

ENHANCING YOUNG LEARNERS' ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY VIA EXTRACURRICULAR ENGLISH ACTIVITIES

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Annotation: *This article analyzes the importance of successful communication in teaching young foreign language learners. In addition, recommendations are given on what to pay attention to when communicating in a foreign language, as well as on the development of communication skills.*

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Teaching students to communicate more effectively is a difficult task for educators in the modern world. Teachers' creativity is truly hindered by time constraints and the need to complete specific materials. Additionally, kids might not find the materials difficult. Offering extracurricular English language activities is one practical way to address this issue. The rationale is that educators have greater control over the content they select. Because reading comprehension is still the main focus of English exams, printed materials are used more frequently. Brochures, recipes, folktales, story books, comics, letters, posters, song lyrics, games for communication, children's books, anecdotes, and magazines are among the resources that are provided.

Predicting, previewing, role-playing, oral reading exercises, presenting, recounting, active listening, acting, singing, and poster-making are some of the activities. Activities can be completed individually, in small groups, in pairs, or during class. The suggested materials and activities are intended for elementary school pupils in the fifth grade. According to certain research, pupils at this level have more vocabulary mastery than those at lower levels. Additionally, fifth-grade pupils will generally have the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities through school. Instructors ought to select resources and tasks that align with the English language competency levels of their pupils. To achieve the best outcome, a class should ideally consist of students at the same level of proficiency.

Theoretically, students receive two rewards after engaging in all discussions and activities. They take pleasure in reading in addition to developing their communication abilities.

If the materials and the activities are appropriate, maximum result will be achieved. For those purposes teachers choose printed materials and assign their students to read every week. By doing so, it is expected that the students' reading habit is growing and their reading skills are improving. Materials such as brochures, recipes, folk tales, story books, comics, letters, posters, song lyrics communication games, children's books, anecdotes, and magazines are necessary to use. These materials will really challenge students' imagination and creativity. It

is also important to provide students with materials which make them love and respect God, family, country, other people, themselves and their environment. In short, teachers should find materials which help their students become better people not only become more knowledgeable ones.

Recommended materials and activities above in the light of the following characteristics of how the fifth-grade students of Elementary School learn. According to Harmer, the characteristics are as follows:

- Students can easily lose interest.
- They focus on themselves
- The students' favorite topics are their own lives.
- They need individual attention and appreciation from the teacher.
- They are enthusiastic and curious to learn about the world around them.
- They learn through what they see and hear

Besides providing various materials and activities, teachers need to create and sustain positive classroom atmosphere. In the first place, teachers should create a supportive and cooperative environment to suit the various learner types. One of the examples is by giving feedback and correction just at the right moment. Secondly, teachers should establish good relationships with all students so they can work together either individually or in groups. This can be greatly enhanced when teachers pay the same attention to all the students in their classes, not only to certain students. Thirdly, teachers have to choose topics which are interesting and relevant to their students' experience to make their students become totally involved or take part with enthusiasm.

Since the materials used in the class are printed material, students need to be equipped with previewing and predicting skills. Whereas those two skills are very significant for increasing reading effectiveness. By previewing, students get enough information from the text to start hypothesizing about it and to initiate the cognitive process of matching new information with their prior knowledge. After previewing, students need to have a practice of predicting. Concerning the predicting skill, teachers ask the students to make predictions about the text before it is read or make predictions during reading. Students may predict from titles, illustrations or headlines. After giving their predictions, they should clarify their reasons. If the teacher activates students' previewing and predicting skills, it will encourage their students to read more, aware of any features given and use their imagination.

One of the most useful kinds of text for students to work with is song lyric. To make the process of learning fun for every student, the teacher asks his students to bring their favorite songs to class. To make the atmosphere livelier, they can also permit to bring their music instruments. Students are asked to give reasons why they like their songs and say what they think the message might be. Teachers will discuss the difficult words or the messages together with all students. The main point here is not trying to finish all songs but having fun with songs. Students and teacher can sing, play music or dance together. Even students are given a chance to introduce their own songs.

Oral reading which improves the students' phrasing and intonation is also important to be practiced. This activity prepares students to clearly communicate in English, including

speaking in front of the class or giving presentation. The teacher, who is supposed to be the positive oral reading model, should read aloud as often as possible to students.

Retelling is a proper means to verbalize what the students know or to assess students' understanding of what they have read. It is a better exercise than answering questions because students are free to respond in their own words concerning what they understood from the text. Thus, it enables the teacher to judge the richness of the students' understanding. The teacher may use two procedures. Firstly, the teacher reads the story and then, asks the students to retell it or write their retelling. It is good sometimes to let students decide whether they want to retell the story or write their retelling to make them feel secure, confident, and comfortable. Secondly, the students read story and then orally retell it.

Students are not assigned just to read the recipes but also to cook. They are free to choose their favorite recipes. They will learn new words from different context which can enrich their vocabularies. They have to read carefully and understand the steps in order to serve good food. To make the activity fun, they are offered to work either individually or in groups. They will be active involved in buying the ingredients and cooking. After doing the cooking experiment, students have to make a report or share their experiences. It includes the reasons why they choose the recipe, the process when they buy the ingredients and cook and any problems they encounter, in short, they try to communicate facts, their opinions and emotions.

Other inspiring sources of materials are English magazines. They can be solutions to the problem of students easily getting bored. There are at least two magazines which are interesting to use, Hello and Fun English magazines. From Hello English magazines, students will enjoy reading letters, poetries and jokes. They also know more about their favorite singers, actors or actresses, friendship, healthy life, science, new songs and idioms. Some students enjoy doing the English test and finishing the puzzle. Meanwhile, Fun English magazine presents the instruction how to make craft, stories and songs. These various kinds of materials really benefit our students. Students are given freedom to choose materials that are of their own interests. When they get bored, they can move to another material. To check the students' comprehension, the student who chooses article on science or decides to read a story is assigned to retell what he has read.

The skill of speaking can be sharpened through role plays. In a role play, students are told about who they are, and what they think and feel. Harmer points out that role-playing has three obvious advantages. In the first place, it can be good fun and thus stimulating. Secondly, it allows doubtful students to be more honest in expressing themselves than they might be when speaking for themselves. Thirdly, by including the world outside, students can use a much wider range of language than some more task-centered activities may do.

The above activities mix the skills of speaking, listening, writing and reading. It is good because it will make the process of learning extraordinary. Students will get a rich language experience. Besides improving students' oral language, such activities will grow their self-confidence.

Because there isn't much time set aside for extracurricular activities, teachers must truly set the stage for success. The materials ought to be carefully chosen. The activities ought to

be thoughtfully planned. For the materials and activities to be noticed, they must not only align with the interests of the students but also with their needs, backgrounds, and skills. Additionally, by fostering effective communication between the teacher and students as well as between students, the teacher can foster a positive learning environment for the kids. The goal of all of these initiatives is to get pupils to read, write, talk, and listen.

The above-mentioned resources and exercises can help young students develop better communication abilities as well as stronger reading habits and comprehension. As a result, kids can better understand their other academic materials with the aid of these extracurricular activities.

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