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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the use of games, role playing, and simulation to teach English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) learners, particularly to reinforce new knowledge or expand emerging knowledge and skills. An introductory section looks at game theory and the ways in which it can inform the construction of classroom activities. Distinctions are made between games, role-playing, and simulation, their purposes, and the way in which they can influence individual learner behavior and classroom interaction. A set of card games designed to supplement content lessons at any grade level are then presented. The three basic games use a set of specially prepared language development card decks designed for bilingual and ESL instruction, and each deck is intended to reinforce or help assess specific language learning concepts or content. Instructions for preparing the card decks are given, and classroom uses of the games for teaching and assessment are discussed briefly. The three games are then described in detail, including card deck composition, learner grouping, the object of the game, dealing procedures, and game strategy. Sample cards are appended. (MSE)

Creating Games

For Emerging English Speakers: Language & Content Reinforcement Activities

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Introduction

Games can be used as learning activities, reinforcing new knowledge or expanding emerging knowledge and skills. They are an experiential activity used with effectiveness in classrooms at all levels of education and training and in a variety of subject areas.

This booklet discusses the use of games, role play and simulations in teaching emerging English learners. We describe specific card game applications and how to make your own card games. Also presented is background information about games and simulations based upon Designing and Evaluating Games and Simulations: A Process Approach, by Margaret Gredler, 1994. Her discussion of the theory behind games and simulations is a useful foundation for learning to create your own games and simulations.

Need for Understanding Game Theory

Games and simulations are examples of interactive learning strategies. The need for understanding interactive exercises is indicated by two current problems. One is the negative effect of poorly-developed exercises. This problem is particularly apparent in computer exercises. For example, some computer exercises that are labeled 'simulations' are merely drill-and-practice exercises accompanied by animated graphics. Others are Russian-roulette types of exercises that purport to simulate such events as operating a grocery store or other small business. However, the only activity executed by students is the manipulation of a few variables in an effort to guess the 'right answer' acceptable to the computer program. The curriculum message embedded in such exercises is that ability and hard work do not influence life outcomes.

The second major problem in effectively using interactive exercises is the inconsistent application of 'games' versus 'simulations'. One typical result is that some participants view an exercise as a game and others treat it as a simulation. An example is a phenomenon observed in business simulations. These exercises involve several rounds or cycles of business or trading. Sometimes a business team that is not doing well in later rounds attempts to crash the system. These participants are behaving like game players and, seeing no way to 'win', behave in such a way as to prevent others from 'winning'. Their behavior, of course, ruins the experience for the other participants.

The inconsistent use of the terms 'games' and 'simulations' leads to the mixing of techniques that can seriously flaw an exercise. A common practice is

the use of scoring criteria or other mechanisms of determining winners and losers in exercises that purport to reproduce a particular psychological reality.

An example is the Life Career Game developed in the 1960s. Teams of 2-4 players, using the profile of a fictitious person, plan the individual's schedule of school activities, job, family responsibilities and leisure for 1 week (1 round) up to 12 weeks or rounds. Points were assigned for different decisions about education, occupation, family life and leisure. Such decisions, however, are value-laden; that is, they depend in large measure on one's basic philosophy of life and personal goals. To score such decisions as though they were 'right' or 'wrong' in the same way that statements about geography or biology are either right or wrong is to distort the basic decision-making process. A participant cannot totally focus on making decisions consistent with his or her belief system when the bottom line is a total score. In other words, to mix social processes with efforts to score points leads to confusion, unintended side effects and a reduction in the effectiveness of the exercise.

This is particularly of concern in cross-cultural settings and where games and simulations are being used in the instruction of culturally diverse and emerging English proficient speakers. The cultural perspectives of the game-maker, instructor, and players will affect their perception of the game, roles or simulation, how engaged they become, and, ultimately, how effective the activity will be in furthering growth and learning.

Games, role play and simulations represent different psychological, linguistic and cultural realities. Thus, merging the categories results in a contradiction in terms and the exercises send conflicting messages to participants. Gaming-simulations also can lead to bad feelings between participants who address their roles in a professional manner and those who treat the exercise as 'only a game'. To mix categories, in other words, is likely to lead to misunderstanding and possibly hard feelings, objectives that few teachers will want to engender in their classrooms.

