

LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

MOTIVATING YOUNG LEARNERS USING GAMES

By

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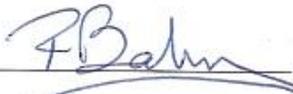
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To my loving and supporting family and future husband

Motivating Students through Gaming

Michelle Tony Frangieh

Abstract

Elementary school teachers are facing difficulties motivating students to learn effectively and efficiently in the classroom. One way to solve the problem is by using gaming in the classroom. This study investigates the use of games to motivate young learners in the classroom. Thus, this study was conducted in a private school in North Lebanon. 37 participants of the same age group, from middle to low socio economic status were selected to be part of the study. Their parents have a medium to a low level mastery of the English language. Classes were taught using two different approaches: traditional and non-traditional. Students were tested at the end of each lesson. Significant differences were noticed in the test results. Using games inside a classroom showed a great motivation for students to master the material being taught. The absence of gaming showed a negative effect both on students' grades and on students' motivation. Although the findings are significant, more research should be conducted to get more accurate results and be able to generalize the results.

Keywords: Gaming, Motivation, Young Learners, English as L2, Traditional, Nontraditional

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Chapter | Page |
|---|----------------|
| I – Introduction | 1 – 5 |
| 1.1 Overview | 1 |
| 1.2 Research Content | 1 |
| 1.3 Statement of Research Problem | 2 |
| 1.4 Research Questions | 3 |
| 1.5 Definitions | 4 |
| II – Literature Review | 6 - 16 |
| 2.1 Traditional Teaching and the Role of the Teacher and the Student | 6 |
| 2.2 Nontraditional Teaching and the Role of the Teacher and the Student | 7 |
| 2.3 The Importance of Group Work | 8 |
| 2.4 Motivation | 11 |
| 2.5 Games | 14 |
| III – Proposed Solution / Methodology | 17 - 21 |
| 3.1 Participants | 17 |
| 3.2 Research Design | 18 |
| 3.3 Instrumentation | 18 |
| 3.4 Participants Observation | 19 |
| 3.5 Achievement Tests | 19 |
| 3.6 Focus Group Interview | 20 |
| 3.7 Ethical Consideration | 20 |
| 3.8 Conclusion | 20 |

| | |
|---|----------------|
| IV – Solution Validation / Findings | 22 – 25 |
| 4.1 Difference between the Traditional and the Nontraditional Way | 22 |
| 4.2 Results of the assessment between the Traditional and the Nontraditional Way | 23 |
| 4.3 Students’ Comments Regarding Both Ways | 24 |
| V – Discussion | 26 – 30 |
| VI - Conclusions and Recommendations | 31 - 33 |
| 5.1 – Conclusion | 31 |
| 5.2 – Limitations to the Research | 31 |
| 5.3 – Achievements | 32 |
| 5.4 – Recommendations | 32 |
| 5.5 – Suggestions | 32 |
| VII – Bibliography / References | 34 - 38 |
| VIII – Appendices | 39 - 46 |
| Appendix I: The Assessment for the Traditional Approach | 39 |
| Appendix II: The Assessment for the Nontraditional Approach | 40 |

LIST OF TABLES

| Table | Table Title | Page |
|--------------|--|-------------|
| Table 3.1 | Difference between the Traditional and the Nontraditional Way | 22 |
| Table 3.2 | Results of the Assessments between the Traditional and the Nontraditional Way | 23 |
| Table 3.3 | Students' Comments Regarding both Ways | 24 |

Chapter I

Introduction

Games are one of the ways used inside a classroom to help the teachers introduce a certain topic to the students. They are considered to be an effective procedure that students can at the same time enjoy and understand the content. Nowadays, teachers are using games not only to introduce a certain topic, but also to include the game in their lesson plans in the English language classroom (Harbon, 2008). Games are one of the most effective ways of teaching and learning actively because more detailed events can be captured when using them (Lee, Ginsburg & Preston, 2009). Many students express joy when games are used in their classroom. Young students love games. They are motivated to work and improve their language while at the same time enjoy gaming. In Lebanon, universities are training future teachers to engage in more interesting methods of teaching, by using games when teaching their students new content material. Van Eck (2006) points out that gaming make learning effective and fun. This research paper attempts to examine the effect of gaming on motivating young learners in English as a second language classroom and how well these learners master the content taught from the game introduced.

Research Content

This research will be conducted on grades one, two and three students of low to middle socioeconomic status in one school in the North of Lebanon. Some of the children's parents are helpful, which means they help their children at home, but some others are not helpful at all. They don't even supervise their children's homework. It is worth mentioning

however that, not all parents master the English language sufficiently to allow them to help their children. This by itself causes a problem for the parents.

Statement of the Research Problem

Many teachers are following a traditional approach when teaching at school. Most school material is boring and theoretical. Classes are teacher centered. There is no active learner. Consequently, students are bored when receiving information. They are receiving the information in a dull way; they remember it for a couple of days and then forget all about it. Young students need to be introduced to the school world differently with something that they will enjoy (Tuzun, 2007). Fun activities that engage students will make them get involved and remember the material more. Technology is one of the best ways that implements innovation and change (Skouge, Rao & Boisvert, 2007). Through technology, students will be able to enjoy the content being taught and show the teacher that they not only understood the material but also mastered it (Tuzun, 2007).

