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Enhancing students' understanding on job hunting skills through board game

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ABSTRACT

To date, issue on graduate employability has been seriously discussed by public. Many factors have been associated with their failure to obtain job upon graduation. One of the factors that usually being highlight is the lack of soft skill among them. They seem unable to acquire important skills such as communication, problem solving, teamwork or leadership skills which is important criteria that the employer looking for. Realising this issue, this game board has been developed and being used during lecture to attract students' interest and to add to the new teaching methods. Improving or coming out with new teaching method is important to suit with the needs of this generation of students. To date, game-based learning approach is suitable to be used because students can master problem solving skills directly or indirectly during the game session. The idea to developed this board game came when saw the students struggled while doing mock interviews due to lack of understanding and practice, hence cause them to get lower score in the assessment. This teaching aids is specifically designed to enhance students' understanding of jobhunting skills that consist of job advertisement, resume and interview. This teaching aids is suitable for teaching and learning because it can increase students' understanding, as well as to inculcate students' interest towards the subject matter, through rapid learning and revision while playing. Due to limited job hunting board games in the market, The Job Hunters is very suitable to be promoted as one of the learning tools, especially in the field of job hunting and communicative English.



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Introduction

In the early stages of the learning system introduced in Malaysia, students and teachers faced difficult situations in terms of competition, lack of infrastructure and learning tools, non-conducive environment and limited ability to understand context and concepts including weaknesses in communication systems between parents, students and teachers (Jamaluddin et al., 2016). This might due to no innovation yet in the learning processes, and lessons were conducted through one-way communication only which resulted in teacher-oriented learning.

Over time, students and teachers have been brought to a new dimension in the world of education namely creative and critical thinking skills in teaching and facilitation (PdPc) (Abd Rahman et al., 2021). One of the

innovations came into the scene was board games. A board game is a game term that involves moving or throwing a pieces on the board according to the format prescribed by the developer of the board game (Noda et al., 2019). It has been proven that educational usage of games has proved a valuable resource in second language teaching. In certain contexts, teachers are encouraged for the self-production of games and resources which can help their students with difficult linguistic areas (Macedonia, 2005).

Using game-board is very effective because it can be done in smaller groups with minimal supervision from the lecturer. Playing game itself has already arose students' attention, so this helps to make the lesson enjoyable and actively participated by the students. According to Brewster and Ellis (2002) as quoted in Andreia (2021) there are several types of fun games, but the prominent are board game, drawing game, a game using sentence cards, dice games, guessing games and listening games. This was seconded by Petrovic (quoted in Meyer 2006) who stated the fun factor in speaking classes occurred when students communicate in board games.

In recent years, graduate employment has been the subject of discussion globally. This concerns whether graduates get appropriate and suitable jobs and whether they are well prepared to undertake those jobs (Feleciya et al., 2015). Since English is considered as the global language to enable international business and cultural exchange, English proficiency is required in all professional fields (Rao, 2016). Poor soft skills, especially communication skills, and the lack of ability to communicate in English are the most common problems found in employability issues. To overcome these issues, The Job Hunters board game is created to help students mastering job hunting skills, with the hope it will nurture students' soft skills, especially communication in English Over the last decades, proficiency in English has become increasingly important in any field (Bharathi, 2016; Feleciya et al., 2015). As English is considered the lingua franca of the twenty-first century, it represents a key factor for employment success and economic opportunities. Hence, employers in the current global market need people who present high proficiency in spoken and written English (Rao, 2016). Low proficiency in the English language has been considered a barrier to academic success and job opportunities (Rao, 2016; Durga, 2018). English communication skills are an important requirement for a career at the national or international level. Therefore, English proficiency is a key factor for employment success and progression (Rao, 2016).

Language learning is defined as learning in the second language or foreign language (ESL/EFL) to develop communication skills. To increase students' employability values, it is very important for students to master both English and job hunting skills. This is to ensure they can convey their ideas and information effectively. Hence, the development of a board game called the The Job Hunters is crucial to helps students to overcome the obstacles in job hunting. The focus of this study is to observe the impact of the use of job hunting students' understanding on job hunting skills.

Method

The Job Hunters is a board -based game designed as a teaching aid to help students acquire skills needed in order to be employed, as well as polishing their communicative English language. It is developed using the SMART technique to ensure the development of The Job Hunters meets all the objectives. Figure 1 shows the process of SMART technique being used.

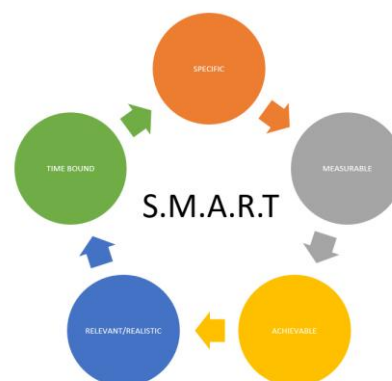


Figure 1 <Smart Technique>

Figure 2 and 3 show the sample of The Job Hunters and how to play the game respectively. Observation checklist and field notes are two instruments used in order to obtain data. Field notes, as mentioned by Richards (2003) are used as the basis for a final decision.