One reason for the confusion is that interactive exercises often are categorized according to surface characteristics such as the various types of paraphernalia that are used (e.g., boards, role cards, tokens, etc.). Instead, games, role play and simulations should be analyzed in terms of their fundamental defining features, or 'deep structure', i.e. the nature of the interactions (a) between participants and the situation, crisis, problem or task, and (b) among participants in the exercise. Understanding the deep structure includes identification of the types of objects and events that precipitate learner actions, the types of actions or behaviors that earn reinforcement, the nature of feedback for the individual's actions, and the relationship of the individual to others in the exercise.

I have used extensive games, role play and simulation activities to teach second language learners. Before introducing a game, role play, or simulation activity to my culturally and linguistically diverse students, we review the 'rules of play' and make sure that everyone was comfortable with the nature of the activity, its purpose, and my expectations about their behavior during and after the activities. We did this with demonstration and peer translation for those students with the most limited English skills. Most children understand the concept of "play" though what constitutes play and what they are allowed to play at, will differ from culture to culture. The students can participate in a discussion or act out what playing at something provides: it may be a way to practice something, to experience something new, to pretend to be something, to learn about something, and all in a fun way. Let your students share things they play with, games they play at home, games that helped them learn something. And emphasize the FUN of it all.

Basic Definitions

Role play, games and simulations are interactive exercises. However, each fulfills a separate purpose and establishes a particular psychological situation for the player (game), actor (role play) or participant (simulation).

Role Play

This can be a very effective tool in teaching second language learners as it allows the teacher to set up many situations where learners can safely practice verbal and nonverbal communication in a low risk environment. In role play, the students become actors engaged in acting like a particular word, character, creature or object. Everyone understands that what is engaged in is acting and not real; thus there is considerable leeway in how precise or how 'accurate' the portrayal is. I have used role play in several ways with emerging English learners. The primary use is with building comprehension of English interactions, i.e. acting out and practicing basic interpersonal communication skills. Students pretend to meet one another while going for a walk, going to the store, going to the doctor, or whatever situation for which I want them prepared, and engage in a brief conversation. At first the conversation contains basic American English greetings and nonverbal behaviors. I want them to prepare for

Games

A game is a 'for fun' contest among competing players operating under rules for an objective such as winning or some sort of pay-off. Some people have difficulty with the use of the word 'contest' in this definition. That is, contests encompass two types of activities, only one of which is a game. Specifically, contests that are engaged in for fun, entertainment, or simply to exercise one's skill can be seen as games. A variety of activities from competitive exercises on the playing field, such as football or crochet, to intellectual contests, such as card games, chess, or backgammon, are in this group. Although consequences are experienced by the players within the exercise, the consequences do not apply to real-life outcomes.

Three important characteristics define a competitive exercise as a game. First, a game is a world unto itself that is determined by its own particular sets of rules that are not replications of real life. Moreover, the consequences experienced as a player in a game do not extend to real life. Losing all one's money in Monopoly, for example, does not lead to being declared bankrupt in one's daily affairs. Second, the paraphernalia used in a game and the consequences prescribed by the rules may be any of a vast combination of objects and events that may enable a player or a team to defeat one's opponents. Third, a game involves winning by taking any course of action allowed by the rules to thwart or defeat other players. In bridge, for example, when one team wins the bid or contract, the objective of the other team is to prevent them from capturing enough cards (tricks) to meet their contract.

Sometimes the behaviors sanctioned in a game are considered reprehensible in the real world. In Monopoly, for example, players are reinforced for adding hotels to properties and charging high rents. The objective is to bankrupt the other players. In the real world, of course, bankrupting one's colleagues would be considered the epitome of greed. Thus, it is important to remember that any game is a fantasy world, defined by its particular rules and efforts to win within those rules.

Simulations

The term 'simulation' has been used in a variety of ways. Included are efforts to model some complex process or reality, and a representation of some aspect of the universe. However, modeling or imitating the central features of a situation does not render an activity a simulation. The question is, what types of actions are the participants engaged in and what kinds of decisions are they making? Suppose, for example, a group of students is given a portfolio of materials describing the

terrain, natural resources, towns and industries of a seaside region in a small country. The students are asked to plan a viable energy policy for the region for the next decade.

