

*В статье раскрыта сущность понятия «дифференциация», рассмотрена специфика использования дифференцированных заданий в обучении аудированию младших школьников на уроках английского языка.*

**Ключевые слова:** дифференциация, дифференцированные задания, аудирование, младшие школьники, урок английского языка, начальная школа.

*The article investigates the essence of the concept of “differentiation”, deals with the specificity of the application of the differentiated tasks in the studies of listening at primary school at English lessons.*

**Key words:** differentiation, differentiated task, listening, primary school students, English lesson, primary school.

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## **TEACHING ENGLISH WITH GAMES AND SIMULATIONS**

*The article discusses advantages of teaching English with the whole language communicative approach incorporating a simulation in to the curriculum of an EFL class. It presents stages and description of the “Family and Marriage” simulation and provides instructions for the teachers interested in running a game in their classes.*

**Key words:** language skills, holistic approach, game, simulation.

**Introduction, setting the problem.** A long time ago, creative winds inspired ESL/EFL instructors to teach English with the help of games and simulations. This method allows to easily incorporate all four learning skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) in to the curriculum of an EFL class. Teaching by games allows the students to disassociate themselves from the roles of ESL/ EFL students and to take up any other roles that are required by a simulation. The process of co-creation of the students’ new identity in a simulated language discourse has long proven to be a beneficially relaxing factor in teaching the language. This method allows to override anxiety and to unleash creativity of language learners.

**Analysis of recent achievements and publications.** Discussing the importance of teaching a communicative aspect of language in language classes, D. Crookall and R. Oxford (1990) stressed the crucial role communication plays in simulations that are “an ideal way of developing communication skills” [2, 7]. Similarly, we believe that students in our classes benefit from the whole language communicative approach. Moreover, simulations foster creativity and imagination of our students, motivate them, and provide a sense of novelty and excitement, adding a splash of light and color to the old routines of an EFL class.

Another important advantage of simulations in language classrooms is their authenticity. H. Brown (1994) mentioned that “in the communicative classrooms, students ultimately have to use the language productively, and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts” [1, 245]. Though the issues raised by a simulation are representations of reality, it is important to stress here that our students are creating fictional images, assuming and acting the roles of fictional characters. In this sense, they are creating a world of fantasy or theater that is becoming as real for them as reality itself. D. Crookall and R. Oxford (1990) claimed that “simulation is ‘brought to life’ by participants. In being activated, however, it gains autonomy and takes on a reality of its own, thereby leaving the domain of pure representativity. During a simulation the notion or feeling of representativity fades” [2, 15]. The image of a theater associated with a simulated reality, mentioned by R. J. Dixon (2002), where “acting or performing rather than participating predominate” [3, 361] is closely associated with our students’ performance in a simulation. The process of acting becomes an intimately personal experience, and strong emotions and stage realities are perceived as real. This process is associated with a feeling of involvement in the world of fantasy. It seems that a powerful grip of theatrical reality slowly consumes our students’ inhibitions and insecurities about their language performance, dissolves the walls of the classroom, and involves actors and spectators in the colorful and magical real life.

**The objective of the article.** In this light, the “Family and Marriage” simulation that I am discussing in this article gives our students the feeling of reality. The material for this simulation is as authentic as it can possibly be: families, relationships, life dramas, family conflicts, romance, dating, marriages, divorces, interaction between family members, friends and spouses — in short, everyday life, where our students are playing a part using authentic language and creating with it.

**The objective of the instructor** is to masterfully and inwardly incorporate four skills of learning in to the texture of a game created by the students themselves. The following skills are developed during the game:

**Reading objectives:** For the gist, and for details.

**Speaking objectives:** Formal presentation, informal discussions, group work, prepared and spontaneous speech production.

**Listening objectives:** Watching the part of a movie “My Big Fat Greek Wedding”. Listening to class discussions, presentations and disputes.

**Writing objectives:** Producing a family tree, writing an individual role essay, writing an argumentative essay on the topic of cross cultural, cross religious marriages at the end of the game.

