

Color Activity

I. Rational

This activity introduces and provides practice with colors. This activity is designed for beginning Alutiiq learners. It can be used in face-to-face classes as well as distance-delivery classes. This activity incorporates resources found at www.alutiiqlanguage.org and pictures borrowed from pandasthumb.org, ousidepride.com, cotsworldseeds.com, sciencelakes.com, wikipedia.com, and stanford.edu.

This activity supports language learning through these means: allowing learners to focus on form as well as meaning and

1) *Focus on Form*

In her Keynote address to the Central Connecticut Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ConnTESOL) Conference, Nina Spada (2008) differentiated between Isolated and Integrated Focus on Form. She asserts, “Integrated Focus on Form has a primary focus on meaning with attention to form embedded in meaning-based and communicative practices.” According to authors Long and Robinson (1998), “*Focus on form* refers how focal attentional resources are allocated,” (p. 23). They maintain that during a meaning-focused lesson, teachers often draw attention to linguistic code features, shifting the focus to form.

The color activity allows students to pay attention to grammatical features as they communicate about colors. Color words take two forms- those ending in –rtuq mean, “it is _____ (color).” Those ending in –sqaq mean, “the _____ (color) one.” This activity requires learners to use both forms in communicating about flowers.

2) *Metacognition*

Metacognition involves thinking about one’s thinking. Anderson (2008) states that, “Metacognition results in critical but healthy reflection and evaluation of thinking that may result in making specific changes in how learning is managed, and in the strategies chosen for this purpose,” (99). He believes that learners who reflect upon their learning are better able to make decisions about how to improve their learning. The author introduces five components to metacognition: 1. Preparing and planning for learning, 2. Selecting and using strategies, 3. Monitoring learning, 4. Orchestrating strategies, and 5. Evaluating learning.

The color activity gives students an opportunity to analyze how the language works. During the pre-task activity, students are given the chance to co-construct meaning analyzing similarities and differences in patterns they find with the color vocabulary. During the post-task activity, students will be given the opportunity to talk about the differences they noticed between the two questions that were asked during the task-cycle and what effect the form of the question had on the answering of the question.

3) Output Hypothesis

Swain (2000) postulates that it is dialogue that constructs linguistic knowledge (p.97). She goes on to describe that the language use is mediating the learning of the L2. Swain (1995) explains that, “output pushes learners to process language more deeply- with more mental effort- than does input,” (2000, p. 99). When producing output, learners can ‘stretch’ their interlanguage to accomplish their communicative goal. When producing output, students are able to notice the difference between what they are able to say and what they want to communicate, they are able to develop and test hypotheses about how the target language works, and they can reflect on the language they have learned.

The color activity calls for the learners to produce output and communicate which flower they like. Students are given the opportunity to notice the difference between what they want to say and what they are able to say. They will be able to test their theories about how the Alutiiq language works when communicating with each other and with the teacher. Students will also be given an opportunity reflect on what they have learned about the language of color.

II. Description

1) Pre-Task

The teacher will access, and project, the color interactive slide show available on the alutiiqlanguage.org website: <http://www.alutiiqlanguage.org/html/lessons/colors.php>

Give each student a copy of the Kraas’kaat-Colors sheet and a box of crayons:
<http://www.alutiiqlanguage.org/files/lessons/KRaas'kaat%20blank.pdf>

As you move through the interactive slide show, have students locate the color word on their worksheet and color both columns with the correct color for each word.

Have students practice pronouncing each form of the color words.

Ask students questions to help them co-construct meaning:

- What do you notice about the color words on this page?
- What do you notice that is the same?
- What do you notice that is different?
- Why do you think there are two columns?

Before beginning the task cycle, review the pronunciation of each of the colors and their two forms.

2) Task Cycle

Tell the students that we will be using our color vocabulary to talk about flowers.

Introduce the word suit’kaat- flowers. Let the students know that we will be answering questions about flowers.

Project the Suit'kaat power point file. Read to them the question: Naliaq pingakan suit'kaa?- which flower do you like.

Click to the next slide (a picture of a blue flower) and ask the students: Caquciq kRaaskaaq una suit'kaa? – What color is this flower?
Have students answer (cungartuq- it is blue). [If students answer with cungasqaq- probe them and try to get them to answer with the correct form]

Click to the next slide (a picture of a red flower) and ask the students: Caquciq kRaaskaaq una suit'kaa? Have students answer (kawirtuq)

Click to the next slide (a picture of several yellow/orange flowers) and ask the students: Caqucit kRaaskaaq ukut suit'kaat? Have the students answer (qaqirngartut/uuringciirnartut)

Click to the next slide (a picture of a field of wild flowers). Ask the students: Naliaq pingakan suit'kaa?- which flower do you like. Tell the students that we are going to do a "Think-Pair-Share." The students will think about their answer to this question. They will turn to their neighbor and share with them their answer, using their color reference sheet to help them. Then the teacher will call on individual students to share which flower they like.

The next three slides are more pictures of fields of wild flowers. Have the students think, pair, and share their answers for the remaining slides. You can have the students share out what flower their neighbor liked.

4) Post Task

The teacher will lead students in a discussion about differences they noticed between the questions that were asked during the task, and what effect those differences had on how the questions were answered.

The teacher will ask question such as:

- What did you notice about the questions asked in this task?
- What did you notice the same between: Caquciq kRaaskaaq una suit'kaa? And Caqucit kRaaskaat ukut sjit'kaat? What do you notice that is different?
- What was different in the pictures between these two questions? (you can project the power point and display the pictures.
- What is the same between the questions "Caquciq kRaaskaaq una suit'kaa?" and "Naliq pingakan suit'kaa?" What is different?
- How do you answer these questions?

III. Extensions

- This activity can be extended, using the color words in games. My class has played “Guess Who” using the color words to describe hair, eye, and hat color.
- There is also a color game available on [alutiiqlanguage.org](http://www.alutiiqlanguage.org). The game board is available at <http://www.alutiiqlanguage.org/files/lessons/Colors%20Board%20Game.pdf>.
- In this game, partners roll a dice and have to pronounce the color that they land on, trying to be the first one to the finish. We use the -rtuq ending saying “It is _____.”
- You can also use the color words on a “walk.” Where one person leads the others on a determined path, speaking of things along the way. The person might ask, “What color is this?” - pointing at something, etc.

IV. Reflection

I have used this activity with all of my Alutiiq Language classes: face-to-face and distance, elementary and secondary. When I initially presented this activity, it was less interactive. I did not have the students sharing their answers with each other before they shared with the teacher. When using the power point with my distance classes, in some sites I had more students and assigned two students to answer per wildflower field slide. In Akhiok, they naturally did a think-pair-share, talking with each other before sharing their choice with me.

When I was thinking about how to make this activity more interactive, I thought about the Akhiok class and decided to incorporate the think-pair-share into the task-cycle.

My Old Harbor intermediate elementary students graders pointed out the difference between the -sqaq and -rtuq endings. A 3rd grade student explained to me the difference in meaning between the meanings. With slight probing, another 3rd grade student corrected his answer from the -rtuq ending to the -sqaq ending.

V. References

Anderson, N. J. (2008). Metacognition and good language learners. In C. Griffiths (Ed.), *Lessons from good language learners* (pp. 99-109). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Spada, N. (2008). *Communicative language teaching: Fact and folklore* [PDF document]. Retrieved from ConnTESOL online website: <http://www.conntesol.net/documents/Spada%20Keynote%20Presentation.pdf>

Swain, M. (2000). The output hypothesis and beyond: Mediating acquisition through collaborative dialogue. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 97-114). Oxford: Oxford University Press.