

Bad language: Swearing – this time allowed!

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Part 1: Practical Guidance and Didactical Approach

Background and keywords:

Crude, cheap and obtrusive language, constantly swearing, insults of any kind, i.e. "bad language" in the broader sense is increasingly becoming a part of everyday life—and therefore, has also become a regular phenomenon in schools. This is not necessarily a gender-related phenomenon either: nowadays many girls as boys use bad language. Moreover, there seems to be a tendency for children to start at an increasingly younger age, and in some cases, at a very early age. Bad language often goes hand in hand with aggression or is an expression of it.

Most educational institutions are attempting to address this problem, by, for example, different disciplinary measures such as punishments or by dissuasive measures such as a ban on bad language specifically stipulated in school rules. Effective methods and tools to handle this problem are often lacking and should be included in general teacher training programs.



(Source: <http://www.cutit.ch/annashop3/shop3fluchen.jpg>)

Similar topics:

Aggressiveness and language, negative and positive emotions, anger.

Materials:

- Worksheet 1: cards with animal names to be cut out.
- Worksheet 2: the ABC dictionary of insults (text).

Duration:

About one class session.

The game and the exercise can be used independently of each other.

Number of participants:

Feasible with any class size

Age:

- About 10 years of age (4th grade).
- Well-suited in class (i.e. mother-tongue or foreign language instruction, physical education, etc.), afternoon supervision and youth activities.

Aims:

- To gain competence in expressing emotions (positive and negative);
- To understand and to express one's feelings;
- To act out: wild/attacking/aggressive animals;
- To reduce anger, aggression;
- To improve reading skills;
- To encourage creative writing skills.

(Short) Explanation 1:

The children should imitate the voice as well as the movement of an animal that is trying to attack another animal.

Guidance for the game "the raging animal world":

Pre-class teacher preparation – before the class session: Make two photocopies of Worksheet 1 (or three copies for an uneven number of pupils) and cut out the word cards. In this way, two children each should end up with the same word card (with the same animal). The teacher can select from the pile of word cards or the cards can be placed face down on a table in two piles. Each child draws one card (without letting the other players see what is on their card) and looks at the animal that is on the card.



The pupil has about one minute to imagine how the animal would move and what noise it would make when it is acting aggressively and tries to attack another animal.

The game begins after: "ready, set, go!": for one minute, the children act like "wild animals" and move freely around the room.. They should imitate the movement and the animal sounds as loudly as possible. After the minute is up, the children should look for their "animal partner" and discuss together about the activity, using the questions provided.



(Source:

http://images.amazon.com/images/G/03/videogames/features/ausgestorbene_tierarten_szenarios_big.jpg)

Reflection:

Did you let all of your animal rage out? Then you all get together for the “Animal Conference”. After the children have found their “animal partner”, they speak in pairs about their impressions and emotions:

- What did it feel like to be a “raging animal”? Was it fun, to let your anger out with the help of an animal?
- Did you enjoy being the animal that you acted out?
- Could you find your animal partner easily?
- Did you play a male or female?
- Do you think males and females behave differently? Why?
- What are the differences? Discuss this with your partner in detail.

The children are probably not at all aware (or only after the question during the reflection sequence), of a difference between the aggressive behaviour of female and male animals.

The questions can be discussed further with the entire class: Do girls and boys behave differently when they are angry with another person or because of a situation? What are the differences?

Variations (continuation):

This game can be used at any time in class to “diffuse” a conflict situation.

This game can also be used in foreign language instruction, when the names of animals are being introduced and learnt.

(Short) Explanation 2:

The children read through an ABC dictionary of insults and prepare together a dictionary of pet names.

Guidance for the game or exercise:

Our small ABC booklet of insults and pet names:

Pre-class teacher preparation: Worksheet 2 (Make photocopies of the ABC dictionary of insults and pet names) for all of the children.

The children work in small homogenous groups (all-girls or all-boys) made up of three or four children per group. They read the ABC dictionary of insulting nicknames and lastly write a small dictionary of pet names.

Reflection:

The children read some solutions out loud and hold a discussion along the following lines:

- Which insults do you find especially amusing/funny/imaginative/crude/a good match?
- What situations make you especially angry? List a few of them!
- Think about the last time you used bad language. Explain when it was, the situation and why.
- Which insults do you find acceptable for a girl/for a boy? Why?
- What do you think? Do girls or boys use insults or bad language, four-letter words more often? Give reasons for your answer!
- How do you feel, when someone insults you or praises you?

After the discussion, the teacher can possibly provide feedback about the various opinions expressed. Conclusion: Why should insults be avoided, what solutions exist in case of conflict situations, etc.?

Variations (continuation):

This exercise can be used with as many words as desired for each letter of the alphabet. To supplement this exercise, use the Pixi-Book with the title "Du nudelnackte Nuckelnase" (You noodle-naked suckle-nose). The small guide to insults and pet-names (by Moritz Eidechser, illustrated by Sabine Wilharm, CARLSEN-Verlag), as a global-based reading exercise in mother tongue language instruction.

