

USING PROVERBS TO DEVELOP STUDENTS' INTEGRATED SKILLS

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Abstract:

In this article, we describe a lesson plan that was successfully used at Namangan International University. In designing the lesson plan, the engage, study, activate (ESA) method was applied. Students showed good results in productive skills, although they had difficulty in guessing the correct context of the saying at the beginning of the lesson. It is recommended to constantly use proverbs and sayings to develop learners' integrated skills.

Key words: Engage, study, activate method, integrated skills, intentional and incidental learning, proverbs and sayings.

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In language learning and teaching, aspects like pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary are considered to be important. It is relevant to state that vocabulary is more vital than other language items mentioned above because both basic and complex knowledge are acquired through it. In terms of the role of vocabulary in speech, a British linguist, David A. Wilkins stated that “without grammar, very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed [6, p.97].” In addition, Nation said: “Vocabulary is not an end in itself. A rich vocabulary makes the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing easier to perform [4].” As a part of vocabulary, proverbs and sayings are also effective teaching tools. On the other hand, it should be admitted in some circumstances that it is possible to learn languages without those kinds of fixed phrases too. The last argument is more related to the academic context, where idiomatic expressions are not allowed to be used at all. Despite this fact, proverbs are widely used to develop language learners' communicative competence.

In this article, we aim to describe a lesson plan that was successfully used at Namangan International University. The lesson is intended to develop students' four skills on the topic “Healthy food” or “Health”. To realize this objective, it was chosen a proverb “You are what you eat” and done planned tasks step by step. Engage, study, activate (ESA) method, which was offered by Jeremy Harmer in 1998, was used in planning this lesson. The ESA method has similarities with Presentation, Practice and Production (PPP) method. The main difference is that the phases or order of activities can be changed in ESA [3]. Hence, it is an optional lesson plan that can be used as a main or additional material. Before describing the activity, we decided to give relevant information about the proverbial saying.

The saying “You are what you eat” seems to be understandable as it does not contain a specific professional word. One may think it is connected with food because of the word “eat”. It is certainly not an incorrect answer, however, when it is looked up in “The Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs”, it can be seen that it is used in various contexts such as “obesity, chronic health problems and crime rise [5, p.154]”. In addition, a similar definition of this saying can be found in the online dictionary www.phrases.org.uk where the saying “You are what you eat” is related to the topic of eating healthy food, it was considered firstly used by

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the French lawyer Anthelme Brillat-Savarin in 1826, who stated: “Dis-moi ce que tu manges, je te dirai ce que tu es.” After about forty years, this saying was reused by a German author in a more shortened form as “Der Mensch ist, was er ißt.” According to Gary Martin, the American nutritionist Victor Lindlahr played a role in forming and popularizing “You are what you eat” between the 1930s and the 1950s in mass media [1]. This is a definition of the chosen saying, and below follows the detailed description of the lesson plan.

LESSON PLAN

Topic: Healthy food/Health

Level: B2

Context: to practice Healthy food/Health related vocabulary and practice them in reading, speaking and writing activities

Teaching aids: short passages related to the topic, board and markers

Methods: engage, study, activate (ESA); a guessing game, discussion, free writing

Interaction: individual and group work

Learner objectives: students will be able to improve vocabulary related to money through reading, speaking and writing activities

Engage phase

Task 1 Read the saying and guess the topic

Objective: to attract students' attention to a new lesson and create communicative environment by using a proverb

Teaching aids: board and markers, small sheets of paper, pen or pencil

Method: a guessing game, survey

Interaction: individual

Time: 10 minutes

Procedure: Students are asked to read the proverbial saying “You are what you eat” and guess the new topic. They should write the possible new topic on the sheets of paper that are handed out by two advanced level students. One of the two students gathers the other students' answers and reports about to the second student. The second student writes all the results on the white board and summarizes them shortly.

Study phase

Task 2 Read the passage and retell the main idea.

Objective: to develop students' speaking skills through reading

Teaching aids: board and markers, small sheets of paper, pen or pencil

Method: intentional and incidental learning; using a dictionary, learning vocabulary in context (inductive learning)

Interaction: individual

Time: 15 minutes

Procedure: In this short passage, students practice food and health related vocabulary using both intentional and incidental learning methods. Importantly, there will be indirect self-assessment of understanding the meaning of the proverb in context. Learners are asked to read the extract and attempt to retell it with their own words. In addition, they are explained to express additional thoughts on how they correctly guess the meaning of the saying in Task 1.

Handout

The human body reminds us of the fact that you are what you eat,” writes McKinzie, 11. Vegetables should go where the heart is because they are heart-healthy. Fruits would be where the brain is. Legs are grains. Bones are dairy products, which “keep your bones in tip-top shape, ” while the arms would be meat, to “keep your muscles strong,” says McKinzie.

And the tongue will stand for sweets, fats and oils, which are “a good thing in small amounts [2].”

Activate phase

Task 3 Discuss the saying “You are what you eat”.

Objective: to develop students’ speaking skills through discussing

Teaching aids: No equipment necessary

Method: discussion and debate

Interaction: group work

Time: 15 minutes

Procedure: To prompt the students to participate more in the discussion, related questions are given. The teacher continues asking additional questions based on students’ answers. Teacher also encourages the students to ask questions to minimize his or her role in the class.

Possible questions:

1. Do agree or disagree to the idea “You are what you eat” or “People are what they eat”?

2. If agree why do think so? Or disagree what are the reasons?

3. Can you give an example from your own experience or particular situation related to agreement or disagreement to the context?

Task 4 Write a small text on the saying “You are what you eat”.

Objective: to develop students’ writing skill

Teaching aids: Sheets of paper

Method: free writing

Interaction: Individual

Time: 40 minutes

Procedure: The teacher hands out empty sheets of paper and asks the students to free write on the topic “You are what you eat”. Students are required to write a free writing with at least 250 words. Accuracy and cohesion are not strict. The teacher explains to students their scores will be increased based on effective use of the saying in different functions, such as to introduce the idea, prove it, connect it, or conclude it. Students’ writings are gathered and their marks are reported in the next lesson.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In this article, we described a lesson plan that was successfully used at Namangan International University. We can state that engage, study, activate (ESA) method had a positive effect on achieving our desired result at the lesson. As expected, the survey at the real lesson revealed that almost all 27 students could not guess the new topic and the context of the saying “You are what you eat”. Nevertheless, based on my observation, this lesson was successful because the most students actively participated in every phase of the lesson. At the beginning of the lesson, in case students have difficulty guessing the topic through a particular saying, teachers can show them the photography of, for instance, a fat person and give the task “Find a connection between the saying and a picture”. Importantly, the teachers are recommended to differentiate activities and instructions and be good facilitators rather than constantly being assessors.

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