

## LITTLE TRICKS CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

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În lumea megavitezelor, tehnologiilor superavansate, dar și a eternelor conflicte, infarcte și depresii, pentru mulți dintre noi, din păcate, școala nu mai reprezintă al doilea cămin. De multe ori ne simțim epuizați, stresați și de parcă n-ar fi îndeajuns, suntem bombardați de tot felul de sarcini inutile și ne scufundăm tot mai mult în mormane de hârtie. Totuși, luminița din capătul tunelului există. Trebuie doar să punem accent pe lucrul la clasă și să căutăm acele metode simple și eficiente care să motiveze elevii noștri.

In this world of megaspeed, supergadgets, but also permanent conflicts, strokes and nervous breakdowns, for most of us, unfortunately, school no longer represents a second home. Too often are we exhausted, stressed, and beware: this can be topped. Thus, we are flooded by heaps of useless tasks and counter-productive paperwork. Yet, there is always light at the end of the tunnel. If we just could be more passionate about teaching and look for simple and efficient strategies that will motivate our students.

By motivating our students around the clock we do not only maximize the outcome of teaching and empower our students, we also attain personal growth and recharge our battery. But can we become more effective with the same, or why not, less effort? Many teachers have realized that the KISS method (*Keep it simple, stupid!*) does no harm, on the contrary, it can bring about personal development and autonomy for the students and some valuable me-time for the teachers.

Using appropriate strategies and techniques all students will become active participants and construct their own learning. In this paper, I will present a range of quick-fire ideas, i.e. card games, that are practical, communicative, time-efficient, easy to use, and take the pressure off the teacher.

1. **"A Cup of Conversation"** is a good warmer but also revision game and all you need is a cup and some topics or questions on slips of paper. In pairs, the students are supposed to

draw one slip and keep talking for a minute or two. I learnt about this activity from a YouTube video (made by English for Asia). It develops fluency, improves social skills, and is worthy of your attention.

2. **"The Spiral of Conversation"** can also be used as an icebreaker or reinforcement exercise. Again, on slips of paper there are topics or questions. In twos, students speak, respectively answer the questions, then change slips and find a new peer. It leads to continual communication and interaction.
3. **"Did You Know...?"**-cards can help dug deeper into different subject matters. They enhance general knowledge and showcase the students' knowledge. The activity is performed just like *The Spiral of Conversation*. However, on each card there are two *"Did you know...?"* facts and the student shares the one he considers more relevant. The input flooding is challenging and broadens the students' horizon.
4. **MC-cards** on different topics are good content-organisers and offer punctual and purposeful knowledge. On each card there is a question followed by MC answers, the right one is in bold. The students respond well, tackle the tasks easily, gain more self-confidence and incorporate background knowledge into their conversation.

As teachers we don't have a magical top hat where from to pull out solutions to our everyday problems. However, we can often produce significant change and ensure improvement by applying simple tricks and appropriate instruction strategies. Surprisingly, most don't require painstaking efforts and long hours of labour. As long as we are selective, motivated, and resourceful, and the teaching materials we use are meaningful and student-centered, we, the teachers can take our careers to the next level and spread the sparkle of enjoyable and thought-provoking learning. OK, perhaps you are right and I am overly optimistic about this but do not forget: The more involved students are, the more memorable the lesson will be.

### Bibliography

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