

• Teaching Special Needs☺

Teaching special needs students can be a stressful, frustrating and intimidating experience, but it doesn't have to be that way! We hope our advice can give you some ideas on how to have fun with your lessons, and hopefully make teaching special needs students something you look forward to! ☺ We consider the three following basic ideas when approaching a lesson:

1. Be patient. Don't be afraid to teach the same lesson many times. It may take students longer than you think to be able to remember the material. If they seem to be learning quickly, add on to the information, but remember to review each lesson until you are sure they've gotten it.

2. Make active lessons. Students are more likely to remember the information if there is some sort of action, game or visual aid involved. Even if students are more advanced and learning regular grammar, you can make colored cards to separate things into categories like subject, verb, object, etc. This may help them have an easier time distinguishing between things.

3. Have fun! ☺ Teaching special needs can be a most rewarding experience! Building good relationships with these students will increase their interest in English and other cultures! Learning the students' names and playing with them during breaks will really make a difference in how comfortable they are with you!

What kind of tools and games, you say? The following pages have some helpful examples that work really well for us! Hopefully you can find them useful too! Most of them are very open to being altered, so you can change them to suit your needs!

What's This? Box



Cut a hole on the top of a **box**, and remove one side so that **objects** can easily be placed inside. Students must try to guess the English word for the object in the box! It's good to use vocabulary they have already practiced. We usually use this as a way to either review or progress to something new. You can even practice "open" and "close your eyes."

Body Builder Game (aka Snowman Game) (demonstration)

Build the body dice by covering a cardboard box with colored paper, and pasting drawings of the body parts on each side.

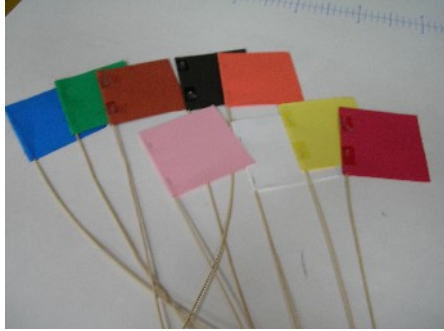


Draw two snowmen on the board (as demonstrated). Divide the students into two teams. Assign a snowman to each team. Have students take turns rolling the body-part dice. Whatever part it lands on, they must first say, then draw on the board. If the student rolls a part that has already been drawn, their turn is over. We usually have them yell, "OH NO!" since they seem to like yelling that as much as they like winning. ☺ The first team to complete the snowman wins!

Let's Go Fishing!

Make **fishing poles** out of **sticks**, **string** and **magnets** (found at 100yen or craft stores). Make some paper **cutouts** of something the students are studying. For example: colors, shapes, animals, objects, etc. Attach magnets to each cutout. Lay the cutouts on the floor. Split the students into teams and have them fish for the cutouts that match the word you call out. (It's basically like Karuta but with magnets.) You can make pairs of cutouts so both teams can win, or make it harder by only having one cutout for each word. You can also make students say the word that matches the cutout after they've won it.

Color Practice

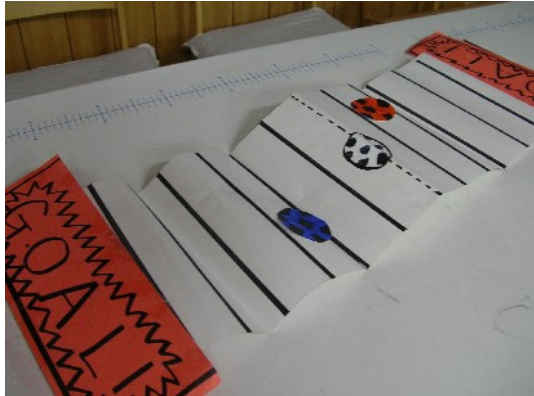


Attach some colored paper to the end of some skinny sticks (like little flags!). Have students practice how to pronounce each color as a group. Then place the flags upside-down in a box. If you want to be really fancy (like us) you can cover the box in gold paper. Walk around to each student and have them pull out a flag, and then say the color they chose. This could be altered to use drawn objects as well. ☺ This is a great warm up for the fishing game!

Vocabulary Bingo Bowling

Clean some **pet bottles** from the recycle bin. Tape some **vocabulary** (maybe with pictures) to the bottles. Students fill out **bingo sheets** with the vocabulary. Line up the bottles on the floor. Students take turns rolling a **tennis ball** across the floor to the knock down the bottles. If they knock down one bottle, they say the word they knocked down (and the meaning), and then they can cross that word off their bingo sheet. If they knock down two bottles, make them say the words, but they can't cross out anything. They have to try again on their next turn. This can be made harder by making the students call which bottle they are going to knock down first, and only letting them cross it out if they knock down the correct bottle. This game can also be played without the bingo sheet if students are having trouble.

