

Magic-Motivated, Quiz-Based, Dynamic English Learning

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I. Introduction

Teachers who attempt to teach without first inspiring a desire to learn are hammering on cold iron. - Horace Mann -

I have been a teacher for 21 years now. 15 years of which were spent with high school students and 6 of which have been spent with middle school students. I have realized that teens will be teens especially in the countryside and it is almost out of the question to teach them only with a textbook and chalk. As a result, I thought that an attractive and unique strategy would absorb students in their English lessons, and I finally came to create an epoch-making solution to lead them to class. The strategy I have developed is a **magic-motivated** and **quiz-based learning** approach which makes an English class **dynamic** for both students and the teacher.

II. Magic-motivated Learning

Magic is an extremely powerful motivator in language teaching. And magic tricks are the stepping stones to the other side of the river for the teens' dream and challenge. My school is located in the countryside, which means there are many students who do not live with their parents. Instead they live with their grandparents. There are also many other students who are orphaned or badly off. In a sense, these students are left unattended in terms of their scholastic achievement. So I need something special to attract them to class, **magic!**

We have heard this proverb — A genius cannot beat a striving man, and even a striving man cannot beat a man doing something with FUN. My strategy to make students interested in learning has been quite successful, and since I introduced magic in language teaching, many things have changed. First and foremost, the students' attitude toward class has changed completely and both the students and I enjoy being together in the classroom.

Ranging from a rubber band magic to a newspaper magic, any trick can be a great help in class. Some tricks are used as a bridge and a catalyst between the contents of textbook chapters and students' inspiration. I, for example, apply a rope magic to the explanation of comparatives, the chain and ring magic to living in the weightless space, a rubber band magic to the ladder climbing and the chopstick magic to counseling a student in trouble. Different tricks are, on the other hand, used directly, when English vocabulary, grammatical points, composition, reading and listening are being taught to the students. Furthermore, most materials I use are easily obtained in our daily life.

With this powerful catalyst, I have surely succeeded in making the students believe 'English is fun.'

III. Quiz-based Learning

If magic is a hidden and unexpected seasoning, then the quiz is a recipe and framework for a chef. Magic makes learning interesting and the quiz makes learning systematic, which results in a dynamic English class. I have let the students use a small white board during their quiz activities. The white board is nicknamed 'Magic Board' because we never expect and imagine what answers will be written on the board from their imaginative brains. Here is the procedure of the quiz-based learning I develop. Review Quiz (1) → Vocabulary Quiz → Opening Quiz → Main Activity → Review Quiz (2) → Disappearing Sentence

Review Quiz (1) is actually a performance assessment. It is compiled from three sources; from Word Book, from EBSe, and from the Textbook. Students need to memorize words and idioms from the daily chapter of the word book and also watch and study EBSe shows in the classroom during the lockers (08:30 ~ 08:50). And then they are examined on these two areas, plus what they learned in the previous period from the textbook.

Many teachers respect the notion of the Russian psychologist Vygotsky, regarding ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) and I do, too. I have reorganized each class into five groups with five scaffolders (key students). Learning points permeate to the other group members with the help of the scaffolder. I have found, however, that the students' achievement and development totally depend on the ability and personality of the scaffolder. A competent and extrovert scaffolder could lead a group very well and the members all get much benefit. On the other hand, a less competent, introvert scaffolder does not lead a group very well and the members do not get much benefit. That's why I don't let the students take the performance assessment while having group activities. Instead I let them take the assessment the next day in order for the students to take their own individual time to brush up.

In **Vocabulary Quiz**, I hope to give the students a basic and simple tool beforehand to follow the lecture of the day. This quiz has two types of word questions. One is to write the meaning of the word with the help of the dictionary, guessing from the English definition. The other is to arrange the jumbled letters and write the word and its meaning, also guessing from the English definition. In this stage I focus on giving as much encouragement as possible to the students. So I intentionally make the word questions easy.

In **Opening Quiz**, there are two or three questions about the lesson they are supposed to learn. They try to solve the questions as a warm-up, with the textbooks and the binders closed. In this activity, they get ready to take the main course of the day through the easy and simple questions.

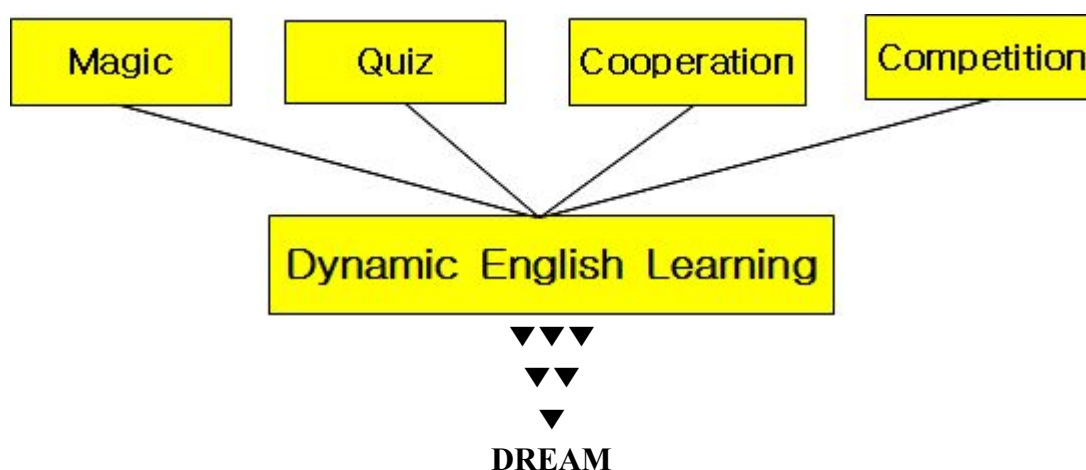
In **Main Activity**, there is a vigorous interaction between teacher and students or among the students. We have an explanation-acquisition activity, a question-answer activity, a role play among individuals or groups and so on. And the students are also asked some sudden pop quizzes and they get complimentary points if they answer in the right way. Meanwhile, scaffolders are busiest helping other group members in this stage. Slow learners acquire learning points of the day from explanations provided by the scaffolder and the scaffolder herself makes her knowledge firm by teaching her friends. Only in this stage are the students allowed to open their textbooks and binders, inside which they keep such studying materials

as handouts and worksheets.

In **Review Quiz (2)**, I focus on checking how much students understand and absorb what they learned during the period. Students are asked various questions with many points distributed in this stage. So any group having low points can win the race from behind, if they try hard. Among the questions of this stage, there should be a composition quiz during which they make very common mistakes and through which I hope to correct them.

Disappearing Sentence is the final stage I develop in the daily lesson. I would like to remind the students of what the key point of the daily lesson is. I make a core sentence about the daily lesson and let the students read it on the screen. As one or two words of the sentence are disappearing, students should always read the full sentence, recalling the erased parts. After all words are disappearing, I let them rewrite the sentence on the answer board. This is the last quiz they are asked from me.

Cooperation inside and **competition** outside the group are maintained through out all of the activities. Once they are in an English class, they have to make an effort for the team. Once they are in the intergroup activities, they have to do their best for the victory of the team. TEAM is an acronym in my dictionary. It means **T**ogether **E**veryone **A**chieves **M**ore. When they are finally chosen to be the caramel winner of the day, they are extremely satisfied and proud of themselves. They already realize what teamwork is.



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