Perspectives on The Application of educational Games to Teaching English Grammar to non-English major Students at HUIT

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the effectiveness of using educational games in teaching and learnig grammar structures to non-English major students at HoChiMinh city university of Industry and Trade (HUIT). The use of educational games could help learners better understand the significance and relevance of mastering new grammatical knowledge easily in English lessons. From the perspective of EFL teachers, teachers' options collect data and further examinng the issues and outcomes, questionnaires and interviews were employed through quantitative methodology. The survey concluded 10 non-major students and teacher' instruction in the process of teaching and learning English to measure non-major students' grammar abilities. In conclusion, the application of educational games in English lessons can create an effectve learning grammar environment for non-major students.

1. Introduction

Education is about individual knowledge and abilities; it is also about learning alongside others. The basis of the educational system is to put learners first. Moreover, education in all topics is essential, it is especially essential to teach English to the younger population, particularly non-major learners. Because early engagement with English helps learners with fluency and confidence as a foundation when they communicate with each other across national boundaries, get living standards higher than ever before, and achieve much success for any educational purposes. Under the impact of using English language skills in higher education, the need to enhance English language teaching and learning has become one of the most important aims of the higher education reform process in HUIT, particular assessments of English grammar are considered fundamental components of English language non-major and major courses at HUIT. Without some knowledge of grammar, it would be impossible to have language comprehension as well as language production. For example, the typical method of acquiring grammar structures is to write word by

word on paper. As a result, students' enthusiasm to learn English is decreasing, so teachers must adapt their teaching techniques. Therefore, to place the students at the centre, teachers must adapt their teaching techniques, such as games, compelling stories, images, and authentic content relevant to learners' lives in English classes, to boost students attention to learn grammar (Castaneda & Cho, 2016; Elbaum, 2006).

Nevertheless, in order to do this, firstly teaching and learning grammar to students has altered dramatically in the modern era of technology and information explosion. Previously, from their teaching experiences, the only way to acquire grammar was through textbooks as this process is relatively tedious and laborious. Teachers have employed a variety of new approaches to instruction to maximize teaching methods and better assist students' language and skill development. One of the most efficient methods has been the use of educational games. Many scientific investigations have been conducted to measure the influence of games appropriately. There are many approaches, such as the functional-notional approaches, to teaching grammar in situational contexts, through texts, stories, songs and rhymes and through games as an effective way to enhance students' proficiency in grammar.

All things considered, the topic for this project is "The Perspectives of the Application of Games in Teaching Grammar to non-major Students at HUIT". Firstly, the research focuses on the selection of acceptable games appropriate for non-major students' abilities as an important part of the educational process at HUIT. Nowadays, non-major students have learned grammar structures more naturally and efficiently as a result of the mix of instructional and recreational activities with the use of educational games by language teaching progress. Secondly, the nature of games as rules is that they are motivating, contextualizing, and natural activities that make learning meaningful, particularly applying correct grammar structures in skills. The use of games not only provides students and teachers have enjoyment and relaxation, but also encourages students to use their language in a creative and communicative manner. For instance, whether the use of games influences the results of learning. Thirdly, the study's primary purpose is to determine the effectiveness of using educational games to teach grammar skills to non-major students. It is intended that by adopting this strategy, students would be able to practice, and improve their grammar acquisition and subsequently increasing achievements in skill development. In short, the research findings will assist teachers in determining how to properly implement this method of teaching in order to improve teaching effectiveness and obtain the best results in the process of learning Grammar in English lessons for non-major students at HUIT.

2. Literature review

Using games in teaching English was one of the most important teaching methods to have an impact on the result of teaching and learning in English lessons. Many studies indicated the effect of using games in teaching grammar as well as other language components such as vocabulary. The integration of

educational games may lead to complete the program effectively. However, the instructional games require teachers must carefully prepare both the allocation of time and the teaching process.

The results revealed that using games is to have an impact on the development of students' English skills, particurlar grammar acquisition. However, there are also some elements to have an impact on the success of educational games by influencing students' interest, motivation, and support in the learning process.

2.1 Grammar

As defined in The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2018), grammar is the study and practice of the rules by which words change their forms and are combined into sentences. According to H. D. Brown, "Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy," New York: Addison Wesley Longman, (2001) grammar is "the system of rules governing the conventional arrangement and relationship of words in a sentence". What is implied behind these definitions is that grammar plays an integral part of foreign language. According to Hawkin (2004), teaching grammar is to help learners acquire English correctly and utilize English language efficiently. Therefore, mastering grammar structures earlier will help students to make meaningful sentences well, and use their language in a communicative manner creatively. That is the reason why teachers and students always focus on teaching and learning grammar. Therefore, how to effectively teach and learn grammar has always been an important task for both teachers and students.

