

ONLINE RESOURCES TO CREATE NEW LEARNING MEANS-THE CROSSWORDS

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Abstract: *The digitalized world we live and work in makes compulsory for us, teachers, to develop the ability to provide new learning materials for our students. We do not have to search deep, the sites that can offer their support in making crosswords are numerous and easy to access. No matter if we choose to use the fill-in crossword to review some vocabulary aspects or to use the straight or quick crossword to make sure the information we transmitted was acquired, solving a crossword is an interactive and fun way of learning. It is our call how we give the definitions, how relevant is the information we base the crossword on, what we want to enhance by solving the crossword.*

Key words: *sites, learning, fill-in crossword, straight crossword, acquisition, vocabulary.*

1. Introduction

The internet has changed the way we bond, socialize, do business, and even learn. It is the major factor that changed our lives under so many aspects so we find ourselves in a point where our lives are almost impossible to imagine without it. We are exposed to so much information in such a short time and we have to process the information and to use it properly so we can say that our lives are digitally changing in the process. Because of the easy access to the internet and the means of learning it provides, many teachers changed their approach towards teaching and consequently their students' way of learning. As Gunawardena and Boverie stated in their study *Impact of Learning Styles on Instructional Design for Distance Education* (1992) varying one's teaching is the most important aspect for both raising the interest of the students and meeting their individual needs[1]. In addition, Como and Snow in *Adapting teaching to individual differences among learners* stated that “The success of education depends on adapting teaching to individual differences among learners”[2]. The present paper intends to show the impact of learning through crosswords on Merchant Marine students.

2. Crosswords- teaching, playing and learning

As Yip and Kwan remarked in their study (*Online vocabulary games as a tool for teaching and learning English vocabulary*, 2007): “Vocabulary learning is often perceived as boring by learners, especially for those who grew up in the digital age.”[3] It is an observation we made related to our students, too. Regardless this fact, we had to teach them vocabulary affiliated to the maritime field: ship construction, anchoring, mooring, safety onboard, first aid, survival at sea, etc. Their reluctant attitude towards specialized vocabulary made us search for entertaining ways of introducing and assessing this type of vocabulary.

We became interested in utilizing a non-traditional teaching means for the purpose of improving students' learning and retention.

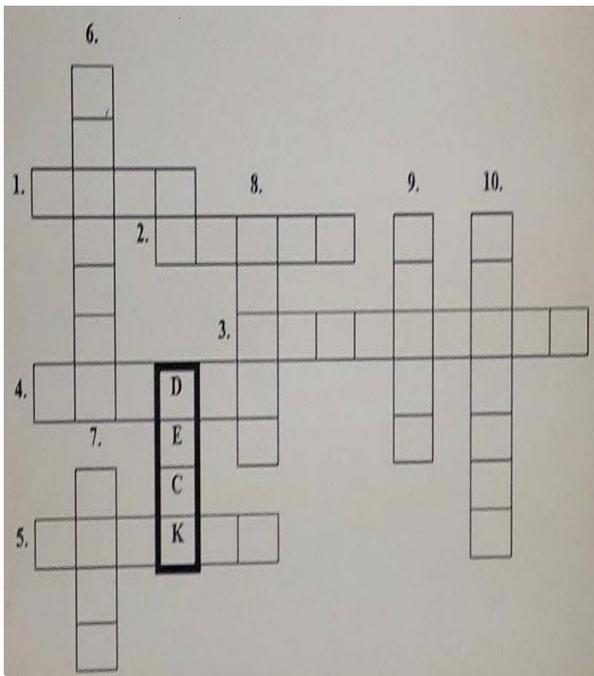
One of the forms we found was the crossword. Even this technique has its own limitations, for e.g. it may not be useful as a mechanism facilitating students' capacities to synthesize and evaluate, it was effective regarding boosting factual knowledge and developing comprehension. In other words, it was fun, compelling, but also instructive. We introduced the crossword as a means of evaluation at the end of the course/seminar. The feed-back was positive: not only had the students a downright reaction towards the evaluation and the vocabulary that was assessed, their overall attitude improved. Crossword provided both students and teachers with feedback regarding students' understanding of the material presented. Moreover, this playful means of learning really enhanced active participation in the learning process.

We used sites [4][5][6] that are not only at hand and for free, but also very friendly to use. Each of the sites provides the algorithm to create a crossword depending on the information you use as an input. Firstly, the teacher must give a name for the puzzle. We usually named the crossword after the units that are in the curriculum. Therefore, for each unit we developed a different crossword. After that, we had to introduce the clue followed by the definition that was to be given to the students. Depending on the words and definitions introduced, a multitude of outputs are provided. Here are 2 examples of crosswords dealing with vocabulary about **decks** and **safety**. The answers of the crosswords are provided in the Annex 1.