In this exercise, the students are taking part in a group problem-solving activity that makes use of simulated materials. Of course, a simulation is a problem-based exercise. However, a simulation differs from a group planning exercise in several ways. First, a specific issue, problem or policy is posed that precipitates a variety of actions by the participants. In other words, some precipitating or initiating event to which participants react is a key characteristic of simulations. An example is a proposal to build a nuclear reactor on the coast near the town.

Second, roles are defined that interact with the posed problem or issue in particular ways. In a simulation about a proposed nuclear reactor, the roles would likely include the mayor of the seaside town the head of the local environmental group, various government officials promoting different energy policies, and so on. In addition to each participant receiving a description of his or her role, all receive a copy of a press release announcing that the government is considering building a nuclear reactor near the town. The participants then interact in their various positions in response to the press release as they attempt to meet their goals and priorities.

This brief description illustrates two major criteria of Simulations. First, a simulation involves the experience of functioning in a bona fide role and encountering the consequence of one's actions as one makes decisions in the execution of that role. Second, the participants address the issues and problems seriously and conscientiously, i.e., in a professional manner. This critical feature of simulations is referred to as 'reality of function'. That is, 'a chairman really is a chairman with all the power, authority, and duties to complete the task'.

Reality of function refers to more than the words or actions of the participants - it also includes their thoughts. In other words, participants must mentally accept the function that is expected of them in the simulation. Developing a simulation which supports reality of function requires attention to three aspects of design. One is to establish bona fide roles for the participants in which they are to carry out important tasks that are functional in the particular social microcosm. Examples include attempting to find food and water after landing on a desert island, attempting to design the best widget, or serving as an emissary to another country. The second is to provide sufficient documentation on an issue or a problem (such as memos, newspaper articles and maps) so that the participants can behave in a professional manner. The third requirement is that of designing

the simulation so that behavioral contingencies support the conscientious execution of the assigned role by the participant. That is, random behaviors or actions that are counter to the context of the exercise, such as crashing the system in a financial management exercise, are not reinforced by success.

These three requirements are of particular importance in the analysis of computer-based exercises. An example is Lemonade Stand, described by the developers as a simulation. Students enter values (for each 'day') for the number of glasses of lemonade to be sold, the price per glass and the daily expenditure for advertising. The computer program, using a model unrelated to the professional experience of operating a lemonade stand, calculates the daily profit or loss. Reality of function for the participant is lacking in the exercise. First, a bona fide role in a meaningful social context is not established. The participant is not informed as to whether the role is that of children or teenagers planning to earn extra money or some other situation. Further, is the stand to be located in a neighborhood, near a school or athletic event, or some other site? In addition, the student makes repeated decisions only about three events. Other decisions such as the specific ingredients to be used in the lemonade are omitted. The un-stated goal of this exercise is for the student to discover the optimum values to be allocated to the selected variables according to the computer model. In other words, the student interacts with the computer (the major 'player' in the exercise) rather than with an evolving scenario. Thus, the exercise lacks reality of function. At best, it is a type of game in which the goal is to beat the computer.

CCDES Language and Content Reinforcement Card Games

Overview

These card games may be used in versatile ways to supplement content lessons at any grade level. They are best used as a review, reinforcement or assessment tool. There are three basic games which can be played with these cards: Sets, Pairs, and Memory. Each of the three basic games can be varied according to specific lesson objectives. The prepared decks of cards (CCDES) are a series of language development card decks designed for use in bilingual and English as a Second Language programs. Each deck of cards is designed to reinforce or assess specific language learning concepts or content.

Constructing The Cards

Classroom teachers can prepare their own deck of cards to fit the particular content or language skill they wish to reinforce. Cards can be copied or created based upon any curricular content. This is a good substitute use for commercial flash cards. The best size is a 3" x 5" index card and they should be laminated or

covered with plastic if at all possible. Be careful not to let colors 'bleed' through if students hand color the cards with markers. To the extent possible, having students assist in designing and constructing the cards engages them in the learning process. Complete decks of already designed cards are available from CrossCultural Developmental Education Services. Examples of CCDES cards are attached to this handout.

A) It is easiest to play for content reinforcement with decks of 40 cards: 4 of each item in a set, 10 sets word, phrase, or concept. In specific cases, e.g. English pronouns, you could have 32 or 36 cards.
B) Use the decks provided by CCDES, or create your own using 3x5 index cards. The concepts to be reinforced may be illustrated by student drawings, cut-out pictures from magazines, or other visual cues. The visual cues must be meaningful to your students. Numbers or words could be added, but the visual cues are the key focus points.
C) Put the cards together in sets of four of a kind, in alphabetical order or other meaningful sequence.

