

REPETITION WITHIN A FUN CONTEXT

by Emilio G. Cortez

Although new curricular and pedagogic developments abound within the field of English as a Second Language, one characteristic concerning the second-language learner remains a constant. Namely, the learners' need for repeated exposure to the target language.

Repetition can become tedious for the adult, and can be perceived as sheer drudgery by the young second-language learner. Thus, elementary-school E.S.L. teachers present the same vocabulary items in varied ways. Such diversification provides pupils with opportunities for extensive repetition in addition to promoting pupils' sustained interest.

The language game constitutes a versatile teaching aid which fosters the repetition of lexical items within a fun context. Consider the following games which may be easily integrated into the elementary-school E.S.L. setting. The "open-ended" nature of these games enhances their utility; either written words and/or depicted words or expressions can be featured.

BEHIND YOUR BACK

The teacher writes eight words on the chalkboard. A child is chosen to stand with his/her back to the chalkboard in front of the class. Another child is chosen to come up and to point to one of the words for the class to see. The teachers mouths (pronounces the word silently) the word for the child who has his/her back to the chalkboard.

If the child guesses correctly, he/she is allowed to point out a word behind another child's back ¹

COLLAGE

The class is divided into two teams. A portion of the chalkboard is divided into two parts by a long diagonal line.

Adapted from Leslie Landin, *100 Blackboard Games* (Palo Alto, California; Fearon Publishers, 1956), p.6.

The same six words are written on both sides of the line, in random order. Opposing team members are chosen to go the chalkboard. The teacher reads aloud one of the words on the chalkboard and the two students underline it. The first pupil to correctly underline the word is awarded a point. The first team to score ten points is the winner.

SAD FACE

The class is divided into two teams. Each of six picture cards (or written words) is shown to the students and verbally identified by the teacher. The teacher's oral model is repeated four times by the entire class.

Both teams start the game with five points. A picture of a "sad face" is included with the other cards. All the cards are shuffled and then placed face down in a pile. Individual team members take turns turning up the top picture card and identifying it. After a picture is identified, it is put aside. If the "sad face" picture card is turned up by a pupil, then his team loses one point. The team which loses all five points loses the game.

In the event of an incorrect identification, the teacher calls upon the whole class to identify the picture. (This game may be adapted so that points are awarded—instead of a "sad face," include a "happy face" card.)

GUESS WHICH ONE

The class is divided into two or more teams. Each of six picture cards is shown to the students and verbally identified by the teacher.

The picture cards are then placed across the chalkboard. The teacher announces to the class that he/she is thinking of a specific picture card. Individual team members take turns guessing which picture card the teacher has in mind. Points are awarded for correct guesses. The first team to score five points is declared the winner.

When appropriately implemented, language games can be very effective for motivating the young second-language learner.