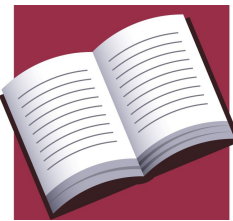


Helping Pupils with Reading

John can't read the textbooks that the rest of his classmates are using. What do I do with this pupil who can't read?

Teachers can use the Language Experience Approach to utilise pupils' oral language to develop basic vocabulary and key concepts about written language. This approach is useful for pupils who can understand the basic content but lack the literacy skills to work independently.



Resources

A set of cards showing keywords with one word on each card with a relevant picture.

Laminated cards can be used repeatedly. (Additional resources may include a laptop, data projector and access to the Internet for images.)

Class set-up

1. Divide the class into groups.
2. Give out keywords to your pupils. In the beginning, it is easier if these keywords cover a particular topic rather than large sections of the curriculum.
3. Ask your pupils to talk to you and each other in small groups about anything that they have learned (using the keywords as a prompt).
4. Identify pupils that have reading and writing difficulties and, as you wander around the room, quickly jot down exactly what these pupils tell you. Recite their own words back to them as you write them down. Other pupils can write their own sentences.

5. Transfer the pupils' exact speech from your note pad to the white board keeping each sentence on its own line. This can also be done on a laptop connected to a data projector so that pupils can see their own sentences. You can then easily print out each sentence and give it to the relevant student.
6. As you print each sentence, read it aloud and ask pupils to do the same when you give it to them.

Reinforcement

This activity can be considerably enhanced (and the subject matter reinforced) by creating a PowerPoint presentation using the sentences from the pupils and asking them to locate images on the Internet related to their sentences. The student's name can be included with their sentence. In this way, you can build a revision story that is unique to the class. The appearance of sentences can be timed to ensure an easy reading speed. The revision story can be printed so that the pupils can revise the content. Pupils demonstrate high levels of attention as they see their sentences appear on the screen and are eager to learn a story that includes their input. As the PowerPoint presentation plays automatically, pupils can be asked to read the sentence that they contributed out loud. With practice, pupils can also be asked to read out other pupils' sentences aloud.

Precautions

Sentences from pupils who do not have writing difficulties should also be included to avoid concentrating attention on those pupils with literacy difficulties.

Evidence-based Practice

Research has shown the Language Experience Approach to be effective in many class settings from helping pupils in a remedial setting (Sharp, 1989) to assisting second language learners in a mainstream classroom (Perez, 2000).

Perez, S.A. (2000). Teaching second language learners in the regular classroom. Reading Improvement, 37(1), 45-8.

Sharp, S. J. (1989). Using content subject matter with LEA in middle school. Journal of Reading, 33 (2), 108-412.