One of the ways that technology can help a teacher introduce a new concept to young learners in class is the presence of games (Tavil & Isisag, 2009). Games present a topic while showing interesting methods to the student. Through those methods, the students will form an inner picture of the content and will be able to identify it later in a different situation. Therefore, games should be incorporated in the lesson in the classroom so that young learners are motivated and are active participants in the class.

Most studies conducted on the effect of gaming on students' motivation in the classroom focus on western societies and cultures, but no studies have been done in

Lebanon. That is why the following study shows the effect of motivating young learners to learn through games placed in a classroom in a private school in North Lebanon.

Research Questions

The objective of this research is to examine the effect of gaming on young learners when introducing a new topic to them in the language classroom. Two research questions were derived from this objective.

- 1- After playing the game, will young learners be able to identify the tools and the objects belonging to that game?
- 2- How are learners going to be affected by that game?

Through this study, young learners will be choosing to go through two different ways. First, they will be introduced to an occupation using the traditional dull way and then being tested using straight forward questions. Second, the same participants will be introduced to several occupations starting with a jigsaw puzzle followed by an explanation with the presence of different colorful pictures. Later, they will be tested using matching pictures and short answers. After going through both the traditional and the non-traditional way, the above two questions will be answered.

Definitions

The following terms are defined as follows

Young learners: It refers to “children from the first year of formal schooling 6 year old to 12 year old” (Tavil & Isisag, 2009, p.300). In another context, Ro (2010) explained that young learners are children with the ages between 8 years old to 10 years old in grades three and four. Others referred to it as pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and first grade students (Mathews, 2008, p.32).

Games: “They help and encourage many learners to sustain their interest and work. They also help the teacher to create contexts in which the language is useful and meaningful” (Tavil & Isisag, 2009, p.302). “Games are considered a set of rules that are adopted for the purposes of entertainment” (Squire & Patterson, 2010). “They also engage students in the subject matter, provide a more interesting way to practice problem-solving skills, and offer a path of understanding difficult concepts (Project Tomorrow, 2008). Kinzie and Joseph (2008) describe games as an:

“Immersive, voluntary and enjoyable activity in which a challenging goal is pursued according to agreed-upon rules. It also provides a safe environment for taking chances and the opportunity to develop the knowledge and refine the skills required to succeed” (p.644).

Motivation: It is when an individual does a certain thing with effort, desire or will (Dornyei, 2001). It is also “a complex set of variables referring to such aspects as effort exerted to fulfill a goal, a desire to learn the language, and favorable attitudes toward language teaching” (Sung-Yeon, 2009, p. 141). Celikoz defined it as “a physiological state

that leads an individual to behave in a certain manner, that drives him/her to behave like that or makes him/her enthusiastic about performing a task” (Celikoz, 2010, p. 113).

Schools and teachers must work on including games inside their classrooms. By including games, students will show full motivation especially if the game interests them. The teacher, nowadays, must shift from using the traditional way in order to use the nontraditional way. The classroom must become student centered instead of teacher centered. This study will work on two different approaches. First, the teacher will use a traditional way to introduce and explain a certain idea. Second, motivation will be used to affect young learners through a game that will be used at the beginning of the testing process. According to it, students will concentrate better with the teacher and will get better results on the assessment. Through these approaches, the research questions must be answered.

After introducing the importance of using games inside the classroom, teachers must be aware of its importance and work on engaging it in their classrooms. In order to back up the study, several studies had been found and several researchers mentioned the importance of games. Chapter two discusses the ideas, the methods and the results that are already found which will back up my study.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

Long ago, people were taught while teachers spoke without giving any chance to the students to share, express and to tell about their ideas (Horsley, 2010). Things changed when games started to occur. Students became more engaged and started enjoying it (Horsley, 2010). Therefore, many teachers started using children's books and images from different sources that made the explanation of the game richer and made students get more involved because they felt interested when discussions occurred in class (Eckhoff, 2010). The traditional and the nontraditional approach differed inside the classroom in several ways. The difference was also seen in the role of each the teacher and the student.

Traditional Teaching and the Role of the Teacher and the Student

Traditional teaching, which is also known as old-fashioned teaching, is linked with several disadvantages (Schwerdt & Wuppermann, 2010). Long ago, it relied on grammar and the study of the grammar not the practice of the grammar (Kariuki & Bush, 2008). Students had to answer to what they were told without asking further questions (Zmuda, 2008). It makes all students learn in the same way even though each has a different ability and, it makes them lose attention very quickly because they aren't active which also makes the information easily forgotten (Schwerdt & Wuppermann, 2010). Traditional classrooms aren't equipped with interesting books; they are only a talking teacher with a chalk to write on the board (Abu Rass & Holzman, 2010). Zmuda (2008) argued that too many students became workers that simply followed directions and finished on time. In addition to that,

Kariuki & Bush (2008) mentioned that in a traditional classroom, students have a greater responsibility on understanding the material more than the teacher because the teacher explains the material, and it is the student's role to master it.

Nontraditional Teaching and the Role of the Teacher and the Student

“Teaching and learning of English language occur as a result of the interaction among the teacher, learners and instructional materials”(Indoshi, Bett & Odera, 2009, p. 217). The classroom is student-centered because students will be involved in most of the talking (Brown, 2008). In their study, Indoshi, Bett & Odera (2009) mentioned that low achievers became more active because they were allowed to communicate and share their ideas. Students in a nontraditional classroom ask more and more questions that allow them to get more information and become more knowledgeable (Zmuda, 2008). The students' character, gender, self concept, classroom environment, the culture they come from and the teachers' role determine the amount of participation inside a classroom (Chun-hong, 2010). When interaction occurs inside a classroom, the teacher encourages, praises and accepts the ideas that are being stated (Indoshi, Bett & Odera, 2009). Interaction makes students active; they get engaged with the content and with others because it will allow others to ask questions, compare ideas, and use evidence to develop the explanations made (Ueckert & Gess-Newsome, 2008). These classrooms are very important because they concentrate on the needs and the abilities of the students (Brown, 2008). That's why teachers must focus and take into consideration their students' abilities to master a concept.

