

## Effective Tactics, Activities and Games for Engaging Students to Online Esl Teaching

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### ABSTRACT

*This article is going to provide some tactics, interactive games and activities for ESL teachers to teach online classes effectively.*

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Teaching online lessons is not always easy as most of us think; it requires more creativity to keep students' brain vitalized. Teachers who teach online classes need to use completely different skills compared to face-to-face teaching. While online classes most teachers face with big challenges in keeping students engaged and interested in lessons. Following plenty of effective tips to make the online classroom much more exciting and engaging:

- **The first step is to present your best performance.** When you meet with students via zoom meeting, google classroom, skype, telegram or other video conference apps, make sure that not only you but also the place you are in look presentable. Teacher should turn on their video, of course and pay attention to look engaged what students are saying and that is also essential. Secondly, try to use different tones of your voice during lesson, it encourages students and protect student feel somehow bored. Moreover, make sure any audio or video materials you plan to use are of good quality. Finally, online lesson has to be reliable when it comes to good internet connection, obviously.
- **Utilize modern technology.** Teaching online requires you to know the knowledge of utilizing technology effectively. You have to know to use online games, text editors, file editors, video editors, and screen saving tools or screen-sharing tools. Before starting your first online lesson, give students some instructions in order to students feel confident to utilize those tools.
- **Work on what stimulate your students.** On that tip, online class is similar in chance to face-to-face classroom. The basic thing to help find what stimulate your students is getting them involved in classes. When you are teaching online or offline you may utilize the same media materials. And feel free to try different things with your students until you find something that inspires them. In this part, pay attention to "Seven Principles of Good Teaching" suggested in "Introduction to Online Teach and Learning" by Joshua Stern, Ph. D

### "Seven Principles of Good Teaching

Based on considerable educational research, Chickering and Gamson (1987) outlined Seven Standards of

Good Practice for Undergraduate Education, principles that have been widely accepted as measures for judging the effectiveness of classroom teaching. ETUDES-NG incorporates elements in each of the seven areas, as demonstrated below:

### **Principle 1: Encourage student-faculty contact**

Through Private Messages students and faculty can communicate. Among other things, this allows instructors to be proactive by following up on students who are not participating in chats, discussions, etc. Students and faculty can also communicate through the discussion forums.

### **Principle 2: Encourage student cooperation**

The same areas of ETUDES-NG that allow for student-faculty contact can also be used for student-to-student contact. Assignments can be created to take advantage of this. Furthermore, the discussion forums can help foster group work and collaboration among students. Consider incorporating peer reviews, project sharing, and thread-leaders to moderate discussions. Student collaboration leads to a sense of community and higher learning outcomes.

### **Principle 3: Encourage active learning**

Instructors can take advantage of the rich interactivity on the Web by designing assignments around appropriate Websites. When students come to these sites, they make choices, and they learn from their choices. Active learning also takes place when students work cooperatively. Give students more control, leadership roles, and options in what assignments to complete. Leave the center stage and transform yourself into a guide on the side.

### **Principle 4: Give prompt feedback**

In ETUDES-NG, students can see results of their tests and view solutions to graded assignments immediately after submission. Instructors can and should promptly respond to student questions. ETUDES-NG allows you to provide both acknowledgement and information feedback.

### **Principle 5: Emphasize time on task**

For example, give students something specific to respond to in each module via the discussions. Build in a reward system of points for each post and reply to the discussion forums. In other words, make posting and responding mandatory. Create a structure that can be followed, broken down week by week or unit by unit, allowing for acceleration of pace.

### **Principle 6: Communicate high expectations**

In your syllabus you should include course goals and performance objectives. You might include model assignment submissions that can serve as examples for students to follow. The bottom line is that you must be explicit and clear in communicating your expectations to students.

### **Principle 7: Respect diverse talents and ways of learning**

Create assignments that offer students options. Giving students choices in their learning experience increases satisfaction and retention. Consider giving students options as to what format to submit assignments or projects. For example, they might design a Webpage, write an essay, or develop a PowerPoint presentation. There is no reason why all students should submit the exact same homework or participate in one discussion topic. Variety is the spice of life and your online class; teach to the various learning styles of your students” [5, 8-9].