Figure 2 <The Game Board>

RULES TO PLAY JOB HUNTERS GAMEBOARD

- The 1st person starts to move by throwing the dice.
- The no shown on the dice indicates where the person has to stop.
- Once the person is at any box, he/she needs to pick one card (placed in the middle of the game board, based on the category of the box).
- Each stop has different questions.
- If the person stops at "qualification category" he need to pick one card from qualification section and answer the question as written on the card.
- The same rules applied if the player stops at "interview" and "Documentation" boxes.
- In order to move further, the player needs to answer the questions correctly.
- If the person falls into the disciplinary action/punishment box, he need to pick one card from the punishment category, and will be penalized based on the written punishment.
- If the person falls into the reward box, he need to pick one card from the reward category, and will be rewarded based on the written reward.
- The above rules applied to the next players.
- The player who first reaches to the "receive salary" box will be the winner.
- Enjoy!!

Figure 3 <The Rules>

This study used focus group discussion to see the impact of the use of Job Hunters. Semester 4 (cohort December 2019) students from Department of Electrical Engineering were selected to conduct a pilot test for The Job Hunters since their syllabus includes job hunting skills sub topic. A total of 30 students were selected to conduct this pilot study. The game was played twice; before and after learning the intended topic. Observation was made throughout the game namely, pre, during and post games to ensure students adhere to the rules and understand them well. The students' exam result was then compared to previous cohort, June 2019, which did not use the board game.

Results and Discussion

The students enjoy the teaching and learning process using board game. According to Lee (2012) board game can be beneficial and meaningful tool when aligned with the curriculum and learning goals. Based on the observation during the game, students did enjoy themselves while learning. This is supported by students' opinion, as shown in figure 4. Apart from this, as we can see in figure 5, it is clearly shown that the students' result improved after using The Job Hunters in December cohort.

Table 1 <Students' Opinion>

Respondent	The opinios
Student 1	"This game is very interesting".
Student 2	"It helps me to improve my communication skill in English".
Student 3	"The Job Hunters is fun to play".
Student 4	"I like the layout".
Student 5	"I don't feel sleepy while playing the game".

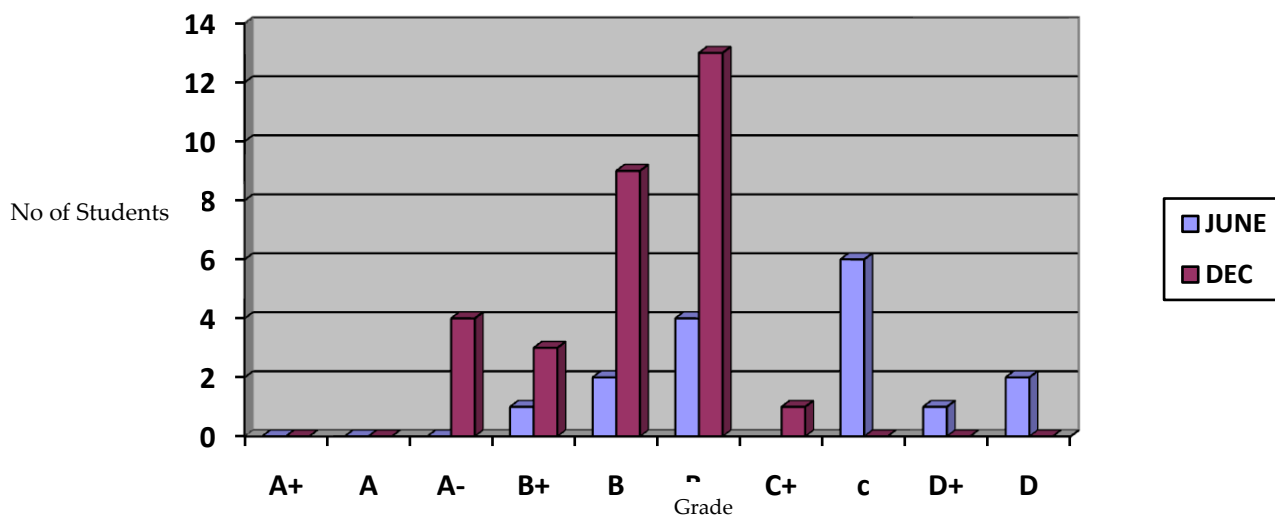


Figure 5 <Students' Result Comparison>

Conclusions

Based on the observation done, board game can trigger students' interest to participate actively in the intended topic. Ongoing improvement on teaching method is vital to ensure continuous support is provided to make students marketable. The usage of board game is beneficial for it helps students to learn in less formal environment and this leads to reduce their anxiety in learning. It is hoped the use of this board game can be expanded to various institutions in future.

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