Students with certain disabilities also benefit more when active learning takes place. Carnahan, Musti-Rao and Bailey (2009) talk about students with learning disabilities. They say that even students with difficulties benefit from the opportunities that happen inside an active classroom. The pictures that are used inside the classroom helped them recognize what was asked from them. Music was also considered an effective way in helping students with difficulties (Carnahan, Musti-Rao and Bailey, 2009). When active learning occurred, students were seen sitting with their body, face and eyes in the direction of the learning material. This shows that these students were engaged when the teacher was explaining the material (Carnahan, Musti-Rao and Bailey, 2009).

The Importance of Group Work

“Group work may be defined as: a small group of students who learn collaboratively to accomplish desired tasks” (Retnowati, Ayres & Sweller, 2010, p. 351). It is one of the important ways to manage a nontraditional classroom. It allows students to be more responsible and to develop team work (Mengduo & Xiaoling, 2010). Schools are now asked to work inside their classrooms and to include group work in order for the class to switch from being a teacher centered to a student centered (Wing-yi Cheng, Lam & Chan, 2008). Whatever age group you are working with, students can work in groups from the day they enter school till they graduate (Reese, 2009). All group members are important because they act as a jigsaw. They all work in equal chances (Wing-yi Cheng, Lam & Chan, 2008). If they don’t work together, and if they are not put together, the whole idea will not work. That’s why researchers tend to include group work in their studies because at the end everyone will work and understand what was taught (Mengduo & Xiaoling, 2010).

During that time, students will work on exchanging ideas together equally and leaving chances for high achievers to explain more and help low achievers where those have their opportunity to ask and interrogate more about the issue (Retnowati, Ayres & Sweller, 2010). They work hard because they know if they don't work together, they will not succeed and in order to succeed they have to cooperate so that they all get the extra points (Wing-yi Cheng, Lam & Chan, 2008). No one would get bored because the high achievers will be talking and explaining and the low achievers will be trying to catch up and asking more questions to the high achievers to explain (Mengduo & Xiaoling, 2010). When dividing a group, make sure to choose a few numbers of participants because equal chances and equal opportunities must be present. The smaller the group is, the better the chances of participations occur, and the bigger the group is, the smaller the chances of participating occur (Retnowati, Ayres & Sweller, 2010). When a group is created, make sure to keep it the way it is even though it might include people of different race ethnicity and gender because at the end, they will show a change in their behaviors. What I mean by that is that participants will show less prejudice, negative stereotype, more self-confidence and they will show a great academic achievement and will attend the classes more (Reese, 2009). It makes students eager to know more and more until they succeed. They will have fun and at the same time learn. The teacher won't be the one giving the information. Instead, it will become the student's role (Mengduo & Xiaoling, 2010). Group members work together for a period of time to reach their goal (Wing-yi Cheng, Lam & Chan, 2008). In their study, they stated that knowledge is constructed through interaction inside the classroom.

In order for the teachers to create successful groups, they must be well trained before going through this step. Krol, Slegers, Veenman and Voeten (2008), mentions five elements that were considered important:

- 1- The group members must work together in order to achieve their goal.
- 2- Each group member is responsible for the work s/he is assigned to do and for the outcome they achieve as a group.
- 3- The group must sit face to face in order for them to be able to communicate.
- 4- In case, there was a special skill in that group, they must focus on working on it to get better achievement.
- 5- The way the group works is very important because they must know what is important for them to work on in order to succeed.

It is very important for the teacher to take an active role when her students are divided into groups. The teacher must make sure to be ready, which means to get the material prepared, divide the classroom into groups, explain carefully what is asked from them, provide the suitable environment for her classroom, monitor their work and move from one group to another to help them (Mengduo & Xiaoling, 2010). In addition to that, teachers must also remember to praise the work that is happening in their classroom. The teacher must treat the groups equally and encourage them equally. Students must be prepared not only for such work in the classroom, but they must realize that such work is also used later on in their future work. They will never work alone. Whatever their occupation is, students will work with others so they must get enough practice to work well in very difficult situations (Reese, 2009). This type of

learning allows students to be introduced to the material and at the same time work alone a lot. It helps in developing team work and cooperative learning skills and a depth of knowledge that students alone could not reach (Mengduo & Xiaoling, 2010).

