

The important role of warm-up activity in language classroom

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Abstract: This study delves into the theoretical aspects of warm-up activities, defining them, outlining their principles, and providing examples. The importance of warm-up activities is emphasized through their role in building relationships, motivating students, capturing attention, activating background knowledge, and aligning with lesson objectives. The paper also concludes with recommendations based on the findings.

Keywords: Warm-up activities, classroom activities, language, English

1. Introduction

Many students express boredom with the repetitive nature of classroom activities, leading to a lack of interest and hindered language learning progress. Regrettably, some teachers overlook the importance of students' interest and motivation in their provided activities. There is a need to explore methods to sustain students' engagement in learning.

Utilizing warm-up activities offers a potential solution by injecting variety into class routines, sparking curiosity, focusing attention, and providing purpose and motivation (Eragamreddy, 2013).

This study aims to explore several aspects of warm-up activities in language classrooms. It seeks to define what constitutes a warm-up activity and its importance within educational settings. Additionally, the research aims to identify key principles guiding the design and implementation of warm-up activities. Furthermore, the study aims to provide illustrative examples of warm-up activities to assist educators in integrating them effectively into their teaching practices.

2. The study

2.1. What Constitutes a Warm-up?

A warm-up phase serves as a preparatory step, aiding students in relaxation and fostering a positive learning atmosphere (Rushidi, 2013). Robertson & Acklam (2000) define warm-up as a brief activity at the onset of a lesson (p.30). Kay (1995) characterizes warm-ups as varied activities that prompt students to engage in English thinking, review previously covered materials, and generate interest in the lesson

(as cited in Velandia, 2008, p. 11). Lassche (2005) describes the warm-up phase in language learning lessons as the "initial orientation" (p. 83). Therefore, a warm-up activity initiates a class with an engaging task to ensure students feel at ease in the classroom and begin thinking in English.

2.2. Importance of Warm-up

The warm-up segment holds significance for several reasons. Firstly, it establishes a rapport, which is crucial for facilitating the learning process. The atmosphere of a class, whether fun or engaging, is greatly influenced by teachers' personalities and teaching methods, which can motivate students to adopt a positive attitude towards learning (Krishnan & Hoon, 2002). Cooperative teaching styles, as noted by Klippen (1985), foster a conducive learning environment by enabling teachers to set the tone of the class through exercises and topics selection (p. 6). Teachers can cultivate an environment where students feel comfortable sharing their ideas and opinions by building rapport (Lassche, 2005). Establishing mutual trust and rapport between teachers and students is essential for creating a positive classroom atmosphere (Richards & Bohlke, 2011). According to Hale and Whitlam (1995), rapport-building is the ability to foster trust and confidence in limited time frames (as cited in Lassche, 2005, p. 84). Warm-up exercises and collaborative tasks, such as jigsaw activities, can enhance the classroom atmosphere (Klippen, 1985). Warm-up activities, such as jokes, games, and puzzles, contribute to a positive learning environment, encouraging student participation and

comfort in the classroom (Joshi, 2006). In language classrooms, learners often require support and motivation from each other to succeed in learning (Krishnan & Hoon, 2002, p. 35). Warm-up or icebreaker activities foster a comfortable environment and establish peer trust among students, facilitating collaboration in subsequent activities (Hansen & Liu, 2005). Language teachers should recognize the utility of warm-up activities, particularly in the initial lessons of new classes, where they serve as opportunities for students to acquaint themselves with one another, while providing teachers insight into the overall class proficiency level. Such activities foster class cohesion (Senior, 1997).

Principles of Warm-up Activities

According to Velandia (2008), there are key principles for crafting effective warm-up activities. Firstly, they should occur at the outset of the class to immediately capture students' attention. Secondly, they must be engaging to motivate students right from the start. Additionally, warm-up activities are typically brief since they serve as a preparatory phase for subsequent lesson stages. Furthermore, these activities should be related to the lesson topic to facilitate seamless transition into other language skill development activities (p. 13).

Similarly, Robertson and Acklam (2000) outline essential characteristics of warm-up activities. They emphasize the importance of making warm-up activities interesting to stimulate students' engagement with English practice. These activities are meant to be brief and serve as a preliminary step rather than the main focus of the lesson. Additionally, warm-up activities can provide students with opportunities to review previously learned language material. However, unlike Velandia (2008), Robertson and Acklam (2000) argue that it is not mandatory for warm-up activities to directly correlate with the lesson topic. They assert that the primary objective of using warm-up activities is to prepare students for English language work, irrespective of specific lesson content (p. 8).

