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**Is Playing Games Good for English Learning?
The Remedial Instruction with Games Used in the 2nd
Grade Students in Guo-Tai**

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the 2nd Grade Students in Guo-Tai

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I. Introduction

A. Background of taking this course

First of all, I have been studying at Fu Jen Catholic University's Educational Program for more than a year to cultivate my ability and gain my professional knowledge regarding being an excellent English teacher.

In addition to my Program of Education, I also worked as a remedial instructor in the tutoring club at National Taiwan University (NTU). When I was a freshman, I participated in a remedial instruction club in NTU, which aims at helping students with financial issues in their families or intellectual problems without paying.

During the process of teaching at NTU, we were asked to design different kinds of activities for children to participate in and those activities were related to their subjects, like English or math. The following picture is the group photo with my co-teaching partner and my adorable student.



Figure 1. A photo with the student and co-teacher

B. Motivation

Choosing this course is to enhance my professional knowledge of how specifically to teach English and what theories I can learn and apply to elaborate on the teaching process and to let students pay more attention in class. Therefore, with my teaching experience and professional knowledge of teaching learned from the Educational Program, I have strong motivation to take this course, and to teach students in Guo-Tai with all my passion and professional skills, especially using “games” to teach.

II. Purposes

- A. This portfolio aims to show the process of our (me and Brynn’s) teaching, and demonstrate the way we conduct games in teaching Guo-Tai students English with the Lesson Plans and photos that we document throughout the whole semester.
- B. This portfolio also aims to persuade English teachers in the 2nd Grade to apply games to their English teaching processes.

III. My Students’ Learning Motivation and English Background Knowledge

Since our students were in 2nd Grade, and the motivation test provided by Prof. Doris Shih might be too hard for them to complete (because it is the English version), we chose to do it orally by chatting with them regarding whether they like English or not, whether they could pronounce A to Z in order correctly, and how many scores they got in average in their regular English tests at school, and so on. And, through the oral examination of the students’ learning motivation toward English, we discovered that many of the students did a great job in their regular English tests, and they were all very active when asked questions associated with English. Besides asking their regular English test results, we also wanted them to pronounce from A to Z one by one. After the quick test, we

discovered that many of them could pronounce each alphabet properly with only a few mistakes, including the mistake of pronouncing each letter in the correct order, or the missing of some letters in the middle of A to Z. Nevertheless, after the oral test, we asked them to write down the letter they just pronounced, and we found out they might not be capable of writing down the 26 letters or spell a simple word like banana correctly. In addition to testing students' familiarity with alphabets, we also wondered whether could they could pronounce some vocabulary correctly; Surprisingly, they could pronounce some vocabulary; for example, one of them could even pronounce alligator well when we asked what is the vocabularies that start with the alphabet "A". As a consequence, through this oral examination of students' motivation and background knowledge of English, it was obvious for us to see students' positive and active attitude toward English and to conclude that students' English oral skills were much better than written skills.

IV. Teaching and Instructional Processes

The followings are three of my Lesson Plans written before classes and prepared beforehand every week to "make students busy," which means our purposes of using diverse activities designed to help students stay focus and active in class.

A. Lesson Plan I (Harmer 224)

1. Description of the class

. The class is composed of two girls and boys who are all in the second grade Today, they look happy and they are all not afraid of attending a new class or meeting with us.

2. Aims

- a. Students would be able to recognize their classmates after the Game of Guessing
- b. Students would be able to pronounce every alphabet after the class.

3. Procedure

- a. Warm-up
 - 1. The Game of Guessing (Original activity created and conducted by Kevin and Brynn)
 - 2. Reason for doing this activity
 - a. Because this is the first class, we want to know more about them, and we also want them to know their classmates more; therefore, we design a short activity (game) for them to play and have fun with each other.
 - 3. The procedure
 - a. At the beginning of the class, we give every person a piece of paper. And they have to write down their Chinese name and English name on one side of the paper; on the other side, they have to write some descriptions of themselves on it that can let other people have the feeling of “this is you!” when they see his/ her description.
 - b. After finishing writing the description and their name on the paper, they have to submit to us, and we will shuffle it. The Guessing Game starts! As I show up one of the students’ descriptions part of the paper, all the students have to quickly put their hands on that piece of paper to answer the question, which is “who is he/ she?”.

- c. If he/ she answers the question correctly, they can get one point. And the one who has been guessed will need to introduce themselves to the whole class so that other classmates can know her better.
- d. After all the students are guessed, the activity is complete.

