching an obstacle is eliminated.
Then group B does the same.

Remarks:
Level: elementary upwards.

An exercise in developing trust between partners, precision in the language of instructions and careful listening. (In natural conditions - with background noise!).

The all-purpose sock

What to do:

Each student is asked to concentrate on a familiar object, e.g. a sock. The task is to draw up a list of six to ten ways in which a sock might be used other than for its normal purpose, for example:

a coffee-filter, a bandage, a trumpet-mute, a mask, a gag, a lamp-shade, a net, a purse, etc. The group then forms pairs. Each pair exchanges ideas; about five minutes are allowed for discussion. In the next stage, two pairs join together to compare lists. A further five to ten minutes are allowed for this. Then each group is asked to describe to the others three (not more) of its best ideas. The groups of four remain as they are. Each group is now asked to think of a similar everyday object (a hairpin, a comb, a fork, etc.). As before, a list of possible new uses for this object is drawn up. The group selects four of its best ideas and presents these as a mime to other groups. The observer groups must try to decide what the object is and in what new way it is being used.

Remarks

Level: elementary upwards.

Although the idea here is very simple, there is still great scope for the imagination. Some students will, of course, have more ideas than others: this is why the exchange of ideas in pairs is introduced. In the discussion, a lot of useful language emerges when suggestions are compared, criticized, and rejected or accepted.

What am I holding?

What to do:

The class is divided into groups of five or six. The groups stand in a circle, each person facing inwards, with their hands held cupped behind back. The organizer then slips a small object, e.g. a safety-pin, a coin, or a matchbox, into the hands of one member of each group. This person can feel the object, of course, but cannot see it. The group's task is to discover by questioning what the object is

Remarks:

Level: elementary upwards.

Before using this exercise, it is worthwhile giving a demonstration to the class as a whole. A volunteer stands facing the class, with hands behind her/his back: a small object is slipped into her/his hands, and s/he answers the class's questions. This enables the class to discover together what kind of questions work best. In this exercise, the questioners have nothing, initially, to guide them. They rely exclusively, therefore, on what can be learnt from their questions. In order to avoid wild guesses ('Is it a drawing pin?') and vague questions ('Is it big?' 'Is it nice?'), the students should be encouraged to use strategies, which will progressively eliminate the possibilities, e.g. 'Is it hard?' 'Is it made of metal?' 'Can it be bent?' 'Is it precious?'

And I'm a butcher

What to do:

Students sit in circles, facing inwards (about ten to twelve per circle). One student begins by giving her/his real name and an imaginary profession, e.g. 'I'm Alan, and I'm a butcher'. The student on the right then repeats this information and adds her/his own name and an imaginary profession e.g. 'You're Alan, and you're a butcher. I'm Helen, and I'm a hairdresser'. The next student to the right continues the process, e.g. 'He's Alan, and he's a butcher. You're Helen, and you're a hairdresser. I'm Ann, and I'm a skin-diver'. The process goes on until everyone has added information about her/himself. The person who began the process then has to repeat the whole series.

Remarks

Level: elementary upwards.

This is a good exercise to develop careful listening to what others are saying, and to sharpen the memory. (It is best not to exceed twelve people in a circle, otherwise the activity may break down.) It is also good for giving each person a sense of his or her own value — the repetition of one's name by others somehow seems to give satisfaction, particularly to weaker students. Although here the input is limited to a simple sentence involving a name and a profession, other more complex inputs can be used (perhaps to give practice in structures currently being dealt with),

e.g. " I'm Frank, and I like swimming."
"I'm Marianne, and I like dancing."
" I'm Jimmy, and I've just returned from Poland."
"I'm Julia, and I'm going to Pitesti next week.", etc

Reconstructing A Map

1. Students form into groups of three, or four at the most.
2. Each group works together to make a drawing of their ideal city.

They are allotted a limited amount of time – perhaps the duration of three songs on a CD. The music creates a relaxing atmosphere.