2.2 Games

Many experts demonstrated many definitions of games to reform teaching methods efficiently. According to Wright, Betteridge and Buckby, et al (2005) game is entertaining and engaging in which the learners usually interact with others. Furthermore, if there is a physical or mental competition in the classroom using the game, the teacher must indicate the game's rules to encourage all participants to actively participate in the learning process with enthusiam according to the teacher's guidance, Merriam-Webster Dictionary ("Definition of GAME", 2018). Certainly, if games are applied to teaching grammar, students learn grammatical rules, and remember the rules easily. Therefore, games might be considered one of the useful tools in conveying knowledge, understanding and accessing information the effectiveness of practicing the language. In short, using games appropriately assists students not only with highly educational purposes, but also the readily comprehending knowledge.

2.2.1 Type of games

The use of games in English education is becoming more and more prevalent. Schools not only use online games, but they also set up a variety of games depending on the classroom situation. According to Hadfield (1999), the classification of language games and communication games. Language games emphasize precision, such as providing synonyms and antonyms. Meanwhile, the communication game focuses on the interchange of knowledge and concepts, such as identifying the distinctions between two images that are comparable. Using the correct language is critical to reaching the intended objective of communication. Hadfield's second method of classifying language games contains additional subcategories. Certain characteristics in games that relate to physical charateristics to most non-major students of creating a positive environment are:

- Matching: Matching synonyms/antonyms, matching two sentences together etc.
- Ordering: Arrange words to form sentences, arrange pictures in the order of the story etc
- Completing: Add words to the blanks to complete the sentences.
- Competitions: Compete to see who can put words into sentences the fastest.
- Card games: Games like bingo, dominoes etc.
- Memory games: Contest to see how many sentences the learner can remember the most in a given period of time.

2.2.2 The benefit of using games

The use of games in English instruction has several significant advantages. In the words of Jill Hadfield (1999), a game is an activity with guidelines, objectives, and elements that make it fun. Games tend to be associated with enjoyment and happiness and they have essential educational value in the teaching of foreign languages in general, and English in specific. Students spend time in gaming activities rather than simply listening to lectures and performing exercises, which increases engagement and active involvement. Learning English in the classroom may be efficiently accomplished through games. In the words of Deesri (2000), when English learners play the game, the initial orientation is to use the language to fulfill the task at hand, and the student's goal is to practice the language rather than focus on inventing the correct speech. The trend of raising participation and attention through games with them, therefore motivating to assist students in gaining language faster and developing their ability to utilize English for the proper reason. Students are introduced to vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure naturally and excitingly while playing the game, rather than just studying from extremely lifeless textbooks. Furthermore, the game supplies training in hearing, reading, and comprehending language by listening and reading queries, explanations, or guidance.

2.2.3 Drawbacks of using games

The use of games in the English teaching process requires more time and careful planning than traditional methods. Understanding the foundation and goals of learning and how to incorporate games into lectures requires careful observation and analysis. Based on the Education Summary, incorporating games in teaching may require considerable time as educators need to allocate time for creating and arranging the game. Selecting the appropriate game and determining the best way to implement it could pose a challenge. As a result, before starting lessons, teachers must conduct evaluations and select relevant resources. Setting up associated activities to maintain uniformity with the overall subject matter takes time as well. Furthermore, educators must adhere to strict time limitations in every session of class. Using the game, describing the rules of the game, and directing the rounds' execution may take up the majority of the instructional time.

3.   Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study aims to explore the perspectives of using games to teach grammar rules in non-major students' English classes at HUIT. English is one of a viral majors of the educational program at HUIT. The study was carried out with 10 non-major students at HUIT. At the beginning, most non-major students are not interested in taking grammar lessons. Because they are not aware of the significant role of grammar in language learning like lack of enthusiasm, motivations and boredom in all English Grammar classes. Since using games in the English classroom as a way to change a new learning atmosphere, teacher starts to apply appropriate game to create a more entertaining, engaging and comfortable learning environment and to attract students' attention to take these grammar classes effectively.