4. Explanation of rules in class

b. Presentation

1. Alphabets Activity

- a. Reasons for doing this activity: To figure out their English abilities to arrange our lesson plan.
- b. Procedure
 - i. We printed out alphabet worksheets beforehand and start leading them to read the alphabet in order.
 - ii. We went through the alphabet one by one and ask them what vocabulary they have learned at the same time and teach them another word that starts with that alphabet.
 - iii. We ask them to trace the alphabet, both capitalized and un-capitalized.

c. **Wrap up**

- i. Homework Announcement
 - a. Reviewing alphabets
 - b. Previewing the words associated with Halloween

4. **Comments**

- a. Students have good participation in activities.
- b. Students possess good English background knowledge.
- c. Time is not enough as we think.

- d. Students are quite active.

B. Lesson Plan II (Harmer 224)

1. Description of the Class

- a. The class is composed of 3 girls and 2 boys who are all in the second grade.
- b. Today (10/25), they look happy and they are all not afraid of attending a new class or meeting with us.

2. Aims

- a. Students would be able to recognize and pronounce the alphabet.
- b. Students could memorize new words associated with Halloween.

3. Procedure

- a. Warm-up
 - 1. Review of last week's lesson
 - a. Reasons for doing this activity
 - i. To make sure that they all review and finish assignments.
 - b. The procedure
 - i. Exchange homework papers to check if they have finished or not.
 - ii. Lead them and go through the alphabet one by one again to help them review vocabulary learned.
 - 2. Explain rules for the activity
- b. Presentation
 - 1. Introducing vocabulary
 - a. Reasons for doing this activity:

- i. Since it's Halloween, teaching new words that are associated with the holiday may provoke their interest in learning English.
 - b. Procedure
 - i. Word cards with pictures are prepared and shown to them one by one while introducing the pronunciation and spelling.
 - ii. Due to the time limit, we teach 6 words: bats, cats, Jack O'Lantern, candy, bag, and costume.
2. Guess the words
 - a. Reasons for doing this activity
 - i. To let students move around in case they feel bored sitting and learning for a long time.
 - b. Procedure
 - i. Let the students come up with a unified gesture/move that represents the word.
 - ii. Separate them into 2 groups and make them compete with each other.
 - iii. The ones who win can use crayons to draw one object from the 6 new words on their own hands.
- c. Wrap up**
 1. Homework Announcement
 - a. Review the 6 vocabulary words
 - b. Remember to bring your textbook
- d. Comments**
 1. Students all finish the assignment.

2. Students have good participation in activities.
3. The girls perform better than boys.



Figure 2. Photos of Brynn and I teaching students Halloween vocabularies and a group photo of me and my classmates

C. Lesson Plan III (Harmer 224)

1. Description of the Class

- a. The class is composed of two girls and boys who are all in the second grade
- b. Today, they look happy and extremely energetic. Because we have been teaching them for many weeks, they are very familiar with us and am not afraid of talking and chatting with us.

2. Aims

- a. Students would be able to spell A to Z fluently.

- b. Students would be able to see the capitalized letters and write down the small letters immediately.
- c. Students would be able to use 26 letter cards to spell a word.
- d. Students would be able to arrange the letter cards in order from a to z and use them to decode the special code that we design for them.

3. Procedure

a. Warm-up

1. English Letters Games

- a. After we reach the classroom, we deliver the letter cards to them on the table, and they are all curious regarding what is going to happen.
- b. Later on, we ask them to use what they have been taught since the beginning of the semester to complete the mission of putting 26 English letters in the order from A to Z together as a group.
- c. During the process of arranging the cards, they would talk to each other and share their opinion toward whether they think the order they arrange is right or wrong.
- d. Finally, they finish arranging those cards and we ask them to pronounce each letter correctly with us.

2. Reason for doing this activity

- a. Because after a week, they might not be able to remember each letter correctly, including how to spell the word and how to pronounce each word. Therefore, we believe through this warm-up activity, it would help every student in the class to

recall their memories regarding the most important and basic 26 English letters.

b. Presentation

1. The activity I: Capitalized letters to small letters Who are faster?
 - a. Reasons for playing this activity
 - i. Because they are still not very familiar with the 26 letters, so we hope that, through this activity, students might be able to have
 - b. The procedure
 - i. First of all, we separate the class into two small groups to compete with each other.
 - ii. After they decide which group they are going to stay, I explain the rules (One group would be the teacher, who is responsible for designing the exam questions, and the other team would be the tester. After they all take turns and play each character. We would calculate the scores they get, and the winning team could get extra points.)
 - iii. The game starts! One group would be the exam maker, and they have to choose 5 letters randomly to test the other group. After they decide which five letters they are going to test, they have to announce them to the rival team, and we will start timing them.
 - iv. The tester has to see the capitalized letters and write down the small letters immediately. Afterward, when they finish writing all the letters, and we would stop timing.