Questions:

What do you feel? How do you feel?

Teachers can introduce more questions and make them more difficult depending on the level of language they want students to practise.

3. When the groups have finished their drawings they leave them where they are and move to another table. They tear up the drawing left on the new table. The music for this part of the exercise should be different and increasingly aggressive tone.

Questions:

What do you feel? How do you feel?

4. Each group goes back to its original table and has a look at what the other group has done to its drawing of their ideal city.

Questions:
What do you feel? How do you feel?

5. Now the groups try to put their drawings back together again by gluing or sticky taping the pieces. The teacher plays the relaxing music from the first part of the exercise. Once the students have repaired their drawings as well as they can they answer the same questions:

Questions:
What do you feel? How do you feel?



Lost in a Forest

Lost in a Forest is a teambuilding activity that also helps people share a little about themselves. Given the scenario that everyone is lost, each person should say how and by what means the group could get out of the forest.

This game is a teambuilding and get-to-know-you icebreaker. The recommended group size is medium, although small and large group sizes are possible too. An indoor setting is ideal. No special props or materials are required. This icebreaker works well for any age, including adults and corporate settings.

Instructions for Lost in a Forest

The situation is dire — a group of people is lost in a huge Canadian forest! The group has not got any equipment or any other tools. They have only their clothes and one person has matches. The group works as a team, discussing the points they know for sure, and that they must get out of the forest before midnight! Team members must cooperate, be helpful and friendly. Encourage people to be creative. After the instructions have been explained, the action starts. This situation game could last quite long, but the teacher has to bear in mind that there might be bright students who will find a way in which to get out of the forest very quickly. If you wish, you can reward the most creative person with a prize. The same game could be played as “Lost on a Desert Island”. This type of activity is very adaptable for language learning and can be used to consolidate expressions like: We should/could/might.... or just to use some useful words.

Another team-building activity could look like this:

The LEGO game

This exercise is good for working on communication skills and broadening vocabulary. Students are split up into groups of three. Each group member is assigned a role: leader, worker or observer. The group is given an instruction sheet with a picture of a LEGO model that

they will be asked to build with some LEGO bricks provided.

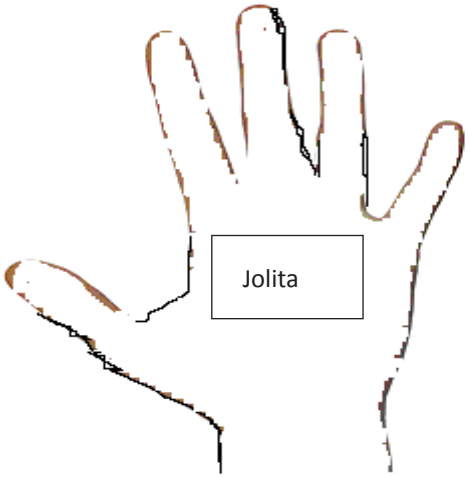
The leader will tell the worker what to do and the worker will do as instructed. The observer will not take part in the building process but will only observe how the other two go about their job. S/he will fill in an observation sheet with questions such as:

1. Did the "leader" tell the worker what to do? Which words were used?
2. Did the worker do as s/he was told?
3. Describe the group work, was it successful? Why? Why not?

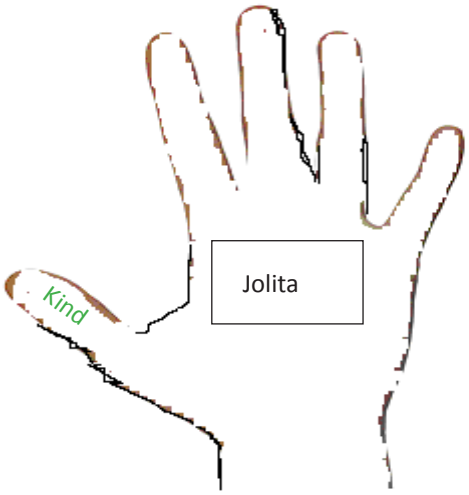
At the end, the observer will report his impressions from his "written report". Discuss with the groups how they did, and what they could have done better. The exercise can be repeated and evaluated, allowing students see how their vocabulary improves.