Motivation

Motivation provides abilities to accomplish long-term goals, and it helps the teacher in providing good teaching (Dornyei, 2009). It is considered to be a new way in teaching (Murray, 2011). It is after all a psychological state where students behave in a certain way with enthusiasm to perform the task (Celikoz, 2010). Every single person can be motivated for a certain thing and in a certain way (Kocabas, 2009). In this context, participants will be motivated using a jigsaw puzzle. Each student has a certain responsibility that makes them motivated to fulfill it (Kocabas, 2009). According to Hoffman and Nadelson (2009), there are several motivational variables that have been found to be associated with gaming. Nowadays, teachers are searching for something to motivate their students in order for them to study better. Before that, the teachers must be motivated in order to motivate their students. If teachers have a low motivation level, then they will have a negative impact on the achievements of the students (Kocabas, 2009). That's why schools must be very careful in how they motivate their teachers and how well is their motivational tool. Research says that motivation is a combination of skill and will (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010). If the students like their teacher, then s/he will be motivated by that. Three things differentiate a motivated student from a non-motivated student as stated by Celikoz (2010). First, when you watch your students and see that they enjoy what they are doing and are continuing in it by focusing on what is told, and then they are motivated. The second thing is the

enthusiasm they show their teacher and the will to perform the behavior. Finally, it is when your students concentrate on a certain subject, devoting all their effort to show full determination. Motivation is not found; it must be created by the teacher, who is responsible for those students. The motivational level that will be created may vary between individuals because everyone has a different background and personality, different interests and attitudes, different expectations, desires and needs (Kocabas, 2009). Confidence might be a problem for a student when referring to motivation. If that person doesn't have the confidence to do the job, then s/he will have difficulties in being motivated (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010). This will not help him/her to perform his role. That's why Kocabas (2009) argues that because each individual is different from the other, then the motivation tool must be different among the individuals. This study will focus on one motivation tool where by using it, we will be agreeing or disagreeing with Kocabas (2009). Teachers should use creative ways to motivate learners and make them feel engaged (Dornyei, 2000). Dornyei (2009) adds that students themselves are also responsible for creating self-motivation.

“There are three main primary sources for second language motivational self system to learn a foreign or a second language. Dornyei (2008) suggests the following: (1) the learner's vision of him/herself as an effective L2 speaker, (2) the social pressure coming from the learner's environment and (3) positive learning experiences” (Dornyei, 2008, p.3).

Dornyei (2000), also claimed that most of the motivational constituents of the selected constructs could be classified into seven broad dimensions which are: affective/integrative, instrumental/pragmatic, macro-context-related, self-concept related,

personality factors such as self-confident, anxiety, goal related, educational context-related and significant others-related. In addition to that, Dornyei and Csizer (1998), listed in their study the ten important points to motivate language learners: They are the following: -set a personal example with own behavior, create a pleasant relaxed atmosphere in the classroom, present the task properly, develop a good relationship with students, increase the learner's linguistic self confidence, make the language classes interesting, promote learning autonomy, personalize the learning process, increase the learner's goal-orientedness, and familiarize learners with the target language culture. These important points have been proved to work effectively in a western society (Cheng & Dornyei, 2007). Cambria & Guthrie (2010) mention some motivation strategies a teacher can use everyday inside her classroom:

- 1- The interest of a student is very important. If the subject doesn't interest the students then they will not feel engaged and willing to participate.
- 2- Students must have a good self confidence in themselves in order to work because without self-confidence, students will not get high achievements.
- 3- The students must have the desire and the will be dedicated to their work and to be part of the classroom. If not then nothing can motivate them.

Therefore, these strategies will be used in this study to test how effective they are in our Middle Eastern society. Results by Guilloteaux and Dornyei (2008) showed that teaching the curriculum in a motivating manner is a realistic possibility. Gaming showed interesting results when used to motivate learners. This will be explained further in this study.

Games

Games can be defined as a play time where rules, tools and artifacts are used at the same time (Charoenying, 2010). They have always been used inside a classroom for learning processes. Also, games have been proven to provide effective results when used inside the classroom (Van Eck, 2006). They are used to show interest to students, motivation to play and to provide a safe context for students' academic learning (Charoenying, 2010). A teacher must be very careful when choosing the game because if it didn't fit to the context, then it will affect the material negatively. They can affect individuals differently because different people have different learning styles, needs and preferences. "Games embody well-established principles and models of learning" (Van Eck, 2006, p.18). Nowadays, everything is related to fun activities and fun games. In fact, if you surf the Internet, you will see several educational games that can be used in your classroom and at the same time are effective and help your students become more effective in the target language. Students are not using books to search for ideas, so the internet has become the most used resources to get new information. That is why the use of games in the classroom is very important (Frاند, 2000). Charoenying (2010) mentions two types of classroom games. The first is used when students aren't finishing or doing what was told and you give them the content as a game to motivate them to finish. The second one is when the teacher wants to make learning more fun, she engages them in a game. Well-made games should provide interesting features. Tuzun (2007) points out the importance of using colors in the games. The effects are very important to grab the student's attention (Tuzun, 2007). The teacher must not forget to give the students sufficient time to be able to

master the whole game. In addition to that, the game must be supported by reliable, strong, and an available information technology infrastructure (Tuzun, 2007). Schools now must design special curricula where technology and games must be integrated (Tuzun, 2007). When showing students the game the teacher must make sure that the fun lasts because in many contexts students are not exposed to the engaging parts of the game provided (Van Eck, 2006). Games are effective, not because they are a fun activity, but because of what they embody and what learners gain as they play a game (Van Eck, 2006). Games also help encourage many learners to sustain their interest and work. They help the teacher create contexts where the language becomes meaningful (Tavil & Isisag, 2009). Students have showed real interest in gaming when integrated in the school curriculum (Squire, Devane & Durga, 2008). Games that are too easily solved will not be engaging to students, so good games require effort from the students in order to work successfully (Van Eck, 2006). Games not only help regular students in regular classrooms, but they are also used to help students with special needs. Students with learning disabilities have been introduced to the world of technology as they can hear and see things that are hard for them when using a paper and a pen (Skouge, Rao & Boisvert, 2007). This shows how effective and powerful technology can be when used inside a classroom. Such games have shown huge engagement from the students, since they capture their attention and teach them how to solve complex problems (Compton-Lilly, 2007).

