

Peer Dictation

Adaptable to all ESL Levels

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Dictate information from a short piece of text to a partner
2. Listen and write information that is dictated by a partner
3. Edit the writing

Directions:

1. Post copies of text on the walls around the room.
2. Pair students.
3. Students decide who will be the reader and writer. They can also switch roles during the activity.
4. The reader goes to the wall to read the text, memorize a couple of words or a short sentence, then return to his or her partner to dictate the text. The reader can visit the wall as often as needed. (No shouting across the room!) The goal is to reproduce the text perfectly, including spelling and punctuation.
5. The writer may ask for clarification at any point. The reader responds verbally, but may not touch the writing instrument.
6. After completing the task, students check their work.

Variations:

Advanced students: A set of questions on the texts could be passed out to all students. Each pair of students is assigned one or two questions based on their assigned excerpt. Students talk with each other to answer all the questions.

Beginning students:

- Use a sequence of pictures and have the “reader” explain the correct order of the pictures to a partner.
- Using a simple sentence students have been taught, cut apart the words and post them on the wall in random order. The reader dictates and the pairs work together to sequence the sentence.
- Using single words students have been taught, cut apart the letters and post them on the wall in random order. The reader dictates and the pairs work together to sequence the letters to make a word.

Benefit to Students:

- Students participate at their own level; the text is at their level
- Can be used with students who have minimal literacy in English
- Requires authentic communication; students must repair breakdowns in communication
- It is fun and interactive, and it gets students moving

Benefit to Teachers:

- Links oral and written language
- Provides a vehicle to practice language already learned
- Provides assessment of speaking and listening skills, including communication strategies
- Can be adapted for any level

Some Principles of Learner-Centered Instruction (Weinstein, 2004)

Learner-centered approaches:

1. _____
 - identify learners' interests and needs
 - identify learning styles and preferences
 - learn about learners' contexts: issues and challenges
 - learn about learners' contexts: resources and possibilities
2. _____
 - identify learners' current knowledge and skills
 - honor and celebrate language and culture
 - provide opportunities to integrate the past with the present
 - [for family literacy], nurture intergenerational transmission of culture and values
3. _____
 - provide information about how the language works
 - develop skills for addressing learners' purposes
 - provide opportunities to address those purposes
 - provide learners with opportunities to create and transmit knowledge
4. _____
 - provide access to authentic texts, authentic tasks
 - move beyond "rehearsal" to authentic interactions in pursuit of real purposes
 - employ project-based learning
 - aim for measurable linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes
5. _____
 - build in learner choice over *what* to learn and *how*
 - create mentoring opportunities in which more proficient learners help less proficient learners
 - foster learner initiative in setting goals and monitoring progress
 - provide opportunities to apply new knowledge outside the classroom, and to report/document results
6. _____
 - create opportunities for sharing stories and experiences
 - provide support for analysis of situations
 - create opportunities to collectively develop strategies for action
 - provide opportunities for reflection and planning for further action
 - engage teachers as learners in on-going discovery

Your ideas:

7. _____
8. _____

Weinstein, G. (2004). Learner-centered teaching in the age of accountability. *CATESOL Journal* 16(1), 97-110.