

Chang & Zhu 2018

Volume 2 Issue 2, pp.12-19

Date of Publication:14th July, 2018

DOI-<https://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pijtel.2018.22.1219>

This paper can be cited as: Chang, S., & Zhu, N. (2018). 5:20:20:5 Efficiency. PUPIL: International Journal of Teaching, Education and Learning, 2(2).12-19.

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5:20:20:5 EFFICIENCY

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Abstract

Some researchers claim that the typical student's attention span is about 10 to 15 minutes, but most classes last 50 to 90 minutes. In addition, some educators argue that technology can distract students more than it can help them, which makes it harder for teachers to capture student's attention while teaching them. How a language teacher captures students' attention and efficiently utilizes the entire 50 minutes is a challenge. The goals of this presentation are to demonstrate how to make the best use of the 50 minutes and to show how technology can be applied to get students engaged.

The 50 minutes are divided into 4 phases: 5:20:20:5. The first 5 minutes aims to warm up students' background knowledge or review related materials. The first 20 minutes focuses on leading students into the core materials for that learning period. The following 20 minutes centers on assessing what students have or have not learned in the previous 20 minutes. The last 5 minutes summarizes the core materials and clarifies any questions. Within each learning period, teachers can use visual and audio applications, such as Power Point slides, Kahoot games, SMART Board and Linoit.com activities, to keep students interested and motivated and make both teaching and learning fun.

Keywords

Language Teaching, Teaching Efficiency, Students Attention, Technology Intergration

1. Introduction

Everybody differs in how they learn. There are four sensory modalities (VARK) that learners can learn best: visual, auditory, reading/writing, and kinesthetic (Fleming & Mills, 1992). Generally speaking, classes are composed of students with four different learning modalities instead of just one modality. Some students might even possess two or more than two modalities that can help them learn better. There is no universal teaching method that can equally benefit all learners. The critical factor in the learning process is attention (Hale & Lewis, 1979). According to James, attention is the taking possession by the mind, in clear and vivid form, of one out of what seem several simultaneously possible objects or trains of thought. Focalization, concentration of consciousness are of its essence. It implies withdrawal from some things in order to deal effectively with others (James, 1890). James held that attention made humans perceive, conceive, distinguish, and remember more effectively and sped their reactions. Therefore, regardless of students' learning styles, what teachers need to take into consideration first when it comes to teaching is students' attention. Only if a teacher catches students' attention and keeps them focused on the learning material can the effective and efficient teaching and learning occur.

Since technology has been an integral part of our society and reshaped our lives in every aspect, the access to technology, such as computers, has become a basic tool in the classroom teaching. Some educators believe that the use of technology in the classroom teaching distracts students more than it can help. Some researchers, however, prove that the integration of technology into classroom teaching can hold students' attention. Willoughby and Wood (2008) noted that learning takes place on computer software without the learners realizing the amount of attention they are paying to the material. Bitter and Legacy (2008) also found that students seem to focus on their work longer when using technology. Moreover, the use of technology not only motivates students to learn but also increases their learning efficiency. In the study of Trifonas (2008), it showed that achievement can be improved in the classroom with the active involvement of the students making optimal use of the technological advancements. Like Khine and Fisher (2003) concluded in their study, technology assists students to make meaning of the learning material and educators must therefore match appropriate technology usage in order to maximise a student's potential learning.

2. Methodology

The data of this proposal were drawn from our 13 years of teaching experiences at Defense Language Institute. Our language program lasts 63 weeks; all four language skills are taught including reading, writing, listening and speaking. This proposal focuses on grammar teaching. We teach one hour grammar each day and five days a week at our school. Based on our past 13 years of grammar teaching experiences, we came up with this 5:20:20:5 efficiency teaching method that we found can help our students learn grammar more efficiently and effectively. The topic of the lesson we use to demonstrate our instruction is how to teach the six question terms: who, what, where, when, why, and how. A Lesson Plan can be found in the Appendix.

3. Discussion

3.1 The first 5 minutes

Plato, the great philosopher, once said that the beginning is the most important part of work. If a language teacher can get students engaged right at the beginning of the lesson, he/she is already half way to success. The language teacher can use the first five minutes to brainstorm background knowledge or introduce relevant materials to get students ready for the core material. For teaching the six question terms, we used to have each question term and corresponding function of each term written on different pieces of paper, students in groups match the question term and its function. Nowadays, we use the SMART Board to prepare the props instead of paper. Students get to work on the matching activity on Smart Board, which allows them to share their answers with the whole class and also keep the whole class engaged and focused during the first five minutes.

3.2 The first 20 minutes

Cooperative learning is a structured, systematic learning strategy, in which not only the learning level of each student but also the overall performance can be promoted (Tan, 2016). Meaningful learning can be achieved as long as one of three forms of interaction (student-teacher, student-student, student-content) is at a high level (Anderson & Horney, 1998). During the following two 20-minute phases, the interaction between students and among students is the key to keeping students engaged and focused on learning. The purpose of the first 20 minutes is to instruct the core material. During this phase, some teachers may tend to lecture or give lengthy explanation, which can cause students losing their interest and attention. Instead of lecturing, teachers can design some activities that are interesting enough to capture students' attention. The activities can be based on

group work and pair work because team work gives students more speaking time and allows them to practice with different types of learners. In that way, they can learn not only from teachers but also from peers.