Two things must be taken into consideration when a teacher wants to engage gaming inside a classroom (Robinson, 2009). The first is that the teacher has to have full confidence when explaining the game to the students she must be aware of how it works so

that students enjoy it. The second thing is that students must not wait long for their turn to play because they will probably get bored and not enjoy the task given. Therefore, in this study, a game will be used to introduce certain topics. The students will be engaged in the game which will help them master the content being taught.

As mentioned before, the traditional way was used and is still used in our days. It is recommended by several researchers to shift from this way and to start using a more interesting approach. By using it, students will interact more, will love learning more, have fun and master the content (Ueckert & Gess-Newsome, 2008). The division of the class will be used in this study because it proved to be very effective. It allows students to be more interactive and to work as a team (Wing-yi Cheng, Lam & Chan, 2008). The game that is included will affect the students positively (Van Eck, 2006). Through it, students will feel more motivated and will have the will to learn what is being taught.

This chapter reviewed the literature available on the topic on gaming and motivation. The next chapter will discuss the methodology and the instruments used to collect the data.

Chapter Three

Methodology

In this section, the researcher introduces the methodology followed to examine whether the use of gaming with young learners in an English as a second language classroom motivates them and helps them achieve better results.

In this chapter, three essential parts will be included. Part one introduces the participants as well as the design followed in this study. Part two discusses the instruments used to collect the data. Part three highlights the procedures followed to analyze the data.

Participants

The participants in this study are a total of 37 students. They are a combination of grades one, two and three in a private school in Al Koura in North Lebanon. Students are considered to be young learners aging between six and ten. The two important languages they use in the school are Arabic and English. English is considered to be the second language in that school. The students come from different backgrounds fluctuating from middle to a low socioeconomic status. The students' parents have different levels of mastery of the English language. Thus, some students have the help of their parents or a tutor at home, and others study alone. A small number of the students have minor learning disabilities, but they are all familiar with the English language and can understand simple concepts. All the students present on the day of the pretest participated in the study.

Research Design

The research design followed this study is experimental research. This research consists of two basic conditions. First, two methods are being compared together to reach a particular treatment. Second, the independent variable, which is the teaching method, is manipulated by the researcher. This distinguishes the experimental research from any other research. Change is asked for (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010). Fraenkel and Wallen (2010), mention that the independent variable is the experiment or the treatment itself. The dependent is known as the outcome that the experiment reached.

The same participants in an experimental research will be referred to as controlled and experimental group (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010). In a first instance, learners will be listening to the teacher without being engaged in any games: traditional approach to teaching. In a second instance, the same participants, will be engaged in a game that will receive a treatment (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). The whole process will undergo several steps.

Instrumentation

In order to get reliable results in this study, the researcher had to use several instruments to collect the required data while working with the participants (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010). Thus, the researcher will be observing the students while teaching the traditional as well as the non-traditional approach. Second, the students will have to sit for a test at the end of the teaching so that the researcher can check if the learners mastered the

content. Third and finally, the researcher will conduct focus group interviews with the students after each teaching intervention to check learners' views about the whole process.

Participant Observation

While explaining the lesson, the researcher, who at the same time is the class teacher, will observe the students and take notes in a diary of the various comments and incidents happening in the classroom. Thus, the researcher will observe how students act, whether they enjoy the traditional approach to teaching or not, and how they act when they have to be assessed on the material explained in the classroom. Similarly, students will also be observed during all stages of teaching a lesson using gaming. They will be observed carefully when completing the jigsaw puzzle; the researcher will be taking notes at that time. They will be observed when the pictures are presented to them. Their reactions to the pictures will be noted carefully. Fraenkel & Wallen (2010) point out that an observation form is very simple and easy to construct.

Achievement Tests

At the end of both teaching instances, students will be given achievements tests to measure how well they mastered the content of both lessons. Achievement tests are the ability to measure the knowledge of an individual (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010). Such tests are used in schools and in research when instructional methods are being compared: the achievement test is usually the dependent variable (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010). At the end of the first lesson, the test will be presented with five straight forward questions. These questions will be based on students having fully understood the lesson and having

memorized of the occupation. At the end of the second lesson, students will be given a different assessment. Students will have some multiple choice questions, matching colorful pictures with a letter and fill in the blanks sentences that have to do with the full understanding of the occupations presented when the teacher was explaining the lesson.

Focus group interviews

Focus group interviews are a set of questions asked by the researcher and answered by the participants. The learners are asked the questions orally, and the answers are recorded by the researcher (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010). The advantage of this interview is that the researcher can ask more questions and require from the participants more in-depth answers. A disadvantage of this type of interview is that it is time consuming (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010).

Thus, students will be interviewed regarding the process followed by the teacher when teaching without gaming and when teaching using gaming.

Ethical Considerations

It is very important for every researcher to think about ethical issues. It is the researchers' full responsibility to make sure that the whole study is ethical (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010). I made sure to get the verbal approval from the schools principal to conduct this study in that school: the principal agreed as long as the school's name and the students' names will stay confidential. The participants agreed to go through this process. They were assured that being part of the research will not by any means affect their grades at

school (See Fraenkel and Wallen, 2010). Their names were kept anonymous. I referred to them as students.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the methodology followed by the researcher to collect the data for the study. The following chapter will state the findings and discuss the results.

