



GAMES AND ACTIVITIES CONSIDERED USEFUL IN A MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

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Even in the most transformed classes, however, faculty are often unaware of the variety of pedagogies that can produce enhanced learning for students and faculty and that can facilitate growth in intellectual complexity and capacity. One useful resource is the analysis of learning styles by David Kolb. He suggests a four-step model of learning, a movement through four phases: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. To this model, I would add parallel concepts drawn from the work of Patricia Hill Collins. Collins suggests a pattern of learning from one's own daily concrete experience and then moving to an expanded consciousness of multiple perspectives, and finally to effective social action that makes use of knowledge in collaborative efforts to create a more equitable society.

Each of these phases in the learning cycle is associated with particular "ways of knowing" and of constructing judgments. It is important to remember, however, that Kolb theorized four distinct, but interrelated, learning strategies. He suggests that learning is not complete unless students, in effect, "go around the learning phases" and see the connections among experience, reflection, theory, and practical applications. It is crucial that they see ultimately, how they might put knowledge into action. The same point applies to my Hill Collins adaptation of the Kolb model.

How to describe learning and teaching

What do we know about language learning? Outside the context of any classroom, all children who are repeatedly exposed to a language will in normal circumstances learn it. They do this unconsciously –rather than as a form of study.

Most adults can learn a language without studying it, providing they are in the right kind of contact with it. Though they may have more trouble with pronunciation and grammar than younger learners may, they may still be able to communicate fluently. However, not all adults who are exposed to a foreign language learn it. They might not want to. Perhaps the language they meet is, in their view, just too complex for them. Perhaps, they do not hear or see enough of it or have sufficient opportunities to try it out.

Children and adults who do acquire language successfully outside the classroom seem to share certain similarities in their learning experiences. First





of all, they are usually exposed to language which they more or less understand even if they can't produce the same language spontaneously themselves. Secondly, they are motivated to learn the language in order to be able to communicate. Finally, they have opportunities to use the language they are learning, thus giving themselves chances to flex their linguistic muscles and check their own progress and abilities.

Babies and children get endless exposure to their first language coupled with emotional support. Adults living in a foreign country get continual exposure to the language at various different levels and can get help from the surrounding language speakers. At these features of natural language, acquisition can be difficult to replicate in the classroom, but there are elements that we should imitate.

How should students practice language?

When students have been exposed to language whose meaning and construction they understand, it makes sense for them to practice it under controlled conditions. This will allow them to check that they have it right.

Practice should not go on for too long, however. There are many other things that teachers and students want to do in classrooms and too much practice will take time away from them.

Example / Invitations (elementary)

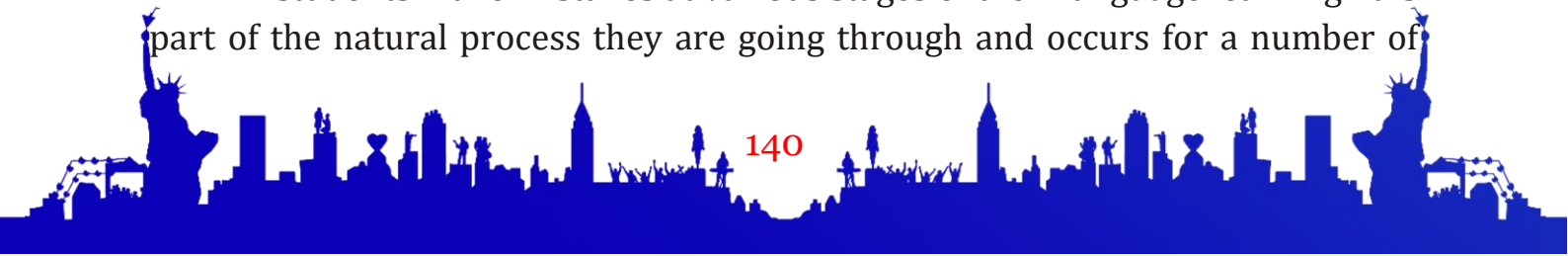
The teacher can get the choral and individual repetition of the key phrases 'Would you like to come to the cinema?' and 'That would be great'. When she has done that, she can get one student to ask the question and another student to answer.