**The statement of the fundamental material.**

*Setting and Running “Family and Marriage” Simulation.*

**Stage 1: Reading.** The students are offered to read and discuss two articles from authentic, non-adopted readers on anthropology. The articles build the vocabulary for the simulation and are concerned with the various forms of marriage and family relationships: Fraternal Polyandry in Tibet and Polygeny in Africa, monogamy in Europe, walking marriage of Mosuo Indians in China. The students read for the gist and details, the readings are followed by a discussion about cross-cultural constraints on marriages and family relationships. The students share information about marriage ceremonies in different countries and talk about marriage traditions and the cultural and religious constraints on marriage and the family. This briefing is essential for building the language and content schemata of our students. It facilitates their transition from one simulation to the other, introduces and builds new vocabulary, and provides a background for the issues to be discussed in the simulation.

**Stage 2: Setting up the Family Simulation.** The “Family and Marriage” simulation could be run with groups or classes of students of pre-intermediate, intermediate, advanced or superior levels of language proficiency. For this simulation, the students are assigned to groups of four or five people. Each group is a “family”. Working as a group, the students are asked to develop and write a family history and come up with the roles of the family members. Each group has to include a family leader and a marriageable son or daughter. To help our students with creating their families, I suggest that they should address the following issues in their group discussions:

1. What is your family name? (Keep your first names). What are all your ages?
2. What religion is your family? What is the history of religious choices in your family?

3. What country is your family from? What kind of community: village, town, city?
4. What kind of work does each member of your family do?
5. How close is your family in physical and emotional distance?
6. What are the roles of each of your family members? What cultural constraints, particularly these concerning marriages, are there on these roles?
7. What are the marriage customs of your family and culture?

The students are free to take any roles they wish and develop their families any way they like. Each family should present a family tree during their group presentation.

**Stage 3: Family presentations.** The students make creative presentations of their families, present a family tree, write individual essays about their roles and one essay per family addressing questions they were asked to focus on. The written assignments are turned in to the instructor on the day of the presentation.

**Stage 4: Marriage Simulation.** The students continue with the marriage part of the simulation discussing possibilities of marriage of marriageable sons or daughters in their family groups. If the marriage is to take place, the groups are running marriage ceremonies according to their family cultures and according to their cultural constraints on marriages and marriage ceremonies.

**Stage 5: Debriefing.** This stage in a simulation is aimed at destroying the fictional world of a game in which the students live up to that date. The students and the instructor are to discuss linguistic, logistic, organizational and psychological aspects of the game, evaluate it and make changes if necessary.

**Stage 6: Argumentative essay.** Writing a classic five paragraph argumentative essay on a given prompt on cross-cultural, cross-linguistic and cross-religious marriages at students' choice.

**Conclusion and applications.** Though a big volume of preparatory work for both instructors and language students seems obvious and could be quite challenging, the practical application and the results of a learning process during the simulation are far worth the trouble to run it sometimes in a regular English language class.

The whole language approach used in teaching with games and simulations rewards our students with such freedom of action, that it inspires our students' creativity and lowers their inhibitions. It results in fascinating stories told by our students, funny or sad, very creative and imaginative, every one different, and every one of them a piece of art and reflection of real life.

It is a good communicative activity to share with other language instructors, who, like me, believe in teaching language with games.

### **References**

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*У статті розглянуто переваги викладання англійської мови за допомогою цілісного мовного комунікативного підходу з використанням у навчальній програмі рольових ігор та симуляцій, а також наведено складові частини й опис симуляції «Сім'я та шлюб», інструкції та рекомендації для вчителів, зацікавлених у її проведенні в своїх класах.*

**Ключові слова:** мовні навички, цілісний підхід, симуляція, гра.

*В статье рассмотрены преимущества преподавания английского языка посредством целостного языкового коммуникативного подхода с использованием в учебной программе ролевых игр и симуляций, а также представлены составляющие части и описание симуляции «Семья и брак», инструкции и рекомендации для учителей, заинтересованных в ее проведении в своих классах.*

**Ключевые слова:** языковые навыки, целостный подход, симуляция, игра.