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Section 2 of the Culture paper: suggested games and activities to maintain learners' interest

True / false: the teacher or a learner reads or displays a PowerPoint with sentences about the plot or characters in a chapter/section/novel/short story/ film. Learners decide true or false – if false, they correct it.

Gap fill: the teacher produces a summary of a chapter/short story/scene from the film, for example, with key words left blank. Learners must fill in the blanks. At the beginning of the course, the missing words could be given in a random order but later these could be omitted.

Who am I?: each learner chooses a character from the text or film. Their partner or group must find out who they are by asking questions. The learner can only answer 'yes' or 'no'. The identity would be revealed after a certain number of questions e.g. 20 or 25. If the group does not guess, the learner wins.

Time lines: this may be helpful for complicated plots. The teacher prepares a set of cards with an event on each one. The learners must place the events in the correct order according to the text/film. This can be an individual/pair/group activity.

What happened next?: on the same lines as the previous activity, cards are prepared and learners have to say what happened next in the plot.

Spidergrams or mind maps: learners are given one word, e.g. a theme, a literary device such as suspense, a character, and they have to construct as large a web as they can, showing how the central element relates to other events/characters/themes in the text/film. A double web can be made when learners are asked to compare and contrast two short stories. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind_map

How much can you say?: learners are in groups. The teacher gives an opening phrase or name, such as 'poverty' – the learners each have to say something about the prompt, which is related to the text/film. The activity continues until no-one has anything else to add. Keep a record of how many contributions were made.

Alphabet game: the letters of the alphabet are written up with a score attached to each one. The most difficult letters, e.g. Z, would have a high score and the easier ones, e.g. A, a lower score. Learners work in pairs or groups to devise sentences about the text/film, each starting with a different letter of the alphabet.

Quotation game: learners work in pairs/groups to draw up a list of key quotations. These are presented to the class and the other learners have to identify the quotations and explain their importance. This could also be a teacher-prepared activity or a test.

Emotions: the teacher gives the class a list of emotions that are portrayed in the text/film. The learners have to find examples of each one. This could be prepared on a worksheet and given as homework to be brought to the next class for discussion.

There are many more games and activities. The key principle in devising your own is to ensure that the learners are doing the work – they deepening their knowledge and understanding of the text/film. Pair or group work is helpful in encouraging debate and discussion. Many other types of practice are possible, such as preparing cartoons of a chapter or scene and asking others to identify it, summarising a scene / chapter / short story in pictures or symbols and explaining why these were chosen or devising an interview with one of the main characters and acting it out.

