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WHOLE-LANGUAGE READING METHOD

This chapter will discuss an approach to reading instruction which has been found effective, especially in a second language situation. It is called whole-language reading method or literature-based reading instruction or Concentrated Language Encounter (CLE). In this chapter CLE will be used. CLE involves scaffolding: Teacher first models what the pupils are expected to say and do. Gradually, the teachers provide less and less support as pupils begin to improve their reading skills. Language learning is based on a meaningful activity or experience, e.g. reading starter book, etc. Pupils learn language through their own thinking process and are able to communicate by speaking and writing. Umolu (1998) highlights the strength of a whole-language method of teaching reading as follows:

A striking characteristic of whole-language classrooms is that children learn at a very early age how to become an “author” and “illustrator” of a book. This usually starts by encouraging children to retell stories they have either heard the teacher read to them or which they themselves have read. After retelling the story orally, the children work in groups to write written retellings. If the children are at the beginning reading stage, they dictate the sentences of the retelling for the teacher to write down on the blackboard. (p.22)

UNITS OF CLE

In using CLE, two units are to be noted: book-based unity and activity-based unit.

Book-based Unit

The book-based unit is divided into two basic phases: Shared Reading and Reviewing the Story

Phase 1: Shared Reading

Objective here is to have the learners come to a firm understanding of the story in the starter text. From the overall structure, down to what happened, who did what, characteristics of people, etc. CLE requires patience with less confident pupils.

There are 2 steps in Phase 1:

Step 1 (a) Introducing the new starter book:

- Ask questions about the cover
- What do you see on the cover
- Tell us about this? (pointing to illustrations)

Discuss the title

- The name of this book is...
- Go through illustrations page by page.
- Predict the content from illustrations.
- What is happening here?
- Now what is going on? etc.
- What do you think the story is about?

Step 1b: Reading the starter book.

Read story to class, relating with illustrations. Read expressively, freely, Using facial expression, tone of voice, gestures and acting to make sure they understand fully. You could use the children's mother tongue with English. You could divide children into smaller groups for shared reading. Keep the rest of the class busy (you could break into about 11 groups of 5 or 6 children each).

Phase 2: Reviewing the story.

Aim: To have the learners recall and talk about the story that was read in phase 1.

- a) Make sure they understand the meaning and can talk about the characters in the story.
- b) You may not include all the steps suggested below, but must include role-playing.

c) Children should talk about the story in their own words.

Step 1

a. **Reading and retelling orally the story in the book:** You spend one or two days between phases 1 and 2.

b. **Read:** Do you remember we read a new story? What was the name of the story? What was it all about? What happened to?

c. **Retelling:** Who can tell the story? What happened first? What happened next? Then what happened? What else happened? How did the story end?

Talk about what do you like most in the story? Why? If you were ... what would you do? Do you like the story? Why? Why not? Would you like to be like ... why? Why not? What did you learn from the story?

Step 2- Dramatization (Mimicking & Role Play).

- Who can act like?
- Was he happy or sad? Act sad?
- Can you walk like? What else did she do?
- Now we are going to act the story.
- Who want to be the? etc
- What happened first? Let us do that (dramatize)
- What happened next?
- You can make mark for characters in the story.
- Design the scenes.
- Use nametags to indicate their roles.

- At first don't force weak pupils to take leading roles; they chorus with teacher.

Activity Based Unit.

Activity based unit is also known as “How to” unit.

Phase 1: Demonstration

The teacher demonstrates an activity such as making a kite or basket or cooking Akara, planting, etc. You can do this as follows:

- Discussing what will happen.
- Showing pupils what materials and equipment will be used.
- Demonstrating by clearly showing the steps.
- Teachers and pupils talk about each step in the process of making kite. What is to be done? How it is done and how they feel about it.

Phase 2: Reconstructing the Experience

Here, you help pupils recall what went on:

- First pupils tell the equipment and waters that are required.
- Then they tell how the thing is made step by step.
- Can ask questions, e.g. Why does a kite have a tail? Or what design do we want on this kite?

The teacher is advised to move on to phase 3, the written language mode, only when the pupils have shown practically that they know how to carry out the activity.

Phase 3: Negotiating a group text (writing the text)

First, ask pupils to recall the story. Ask such questions as

- What happened first?
- Have children recall how characters felt or looked.

