

LESSON PLANNING AND LANGUAGE-GAMES

WITTGENSTEIN ON LANGUAGE:

- We remain unconscious of the prodigious diversity of all the every-day language-games because the clothing of our language makes everything alike. Something new (spontaneous, ‘specific’) is always a language-game.

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- “I set the brake up by connecting up rod and lever.”—Yes, given the whole of the rest of the mechanism. Only in conjunction with that is it a brake-lever, and separated from its support it is not even a lever; it may be anything, or nothing.

Philosophical Investigations—§6

LANGUAGE-GAMES:

- Games vary, but most have some form of rules, a field, moves, and pieces.
- A language-game has rules of engagement, a topic, phrases, and vocabulary.
- It’s hard to play a game with other people if you don’t have all the components.

LANGUAGE-GAMES AND LESSON PLANNING:

- First, think of the particular language-game you want your students to master.
- Next, think about the components of that particular language-game.
- Separate the components and arrange in a logical order for smooth uptake.
- Make each component into a distinct section of the lesson plan.
 - ✧ Give examples, modeling, phrases, and vocabulary.
 - ✧ Students should always repeat and practice your modeling. Briefly.
 - ✧ Engage the students with an activity focused on the particular component.
- Do not skip any components!
 - ✧ Some components should be stretched a little to fill an entire period.
 - ✧ Short components can be given together in order in a single period.
 - ✧ For advanced students, just move more quickly.
- When students have all the components, bring them together with the Grand Finale.
 - ✧ Final lesson should be totally student-centered.
 - ✧ Think of a fun activity that exercises the entire language-game at once.
 - ✧ Try to get students to present their dialogues, projects, etc. to the class.

THE BENEFITS:

- Fills out your semester plan with less head-scratching and anxiety.
- Fills out your students’ experience of whatever language-game you present to them.
- Gives your students and JTEs a smooth, logical flow from one class to the next.
- Helps avoid the confusion that seems to easily set in during team-teaching activities.
- No more One-Hit-Wonders amidst random duds.