



Tutor Tips

The Language Experience Approach

The Language Experience Approach is a method of teaching a person to read his or her own spoken words. You do not have to be a professional teacher to help a person learn to read using this method. The philosophy of the Language Experience Approach is expressed in the following statements:

What a person thinks can be spoken.

What is spoken can be written.

What is written can be read.

Since the reading material generated by the Language Experience Approach comes from the adult learner's own experiences, it has two advantages. First of all, it contains words the student already understands, and secondly, the story is one that is of interest to the student since it's her own. An added plus is the immediate success the reader experiences with reading his own story.

HOW TO USE THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH

Telling the story:

1. A story or personal experience
 - (a) favorite activity or hobby
 - (b) a job, family trip or interest
 - (c) a recipe or step-by-step directions for making something
2. An aided story
 - (a) Show a picture and have the student describe it or emotion it causes.
 - (b) Read a story and have student retell the story.
 - (c) Have student retell a story seen on TV.
 - (d) Give a sentence starter: I am __; I can __; I like __ .
3. Have the student dictate the story to you as you write it down.
4. Keep it in the student's words; ask for clarification if it's not understandable.
5. Keep the story short at first.
6. Print it as the student dictates or utilize a computer and print it out.

Using the Story

1. Read the story to the student. Draw finger under the line, pointing out the words as you read.
2. Utilize the Duet or the Echo strategy after you read the story the first time. Either read with the student (Duet Reading) or have the student read each sentence after you (Echo Reading).
3. Have the student read the whole story alone.
4. Listen for words that need to be reviewed and put on word cards.
5. Review words on cards.

Reading and re-reading the Story

1. If the story is printed from the computer, send a copy home.
2. If you have only one copy, plan to Xerox it or type it and print it.
3. Read the story at the next session, and again later to practice fluency.

EXAMPLE OF LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE STORIES

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I would like to say, believe it or not, when we were going to school the teacher wouldn't let us talk too much about what was happening in the changing of the times. Like when the Civil Rights started real strong they would say don't be talking about this around so many people. But I could never understand why they didn't want us to talk about it until now. They really were afraid of the white people.

I remember our bus driver, once they burned a cross in front of his house and he had to leave town because he was helping Civil Rights Organization.

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One Saturday night, Solomon, and I and W.C. we went to Porter, Georgia, to the movie. We saw a Western. After we came home, me and W.C. we got our guns and started to playing cowboys. My mother was working. She sent me and W.C. to the house to get water. Instead we got our toy guns. We decided we wanted to do something big which was holding up the bus. We saw the bus coming. We figured out how to stop it, which was laying down in the road.

After the bus stopped. W.C. told the driver, "Get you hands up." Then I told him if he knows what's good for him he would do what the man told him. He put us on the bus and took us where our mother was. Mama told us she was tired and didn't feel like running. She sent Sonny Boy to get switches. She sat down and plaited them together. She put three into one, when she hit you one lick, she hit you thee times. And all during the whipping she was telling us how wrong we were. And we were telling her we were not going to do it any more.

That one whipping taught me wrong don't pay. Then we decided not to be crooks. Instead we still gave Mama a hard time.