Now she can ask students to make different invitations. She can try to elicit alternatives. She can then prompt them by saying 'concert' for them to say 'Would you like to go to concert?' and 'nice' for 'That would be nice'. She may also want to give them the option of 'I'm afraid I can't' or 'No, thank you'.

If she thinks students need more opportunity to practice this question-and-answer exchange, she can put them in pairs to make as many invitations and replies as they can. While they are doing this, she can go round listening and helping where necessary – or she stand at the front of the class getting an idea of how it is going before stopping the pairs and hearing one or two of them with the whole class.

Why do students make mistakes?

All students make mistakes at various stages of their language learning. It is part of the natural process they are going through and occurs for a number of





reasons. In the first place, the students' own language may get in the way. This is the most obviously the case with 'false friends' – those words which sound or look the same but mean something different such as 'assister' in Spanish which means 'attend' in English and not 'assist'. False friends are more common where the learner's language shares a common heritage with English (i.e. Romance languages).

Grammatical considerations matter too: Japanese students frequently have trouble with article usage, Germans have to get used to positioning the verb correctly, and Arabic students have to deal with a completely different written system.

Whatever the reason for 'getting it wrong', it is vital for the teacher to realize that all students make mistakes as a natural and useful way of learning. By working out when and why things have gone wrong, they learn more about the language they are studying.

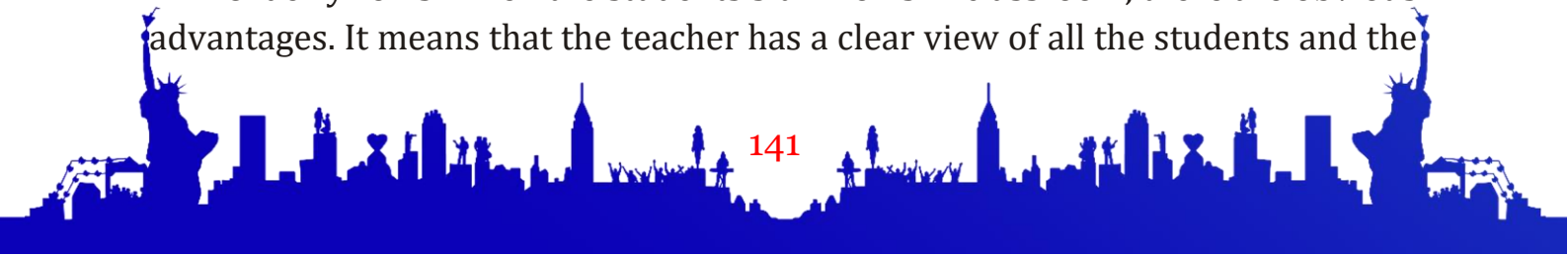
Include both group and individual activities. Communicating with each other will reduce bad habits of them and learn more about each other on both personal and cultural issues.

Try to find the right method of learning for each student.

What is the best seating arrangement for a class?

In many classrooms around the world, students sit in an orderly row. Sometimes, their chairs have little wooden pallets on one of the arms as surfaces to write on. Sometimes, the students will have desks in front of them. It is known to find the chairs bolted in the floor. At the front of such classrooms, frequently on a raised platform (so that all the students can see them), stand the teachers. In contrast, there are other institutions where you can find students sitting in a large circle around the walls of the classroom. On the other hand, you may see small groups of them working in different parts of the room. Sometimes, they are arranged in a horseshoe shape around the teacher. Sometimes, it is not immediately obvious who the teacher is. Clearly, we are seeing a number of chairs and tables and this raises a number of questions. Are schools, which use a variety of seating plan progressive or merely modish, for example? Is there something intrinsically superior about grid seating arrangements – or such classrooms the product of traditional orthodoxy? Is one kind of seating arrangement better than the other one? What are the advantages of each? The following part discusses these various arrangements.

Orderly rows: when the students sit in rows in classroom, there are obvious advantages. It means that the teacher has a clear view of all the students and the





students can all see the teacher – in whose direction they are facing. It makes lecturing easy; enabling the teacher to maintain eye contact with the people he or she is talking to. It also makes discipline easier since it is more difficult to be more disruptive when you are sitting in row. If there are aisles in the classroom, the teacher can easily walk up and down making contact that is more personal with individual students and watching they are doing.