An icebreaker using the Hand

Students are divided into groups of 5. Everyone has a sheet of paper and a pen. Students must draw a hand on a paper and write a name on it. (See picture.)



Students then pass their sheets to their neighbours. On one of the fingers, the neighbour must write an adjective (positive) about the person named on the hand.



When the first adjectives have been written, the sheets are passed on to the next group members, and so on until adjectives have been written for 4 fingers. The last finger is left for the person who originally drew the hand. Students mustn't repeat the same words. Students read out loud the adjectives the other students wrote about them and another one that they write about themselves.

The most difficult task for the teacher in teaching the language of emotions is persuading learners to state their feelings directly, since we all have a tendency to over-complicate how we feel and / or blame another person. The language teacher, however, has the advantage of being able to encourage learners to use the simple language of emotions before they have the range of language to complicate matters.

The GUESS WHO game

This game is for asking questions and describing people. The rules are quite similar to the board game "GUESS WHO". Split the class into two equal groups. The groups will face each other on opposite sides of the room. Each group will appoint a person who will be "IT", but the identity of this person will be kept a secret for the opposite team. The teams take turns asking questions or guessing who the mystery person is. They may only guess when they are sure; one wrong guess and they lose the game! Until they are ready to guess the person, they ask the opposing team ONE question per turn. The questions must give a "yes" or "no" answer. Questions could be about hair colour, clothing and so on. If a group member is sure that it is not a person with freckles, for example, all the students from the other side with freckles move to the back and so on.

If one team guesses the correct mystery person from the other team, they win; if they guess wrong, they lose!

Appendix 1

The six common dialogue types

- Type one focuses on a common, everyday situation, such as buying clothes, discussing sports, or going to a movie. It simply shows what people would say when involved in such a situation. For example:

  A: Let's play tennis.
  B: It's too hot. Besides, my racquet is broken.
  A: I can lend you one of mine.
  B: Well, all right.
  A: If we leave now, we can get a court
  B: O.K. But I don't feel like playing more than one set

- Type two revolves around a specific grammar point. For example:

  A: How long have you lived in Washington D.C.?
  B: Three years. How long have you lived here?
  A: Let's see – we moved from New York to Washington in 1952. We've been here since 1952!
  B: That's more than twenty years. You've been here for a long time!

- Type three clarifies the meaning of a specific word or expression. For example:

  A: What do you call the powder used in water to make clothes stiff?
  B: "Starch."
  A: Is there a verb "to starch?"
  B: Yes, you can say, "Please don't starch these shirts," for instance.
  A: That's what I need to know. I can't stand starch in my shirts

- Type four expresses very strong emotion. For example:

  A: Mary, I want to apologize for
  B: Don't bother! I don't want to talk to you!
  A: Just a minute. Please listen! I'm sorry I couldn't call you last night.
  B: Do you realize I waited three hours for you to call?
  A: It won't happen again! I promise you!
  B: Well… it had better not!

- Type five collects related vocabulary items. For example:

  A: So this is where so much fruit is grown!
  B: Yes, the soil and climate are ideal for most fruits.
  A: During the fall you have apples, quince, pomegranates…
  B: … and in the winter there are oranges, lemons, limes, tangerines and grape fruit.
  A: I suppose you have cherries, strawberries, plums, peaches, apricots, grapes, and melons in the summer.
  B: Yes, but we have no bananas. They grow along the coast where it's really hot.

- Type six highlights specific cultural features or customs. For example:

  A: How was the New Year's Eve party?
  B: It was lots of fun. We danced all evening and sang Auld Lang Syne just before midnight.
  A: Did you blow a paper horn and throw confetti when the clock struck twelve?
  B: Yes, everybody did. Then we went on dancing until 3 A.M.!