3.2. Participants and materials

The aim of the study was to gain insightful knowledge through the use of games in teaching and learning grammar lessons in English classroom. The study was conducted at HUIT with 10 non-major students and teacher' instruction with different levels, attending grammar class twice a week. The research employed both quantitative. To collect data and further examine the issue and outcomes, questionnaires and interviews were employed. Teachers were able to measure students' grammar abilities through the use of educational games. However, the study could benefit from additional details on specific types of games used in grammar lessons and how they were integrated into the curriculum. This would provide a clearer picture of the study methodology and findings.

3.3. Methods

3.3.1. Survey

The survey method of the study is quantitative methodology to collect data about teaching methods and language acquisition from principal participants, particularly non-major students at HUIT, and use relevant methods on teaching techniques into a useful tool. The method illuminates that it has been committed to trying to improve the quality of teaching and learning in English grammar classes. The study's goal was to look into the impact of employing educational games in English courses to improve not only students' grammar abilities but also teachers' teaching techniques. To improve study performance, all non-major students need to connect with others in a new learning environment through the use of educational games with enthusiasm. In conclusion, using educational games in English lessons can effectively improve students' grammar proficiency, and make it easy for teachers to explain the concepts of grammar structures. The outcomes of the research are below:

- The connection between the use of educational games and 10-non-major students language proficiency
- The impact of using educational games on non-major students in English classrooms.

3.3.2. Questionnaires

According to Bell, J. (2005), methods used in case studies of this kind have to be chosen for students' suitability for recent inquiry. Therefore, there is a cost-effective and efficient way to gather information to achieve the research objectives through questions presented below:

1. What are the teachers'perspectives on the use of educational games on teaching grammar?
2. What are the learners' attitudes in the English grammar game classes?
3. Are there any advantages and drawbacks to employing games to teach non-English major students?

However, many questions remain unanswered to enhance the results achieved throughout the teaching procedure. For instance, whether the use of games influences students' opinions, attitudes, and the results of learning. The project's primary goal is to obtain answers to the questions from learners. Hence, the research findings will assist teachers how to properly implement this method of teaching in order to improve teaching effectiveness and enhance the best results in the process of learning English grammar for non-major students.

3.3.3. The researcher Instrument

A questionnaire was prepared and administered in various classes at HUIT for 10 non-major students-teachers. The questionnaire comprised five questions. Applying games to grammar lessons is to have the responses from both non-major students and teachers through the questionnaire applied in English classes at HUIT. Firstly, the participants received all questionnaires, and had an explanation of the purpose of the

survey. Secondly, with the assistance of 10 non-major students and teacher' instruction from classes, the questionnaire was completed in their leisure time and the findings were returned anonymously to answer questions about their experiences participating in game activities during the English grammar learning process at HUIT. The following are survey questions with five degrees of agreement: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree along with the combination of multiple choice questions. Finally, the collected data must be truthfully reported and analyzed to ensure the reliability and validity of the study.

There are five levels of questions covered:

1. Do professors frequently employ educational games in English lessons to encourage students to engage in the English learning process?

2. Do you believe that utilizing educational games makes classes more engaging than traditional methods of instruction?

3. Are grammar abilities, along with others skills, the most improved after taking part in educational game activities?

4. In your perspective, what makes instructional games appealing and beneficial for English learning?

a) Interactive.

b) Competitive.

c) Reduce stress.

d) Integration of multimedia.

e) Other points of view.

5. Do you have any issues or troubles when playing educational games?

a) No worries.

b) Having difficulty communicating information in English.

b) Failing to keep up with the class's speed.

b) The class is too loud to focus on receiving information.

e) Other points of view.