Review & Reinforcement

All of the games can be played to reinforce receptive and expressive language, visual and auditory memory, or content literacy. They can be used to reinforce cognitive learning balance in tempo, tolerance, persistence, and categorization styles. If students are non-verbal, the games can be played through cognitive visual matching. If students are limited English proficient, the games can be played in their native language, and later bilingually. A set of bilingual cards can be created by starting with native language cards, adding English language captions, and finally adding English language pairs to the set.

By mixing familiar and imaginary images and words, requiring reflection and association, the games can be used to reinforce cognitive learning balance in tempo, tolerance, persistence, and categorization styles. The cards may be used to review basic concepts, vocabulary words, or other content. The games can be played periodically during the school year to provide a review of foundation concepts when making a transition to a new topic or subject matter.

Assessment

The games may be used as an alternate assessment process. By watching the students play the card games, especially when a lot of expressive and receptive language is required, the teacher will be able to observe the extent to which individual students have acquired the learning concepts and content or how well they have retained previously presented information.

Basic Rules of Play

1. Play is best with no less than 4 and no more than 6 players in a group.
2. Deal 4 to 5 cards to each person playing.
3. Place remainder in 'draw' pile.
4. The game continues until all cards are in sets and on the table.
5. Take turns clockwise starting with person to left of the dealer.
6. You only get one card at a time, asking: "Do you have xx?"
7. Your turn is over when someone says: "No, I don't have xx; draw."
8. The person asked, answers either yes or "No, I don't have xx; draw."
9. The person being asked responds: "Yes, I have xx" and shows everyone the card as they hand it over to you.
10. When you get a complete set, you say: "I have a set of xx" and show it.
11. If you draw the card you asked for, just keep it. Your turn is still over.
12. If you draw the final card in a set, save it until your next turn. Then lay down your set, saying: "I have a set of xx" and show it.
13. The winner is the person with the most sets.
14. Remember, there should be lots of speaking and listening!

The Games

There are three basic games: SETS, PAIRS, and MEMORY. All of the three basic games, Sets, Pairs, and Memory, can be played to reinforce or assess receptive and expressive language, visual and auditory memory, or content literacy. They can also be used to reinforce or assess cognitive learning balance in tempo, tolerance, persistence, and categorization styles.

SETS

Deck: Each group playing should get a deck with 8 to 12 sets of four cards of each concept.

Players: Two to six in each group playing.

Object: To collect the most sets of four of a kind.

Deal: Cards are dealt one at a time. Each player receives five cards. The rest of the pack is placed face down in the center of the table to form the 'draw' pile.

Play: Have the students choose the first player by names alphabetically, ages, or other device. Starting with the first player, each player calls another by name and requests cards of a specific type, as: "David, do you have any Red?" or "David, kavirliten taiski". The player asking must hold at least one of the type of card requested. The player asked must give up the card requested, saying: "Yes, Kala, I have a Red" or "Eii, Kala, kavirliq tuten."

Another variation of this is to have the player ask for the category first. For example, "David, do you have anyone singing?" David holds up a card and says, "Yes, Kala, I have someone singing. Who/what is it?" If Kala successfully identifies the picture, "That is a bird singing" then she gets the card. Another variation is to have equations on the cards. For example: 4+4, 2+6, 3+5, 9-1. The student asks, "Bahe, do you have any 8's?(Tseebii' hoo'lo)" Bahe holds up a card with 2+6 on it and says "Yes, what is it? (Haash woolye?)" David replies "8" (Tseebii') to receive the card.
The player asked does not have to say she has more of the set of cards if she has more than one of the same set of cards. The player requesting has to ask for each individual card. E.g. "David, do you have another card about the Civil War?"

If the player asked does not have any cards of the type requested, then she says "Draw!" and the asker draws the top card from the draw pile. A player's turn to ask continues so long as she is successful in getting the cards requested. If he is told to draw and happens to draw a card of the type requested, the player may

show this card, name it, and continue the turn. As soon as any player gets a set of all four cards of one type, they must show them and give the names of the cards out loud, placing them on the table in front of him or her.