Orderly rows imply teacher working with the whole class. Some activities are especially suited to this kind of organization: explaining a grammar point, watching a video, using the board, demonstrating text organization on an overhead transparency that shows a paragraph, for example. It is also useful when students are involved in certain kinds of language practice. If all the students are focused on a task, the whole class gets the same messages.

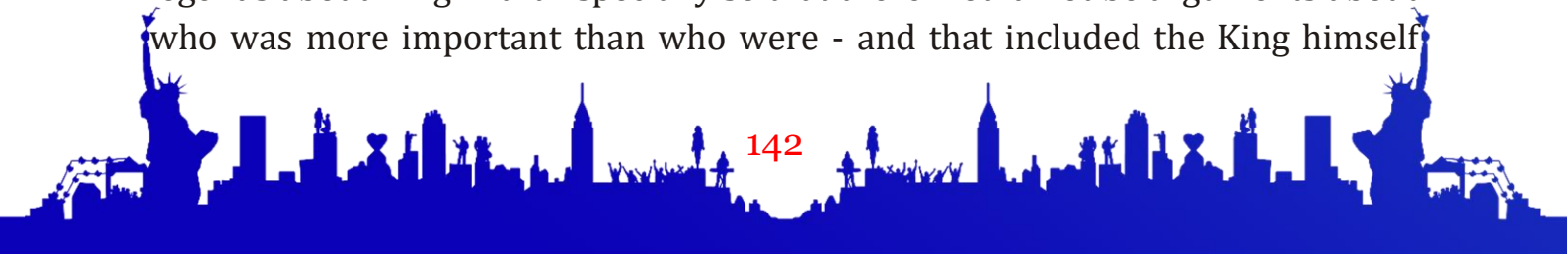
When teachers are working with the whole class sitting in orderly rows, it is vitally important to make sure that they remain in contact with the students and that they keep everyone involved. Therefore, if they are asking questions to the class, they must remember to ask the students at the back, the quiet ones perhaps, rather than just the ones nearest them. They must move round so that they can see all the students to gauge their reactions to what is going on.

One trick that many teachers use is to keep their students guessing. Especially where teachers need to ask individual students questions, it is important that they should not do so in order, student after student, line by line. That way, the procedure becomes very tedious and the students know when they are going to be asked and, once this has happened, that they are not going to be asked again. It is much better to ask students from all parts of the room in apparently random order. It keeps everyone on his or her toes!

In many classrooms of the world, teachers are faced with classes of anywhere between 40 and 200 students at a time. In such circumstances, orderly rows may well be the best or only solution.

Circles and horseshoes: in smaller classes, many teachers and students prefer circles or horseshoes. In a horseshoe, the teacher will probably be at the open end of the arrangement since that many will be where the board, overhead projector and/or tape recorder are situated. In a circle, the teacher's position – where the board is situated – is less dominating.

Classes, which are arranged in a circle, make quite a strong statement about what the teacher and the students believe in. He designed the Round Table in the legends about King Arthur specially so that there would not be arguments about who was more important than who were - and that included the King himself





when they were in a meeting. Therefore, it is in classrooms. With all the people in the room sitting in a circle, there is a far greater feeling of equality than when the teacher stays in the front. This may not be quite so true of the horseshoe shape where the teacher is often located in a central position, but even here, the teacher has a much greater opportunity to get close to the students.

If, therefore, teachers believe in lowering the barriers between themselves and their students, this kind of seating arrangement will help. There are other advantages too, chief among which is the fact that all the students can see each other. In an 'orderly row' classroom, you have to turn round – that is, away from the teacher – if you want to make eye contact with someone behind you. In a circle or horseshoe, no such disruption is necessary. The classroom is thus more intimate place and the potential for students to share feelings and information through talking, eye contact or expressive body movements (eyebrow-raising, shoulder-shrugging etc.) is far greater.

Separate tables: Even circles and horseshoes seem rather formal compared to classes where students are seated in small groups at individual tables. In such classrooms, you might see the teacher walking around checking the students' work and helping if they are having difficulties – prompting the students at this table, or explaining something to the students at the table in the corner.