4.   Results

According to the participants, grammar is extremely important. Besides, games are one of the most useful in grammar lessons. The pie chart illustrates the views of non-major students at HUIT on the level of frequency with which their teacher employs educational games in the classroom to develop English grammar abilities. The chart is made up of several percentages that indicates different degrees of students' opinion.
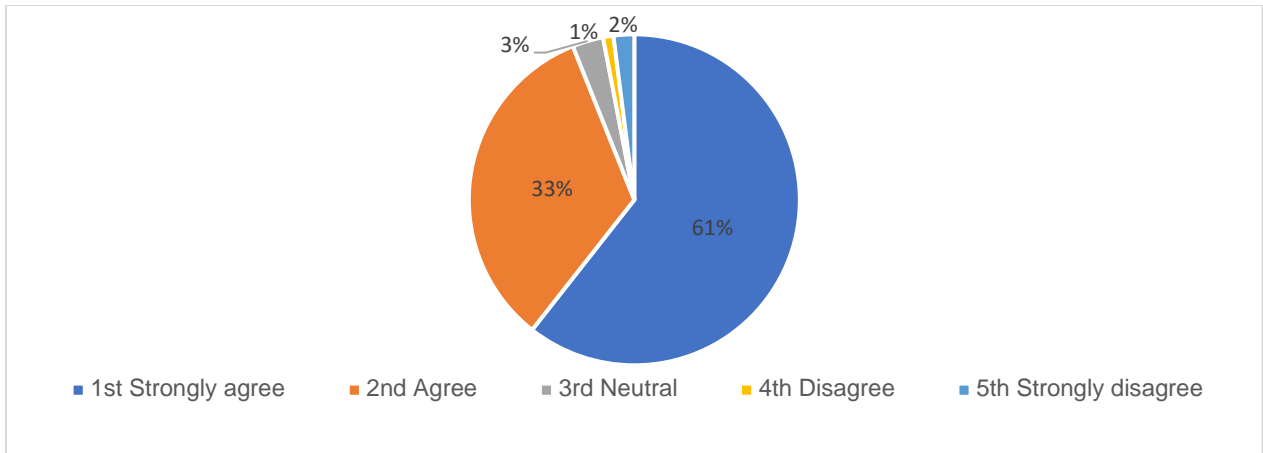
Figure 1. The use of educational games in grammar lessons

A substantial number of non-major students, 61% of the total number of students, stated they completely agree with instructors utilizing educational games to teach English daily. It can be shown that 33% of the non-major students agreed with the usage of educational games. The proportion of those who hold neutral view or opposing view is very small, constituting only 6% of the total to the usage of educational games in English instruction.
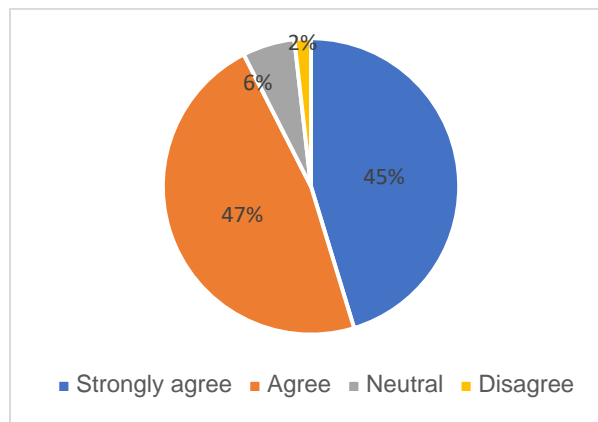

Figure 1. The application of Educational games in teaching process

With points of view on the use of educational games will create a better learning experience than the normal educational approach. The majority of students expressed support with the use of educational games in the English teaching process. More than one-third of the students (45%) absolutely agree, and almost nearly a half of the total (47%) think that educational games should be used in the process of learning English. This demonstrates that the majority of students are strongly interested in educational games in the process of learning. They recognize the significance and efficiency combining of learning with gaming activities in English classes.

The number of students who are either neutral (6%) or disapproving (2%) ideas is low, but their views must be considered.
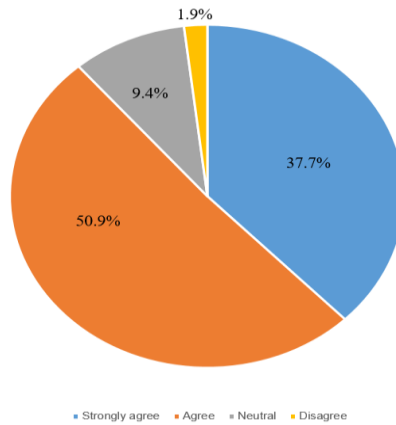

