

Transforming a brainstorming session into a guessing game

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The class filmed here is engaged in the initial stage of a new unit entitled *Monsters in Literature and Cinema* for my 1^{ère} LVA group of 26 pupils. The guessing game is designed as an alternative to a traditional brainstorming activity.

Description of the activity

The activity is based on **riddles** with **key words** that I wrote on pieces of paper.

Each group has 2 words and is given 5 minutes to come up with a definition of their own. They can use bilingual dictionaries if they need to.

Then 2 members of the group read the definition and the others have to give the answer as quickly as possible.

Once this part is over, they are asked to **recall all the words** in groups in 2 minutes - for this activity there were 12 words.

The group who finishes first goes and writes the words on the board.

To complete this brainstorming I ask them to think of 2 key words for each of the 12 words, which they then add to the **spidergram**.

In total we have 36 words.

At the end they have to **guess the subject** we are going to study.

Objectives

The aim was not only to help the pupils build up their vocabulary for the unit to come, but also to help them memorize by exposing them to the same words many times in one hour. Another aim was to develop communication within the group and the whole class in English during this phase.

Comments :

Positive points

- Interaction was maintained in English to some extent.
- Collaborative work was developed.
- Working in groups of 4 helped the exchange of words within the group and helped memorizing.
- Placing the emphasis on communication without correcting too much reduced pressure on pupils.
- During the second part of the activity (when they had to guess), the pupils who had found the answer in French wanted to look up the words in the dictionary to say them first, which created emulation in the group.

What needs to be improved

- With hindsight I think it would have been better to ask pupils to improvise their riddles with a mindmap to make rephrasing and interaction easier when the other groups did not fully understand.
- Some groups played the game and communicated in English, and some did not. Interaction in English was at least maintained when I checked on them to see how they were doing.
- The activity took one hour, which was perhaps too long.

Le billet du comité de relecture présidé par Silvana Turchino Diksa, IA-IPR

Points forts :

- Alternative à un brainstorming traditionnel de classe (activités permettant **en fin** de séance de deviner /découvrir le « topic »)
- Motivation par le biais du « guessing game » et de la compétition par équipes.
- Encourager le recours à un dictionnaire, à utiliser des « mindmaps » pour mobiliser et étendre le lexique relatif à un thème.
- Différenciation possible entre les groupes (difficulté des mots à faire deviner par exemple)
- Favoriser la mémorisation du lexique pendant la séance

Perspectives pédagogiques possibles :

- Encourager la collaboration dans le groupe dans un premier temps sans outil pour favoriser la mobilisation et l'échange.
- Proposer le recours au dictionnaire (unilingue de préférence) dans un second temps ou en « joker » uniquement (possibilité de différencier la procédure selon les groupes)
- Envisager un travail/une activité phonologique sur les mots à mémoriser lors de l'activité de fixation immédiate de la séance (puisque les élèves doivent les restituer à l'oral)
- Allouer un timing précis pour chacune de ces activités afin de gagner en efficacité et maintenir le rythme de la séance (l'activité ne saurait durer plus longtemps qu'un brainstorming traditionnel)