- v. After each group takes turns to be the tester and the exam maker, the group that takes less time answering the questions would win.

c. Wrap up

1. They have to pronounce every letter correctly to leave the classroom.
2. Homework Announcement
 - a. Reviewing alphabets

4. Comments

- a. Students have good participation in activities.
- b. Students cooperative with each other pretty well.
- c. They have positive competition with each other.
- d. And they improve a lot this time.

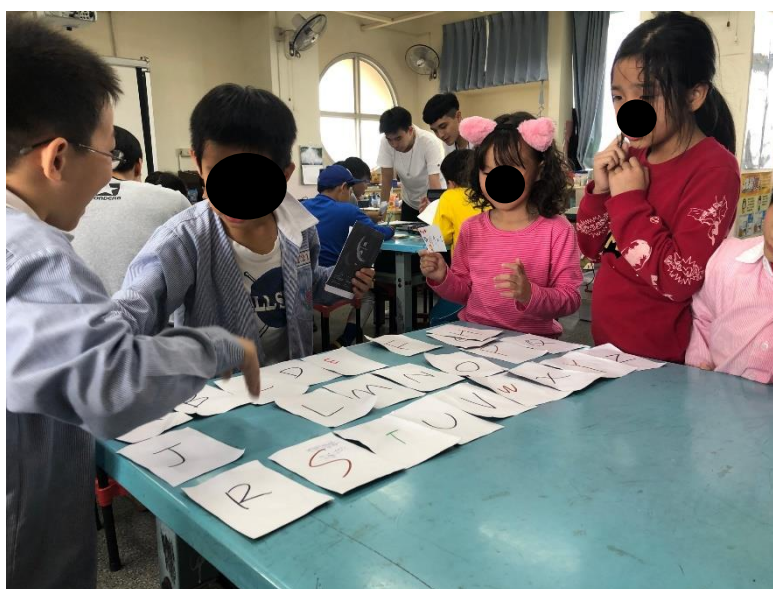


Figure 3. A photo of students playing English Letters Games

V. Theories Used

A. Piaget Theory—Heteronomous Morality

. Piaget's Theory says that people who are under ten years old are used to be regulated by other people who could be teachers or families, which is called Heteronomous Morality. Based on Piaget's Theory, I and Brynn decided to set the rules at the beginning of the class so as to perfectly conduct the theory of heteronomous morality mentioned in Piaget's Theory, and to well control students' behaviors during the process of remedial instruction (Piaget).

B. Behaviorism & Operant conditioning

. Behaviorism and operant conditioning are what we use throughout the whole semester. According to the Behaviorism Theory, it highlights the interesting relationship between S (Stimulation) and R (Reaction). Due to the fact that I and Brynn want to enhance students' participation in in-class activities and to compliment for great behaviors, like being willing to answer teachers' questions, and paying attention to our instruction, and so on, we take advantages of the positive reinforcers, including food and points, it goes perfectly well, and all students as the pictures show below are very delighted when they get some candy and cookies given owing to their good behavior. In addition to the positive reinforcers, we also present punishment, like minus their points, when they are constantly noisy and out of control (Skinner).



Figure 4. Photos of my cute students drawing in Christmas

C. Audio-lingual Method (ALM)

In this semester, we focus on enhancing their understanding of the 26 letters from A to Z, and to elaborate their pronunciation. Therefore, we always make good use of the Audio-lingual method by asking them to “repeat after me”. During the process of using this method, we discover that students might be more capable of pronouncing each letter correctly or with only few mistakes (Richards and Rodgers).

D. Total Physical Response (TPR)

Most of the time in our activities, students are allowed to present the word physically in the way they want to express, which corresponds to the definition of TPR. Take one of our activities as an example. At that time, it was near Halloween, and we decided to teach them some words related to Halloween. We prepared word cards and each card was written a word