Chapter IV

Findings and Results

After testing the traditional way and the nontraditional way and after interviewing my participants, several points were derived from this study.

Table 1

Difference between the Traditional and the Non-Traditional Way

| Traditional Way | Non-Traditional Way |
|---|---|
| 37 students participated in this method The subject was explained in a dull way. My tone was boring. I was talking all the time telling them about the occupation. | 36 students participated in this method The subject was explained starting by using a game. Students were divided into groups randomly. Each group was given two jigsaw puzzles and they had to put the pieces together. Then, every group came up and told what the jigsaw puzzle might be. Then colorful pictures were presented and talked about with discussions allowed. Students showed a lot of enthusiasm when the pictures were presented. |
| An occupation was presented without any pictures. Students had to imagine the things that I was talking about. The assessment was five straight forward questions. They were questions about the occupation and about what I told them. Students had to be very careful while I was telling about the occupation because the questions needed full concentration and a good memory. | Several occupations were presented with many colorful pictures. Students showed great interest in the pictures. The assessment had several questions. The first was choosing the correct answer. They had to choose an answer from three. The second exercise was matching the letters of the occupations with the picture of that occupation. The third exercise was similar to the previous but with only three occupations. Finally, the last exercise was filling in the blanks with the correct answer from the box. |
| During the explanation and during the testing, I was keeping record of what was happening during the whole process. I wanted to take notes about everything that was happening. This made students feel | Notes were taken at the beginning, when students were placed into groups and when they were working on the jigsaw puzzles. Notes weren't taken when I was explaining and showing them the pictures. I didn't have |

| | |
|--|---|
| sleepy and bored. | the chance to write down notes because several students wanted to share their ideas and their experiences. During testing time, questions were allowed and it also prevented me from writing down notes. They were taken later on when everything was over. |
| During the examination, few students started writing, while others tried to copy from their friends. Some even didn't write, they said that they don't know it. Others tried to ask some questions, but they were not allowed. | During the examination, students enjoyed the simplicity of the exam and enjoyed the colored pictures. Questions were allowed during that time. They had enough time to finish the exam. |

In order to recognize the different results between the two methods, each assessment had similar testing scores. They were both over 100. Student's grades that were 50 and above, were considered a passing grade. Grades below 50 were considered a failing grades.

Table 2

Results of the Assessments between the Traditional and the Non-Traditional Way

| Traditional | Non-Traditional |
|--|---|
| Six out of 37 students took higher than 50 | 18 out of 36 students took higher than 50 |
| 31 out of 37 students took lower than 50 | 18 out of 36 students took lower than 50 |

After finishing each assessment, students were interviewed together and asked about the whole process. Several questions were asked while interviewing these students after using the traditional way and after using the nontraditional way.

- How do you feel about what happened?
- Did you like it?
- Did you enjoy my explanation about that occupation?
- Did you like it that there weren't any pictures presented in the traditional way?

- Was the subject interesting at the first time?
- Was it interesting at the second time?
- Did you like that there were no pictures in the first examination?
- Did you like that there were pictures in the second examination?
- Was the first assessment difficult?
- Was the second assessment difficult?
- Do you think that you must study about the occupation at home before taking the exam?
- Do you think that you must study about all the occupations presented before taking the examination?
- Would you like to do it again?

Students' answers were different and many. Some were surprising. The table below tells how students felt during and after the whole process.

Table 3

Students Comments Regarding both Ways

| Traditional Way | Non-Traditional Way |
|--|---|
| Very few said that what I explained was easy. | Most of the participants said that the topics were nice and interesting. They were more than one and it always made them feel eager to know about the second one. |
| Some felt that it was something new. | The jigsaw puzzle was very nice and fun. They loved the idea of how each group sat together and worked on putting the parts together even though they were from different class levels. |
| Others said that the story and the topic made them feel happy. | . They liked the pictures that I presented after the game. They said they were many and they helped to understand and see things |

| | |
|--|--|
| | better. |
| Many said that the story was understood and clear to them. They said that my explanation was simple and straight forward. | Some liked that they had to change their classroom. It was a thing that they never did before. They felt relaxed about it. |
| Some felt a bit bored. They mentioned that my tone was always at the same pace and it made the story dull. | Others liked the division of the groups and how it happened randomly. They said if they were from the same class, it wouldn't be nice. |
| Some felt tired and sleepy. They felt like leaving the classroom. | Some said that the assessment was easy. The pictures were nice and colorful. It made things easier. |
| Many felt that they know the entire test and that they will get high grades. | Most of the participants finished the test quickly. They submitted it with a great smile. |
| Some didn't know anything and they said that it was hard. They didn't want to go through it. They asked if they can leave the lines empty without answering. | Students that are below the class's average loved it and said that the pictures were a help to understand the concept explained. |
| Some felt scared because the assessment had a different scoring from what they were used to. | Some felt bored and sleepy. They said that they know about some topics but the tools were new and this made them focus more and catch up. |
| Others felt tired and hungry. They asked if they could eat. | Some said that the puzzle was a bit hard. Some pieces confused them but it was a nice activity. |
| A student wanted to kill the firefighter. He said that he bothered him even though he helps people. | Many felt tired because they were sitting beside each other. They felt that they needed their own space. |
| Many participants said that most probably, they will do it again. It was nice being joined together. | Students felt relaxed to the grading system because the numbers looked like the one they had at school. They also said that they loved what happened and wished that all their lessons were explained in that way. |

Both ways were used inside the classroom when introducing new topics to young learners.