Decks

1. The deck from which the other decks on a vessel are numbered.

- 2.The deck extending, without any constructional breaks, from the fore part of the vessel to the aft.
- 3.A deck found on passenger vessels, around accommodation, offering a good sea view.
- 4.The deck used by the officers commanding the vessel during the voyage.
- 5.The higher deck onboard vessels, used for antenna mounting and for hoisting signaling flags on the mast.
- 6.The deck that is open to all precipitations.
- 7.From this deck you can lower the national flag of the vessel.
- 8.Usually this is the biggest deck of a vessel.
- 9.The space found in the hull of a vessel, separating two decks.
10. The deck extending from the stern of the main mast towards the aft of the vessel.



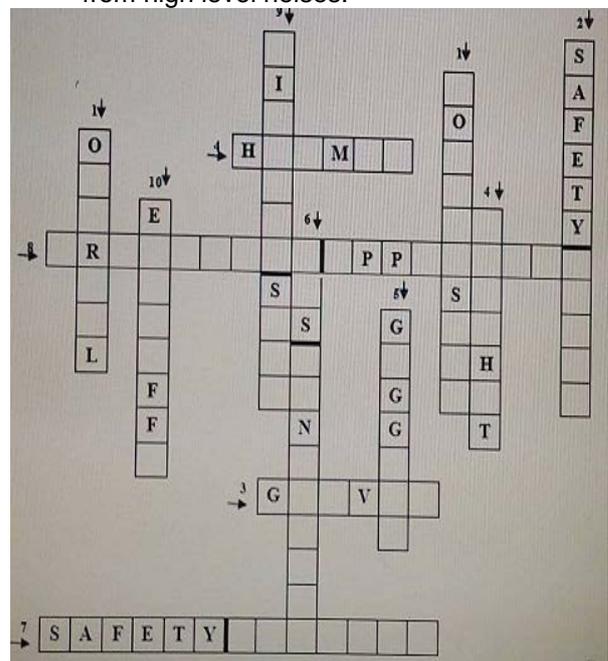
Safety

- 1.Cotton clothes that covers all the body in order to protect from contact burns and cutting;
- 2.Footwear designed to confer good adherence, oil resistance and usually have metal toe;

Conclusion

Even though not all teachers agree on the usefulness of puzzles in education, based on the unbiased results in learning and attitude we witnessed in our students, we are convinced that crossword puzzles can accelerate the process of learning of terminology.

- 3.Covers that protect the hands against dirt, oil, chemical substances, heat or mechanical damage;
- 4.Piece of equipment used to protect the head from mechanical shocks;
- 5.Specially designed equipment for protecting the eyes against light, dust, chemicals or other debris moving through atmosphere, but limiting the view as little as possible;
- 6.Small electronic device that can be hanged on the clothes and used for checking the atmosphere any hazards as lack of oxygen or presence of toxic or explosive gasses;
- 7.Set of very resistant fabric bands, that when dressed and used properly reduces the risks for someone falling from height;
- 8.Device consisting in an air tight mask linked to a tank, in order to provide the wearer with fresh air in contaminated atmospheres for at least 30 minutes;
- 9.Specially designed clothing that covers all the body and have such properties that protects the wearer from fire and head for a considerable period of time;
10. Protective equipment used to protect from high level noises.

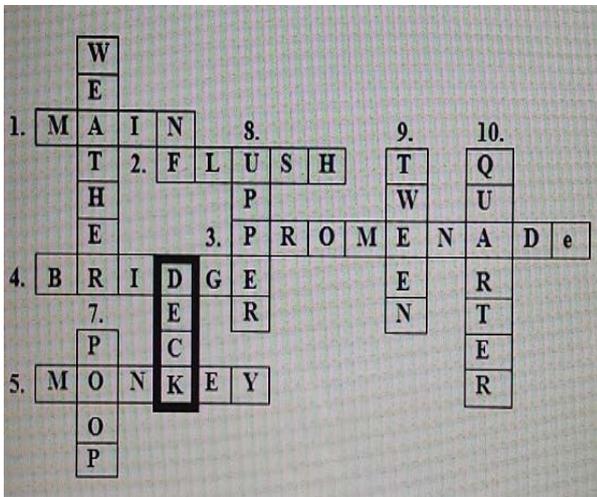


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- [6] <http://tools.atozteacherstuff.com/free-printable-crossword-puzzle-maker/>

Annex 1

Decks



Safety