If played competitively, the player who collects the most sets by the end of the game, wins.

PAIRS

Players: Three to six in each group playing.

Object: To match all the pairs and to avoid getting left with the single one.

Deal: One card is taken out of the deck and placed aside. Cards are dealt one at a time. All of the cards are dealt; it does not matter if the distribution is unequal.

Play I: Each player looks at their group of cards and picks out all the pairs. They place these on the table in front of them while naming the items depicted out loud. When all the hands have been reduced to non-paired cards, the starting player presents her cards to her left-hand neighbor, making sure he cannot see their faces, saying "Pick a card." If the card drawn matches one in his hand, the neighbor lays the pair down, saying "These are both about Abraham Lincoln" or "These are a pair of something blue." He then presents his cards to his left-hand neighbor. Play continues in the same way around the table, each player drawing a card from the hand at the right, paired cards being put on the table, until only the odd card remains. The player stuck with the odd card is out of the game. Play continues until one is left.

Play II: Best played with two or three, not more than four. Each player places their pile of cards face down on the table in front of them. All the players turn over one card each simultaneously. If two of the cards match, the first player to say "Pair!" gets to keep the pair of cards. Pairs are set aside next to the player winning them. The player must tell the other players how the cards make a pair before placing them in his winning pile. E.g. "These are a pair of 'He is running' or "These are both about the Rainforest." If she cannot explain how they make a pair, she cannot keep them. Play continues in the same way, all players turning up a card simultaneously, the first player to see a match saying "Pair!" and explaining the match. Play continues until all the cards are matched. A prize could be given to the player making the most successful matches, if played competitively

MEMORY

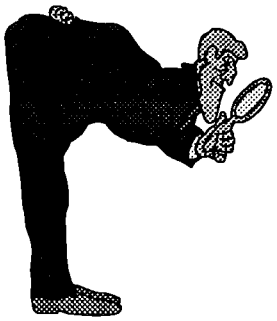
Deck: Each group playing should get a deck with 8 to 12 sets of four cards of each concept.

Players: Two to four in each group playing.

Object: To match all the pairs. To get the most pairs.

Deal: Cards are dealt one at a time face down on the table. All of the cards are dealt. It is easier if they form a symmetrical pattern, i.e. a square or rectangle, and more challenging if placed randomly.

Play: The starting player turns two cards face up, one at a time, without moving either away from its position on the table. If the two cards are a pair, she places them in front of her and names them to the other players, e.g. "These are both something blue; this is a blue cat and this is a blue cup" or "These are both 'She is running'." She turns up two more cards. When she turns up two cards which are not a pair, she turns the cards face down, without disturbing their location, and the turn passes to her left-hand neighbor. The player who gathers the most cards wins the game. It is important to have the students monitor one another in always giving descriptions of the pairs out loud and in as complete a way as is appropriate for their level of development.



CCDES has the following decks available:

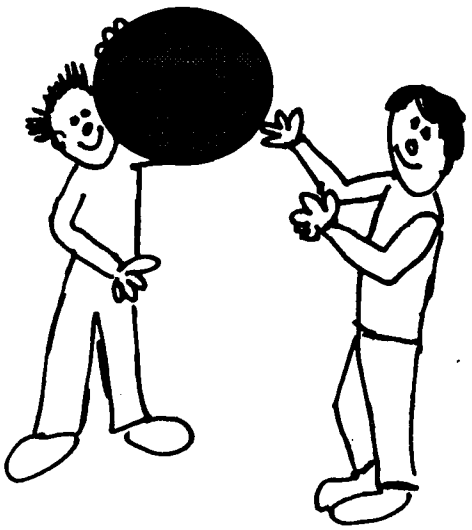
- Body Parts (English, Russian, Spanish, Lushootseed)
- His-Her (English, Russian, Spanish, Navajo)
- Is-Are (English, Russian)
- On-Off (English)
- She Is He Is (English, Russian)
- Calendar (English, Russian, Spanish)
- Colors (English, Russian, Spanish, German, Navajo, Yup'ik, Lushootseed)
- Numbers/One to Ten ((English, Russian, Spanish, German, Navajo, Yup'ik, Lushootseed)
- Cognitive Cues (Spanish, English)
- US Presidents (English)
- Weather (English, Russian, Lushootseed)
- Time (English, Russian, Spanish)

