LAYING YOUR CARDS ON THE TABLE

By Robert Young (ELTAS)

Using cards is an excellent way to brighten up your lessons and retain the interest of your students. In my opinion, it is a very effective ways to teach vocabulary and also many aspects of grammar to students of all levels of language ability. It also stimulates interaction between students and helps to break the ice. My students are always interested when I pull a new set of cards out of my bag. You can divide the class into teams and each team takes it in turns to do a different card exercise. You can even have the teams competing against each other which raises spirits even higher. Encourage discussion during the exercise and ask the students to think of other solutions. In every lesson you should elect a student to act as secretary who writes down any new words alongside the German translation and an explanation of the meaning of the word. Every month you can then create a new card game using the list of new words which have been learnt. After all exercises have been completed, each student receives the solutions as a handout. Each week you can use two new card games plus the most difficult game from the previous week as revision. For the card exercise, you need different coloured cards which should be cut to the desired size. It is better to use a marker to write the cards. First of all, type the exercise as a Word document, and then write the cards. There are different many categories of card exercises including:

1. Matching English and German words or phrases.
2. Matching related words.
3. Matching word pairs.
5. Matching opposites.
7. Dividing words into different categories.

Below are five examples of card exercises followed by some ideas so you can create your own card exercises. For each exercise you should do the following:

1. Shuffle the cards well.
2. Divide the students into groups of no more than 4 people evenly distributed according to age, gender and ability.
3. Let the students lay the cards neatly on the table and try to match them.
4. Help the students with words which they do not know or have a dictionary available.
5. One student should make a note of any words which were previously unknown by the group.
When the exercise is finished you can do the following:
- Have the students speak the words out loud and check the pronunciation.
- Have a student choose a word and explain it in his own words. The others have to guess which word he has chosen.
- Get the students to take it in turns to ask their neighbour a question using a word or phrase in the exercise.
- Ask each student a question using words from the exercise.
- Write some of the words on the board with the letters jumbled.
- Write a difficult word on the board and have the students create a mind map around this word.
- Play a game with matching cards by sharing the different coloured cards equally amongst the students. Each student takes it in turns to call out a word and one of the other students has to look for a matching card in his hand. If he calls out a wrong card he loses his card. If he calls out a correct card then he wins both cards. The person with the most matched cards in the end is the winner.

**Business word pairs**

1. bank          overdraft
2. business      trip
3. credit        limit
4. current       account
5. curriculum    vitae
6. fiscal        year
7. human         resources
8. job           vacancy
9. joint         venture
10. market       research
11. maternity    leave
12. mobile       phone
13. public       relations
14. short        list
15. small        change
16. standing     order
17. suggestion   scheme
18. tax          haven
19. training     course
20. venture      capital

**Business word opposites**
1. boom recession
2. careful negligent
3. cheap dear
4. conscientious lazy
5. credit debit
6. establish fold up
7. export import
8. help hindrance
9. huge tiny
10. income expenditure
11. individual corporate
12. present absent
13. private public
14. profit loss
15. safe dangerous
16. sales purchasing
17. smart scruffy
18. soar tumble
19. temporary permanent
20. variable constant

**Negative adjectives**

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likely accessible possible logical responsible
pleased
clear direct probable legal rational organised
abridged advisable perfect legitimate reversible satisfied
certain appropriate practical legible relevant loyal

Here you need 6 cards with the negation prefixes written on them. There are, of course, many other adjectives which you could use.

**Business verbs and associated nouns**

*The German translation is only for the handout*
1) Achieve a target Ein Ziel erreichen.
2) Beg to differ Ich erlaube mir, anderer Meinung sein.
3) Break even Ohne Gewinn oder Verlust abschliessen.
4) Call the shots Das Sagen haben.
5) Carry the can Verantwortlich sein.
6) Chair a meeting Eine Besprechung leiten.
7) Clinch a deal Ein Geschäft abschliessen.
8) Corner the market Einen Markt beherrschen.
9) Draw a conclusion Einen Schluss ziehen.
10) Face the music Die Konsequenzen tragen.
11) Foot the bill Die Rechnung bezahlen.
12) Learn the ropes Sich einarbeiten.
13) Pull one's weight Seinen Teil leisten.
14) Tackle a problem Ein Problem anpacken.
15) Throw a party Eine Party schmeissen.

Idioms

1. Jetzt geht mir ein Licht auf. - That rings a bell.
2. Jetzt sind Sie dran. - The ball's in your court.
4. Kurz zusammengefasst. - In a nutshell.
5. Massnahmen ergreifen. - To take steps.
7. Ohne Hand und Fuss. - Without rhyme or reason.
8. Um den heissen Brei herum reden! - Don't beat about the bush.
9. Retten, was zu retten ist. - To make the best of a bad job.
10. Seien wir ehrlich. - Let's face it.
12. Sich einmischen. - To butt in.
13. Sich fehl am Platze fühlen. - To be out of one's element.
15. Um es ganz offen zu sagen. - To put it bluntly.
17. Vom Regen in die Traufe. - Out of the frying pan and into the fire.
18. Von mir aus. - For all I care.
19. Was Sie nicht sagen! - You don't say!
20. Die Suppe auslöffeln. - Face the music.

Other ideas include :-

This article is from the Articles Bank of the IATEFL Associates Website @ www.dudeney.com/iatefl/associates/
1. Irregular and regular verbs.
2. State and dynamic verbs.
3. Do / make words. (e.g. Do homework, make a suggestion)
4. Proverbs.
5. Countable and uncountable nouns.
6. Prepositions at, in, on.
7. Phrasal verbs.
8. Verb/adjective -> noun suffixes (-ity, -ion, -ing, -ment, -ness, -ance, or none e.g. call)
9. Verbs + infinitive and verbs + gerund (-ing).
10. Verbs which are associated with a specific preposition (e.g. rely on).
11. Technical vocabulary e.g. car parts, computer words, machine processes etc.

So if your lessons feel like “a house of cards” and you are heading for a “cardiac arrest” then “try your hand” at “laying the cards on the table” and this “safe card” “card trick” will rescue you and become a good “visiting card” for you as an “ace” teacher and before long you’ll be applying for a “gold credit card”. 😊

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