The first 20 minutes is divided into 5-minute and 15-minute sections. During the first five minutes of this phase, students are asked to work on the “Filling in the blank of each sentence with the appropriate question term” in order to get to know how to use each question term. Students in pair use their computers to work on the activity posted on Smart Board and then upload their answers to Linoit.com. Students are asked to check other groups’ answers and provide their reasons. This gives students the opportunity to learn from their own mistakes and also learn from each other. During the following 15 minutes, each group is assigned a question term and then read the article selected by the teacher on yahoo.com. Students need to find the statements in the article that they can change into questions with their assigned term, and then post their findings on Linoit.com. For example, the Who group has to find out all the statements in the article that can change into the “who” question. Linoit.com website allows all the students to see and check the findings of each group.

3.3 The second 20 minutes

This is the time for assessment. The purpose of assessment is to check whether students understand the usage of question terms, and to see what needs to be further elaborated. As Sharon Boller (2012) stated it is essential for the teacher to provide “specific, timely feedback that reinforces that we’re doing well or gives us clear feedback on where we are performing poorly.” If the first 20-minute is important, then the second 20-minute is critical to the success of a class. After the instruction of the first 20 minutes, students may believe they have understood the core material. Thus, they might start losing focus. It is very crucial for teachers to design activities that continue to engage students at this point since engagement is the key to learning.

The assignment for the first 10-minute is to have students walk around the classroom and ask two students at least 6 questions respectively. This provides an opportunity for students to physically move around. Students can come up with simple questions such as “What is your name?” or “When did you start learning English?” If students’ level is higher, questions can be related to the article they read during the first 20 minutes, such as “What is the main topic of the article?” or “How does the author justify his argument in the article?” Then students need to ask another two students 6 questions with the third person as the subject, for example, “What is his name?” or “How does he come to school every day?” During the first 10 minutes, teacher’s role is not just a facilitator, he/she is also an keen observer, who needs to find out what concepts students have not fully grasped. At the

end of this practice, the teacher can use one or two minutes to provide a quick feedback on students' performance.

During the remaining 10 minutes, the teacher can let students play Kahoot game to provide more practice and double-check their comprehension. Dewey (1944) pioneered the concept of games as a teaching methodology and there has been much research done with regard to their application since. Shanahan et al (2006) identified five key characteristics of effectiveness of playing games: the game must relate to the learning outcomes; teacher and students must quickly understand how to play the game; the game must not become more important than the learning; the game must motivate students to perform better; and finally students must be able to provide feedback to the teacher on the game. Chih-Chao Chung's research results show that incorporation of textbook materials related games in classroom teaching can indeed improve student's overall learning effectiveness (Chung et al, 2017).

Kahoot game is one of the ideal teaching tools because it incorporates all the paper-feature exercises and quizzes while providing feedback instantaneously. The teacher can design a Kahoot game beforehand based on what he/she wants to check on student's comprehension. Format of questions can be filling blanks, error correction, sentence creation, etc. Approximately 20-25 questions are needed for a 10-minute game. The game rules are straightforward. Once the teacher finishes writing all the questions and names the game on Kahoot website, the website will provide a 6-digit number associating with the game. In class, each student first needs to use their cellphone to sign onto the Kahoot website with that number. Then, he/she inputs the name he/she wants to use during the game. Once all students' names show on the screen, the game starts. Each time, students answer a question, the screen will show the right answer and who answers it correctly. The game continues until all questions are answered. Whoever gets the most correct answers wins the game. At the end of the game, the teacher knows exactly what students have comprehended and what needs to be explained further.

3.4 The second 5 minutes

There are different ways to end the class. The teacher should tailor the last five-minute instruction based on students' performance during the second 20-minute phase. If students demonstrate that they have grasped the material, the teacher can use the last five-minute to summarize the core material and introduce new material for next class. If students still struggle with the material, the last five minutes should be used to further explain the concepts that students still

have problem with. In a word, the teacher should make sure that students comprehend the core material during the last five minutes of class.

4. Conclusion

The goal of teaching is to keep students engaged, motivated, and energized. There are various ways to divide 50-minute or 90-minute class time based on the learning material. This paper provides and demonstrates one example of how teachers can integrate technology into classroom teaching within the 5:20:20:5 phases.

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APPENDIX

LESSON PLAN

Objective:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be able to use the six question terms: who, what, where, when, why, and how. 		
Time (Est.)	Action	Materials
5 minutes	<p>SCHEMATA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students in group match the question term and its corresponding function 	Smart Board
20 minutes	<p>PRESENTATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> students work on the “Filling in the blank of each sentence with the appropriate question term” teacher assigns each group of students a question term and an article on Yahoo or VOA for them to read students find the statements in the article that they can change into questions with their assigned term students post their findings on Linoit.com 	Web Site & Smartboard & Linoit.com
20 minutes	<p>PRACTICE + ASSESSMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> students walk around classroom and ask two students at least 6 questions respectively and then ask another two students 6 questions with the third 	Kahoot

5 minutes	person as the subject <ul style="list-style-type: none">• teacher provides a quick feedback• teacher further evaluates students' comprehension on Kahoot SUMMARY teacher summarizes the core material, clarifies any questions, and introduces the new material for next class if time allows.	Smart Board
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