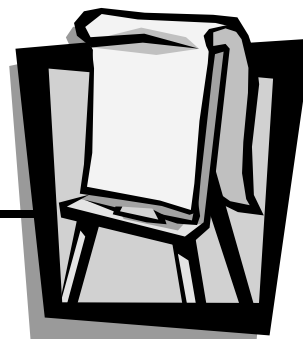


Teacher to Teacher

Language Experience Activities for Adult Reading Instruction

Dianna Baycich

If you are having trouble finding good low-level reading material for your adult new readers you might want to try using a language experience activity. The language experience activity is a reading strategy often used in primary and elementary grades but can easily be adapted successfully for adult low level reading instruction.



When did teachers start using the language experience activity?

Use of the language experience activity (LEA) goes back to 1908. A teacher named Flora Cooke had her students talk about things they had seen or done while she wrote down what they said. The class then read and reread the story until all of them could take it home to read to their parents.

What is a language experience activity?

A LEA is an activity in which the teacher writes down a story as the student dictates it. The student then reads the story back to the teacher. The story can be something that happened to the student, information about a hobby the student has, something the student has accomplished, an event the student has attended; in other words the story can be about anything the student wants. The teacher/tutor writes the story in exactly the words the student uses with no changes in grammar or sentence structure. The story then becomes the text for word recognition and comprehension activities.

What are some of the benefits of using a LEA?

There are several benefits of using a LEA with low level readers:

- the student is familiar with the content of the story because it is written in her own words
- the student is interested in the story because it is from the student's own life
- the student is comfortable reading the story because it is familiar and interesting
- the student feels good about having his stories written down and used
- the teacher/tutor gets to know the student better by listening to her stories

- the teacher has continued access to new reading material from and for the student

What are some uses of the LEA?

The LEA can be used for assessment and instruction. The following activities can be spread out over several sessions.

- Assessment: the LEA can be used as a non-threatening way to assess the student's reading ability. As the student reads the story back to the teacher, the teacher can make notes of strengths and weaknesses in the student's word recognition and fluency.
- Word Recognition: the student can choose words from the story to build a word bank. The words from the word bank can be used for word recognition activities, word games, or can be written into sentences by the student.
 - the student can read through the story to find words in a word family he is working on or use words in the story to build word families.
 - the student can underline words she recognizes each time she reads the story
- Comprehension: the teacher can cut the story into sections or sentences and have the student work on sequencing
- Fluency: since the activities used with the LEA require repeated readings of the story, the student's fluency improves.
- Connections: students learn the connections between reading and writing, speaking and listening, spoken language and written language.

Ohio Literacy Resource Center

Enhancing Adult Literacy in Ohio

Ohio Literacy Resource Center
Research 1 - 1100 Summit St.
Kent State University, PO Box 5190
Kent, Oh 44242-0001

#446557

Phone: (800) 765-2897, (330) 672-2007

Fax: (330) 672-4841

Email: olrc@literacy.kent.edu

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Kent, Ohio 44240
Permit No. 2

Check Us Out!
<http://literacy.kent.edu>