2.3. Examples of Warm-up Activities in a Language Class

1. Word Association Game: Students take turns saying a word related to the previous one, focusing on vocabulary recall and association.

2. Picture Prompt: Show a picture related to the

lesson topic and have students discuss what they see or predict what might happen next, promoting speaking and critical thinking skills.

3. Quick Quiz: Pose a few simple questions related to previous lessons to review vocabulary or grammar concepts.

4. Sentence Completion: Provide incomplete sentences related to the lesson content and have students fill in the blanks, reinforcing grammar structures and vocabulary.

5. Discussion Starter: Present a thought-provoking question or a controversial statement for students to discuss in pairs or small groups, encouraging speaking and debating skills.

6. Brainstorming: Ask students to brainstorm words or ideas related to a specific topic, fostering creativity and vocabulary expansion.

7. Role-Play: Assign roles to students and have them act out a short scenario related to the lesson theme, practicing language use in real-life situations.

8. Song Lyrics: Play a short excerpt of a song related to the lesson topic and have students listen for specific words or phrases, followed by discussion or analysis.

9. Tongue Twisters: Challenge students with tongue twisters in the target language to improve pronunciation and fluency.

10. Word Scramble: Provide a jumbled list of vocabulary words for students to unscramble, testing their word recognition skills.

3. Conclusion

Warm-up activities play a vital role in language classrooms for several reasons. Firstly, they establish a positive atmosphere and rapport between teachers and students, fostering a conducive learning environment. Secondly, warm-up activities capture students' attention and motivation right from the beginning of the lesson, enhancing their engagement with the material. Additionally, these activities serve as a bridge between previous learning and new lesson content, facilitating smoother transitions and aiding in the retention of information. Moreover, warm-up activities provide opportunities for language practice and review, helping students consolidate their skills and build confidence. Overall, incorporating warm-up activities into language lessons not only sets the tone for productive learning but also contributes to students' overall language proficiency and enjoyment

of the learning process.

It is crucial to emphasize that despite their simplicity, warm-up activities should be thoughtfully prepared. Furthermore, we must consider their connection to subsequent activities to maximize their instructional value. Effective warm-ups are short, relevant to the lesson topic, conducive to further learning, interesting, and enjoyable. By implementing such activities, we can prepare students to concentrate and engage actively in the English class from the outset.

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Sử dụng bản đồ tư duy để nâng cao.....(tiếp theo trang 159)

Như vậy, giáo viên có thể làm nhiều việc để tạo ra tạo động lực hoặc tăng cường động lực cho học sinh theo nhiều cách khác nhau, trong đó có việc sử dụng bản đồ tư duy, một loại công cụ trực quan sinh động. Học tập thông qua bản đồ tư duy, học sinh không chỉ có được hứng thú, động lực mà cả hoạt động học tập cũng trở nên hiệu quả và thành công hơn.

3. Kết luận

Động lực đóng một vai trò quan trọng trong việc học ngôn ngữ như đã được đề cập. Nó thu hút người học vào các hoạt động và tạo điều kiện thuận lợi cho việc học tập hơn. Vì vậy, giáo viên cần chú ý đến những ý tưởng, kỹ thuật dạy học nhằm nâng cao động lực của người học. Bản đồ tư duy được xem là một công cụ rất hữu ích trong việc dạy và học ngôn ngữ. Nhiều màu sắc, biểu tượng, hình ảnh và đường nét khác nhau giúp đánh thức bộ não của người học để sẵn sàng tiếp nhận những điều mới mẻ, chuẩn bị cho việc học dễ dàng hơn nhiều. Khó có thể phủ nhận sự cần thiết và tầm quan trọng của việc sử dụng bản đồ tư duy trong dạy và học ngoại ngữ bởi chúng kích thích sự sáng tạo và thúc đẩy khả năng ghi nhớ. Ngoài ra, bản đồ tư duy còn khiến quá trình học tập trở nên hấp dẫn, vui nhộn và sinh động hơn và do đó có thể nâng cao động lực học tập cho người học.

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