

GAMIAPP:
USING GAMES IN WHATSAPP TO INCREASE PUPILS' ENGAGEMENT IN ENGLISH PDPR

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Highlights: This abstract present how the usage of various games in WhatsApp can increase pupils' engagement to support a blended learning English class through active learning during teaching and learning at home (PdPr). WhatsApp is used as a tool for the teacher to carry out the lesson because it requires low-bandwidth.

Key words: *pupils' engagement, WhatsApp, games, English, PdPr, remote learning*

Introduction

Due to Covid-19 pandemic, the urgent need for emergency remote learning and teaching emerged and the teachers who are not trained to teach fully online before have to adapt their teaching plan to the new norm. The pupils are also having to adjust themselves to quickly familiarise themselves to online learning. Another challenge for this remote learning is the inequality of technology access especially among the pupils from low-income family and those who live in rural area (LoBue, 2020).

As cited from Rambe & Crispen (2013), "WhatsApp instant messaging has potential to bridge information divides between educators and students". This is because WhatsApp is user-friendly and even the 7-year-old pupils are familiar with its function. Moreover, WhatsApp is a free app and almost all Malaysian has it. A statistic report has shown that as of May 2020, 98.7% respondents from Malaysia stated that WhatsApp is their favourite communication application (Muller, 2021, April 07).

English is one of the core subjects in school. In some parts of Kelantan, English is considered as the third language, after the Kelantanese dialect and Bahasa Melayu. Some refer to English as a killer subject. Therefore, it is quite hard to get the pupils to be interested in this subject because of the preconceived belief that English is a difficult subject.

Therefore, the teaching and learning English at home proves quite a challenge, especially to get the pupils to respond to the teacher in WhatsApp group during 'class'. This study presents the use of games that can be carried out in WhatsApp group to increase pupils' engagement through active learning in English class.

Description

The games chosen are games that do not require any cost and involved all pupils. Along the game, the teacher will be as a facilitator as well motivates the pupils to participate.

Gamification, however, is not directly associated with pupils' knowledge and skills. On the other hand, "gamification affects students' behavior, commitment and motivation, which can lead to improvement of knowledge and skills" (W. Hsin-Yuan Huang, D. Soman, 2013). The game itself serves as reward after the pupils finish their tasks for the lesson that day.

The selected games integrated with this WhatsApp class are:

1. **Emoji in Countable and Uncountable Nouns** – during the post lesson, as a closure and solidification activity, the teacher ask the pupils to emojis to list the countable nouns and uncountable nouns. The pupils had fun to find the emojis instead of just writing or typing the words.
2. **Guess the Emoji Game** – this game is can be used as induction activity, closure and even time fillers. The teacher will give some emojis and the pupils have to guess the phrase. It can be used to guess the idioms, a movie name, phrasal verbs, compound nouns, etc.
3. **Scavenger Hunt** – this game promotes active learning among the pupils. It can be carried out in many topics such as comparative adjectives, vocabulary, as well as contextual learning. For example, the text discussed is about Malaysia, so the pupils are given 5 minutes to find at least 3 items around their house that remind them of Malaysia. Then, they have to take a picture of the items and share it in the group. For younger learner, year 1, for example, the teacher can ask the pupils to find 5 items with red colour for the colours topic.
4. **Who Wants to be a Millionaire** – the template of the game in PowerPoint can easily be downloaded from the internet. The teacher just have to modify the questions to suit the topic learned. It can also be used as topical

assessment. This game is ideal to be used during Google Meet, but the teacher can use it in WhatsApp to by exporting the slides into jpeg files and upload the questions then the answers into the group.

5. **Crack the Code!** – the pupils are given jumbled up words related to the vocabulary or themed that will be learned that day. The fastest pupil who can solve it is the winner.

Context

The project is carried out among the Year 4, 5 and 6 Kenanga pupils of Sekolah Kebangsaan Chicha Tinggi, Pasir Mas, Kelantan in English class. Because of prolonged PdPr and the unfamiliarity of having lesson remotely, the pupils have lost focus. More and more pupils 'showed up' less in the class WhatsApp group every day. The initial problems are internet coverage and having to share the gadgets with their siblings who are also involved in PdPr.

However, the recent phone calls made to the parents showed that even those who have their own mobile phone did not showed up in class. Most of the pupils feel bored and somewhat overwhelmed with the PdPr 2.0 timetable which requires them to have more than 4 subjects in a day.

It is important to keep the pupils' interest and engagement so as to keep them motivated to follow the lesson. Most of the games are used to solidify the lesson for that day, in a fun way.

Advantages of Using Games in WhatsApp Class

- Keeps the pupils engaged and respond during 'class' in WhatsApp Group.
- As extrinsic motivation for them to complete the learning tasks that day.
- Those who are initially act as silent readers also involve in the game.
- Motivates them to participate in class and do the assignments because in order for them to 'win' the games, they have to be prepared as the games usually related to the lesson learned.
- it's free. No cost included except for the internet data.
- Easy to be prepared by the teacher and not time consuming.
- User-friendly. The pupils need not to be an IT-savvy to participate in the game.

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