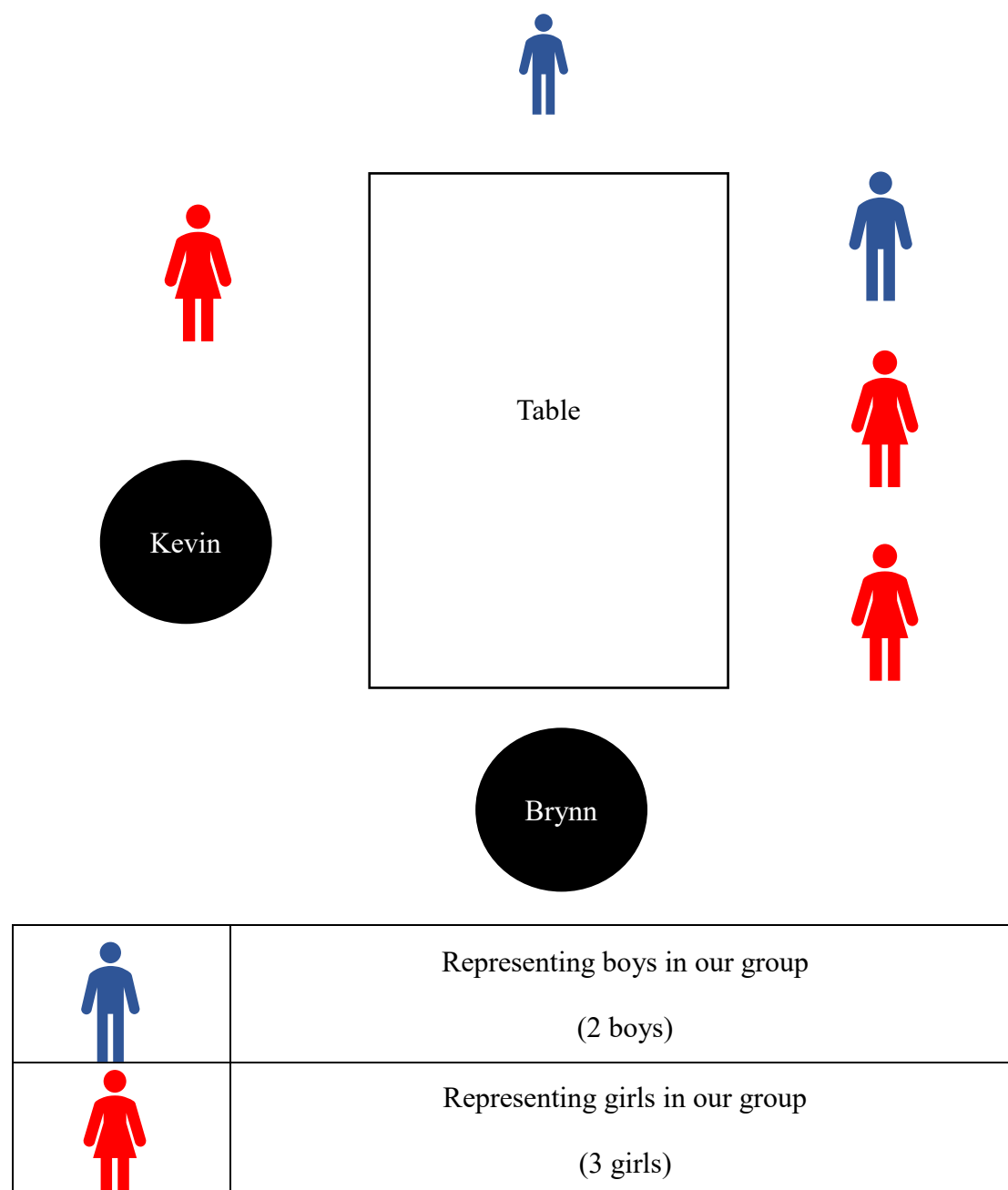
associated with Halloween, like bat, cat, Jack O'Lantern, candy, bag, and costume. And every student needed to come up with the unified gesture that well represents the words. As the Guess Game started, they were only allowed to use their physical body to act out the word and to successfully let his/ her teammate understand which word he/ she was acting. At last, every student with the help of TPR had acquired and remembered the words related to Halloween, which surprised us very much (Asher).

VI. Assessing My Students

- A. Every activity designed is given some aims to it, and Brynn and I would use those aims as the assessment to see whether students learn the knowledge that we expect them the acquire after the class.
- B. This is the simple Rubric that I designed to assess students' learning results

Assessment Lists for the semester	Yes/ No
Students would be able to recognize their classmates after the Game of Guessing	
Students would be able to pronounce every alphabet after the class.	
Students would be able to recognize and pronounce the alphabet.	
Students could memorize new words associated with Halloween.	
Students would be able to spell A to Z fluently	
Students would be able to see the capitalized letters and write down the small letters immediately.	
Students would be able to use 26 letter cards to spell a word.	
Students would be able to arrange the letter cards in order from a to z and use them to decode the special code that we design for them.	

VII. Seating Chart



- A. In the first and second classes, Brynn and I decided to let them sit as the above seating chart shows. Because the boys in my group are friends, we initially believed that they can sit together and learn with each other. However, what

happened was, most of the time, we needed to spend a lot of time controlling their behaviors. And, as they sit together, they always liked to chat and had fun in their own fantastic small world, and they could totally ignore our instruction.