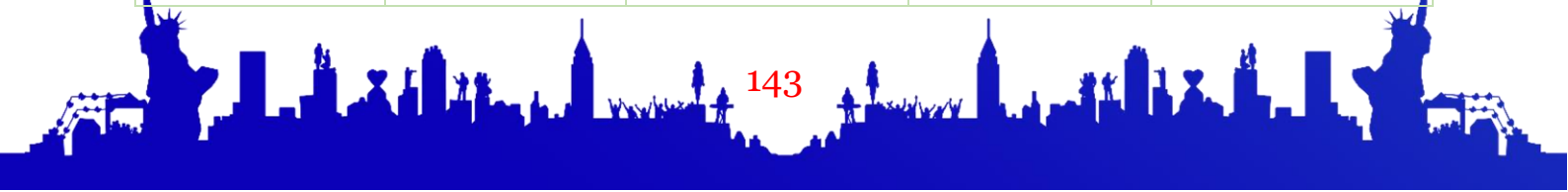
When students sit in small groups at individual tables, the atmosphere in the class is much less hierarchical than in other arrangements. It is much easier for the teacher to work at one table while the others get on with their own work. It feels less like a teacher and students and more like responsible adults getting on with the business of learning.

However, this arrangement is not without its own problems. In the first place, students may not always want to be with the same colleagues: indeed, their performances may change over time. Secondly, it makes 'whole-class' teaching more difficult, since the students are more diffuse and separated.

The way students sit, says a lot about the style of the teacher or the institution where the lessons take place. Many teachers would like to rearrange their classes so that they are not always faced with rows and rows of bored faces.

Task 1: Speaking

Explanation	Linguistic	Perceptive	Communal	Demonstrative
What is your preferred	Be able to structure	Plan the material	Pay attention to each	Are more reasonable than





holiday?	four	comprehensibly	other; resist	compliant
Class is told about it.	complete sentences	with teacher's assistance	to decide on the holiday and the student who is talking about it	
Group task (6 students in a mini-group)	(Ramadan, Navruz, New Year, Christmas)			

Argument: students reasonably need a lot of teacher provision and observing, but they may be able to carry out some order on their ideas; they compete with each other in the choice of a holiday that they as a group can tell the whole class. They carefully enjoy the idea of distribution their knowledge with their classmates in their group first as well as with the whole class sooner. This gives them a sense of possession and intervention.

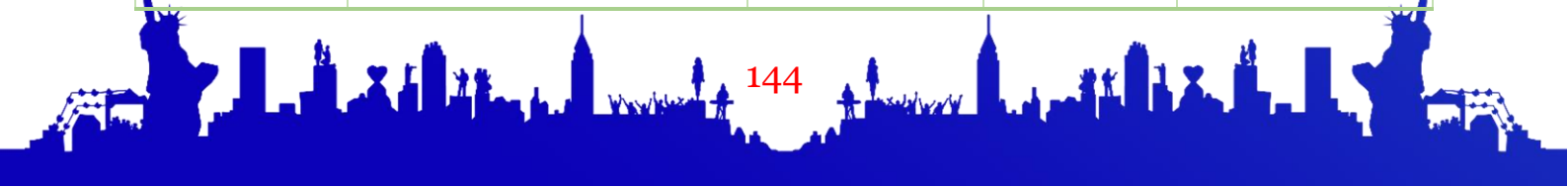
Task 2: Speaking

Explanation	Linguistic	Perceptive	Communal	Demonstrative
Tell any bedtime story that parents tell you.	Narrative structure / Krilov's fables; X. Tukhtaboev's stories and several others	Thinking to make a selection and organizing the story in a coherent series of events	Paying attention to each other (be quiet, let's listen)	Inspiring students to volunteer to tell ("Teacher", he knows but he is shy to tell)
Individual task				

Argument: it is likely to conclude that students have logic of how a story can be told: it has a title; beginning, mid and a culmination; there is generally an issue that comes to be solved at the end. Their stories commonly have a moral, funny, and cover quite a series of topics. It is obvious that they choose to tell stories that are personally expressive to them.