Figure 3. Applying educational games in English classroom

From the data presented, it appears that students express different views on the effectiveness of using educational games to enhance English grammar skills. A significant number of students (37.7% strongly agree and 50.9% agree) believe that such games are helpful in creating an English-speaking environment in the classroom and enhancing their grammar structures rapidly. A small percentage of students (9.4%) feel that they need more experience in the use of games effectively. Moreover, only 1.9% of students disagree to provide an opportunity to communicate with other classmates in a classroom setting.
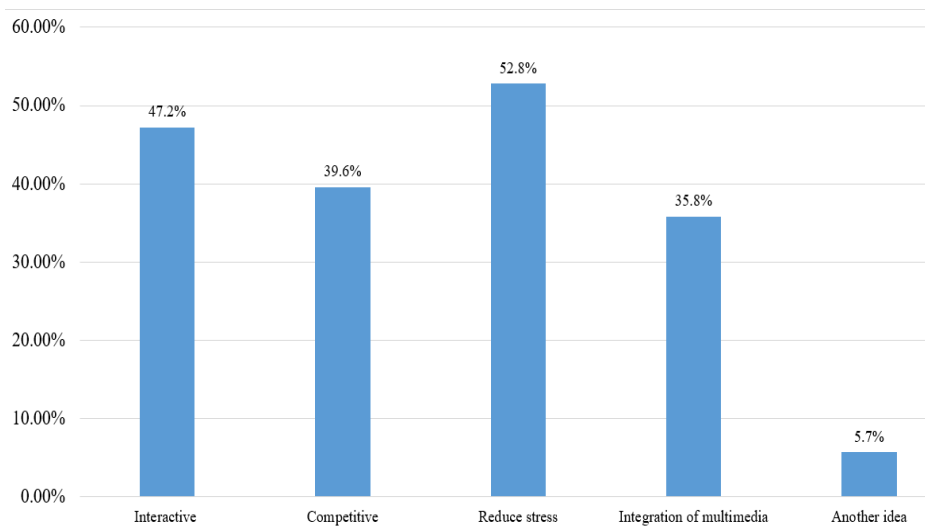

Figure 4. Benefits of educational games

Based on the proportion of student replies, the bar chart illustrates the benefits of educational games, finding the balance between enjoyment and challenge throughout the learning process. The greatest number of students account for 52.8% having a comfortable time during the learning process. The number of 47.2% of all students stated that educational games allow them to engage and utilize English in real-life situations. With 39.6% of other options, they are interested in competitiveness in educational games. Meanwhile, instructional games, which are multimedia integrations of visuals and vibrant noises, account for just 35.8%, which is quite a bit lower than the other variables.
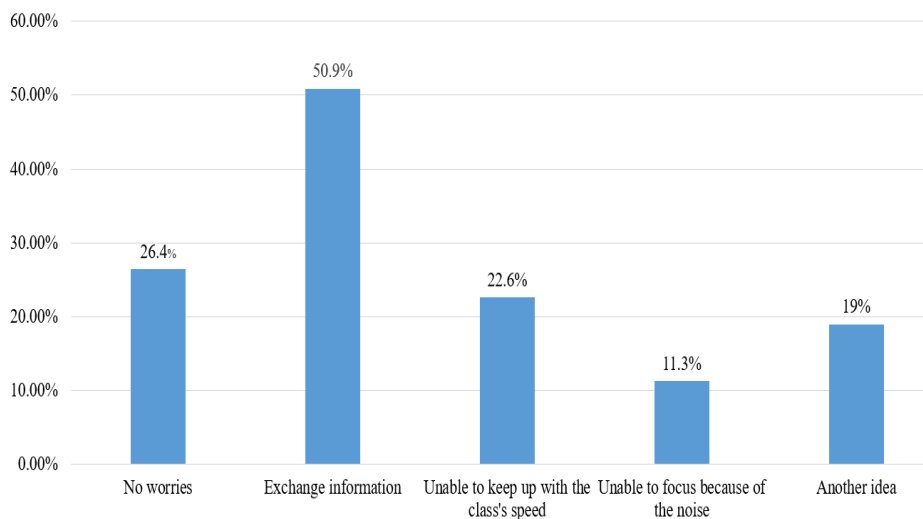

Figure 5. The drawbacks of using Games in the classroom.

According to Figure 5, more than one fifth of students found it is not easy to play educational games effectively. Additionally, the bar chart highlights some common challenges that students face, such as losing concentration due to noise during the game (11.3%), having difficulty keeping up with the class (22.6%), and finding it tough to convey grammar rules in English language learning, which is a problem for almost 51% of them. It's worth mentioning that 19% of students draw on their personal experiences and individual talents in addition to what they learn in English classes.