- B. Afterward, we chose to use game competition to control their behaviors by separating them into two groups to compete with each other. Based on our experience, as they were separated into two groups to compete, the sense of positive competitiveness among them would be aroused, and their poor behaviors like being noisy and out of control could be decreased.

VIII. ESA Procedural Chart

A. Engage

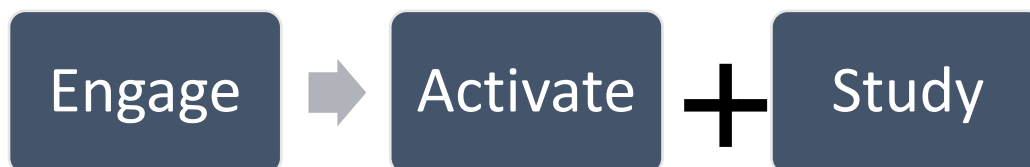
. Since our students were often lack of concentration or got distracted easily, we would use some simple games to let them engage in the class and knew that we were going to start our class. For example, we used Guessing Game, which could be referred to as my Lesson Plan I area, on the first day to boost their engagement in class and to help them know each other more during the process of it.

B. Activate +Study

1. Instead of letting them simply study or activate, we preferred to let them do both at the same time. Given that they were only in 2nd Grade, and they might feel bored if we simply asked them to read and learn. Therefore, we designed games related to English and to the knowledge that we expected them to learn for them to have fun and learn at the same time. For instance, we designed a letter card game, and they had to take advantage of the letter cards as well as the knowledge they learned to solve the mission that we

gave to them. For instance, they needed to find the missing letters among the 20 letter cards that I gave to them.

2. As a result, our ESA procedural chart could be like the following picture:



IX. Discussion and Reflection

A. Discussion: Is the game good for English learning?

. Most of the time people feel like the game is not good for children to study; however, I believe this totally depends on how the teacher conducts and designs the game. For example, the games that we use for the teaching are undergone a sophisticated examination by multiple teachers (my classmates). We discuss the games going to be used in class together, and come up with the weaknesses that we found could be improved. Then, after several discussions, we could finally come up with one simple and easy understanding game that could somehow benefit our students' English learning.

B. Reflection

. Having the chance to teach and conduct the theories that I learn at school is a fantastic journey for me. Because I always dream of becoming a professional teacher, this time I feel like I become more like active researcher, which is the concept taught by Professor Doris Shih during the individual conference. During the process of teaching, we discovered that

students are lack of concentration, so we changed the way we teach with the assistance of game design. And it went perfectly well. The reason why I think I expect myself to be an active researcher is that I could always adjust my ways of teaching, my teaching materials, my seating charts, and so on. And each time is like a trial, we do not know what would happen after we adjust something. But the process of doing this adjustment could somehow gradually make students more active and obedient in class. When seeing their improvement (from having difficulties spelling from A to Z to being confident to say out loud the 26 letters), we feel so touched and moved by our own efforts and students' hardworking attitude. At the end of the semester, when we are leaving, the students told me that "teacher, thank for your teaching, and I will miss you!" This makes me feel like every hardship and obstacle that I face during the class preparation time is worthy, and indeed I will miss them, too!



Figure 5. My group photo with my students

X. Conclusion

. With this remedial instruction in Guo-Tai, we can see that games are beneficial for 2nd Grade students' English learning, especially for students who are going to learn alphabets. Along with some theories used, like behaviorism, Piaget's theories, and S-V Theory, games could be very effective and useful. What is more, because every game needs rules, rule sets become important. Based on Piaget's Theory—heteronomous morality could be very crucial for controlling students' behaviors. Last but not least, with the conception of doing active research, giving an appropriate adjustment to the teaching content, methods, and theories could also be extremely beneficial to the teaching process.

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XII. Appendix

A. Checklist

Checklist	Done
Introduction	✓
Background of taking this course	✓
Motivation	✓
Purpose	✓
My Students' Learning Motivation and English Background Knowledge	✓
Teaching and Instructional Processes	✓
Lesson Plan I	✓
Lesson Plan II	✓
Lesson Plan III	✓
Theories Used	✓

Piaget's Theory—Heteronomous Morality	✓
Behaviorism and Operant Conditioning	✓
Audio-Lingual Method	✓
Assessing My Students	✓
Seating Charts	✓
ESA Procedural Charts	✓
Discussion and Reflection	✓
Conclusion	✓
Reference	✓
Appendix	✓

B. The “Thank you” certificate given by Guo-Tai Elementary school