Some students enjoyed the traditional way and some felt bored. Most of the participants enjoyed the non-traditional way because a game was included. The following chapter explains and links the results to previous research done by different researchers.

Chapter V

Discussion

Previously, in many studies, games proved to be an effective way in introducing new topics to young learners. After conducting my study and after assessing the participants, gaming proved to be an effective way in that context. However, the results shown were a little surprising according to the students' comments. This supported the research conducted on similar studies and which was reviewed in chapter two.

While explaining a new concept to the students using the traditional way, they felt bored, sleepy and wanted to do something else. They wanted to participate, but they were not allowed as the classroom was teacher-centered. I was the only person speaking in that classroom because the students were not allowed to share their ideas and their thoughts. This concurs with the findings of Kariuki & Bush (2008) who described the grammar as being told and not practiced. When explaining the traditional way, they stated that the latter was also considered to be a major one because no interaction was made. Students didn't have any books or pictures to see and this made them feel more bored. I was as Abu Rass & Holzman (2008) pointed out, a talking teacher with a chalk. Another issue was argued by Kariuki & Bush (2008) and my study proved to be true that students had the full responsibility for getting as much material as they can to be able to answer the questions. I only offered the talking without any notes and they had to work on the rest. The testing was straight forward questions.

Whereas when new concepts were introduced to the same participants to create a more interactive classroom, students felt more relaxed to what was taught. They were divided randomly into groups. This division made them more responsible because they needed to finish the two puzzles before other members of the class, so they were all working in equal chances (Wing-yi Cheng, Lam & Chan, 2008). Each group was given two puzzles that needed to be completed. The instructions were explained carefully and students felt engaged all the time. They didn't need to wait for their turns, they worked as groups. These two ideas were considered essential in Robinsons (2009) study. The division of the groups made it important for the whole group because every participant was able to be a part of the whole process. Everyone had to work together to succeed. This made the low achievers and the high achievers motivated at the same time (Indoshi, Bett & Odera, 2009). Then, more colorful pictures were shared with them and during those pictures, the material was explained. At the end, the assessment, which was full of colored pictures, was presented. Later on, when asked about the colorful pictures, participants said that the colors were nice and they liked the fact that these pictures were from their everyday life. This was an issue that Tuzun (2007) discussed. He said that it will grab the students' attention and it really did.

The results of both ways showed a big difference due to the way things were explained and due to how interesting things were explained as shown in tables one, two and three. The comments of the students and their motivation showed similar results that were exposed in previous studies conducted. Students were motivated when gaming was used in the classroom (Hoffman & Nadelson, 2009). Learning was fun and more effective and

students understood the material more. The difference in the results was interpreted between both the traditional and the non-traditional way. Thus, it is shown in table two in this study. The motivation that was created during the explanation made the students eager to see more pictures. This idea was mentioned in previous studies such as Dornyei (2000). As Dornyei (2008) suggested, the students positive learning experience is a primary source for students to learn a second language, and this by itself, was very important while explaining the non-traditional way because gaming was included at that time.

In addition to that, students and during explanation felt relaxed when sharing their previous knowledge and their previous experiences, they were placed in an environment that was familiar to them, the task was presented properly, and many other essential points were used as suggested previously. The small number of participants made it a better place for discussions to occur (Retnowati, Ayres & Sweller, 2010). That's why, the middle eastern, and not only the western society proved that participants felt relaxed when interesting material such as games as used (Cheng & Dornyei, 2007). When the participants were putting the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle together, they felt eager and enthusiastic. It felt a bit challenging between the groups, and it needed their full concentration to be able to finish it correctly. A student was very pleased to see a police officer. That student felt like sharing with the rest of the group that her daddy is a police officer and that he wears similar clothes to work and this was explained by Van Eck (2006), when he suggested that things affect students differently. Students with special needs expressed the process as fun and interesting. It made them focus more on what was happening (Carnahan, Musti-Rao and Bailey, 2009). They said that it was something that they liked. This was an important idea

that Skouge, Rao & Boisvert (2007) mentioned in one of their studies. This showed how powerful and effective technology was before and is now according to the present study.

My participants were students aging between six and nine years old. They are referred to as young learners. These young learners had different comments regarding the whole issue. The students who were young in this raging, felt that things were a bit hard and difficult even though pictures were presented. Some even faced difficulties when the jigsaw puzzle was given to them. The older age in this range felt relaxed and happy when going through this whole process. They didn't feel sad because they couldn't know the answers in the first assessment, they accepted it. The younger groups didn't accept the fact that they didn't know it and they kept on asking if this was for school purpose. Keeping these two ages together cannot be identified as both to be young learners because six year old proved to have different abilities than nine year old. That's why further studies can be conducted to get better results regarding that issue.

My participants showed full enthusiasm when the jigsaw puzzle was presented and because they needed to finish that task, they were working with all their effort (Kocabas, 2009). Celikoz (2010) mentions three points that tell you that your students are motivated. They were all seen during my study. Students were enjoying what they were doing. They all wanted to work and focused on finishing that task.

The game that I chose from my study is the jigsaw puzzle. It was well chosen because through it, my students were able to get a first idea about the topic, and they were able to see interesting pictures that will help them later on throughout the explanation.