For more information about the sets of cards and other cross-cultural development games and materials, please write to:

CrossCultural Developmental Education Services
6869 Northwest Drive
Ferndale WA 98248-9425 USA
360-380-7513 voice & fax

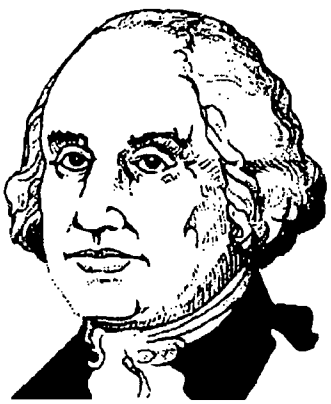
Example Cards From CCDES Decks

Excerpts from His Her game



Their ball is blue.

Excerpts from Presidents game

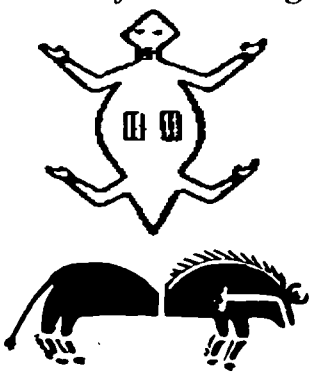


George Washington

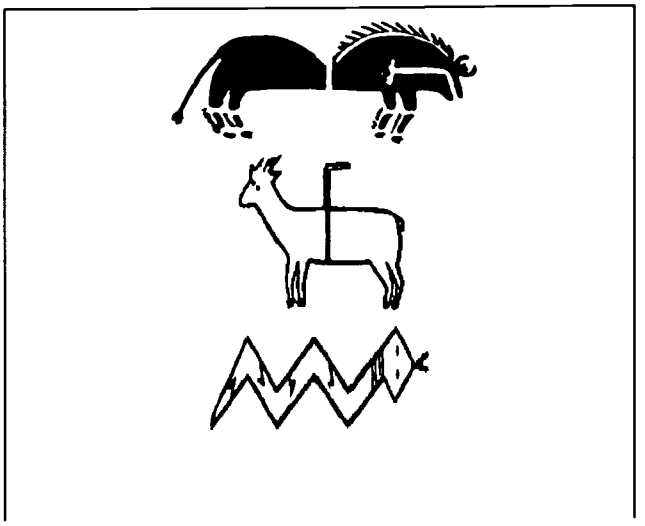
1797-1801

Example Cards From CCDES Decks

Excerpts from Navajo Numbers game

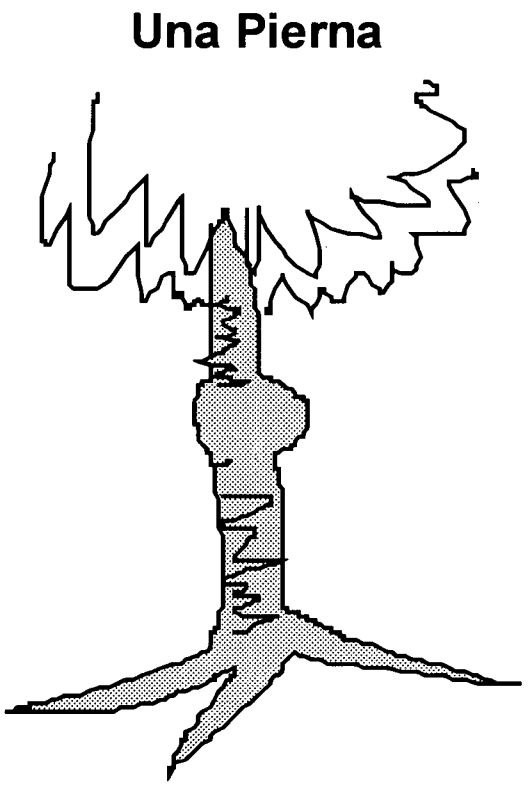


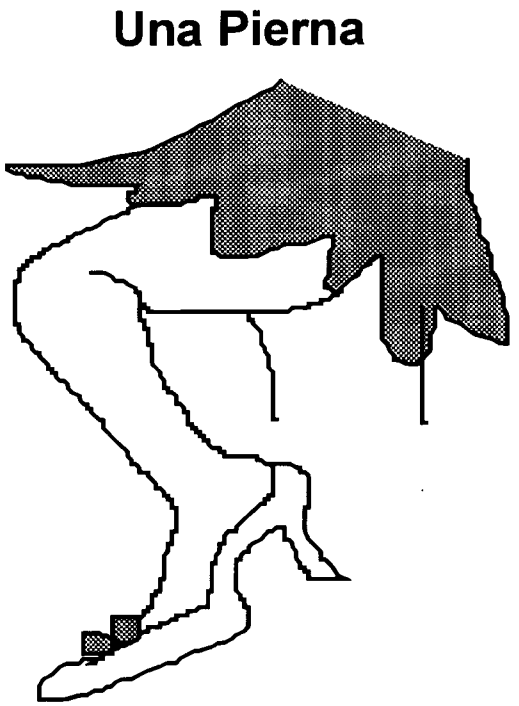
2 Naaki



3 Taa'

Example from Spanish Body Parts game





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It is easiest to play for content reinforcement with decks of 40 cards: 4 of each item in a set, 10 sets word, phrase, or concept. In specific cases, e.g. English pronouns, you could have 32 or 36 cards. You can use cards from other curriculum materials, e.g. flash cards, purchase CCDES card games or create your own using 3x5 index cards. The concepts to be reinforced may be illustrated by student drawings, cut-out pictures from magazines, or other visual cues. The visual cues must be meaningful to your students. Numbers or words could be added, but the visual cues are the key focus points. Put the cards together in sets of four of a kind, in alphabetical order or other meaningful sequence.

Phrases for playing the card games in English, Navajo, German, and Spanish

Phrase for CCDES games	NAVAJO	GERMAN	SPANISH
Do you have _____?	**_____ish holo?**	**Haben sie _____?**	**¿Tiene usted ___? / ¿Tienes tú _____?**
I have _____.	**_____ holo.**	**Ich habe _____.**	**Yo tengo _____.**