- Making sure each of your lesson has clear outline that you teach them, so they can know what they learn on that day’s topic and also you need to begin to introduce the topic using simple and understandable way. At the end of the lesson plan to give task to work in small group based on preparing their own videos explaining something. For example, you can give the topic “Environmental Pollution in our country”, and there students need to determine what kind of problems are being menace to our environment and through taking interview on this topic, they use graph to show what kind and percentage of pollution being observed is the most essential to solve and then, they give proper solutions to that environmental problem. Finally, it will be the part of

assignment and you will evaluate this task to teams. The aim of this kind of tasks enhance the skills of working with group, communication, cooperation, community. After finishing the task, give them positive feedback, and analyze all tasks in detail. It provides positive criticism and allows to see students need to change to straighten their focus and results. One more explanations for lesson don't forget to reward students who is active among classmates.

In online classroom, learning through virtual games help students absorb new topic whilst having fun at the same moment. It also enhances the likelihood of them wanting to play more, and lead them learning more easily.

While doing research on what kind of ESL games, activities that online teacher need to try, I find the following games the most effective

- **Spelling Bee** – “Spelling bees are a high school classic, and this no-prep online tool from Visual Thesaurus will challenge your more advanced students.

Will they be able to spell words they can only hear and not see accurately? Your students simply need to listen and type the correct spelling to move on to the next word. Sounds simple, right? What we like about this online spelling bee is that it also offers teachable moments. Each word is accompanied by both a definition and a mind map of synonyms that are revealed after each correct guess, making it ideal for vocabulary-building exercises as well as listening and writing activities.

But aren't spelling bees supposed to be competitive?

It's easy for students to measure and compare their performance because the website tracks different metrics, including words spelled correctly, your longest unbroken streak, total guesses, and your current rank. The current rank function will allow your students to see how well they stack up against other players. Plus, its user-friendly interface makes it the perfect tool for quickly creating in-class spelling competitions if you need a handy time filler.

**Be warned:** It's not easy. Spelling some of these words would prove challenging for many fluent English speakers, and there is no function for moderating the level.

- Skill Level: Advanced
- Age: Teens – Adults” [1]
- **Kahoot** - that is free-to-use website which I use mostly in my online classroom – With that game, you can share the screen and students can join and play the game using mobile phones. It is really profitable site for working with group classes as the students see this game as a competition between each other to be winner. [4]
- **Bamboozle** – is also best one of the websites to use when you have multiple students in your online classroom. The game works by having
  - Students select numbers on the grid, answer questions in full text or with the correct options, and earn points accordingly. Bamboozle can also help you team up students and work together to answer questions if you have a large online course. You can use the game to introduce new topics, check your
  - Current or previous work to confirm your understanding, and work very well as a new student or class icebreaker. [2]
- **Games to learn English** – This is free-to-use website for young children to learn English online and there is a selection of games that students can use to practice learning English in a fun way. It is firstly planned at ESL young children. [3]
- **Organize online debates**- choose any topic based on your subject and divide students into two group and then assign one group “Pro” side of the argument and next group argue “Cons” side. By means of video meeting conference app, you can organize debate of the chosen topic. Each group prove their ideas by facts and this activity force to work on this topic deeply. It is the best one to strengthen research skills.

- **Interview any person you adore** – Give a task take interview and it a kind of team-work. divided into small groups included three students. Group members choose one person or family that they adore and then one of them need to take interview and the second collect write given interview in the book form and the last student design the book and final step will presentation of the work.

Most of the online teaching teachers told they have lack of awareness of technologies related to online conference or had faced some challenges to organize online conference lessons and find difficult to find interesting activities and attract the students' attention and interest to the lesson. So, I hope these suggested online teaching tips, some virtual games and activities work to ESL teachers to stimulate and enhance students' knowledge effectively.

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