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EDSL 315 – Professional Seminar 3

Jill Brooks

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SPEAQ reflection

**Gamification featuring GIMKIT by Glenn Cake**

**November 7th from 14:15-15:15**

This workshop was an introduction to the app GIMKIT which can be used in the classroom as a way to gamify the lesson. It was created as a school project by a 19-year-old teenager from Seattle by the name of Josh Feinsilber and can be used in both face-to-face and virtual classroom settings. I chose to watch this workshop since I strongly believe in gamification of the classroom. This allows students to find the joy and excitement in the classroom without even realizing that they are learning.

One of the great features of GIMKIT, which is one of the reasons why I see myself using this in the future, would have to be the ability to create classrooms and drop quizzes there so that students can either complete them for homework or live, depending on what the teacher chooses. As ESL teachers, we do not only have 1 group on 1 level, so it is great to have the ability to create online groups in order for them to receive different content that we decide to assign to them. I really enjoy completing Kahoots with my students since the students enjoy it so much however, we are only able to complete those live. With GIMKIT, I would be able to leave the quiz for students to complete when they feel ready.

As I stated, the teacher creates classrooms and GIMKIT allows for us to see how the students have done when completing the quiz. It can also check how the entire class did on specific questions so that the teacher can pinpoint which aspects students have the most amount of issues with. This aspect makes the application truly worthwhile to me since it allows me to check for understanding without students being stressed about a graded quiz/test. Students can also help create a quiz by adding questions to an editable one created by the teacher. We still control which questions we accept however; this is an additional way to check whether students truly understand the material or not.

The only drawback of GIMKIT would be the price. The free version only allows for 5 players per quiz, which forces us to buy it since it will never happen that our class only has 5 students. An individual account costs 66$ a year, in U.S. dollars. Now, they said that they had a school deal that would include up to 20 teachers for the price of 650$ U.S. for the year. As appealing as this application is, I prefer to stick with Kahoot until I can decide to whether the application is truly worth the price.

Overall, other than the price issue, GIMKIT is an application that I believe to a great addition to my classroom resources. The live or virtual aspects as well as the quiz drop into a created classroom take it one step further than Kahoot and really make me want to try it in the future. As I have mentioned, gamification in the classroom is something that I believe to be essential and GIMKIT incorporates that aspect perfectly for easy use for both myself and my students.

**Teaching Outside the box: A Crash Course in Creativity by Dave Burgess**

**November 7th from 15:30-16:30**

This plenary was the closing lecture of the SPEAQ conference and was given by Dave Burgess, author of the book “Teach like a Pirate”. He spoke of the use and development of creativity in teachers and I will be sure to apply these techniques in my teaching, even during my current field experience.

He started off by telling us that creativity is in all of us. We can never use the excuse: ‘Well I’m just not creative’. Creativity is locked in our brain; we just need to learn to ask the right questions. A question like: “Can I get my students outside for this lesson?”, will often end with you saying that it will not work out and giving up. Instead, we should use questions like: “How can I get my students outside for this lesson?”. The addition of that one simple word changes your entire way of thinking. With this question, you know that the students will be going outside, you just have to figure out the specifics. As a teacher in training, I have already seen how difficult things can be and how easily we can give up and stick to the same old boring curriculum. I want to use this method of thinking and really ask myself questions that will push me to be creative and to come up with fresh new ideas that my students will find engaging and educational.

He then moved on to speaking about the wedding photographer principle. The idea is that your photograph takes picture of picture regardless of perfection and leaves you with so many choices at the end. As teachers, we need to let go of the idea of perfection because it simply does not exist, and we will become exhausted and frustrated searching for it. I found this particularly comforting since, I am a sort of perfectionist. I love when things are exactly as they should be, and I always doubt my work because I am searching for perfection. I need to accept that teaching is messy, and it is a place where perfection will actually stifle creativity so, I must learn to let go of my fear and embrace the beautiful process that will lead to me creating wonderful lessons that my students can enjoy.

The third part that he really emphasized was all about the experience. He stated that: students might forget everything that you taught them, but they will never forget the experience. I have already witnessed this in my own classroom this field experience. I am teaching the secondary 1 students a unit on E-waste and, while discussing a video we had just finished watching after having read an article on the topic, one of the students raised her hand and said that she wouldn’t remember any of this 10 minutes after she left school that day. Now this may be true however, the students were enjoying the discussion they were having, and they were contributing so much and debating aspects of the topic, including the young girl, and I knew right then that I had done my job right. It is true that students may not remember anything about the e-waste unit however, they were having long and engaging conversations about it in English and the best part; they were enjoying themselves. I witnessed this even more when I completed a Kahoot quiz with them. They were so into it and really enjoying themselves that I know that they will look back on my classes with them and remember joy and laughter.

Finally, this lecture was so interesting and so full of information that I left confident that I could now become an even better teacher to my students. I learned that, with the right questions, creativity is limitless and that I need to let go of my idea of perfection and embrace whatever comes from the chaos. Teaching is a wonderful job and I have the opportunity to make students actually enjoy school. The amazing thing about being a language teacher is that, students will be having fun in the language of instruction and as such they will still be learning without feeling forced. Overall, I want to create memorable experiences with my students and this plenary really gave me the opportunity to learn how to do just that.