

Language Experience

This is a tried and tested method for working on Reading and Writing. It comes from the world of teaching basic Literacy within ESOL, but can be used at any level. Also, it takes very little preparation.

1) Conversation/generating language

Introduce a context/topic orally or with pictures/objects. Either ask the student questions to encourage her to speak, or have a conversation. You might generate half a page or just one sentence.

2) Accurate sentences

Go back over what the student said but correcting it to accurate sentences, going with what she produces eg if she says 'I liking to knit.', correct to 'I like knitting.' not 'I enjoy knitting.'

3) Writing

Now write everything down as continuous text (not a list of sentences). You write it, but involve the student by encouraging them to say the words along with you, following with her finger or giving you some of the letters.

OR

The student writes everything down, with your help as needed.

Whichever method you use, at this stage you might still be working together to change, improve and add words or sentences. This a natural writing process – as I have written this guide I have proof-read, altered and improved as I went along and will do a final read-through.

4) Reading

Now you have a text for reading and writing practise which has come straight from the student herself. You can create numerous reading activities from this, for example:

a) For each sentence:

- read it out,
- read it with student reading with you (encourage them to run a finger along as they read),
- with each sentence, go back to any words or sounds which have caused trouble and repeat a few times,
- let them have a go at reading each full sentence on their own.

b) Word order:

- cut up one sentence at a time
- give to student jumbled up
- get student to rearrange, give her plenty of time and only help

if needed

- student reads whole sentence at least once in right order.

c) For sentence and paragraph order, adapt the above

d) Ask oral or written questions to either check understanding or review difficult words.

e) Take a short list of words from the text and do some spelling work.

f) Use the text to find spelling patterns.

g) Pull out one aspect of grammar (eg Past Simple, a/an), make a list of the examples and use this to review or learn, perhaps highlighting relevant words or producing further examples.

5) Final reading

Get student to read out the whole text one last time.

6) Review

At the start of your next lesson get your student to read the text again to see how much they have remembered, also encourage them to practise reading it in between lessons.

Optional

7) Phonics - you will already have done lots of phonic work throughout, especially in 3) and 4), but you can do more if you need...

- pick just two or three sounds which have been difficult
- write out the word/s they are found in separately and underline the letter/s which correspond with the sound/s
- practise each sound together several times by itself and then with the whole word. If it's hard for the student to produce the sound, produce it yourself and describe/show where the tongue goes and what shape the lips make.