Therefore, my game perfectly fit in my content. This was an issue Charoenying (2010) focused on. If the game is misplaced, then it is useless, and it will affect the participants negatively. Students showed full engagement when completing it. They didn't wait for turns because they all worked together and they were a small sample. Every single group watched carefully when the other groups showed the picture that they completed. This was one of two major points Robinson (2009) stressed on.

The use of the jigsaw puzzle when introducing a new concept to the participants showed how effective gaming can be inside a classroom. The results were shown and linked to previous research. The last chapter concludes the important ideas and the results mentioned in the study.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

Games are being used everywhere in every home; children love using these devices to play; why not use them to study in a fun way? Motivating young learners through games seems to be an effective method of learning. In this way, they will be learning something new while they enjoy it. Teachers must be aware of how to use the games, and they must explain well the procedures clearly to the students so that they know what they are going to do. They must make sure that they are motivated before trying to motivate the students. They must be careful on how to motivate their students because they might affect them negatively instead of helping them. Therefore, this study intended to draw the attention of new teachers to engage gaming as much as they can, because it has been proven to be effective in this content. Finally, even though some people might think that using games inside a classroom is a waste of time, this study argues that it is a way to motivate students to learn and understand things better.

Limitations

Both of my questions have been answered to after going through both approaches. The sample that I used is a small sample but it showed that gaming is useful when used inside a classroom. If my sample was larger, it might have given me more precise results because the bigger the sample, the better it is. I would be getting results from a wider range. My sample might not have given excellent results, but it proved to be better than the old boring traditional way of teaching.

Achievements

It is amazing how this study turned out to be. The game that was used was by itself a great help. It pushed students to show more and better motivation. They were active and they controlled the class. They shared their ideas and their thoughts, so they loved interacting with each other. They enjoyed viewing the pictures and enjoyed performing well in the exam. This showed how a simple game like the “jigsaw puzzle” affected students and motivated them to learn more and better.

Recommendations

My advice for my fellow teachers: be motivated so that you can share it with your students. Create the suitable atmosphere for them in order to become motivated. Encourage them to have self confidence and allow the discussions that they enjoy doing regarding that topic. Be sure to include a game that has to do with your lesson and at the same time encourage your students. Use games to make learning more fun.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study was conducted on a small sample in a private school in North Lebanon. These results were proved in this content which means that if the same study was conducted in another school that might have a similar environment, results might be different because students are different in all ways. Each student understands things differently, the parents’ knowledge affects students differently, their relationship between their friends affects them and the amount of motivation they receive makes them feel engaged or not. Similar studies done by different participants will give us a better judgment

on using gaming inside a classroom. Therefore, more interest in this topic is requested to make the school world a better place for the future generations.

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Appendices

The Assessment for the Traditional Approach

1- What does a fireman do? (20pts)

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.....

2- What is a Pump Water Tender and when will a fireman use it? (20pts)

.....
.....

3- Name three things that are important for a fireman to wear at his work? (20pts)

.....
.....

4- What should you do when you see a fire? (20pts)

.....
.....

5- What happens at the fire station when you inform the operator that there is a fire?

(20pts)

.....
.....

The Assessment for the Non-traditional Approach

1- Circle the best answer: (2pts)

- Where do farmers work?
 - a- Hospital
 - b- Farm
 - c- Post office
- Where do doctors work?
 - a- Library
 - b- School
 - c- Hospital
- Where do teachers work?
 - a- School
 - b- Hospital
 - c- Farm
- Where do police officers work?
 - a- Playground
 - b- Police Station and Streets

c- Farm

2- Write (a-h) to name each picture: (8 pts)

a- Nurse

b- Farmer

c- Dentist

d- Mail carrier

e- Librarian

f- Teacher

g- Construction worker

h- Doctor





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3- Write: (2 pts)

A if the tool belongs to a farmer

B if the tool belongs to a teacher

C if the tool belongs to a doctor



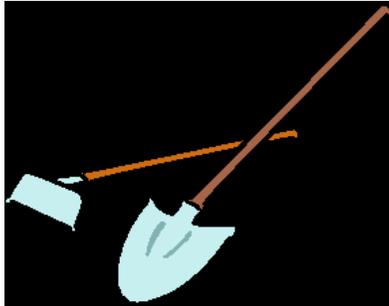
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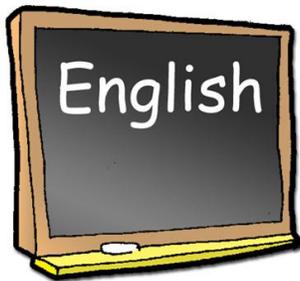
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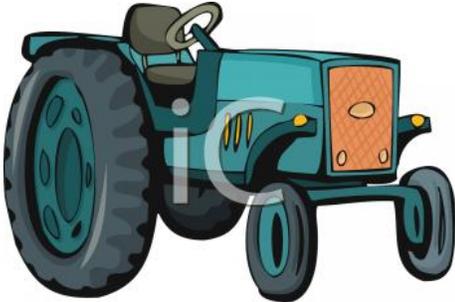
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4- Fill in the blanks with the best answer from the box: (8 pts)

librarians - farmer - mail carrier - doctor - teacher
- construction workers - police officers - nurse

- Amakes learning English fun and exciting.
-help us find the books we need.

- Ahelps make sick people comfortable by giving them their medicines. They help doctors inside operation rooms.
-protect people in their communities.
- Aworks on farms and help fruits and vegetables grow.
-build houses, shops, offices and roads.
- Ahelps keep us healthy.
- Apicks up mail from post offices and delivers it to people's homes.