Soccer Game



We usually start with three emotions, and work our way up to more. We make large face cards to practice with. (see above)



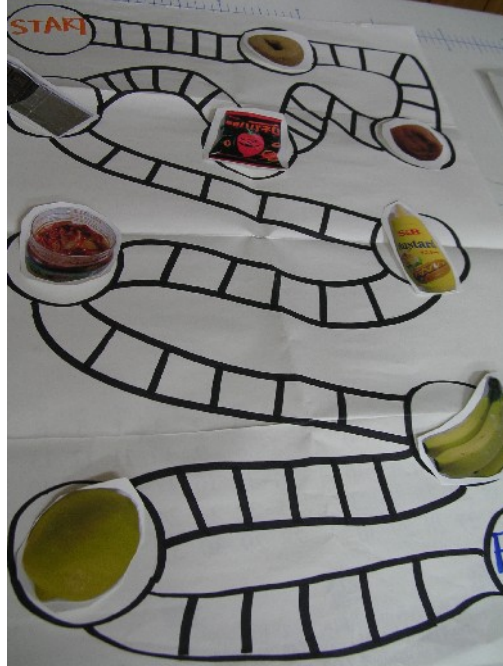
Make **two dice**, one with **numbers**, and one with **emotions** (happy, sad, angry, etc). Make a **paper soccer field**, and **two paper soccer balls** (two different colors). Tape the soccer field to the board, and use magnets (or tape if you have to) to hold the balls on the start line. Divide the class into two teams, and assign each team a goal. Each student must roll both dice. The number they land on indicates how many spaces they can move. The emotion indicates which direction they move. For example, if they roll “happy” they move towards their goal, but if they roll “angry” or “sad” they move away from their goal. The first team to score a goal wins!

McDonald's Game (aka Hamburger Shop)



We asked McDonald's for some supplies to make our own pretend hamburger shop! Students role play being a customer. They can practice Small, Medium, Large, and whatever food items packaging you managed to get! (If you are too shy to ask McDonald's for packaging, you can always draw your own cards. Students love the real packaging though ☺). This is great practice for numbers, sizes, and menu items. If students do well, have them try being the shopkeeper too!

Emotion/ Object Board Game (Sweet, Spicy, Sour Game)

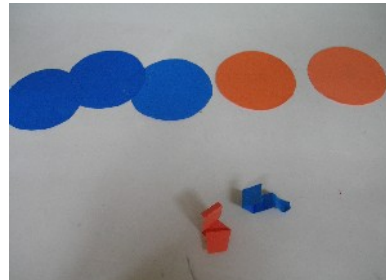


Note*In this example, we made the game for sweet, sour or spicy foods. But you can use anything you want for the cutouts.

Draw a board like the one in the picture. Leave large spaces for cutouts. Make cutouts of sweet, spicy, and sour foods. Place each food on a large space. Make two stacks of cards in two different colors. For example, a red stack, and a blue stack. Draw different numbers of faces on each card in both stacks. For example, draw four happy faces on one blue card, then draw two sad faces on another blue card. Make sure you draw the same emotion on each card, but vary the number of faces. Students draw a card from a stack. The number of faces is how many spaces the students can move. The emotion determines the direction. Happy means they can move forward, and sad means they have to move backward. If they land on a cutout, they must first say what it is, then if it sweet, sour or spicy. The first student to make it to the finish line wins!

Paper Team/Point System

Making groups: We use small pieces of colored paper for simple things like breaking into groups. Cut small pieces of paper in two colors (whatever colors you would like them to practice), then tell the student to “close” his or her eyes. Put one of each paper in your hand, and have them “open” their eyes. Have them choose a hand, and whatever color they get is their team color! Have them say the color team they are on.



Paper points: Instead of writing the points that teams win on the blackboard, how about getting some more color/number practice in?! Make many circles in different colors (usually the same colors you assigned each team; for example orange circles for orange team). Attach magnets to the circles (or tape if you have to). When a student wins a point for their team, give them a paper point to put on the board. At the end of the game, have the teams count the points together to see who won! 😊

Basic Cutout Examples (magnets and flashcards)



Memory Game



Place small objects (or paper cutouts) of things students are learning on the table. (We made a fancy separator out of milk cartons) Cover them with paper cups. Have students work individually or in a pair to play memory! In case you haven't played memory before, it's fairly simple. Each person or pair can turn over two cups! If the items match, they get to keep them (as points). Have them say each item they uncover. Also you can have them practice saying "open" and "close." Students with the most points win! ☺

Are these examples too easy for your students? Try challenging more advanced students to translate an illustrated story book! Or, use pictures to play Karuta practicing subject, object, verb sentences! A restaurant reservation role-play is another fun activity advanced students can enjoy.

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