Task 3: Writing

Explanatio n	Linguistic	Perceptive	Commun al	Demonstrati ve





Tell your preferred food	Using proper verbs/nouns/punctuation grades and the right tense	Brainstorming and gathering material about topic; structuring information logically	Exchanging data with friends; clarifying hesitation	Helping each other to record the correct answers to the reminders delivered
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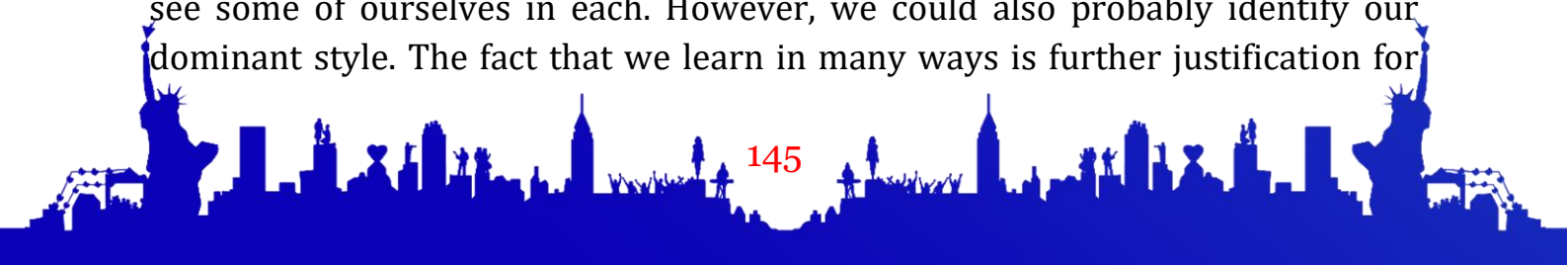
Argument: The teacher as a whole-class activity demonstrates this activity before students are asked to write. Some of the reminders that are delivered: What is your preferred food? How does it look (nature/reliability)? Why do you like it? Can you make it yourself? How often do you eat it? These reminders help the students write logically with a consistent ordering of the information they want to represent.

Styles in a multinational classroom

Eddy (1999) defines a learning style as the way in which we wish to organize, categorize and integrate information about the surroundings. There is a great deal written on learning styles – and probably as many theories as there are writers on the subject. However, in their most basic form, there are three main learning styles (Eddy):

- Auditory learners wish to obtain ideas and information by hearing them. These learners may struggle with reading and writing, but excel at remembering spoken words such as song lyrics. They often benefit from discussion-based classes and the opportunity to give oral presentations.
- Visual learners prefer to receive information by seeing it. Typically, these students pay much attention to detail. They are less likely to speak in class than their auditory peers, and generally use few words when they do. Outlines, graphs, maps and pictures are useful in helping these students learn.
- Hyperactive students tend to move around a great deal. Because they like movement, they may take many notes and learn best when allowed to explore and experience their environment.

It is important to note that the various styles are those preferred by learners. If we looked at complete descriptions of each style, we would probably see some of ourselves in each. However, we could also probably identify our dominant style. The fact that we learn in many ways is further justification for





utilizing variety of teaching approaches is so important. Understanding learning styles can help you create more inclusive classrooms, where everyone has a chance to succeed. For instance, a student from a culture that teaches children to listen quietly in a classroom (or a visual learner who is uncomfortable with speaking) can be at a disadvantage when a portion of the grade is based on participation in class. Sensitive teachers can allow for group work during class to create smaller, safer environments for these students to speak and for their classroom performance to be evaluated.

Students' Special Needs

Some students will have unique challenges that make learning in a traditional classroom difficult. Examples include visual or hearing impairments, Attention Deficit Disorder, mobility challenges, chronic illness (such as that brought about by chemotherapy), and learning disabilities. Many possible accommodations help to create a productive learning environment for these students. It may be necessary for students with a hearing impairment to have an interpreter present, for instance. A student with a chronic illness may need you to be flexible about the due dates for assignments. Below are suggestions to consider when you work with students with special needs:

- Even though two students may have the same disability, their needs for accommodation may be quite different. Treat each student as an individual.
- Keep in mind that disabilities are not always visible to us. You are not required to assess a student's health; you should accept authorized documentation concerning an individual student's needs.

Using many modes (written, verbal, video/slide, etc.) to present information is one way to help some learners with special needs learn more effectively.

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