5. Discussions

The results of the survey of non-major students and the English teacher indicate learners' communication and interaction in real-life contexts, assist learners in memorizing grammatical items. More than 90% of students indicated that teachers frequently apply educational games in English lessons to assist learners in memorizing grammatical items, and motivate learners to acquire new grammatical knowledge so that they are likely to be more confident in their English learning process. As the teacher mentioned, games can be considered more essential tools for EFL teachers at HUIT to create a more comfortable and favorable classroom environment in language teaching. Additionally, more than 90% of students thought

that educational games are more appealing and entertaining than traditional learning techniques. Students at the neutral level may require further knowledge or experience before making a final decision to use educational games.

There is still a small percentage of HUIT teachers and non-major students who seem not to have any ideas or express opposing views toward the issues raised in the questionnaires. Probably, they have not had a chance to experience game-like grammar lessons. Even if they have, the experiences are not impressive enough for them to be aware of the importance of games in their learning and teaching process.

According to my experiences and observations in teaching grammar, the application of games and game-like activities has both benefits and drawbacks.

On the one hand, these activities can create an effective learning environment to satisfy educational purposes, which can lead to the best outcomes in the development of students' grammar understanding and linguistic abilities. Therefore, teachers at HUIT can partly choose relevant games and activities to benefit their students, especially at different levels.

According to the collected data of the charts above, the challenge that teacher encounters is one of time management. Because playing games is the key responsibility is to transmit knowledge, so EFL teachers are wisely to select the best games that are appropriate for all grammatical points, and add the limited time during game class happening. The English teacher must also control the classroom and deal with unexpected events caused by students' behaviors.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The aim of the study is to investigate the effectiveness of the application of games in grammar lessons based on the interaction of both teachers and students in class. Based on the findings of the survey, most teachers and learners respond positively towards the use of games, and that is a good sign to reform the educational process effectively. According to Deesri (2002, p.3), students feel uncomfortable and stressful in the classroom because they have to learn lots of unfamiliar grammatical structures and this affects their learning with the use of games. Therefore, using games to help students learn English grammar structures can be a useful strategy that can be implemented in other classrooms. Some positive implications are provided based on the research findings and discussions on applying educational games to help non-major students' grammar skills at HUIT.

Teachers must offer the limited time to select and prepare game content that is appropriate for each class's level. In the classroom, the interaction between the teacher and each student plays as a significant link to encourages students' interest and drive to participate in school-related gaming activities, resulting in improved English grammar skills.

As a result, games are designed to create interactive activities to develop learners' language competence. Various games were applied to develop learners'grammar abilities in the English lessons. Teachers play a significant role in selecting the correct kind of game for teaching English grammar to non-English major students in English lessons. Nowadays, teachers need to adapt to the new learning environment through the aid of games to help students understand the grammar rules easily and interestingly. It is critical to recognize that students' English grammar proficiency is still limited and to select games with sufficient difficulty to draw attention. In an English classroom, teachers need to be wise in choosing relevant games for the students' level and the teaching materials to bring out their full efforts and skills when the value of games in teaching is truly meaningful.

HUIT teachers find using games in an English class as an essential tool with many benefits. Firstly, games create learners more chances to express their ideas in different situations and practice language learning in an effective manner, particularly grammar acquisition. With the point, students can grasp grammatical items, sentences structures in a wide range. Secondly, educational games provide a new classroom atmostphere that finds a balance between enjoyment and challenge. In short, using educational games to educate students on English grammar abilities is an appealing strategy that offers positive effort in boosting learning English skills for students, particularly non-major students.

Initially, game preparation involves a series of steps ranging from searching, selecting, revising, or creating, which takes quite a long time. Therefore, the internet is the most powerful and affluent source of references. HUIT EFL Teachers can rely on some trustworthy ESL websites for the games that suit and facilitate their teaching instead of thinking of games themselves. What are some of the trustworthy ESL websites that HUIT EFL Teachers can rely on for the games? Checking out the best websites below:

https://www.bamboozle.com/: ESL games available-They're great if you are teaching English to young learners in   particular.

https://www.englishgrammar.org/: a list of specific topics and find interactive exercises, quizzes and PDF lessons to help test your students' knowledge and understanding of English grammar rules.

https://quizlet.com/: a fantastic website that is primarily focused on learning through games and quizzes and you'll find a whole host of fun activities for your class.

However, they need to evaluate and measure the educational purposes that games may bring. Hence, teachers have to strictly follow the time frame so that there is a sufficient amount of time for the main sections.

Finally, HUIT teachers should skillfully let the stronger students work with the weaker to achieve mutual assistance in a group or a team. The weaker ones might feel more comfortable when participating in the activities.

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