Writing a group text

- Get pupils to agree on a suitable sequence of events.
- Let's make our own book.
- What do we call our story?
- What shall I write first?
- What happened next? How do we end our story?
- Use pictures in the book to guide children
- Say each word as you write it. Say sentences only in grammatically correct form. ...
- Each time you finish writing a sentence, ask the whole group to read it as you point to each word.
- When you add a sentence, ask pupils to read from the beginning.
- They include only details they want, use their English.
- Have them work in small groups so that each child can contribute to the story
- Correct wrong sentences.

Illustrating the group text

When text has been finished, have children draw an illustration for each page as it is finished.

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USING YOUR BIG STORY BOOK

1. Preparation

- Read the book
- Identify key, new or difficult words and phrases.
- Develop a set of key sentences (sentence strips) for summarizing, sequencing, re-writing or re-telling the story.
- Prepare posters, work-cards, activities, etc. for various lessons (learning experiences).

2. Introduce the theme

- Use a story, song, rhyme, game, or experiment to ensure the interest and involvement of the learners.

3. Introducing the book

- Hold or display the book so that all the learners can see it and ask what they think the book will be about.

Say: “Look at the cover.”

Ask: “What is the title of the book?”

“What do you see in the picture?”

“What do you think the book will be about?”

4. Discuss the illustrations

- Encourage the learners to talk about the pictures

- They can use their home language if necessary.
- Don't read the text at this stage. If some of the learners do, it's OK.
Ask, "What do you see in the picture?"
"What is happening?"
"Is there anything in the picture that you don't understand?"

5. **Vocabulary or "word bank"**

- On the board or wall, build a word bank of "difficult or new" words that the learners might need to know in order to understand or read the book.
- Explain the words – use them in a sentence
- Let them spell, etc.
- Refer to the 'word bank' when you read the book.

6. **First reading**

- Read the book to the learners, pointing to pictures and new words, and discussing anything new or difficult.

7. **More formal lesson**

- Use the story as a springboard to introduce a specific topic within the theme. This is an opportunity to introduce a poster, an activity or an experiment.

8. **Second and further readings**
 - Further readings can be used to introduce other topics within the theme.
 - Learners can be encouraged to join in (point to the words as they read).
 - Later individuals can read portions aloud on their own.

9. **Follow-up activities**

Writing; drawings; wall-stories; dramatizing the story; experiments; craft activities; shared writing (Model the writing for them from their own comments and let them copy it. This will help the pupils learn to write, especially where they must learn to make notes, reports or write up experiments, etc).

10. **Conclusion**
 - Encourage the learners to talk about and show their work.

DISPLAYS AND DISPLAY BOARDS

Characteristics and advantages of display devices:

- Display areas such as boards, tables and interest corners can be set up very simply and at very little cost.
- The creation of a flexible arrangement of visuals, verbal and concrete objects provides the potential for learners to

- interact with the materials as often as desired and at their own rate.
- The ability to see pictures, objects and models in attractive displays creates an interest that words alone cannot accomplish.
 - Involving the learners in the collection of the materials and in the creation of the display is meaningful and exciting to them as it appeals to their natural urge to collect and explore.
 - Displays brighten the classroom and set the scene for more effective learning by creating an atmosphere which promotes interest and reading, by focusing attention on a particular topic or theme.
 - They help the learners to think visually, to initiate discussion and to communicate information accurately.
 - They can be used to present information, display work completed by the learners, give instructions and encourage participation, giving an overall view of the topic.
 - They afford opportunity for pupil participation, for review and for evaluation.

Setting up the display

- First determine your objective, as the display is not merely a decoration.

- Ask yourself what you hope to achieve with your display.
- The display should focus on a topic or theme and be relevant.
- The amount of information will depend on the educational level of your target audience.
- Make a very brief summary of the topic and decide what needs to be simplified or emphasised.
- Decide what pictures would be useful and what items or objects you could use to make it more attractive and interesting.
- Plan the layout in rough first, keeping a focus point in mind.
- Make it attractive.
- Lettering is important and should be easy to read.
- Information should flow and be easy to read – left to right, top to bottom.
- Keep the display interesting – change it regularly – don't allow it to become stale.
- Most of all, **KEEP IT SIMPLE!**
- Discuss and evaluate what they have done.
- Select work from the activities that the pupils have done and display all the chosen work on the interest table or wall.

Remember that this is not one lesson and that many topics can be explored and developed around the theme over a number of days or even a few weeks.