

A MANUAL FOR THE USE OF
INSTRUCTIONAL WORD GAMES

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TARGET AUDIENCE: JUNIOR SECONDARY 1 & 2 (FOREIGN & INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES)

MATERIAL TYPE: NON-SIMULATED WORD GAME

OBJECTIVES: AT THE END OF EACH GAME SESSION, PARTICIPANTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

- a) Correctly form words using the assigned 7 - 10 lettered alphabets.
- b) Identify all new words formed.
- c) Give the dictionary meanings of all the new words formed, and;
- d) Use these words correctly in sentences.

RESOURCES USED FOR THE PRODUCTION:

Straw Board, Sand Paper, Water-proof pens, Card boards, Stencil lettering guide.

INTRODUCTION

Instructional games are good learning techniques. They lend themselves to almost every learning situation provided a good classroom organization and control is ensured. To achieve lasting and meaningful learning among the young learners, enjoyment and achievement should be allowed to go together.

Using games in classrooms is probably as old as the human race. The application of games to learning stems from the theories of educational reformers like Froebel and Montessori who saw children as creative beings who should be given ample opportunity to find out things for themselves. They repeatedly stressed the need for children to have freedom to learn initiative and self-reliance with the teachers acting as guide posts and facilitators rather than as custodians of knowledge. It has also been observed that carefully designed "play things" help mentally handicapped children to learn faster. One major value in utilizing this instructional strategy is the increased student motivation and participation that ensued. Thus, to keep pace with the rest of the world in the areas of Science and Technology the basic subjects must be handled effectively and joyously from the onset so as to give

the young learners a solid background and the required motivation. Instructional games as a teaching strategy is not without some limitations. One of such limitations is the fact that games generally take considerable time to play. For instance, Wittich and Schuller (1979) noted that out of some 29 games for junior and senior high school they reviewed, the playing time lasts between one to thirty (1 - 30) hours, with an average of approximately four to five (4 - 5) hours for each game. Often teachers cannot adequately accommodate such learning activities within the class contact period. Instructional games are, however, effective motivational device used to maximize students' participation. Teachers who use them report their best results when such materials are carefully incorporated in an overall instructional plan (Ekpo, 1985).

RULES OF THE GAME

This game may be played by 2, 3 or 4 players or in groups of 2, 3 or 4 in addition to a time keeper/recorder and a custodian. It is an indoor game that should be used in any language class. The principle and the rules of the game are the same for all languages. One hundred and fourteen (114) lettered alphabets or tiles are produced from straw boards and 2, 3, or 4 larger card boards of about 20 x 20 ruled into 1 x 1 squares are prepared to serve as playing areas. A custodian who may either be an instructor or one of the students keeps all the lettered alphabets and decides on what letters to give to the players. He gives ten (10) lettered alphabets to each of the players at any single round of the play. Thus, if there were two players he will need to draw 20 lettered alphabets; if three, 30 lettered alphabets; if four, 40, etc. At each game session, all players have to be given identical set of lettered alphabets. Each player is free to use these letters to form correct English (French or any African language) words they know across their playing boards within 30 seconds.

To make the learning tasks challenging, some restrictions could be given like no acceptance of proper nouns, etc. There should be a clue to indicate when to start and end each playing session. At the expiration of the 30 seconds, the number of correct/complete words are reckoned up, all unused letters are returned to the general pool held by the custodian of the letters.

RECKONING UP

All five letter words and above are awarded 5 points, while 4 letter words are awarded 2 points, and anything less is awarded one point each.

Thus for player 'A' with the following words:

	L	I	G	H	T						
	E		O								
	D		E								
			S								

the total score could be 8 - (Light -5; Led - 1; and goes -2 points).

Whereas player 'B' with the same 10 lettered alphabets might form a different set of words thus:

		E	I	G	H	T					
						O					
						E					

At the reckoning up, player 'B' will score only 6 points. The word 'eight' fetches him 5 points and 'toe' fetches him 1 point. Since he has only used 7 lettered alphabets out of the 10 served, the 3 unused - L, D, S have to be returned to the custodian's general pool before the next gaming session.

DETERMINING THE WINNER

The player with the highest score at the end of the game is declared the winner. For this first round therefore, player 'A' with 8 points is the winner.

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

Various follow up activities could be arranged for the learners:

- a) Each player could be encouraged to identify all the new words he is seeing for the first time, find out their dictionary meanings and use them correctly in sentence construction.
- b) Other games could be played using a set of 10 lettered alphabets with similar rules. For instance, the players could be cued as follows:
 - i. Give one word for a person whose duty is to make other people more beautiful - (Beautician - 10 letters).
 - ii. Give one word for a spotless, flawless pure substance that is clean and neat - (Immaculate - 10 letters), etc.

REFERENCES

- EKPO, C. M. (1985). "Feedback - Expert appraisal of Instructional Word Game," exhibited at the 1985 National Festival of Instructional Materials held at Kaduna: 10th - 13th December, 1985.
- WITTICH, W. A. and SCHULLER, C. F. (1979). Instructional Technology: Its Nature and Use Sixth Edition. New York: Harper and Row Publishers.