Take (it)!	**Neidii'aah (Neigh-dee-ah)**	**Nehmen sie _____!**	**¡Tome usted ___! / ¡Tome tú ___!**
Yes	**Aoo (oh')**	**Ja (Yah)**	**Sí (See)**
No	**Dooda (dough-dah)**	**Nein (Nighn)**	**No**

Phrase for CCDES games	NAVAJO	GERMAN	SPANISH
Do you have _____?	**_____ish holo?**	**Haben sie _____?**	**¿Tiene usted ___? / ¿Tienes tú _____?**
I have _____.	**_____ holo.**	**Ich habe _____.**	**Yo tengo _____.**
Take (it)!	**Neidii'aah (Neigh-dee-ah)**	**Nehmen sie _____!**	**¡Tome usted ___! / ¡Tome tú ___!**
Yes	**Aoo (oh')**	**Ja (Yah)**	**Sí (See)**
No	**Dooda (dough-dah)**	**Nein (Nighn)**	**No**

Order Form for CCDES Card Sets

INVOICE DATE:	INVOICE NUMBER:	P/O NUMBER:
SOLD TO:	SHIP TO:	

	unit cost	quantity	total cost
Cognitive Learning Strategies Cue Cards Set (cards [English or Spanish] plus booklet)	$75.00		
Language/Content Reinforcement Games (English Set of 8 plus booklet)	$100.00		
Card Game: Body Parts (English, Spanish, Lushootseed or Russian)	$15.00		
Card Game: Colors (English, Yup'ik, Navajo, Spanish, German, Lushootseed or Russian)	$10.00		
Card Game: HIS-HER (Possessive Pronouns, Choice of English or Russian)	$15.00		
Card Game: IS-ARE (Plurals & Singulars, Choice of English, Russian or Yup'ik)	$15.00		
Card Game: Numbers (English, Yup'ik, Navajo, Spanish, German, Lushootseed or Russian)	$10.00		
Card Game: ON-OFF (Prepositional Phrases in English)	$15.00		
Card Game: SHE IS-HE IS (Gender & Action Words in English)	$15.00		
Card Game: Time (Choice of English, Russian, or Spanish)	$15.00		
Card Game: US Presidents (1789-1845, 1845-1881, or 1881-1933)	$15.00		
Card Game: Weather (English, Spanish, Lushootseed or Russian)	$15.00		

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