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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a strategy for teaching elementary students language arts that involves the collaboration of the regular education teacher and a speech therapist. The classroom teacher and speech therapist work together in providing lessons related to whole language, reading, parts of speech, semantics, and written expression. This allows speech and language services to be provided to special needs children in the regular classroom and benefits all students. Five lesson plans are presented that include grade level, objectives, and guidelines for implementing the lesson. Objectives include assisting children in developing an appreciation for the written word, as well as developing better reading comprehension through the use of children's literature; realizing the relationship between letters and sounds and learning to correctly articulate sounds; recognizing the different meanings of words and expanding students' vocabulary; recognizing prepositions and seeing how they can be used more effectively in both spoken and written language; and encouraging student expression through poetry. (LP)

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## PUTTING MAGIC INTO LEARNING LANGUAGE ARTS

My career in public school education began as a secondary classroom teacher of speech, drama and English. The method in which I taught language arts was primarily determined by the methods taught in college courses. Twelve years ago, I chose to leave regular education and venture into special education as a speech and language pathologist. The coursework taken in the area of language remediation gave me a totally new perspective on how language development emerges in children. Even the testing used to determine language delay centers on the principal that there are processing skills used to take words and create either oral and/or written language. Much like the word processor that takes what we feed into it and prints into a document such as this, our brain serves as a processor and takes the words, ideas and thoughts we use and transfers them into either spoken and/or written language. Children, as well as adults, who have difficulty naturally processing this kind of information will need to be shown strategies to aid in their language processing. This concept then changed the way I now teach children to deal with language arts. My style of delivery is more interactive in that rather than telling them the information, I allow them to interact with me and they, using their language already developed, teach themselves.

My interaction with children is done through a delivery model called the Language Lab. Several years ago when I had a large caseload, I sought to find a way to make the best use of my therapy time. I decided that if a teacher had a number of students who basically had the same goals and objectives on their IEP's, I could provide their service within the classroom. Now that the federal government is demanding of public schools to see that "special needs" children are included as much as possible with children in regular education, the Language Lab allows me to no longer pull children out in order to provide remediation, but provide that service to all children in their classrooms. In the four years of using this model, I have been asked to assist the regular classroom teacher in teaching a variety of lessons in the area of language arts within the curriculum of the elementary school. I have had then to create new ways of introducing these concepts. Some of these ideas have been now compiled into a teacher's handbook, **BAG O' TRICKS**. From this collection, we have selected five different lessons that will be featured in our presentation. Each of these lessons is designed to be done with the collaboration of the classroom teacher. However, a regular classroom teacher or the speech/language pathologist can use each of these ideas alone to provide interventive and remediation for students. Using the format of the Language Lab, a classroom teacher and speech/language pathologist will demonstrate the following lessons:

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1. Using a **whole language** approach, a piece of children's literature will be introduced and various areas of the curriculum such as math, reading and writing will be featured.

2. As soon as children enter school, they are taught **reading**. Early speech problems can be managed as the speech therapist and classroom teacher work together to introduce letters and the sounds associated with each.

3. One of the earliest concepts of our language system is the eight **parts of speech**. Through the Language Lab children can be introduced to each one and be given the opportunity to use in both their oral and written language. Our focus during the presentation will be on **prepositions**, yet the handbook covers all parts of speech.

4. **Semantics** is the simple connection words in our language have with each other. Our focus during the presentation will be on **homographs**, words that have both the same spelling and sound alike, yet have different meanings.

5. Students must be able to take all of the above language skills and use them in their **written expression**. Our focus will be to share one of the creative writing activities centered around learning how to write a **cinquain**.

I have observed that something magical takes place when I intervene inside the classrooms. First, all of the children know who the speech therapist is and what he or she does. I've caught the sparkle in children's eyes as I enter the classroom. Even though I could be seen as a sign of rescue from their work, I believe they are both anxious and curious about what they'll do with me during my time with them. If I'm asked whether I'll be in their room today and I indicate no, there is disappointment written on their faces. Children who are in classrooms where I don't assist are always asking me to come to their rooms. The simple smile on children as I see them during the school day tells me that I have touched their lives in some way.

I know that the Bible verse: "**Two are better than one because they have a good return for their work.**" (**Ecclesiastes 4:9**) is true, as I look at the success all children are having in language arts when the classroom teacher and speech/language pathologist work together. They say that the proof is always found in the pudding. Last year, I provided the Language Lab to a fourth-grade class in a rather low socio-economic school. When the class was administered the standardized achievement test in the spring, they performed better than they had when they were in the third grade last year. I had not worked with this class previously. The teacher believes that their success was due to our collaboration in teaching language arts. I firmly believe that we were able to make learning language easier through the use of a couple of magic tricks from the magician's bag.

**CONTENT AREA:** Language Arts>Whole Language

**APPROPRIATE GRADE LEVEL:** Kindergarten-Third Grade

**OBJECTIVE:** To assist children in developing an appreciation for the written word, as well as developing better reading comprehension through the sharing of fine literature.

**LESSON PLAN:** First, you'll need to select from the school library a book that is appropriate in reading level with the class you teach. An excellent resource I found helpful in selecting appropriate literature is Carolyn Prentice Burden's Literature Gems: Whole Language Activities for Articulation and Language. One of the suggested stories is Vera B. Williams' A Chair for My Mother. Literature Gems will give you some suggestions on how to present the story. I suggest you read the book and create a series of questions over the story which will measure the student's comprehension. I developed a set of twenty-three questions over the story. Following are a few of them:

1. What kind of work does her mother do? She is a waitress.
2. Where does her mother work? She works at the Blue Tile Diner  
(You could then discuss what a diner is and what it is like.)
3. What did her mother do with her money made in tips? She usually placed them in a large glass jar. (You may want to discuss what a tip is at this time.)
4. What were they going to do with the money when the jar was full? They were going to buy a chair for Mother.

You could get the class involved in a game as you ask them to answer the questions. I used the wooden block game, JENGA. As a student responded correctly, he was able to remove one of the blocks and place it on top. The activity ends when the wooden tower falls or every student has had a chance to demonstrate comprehension. You could even bring a large empty pickle jar into the room and encourage the class to fill it with change through the year and then use the money to purchase something for the classroom or assist someone who has needs.

**CONTENT AREA:** Language Arts>Letter and Sound Recognition

**APPROPRIATE GRADE LEVEL:** Kindergarten-Second Grade

**OBEJECTIVE:** To assist children in seeing the relationship between letters and the sounds they make, as well as assist them in learning to correctly articulate the sounds in their language.

**LESSON PLAN:** Anytime you present phonics to children, I would follow these steps during instruction.

**Step One:** You need to begin by introducing a letter/sound relationship by bombarding the children with the sound correctly articulated. Jim Stone's The Animated-Alphabet presents each consonant and vowel sound as a character. For example, if you were working on the k, you'd introduce Kimmy Kangaroo. Kimmy is introduced through a song put to a familiar tune. Jim also gives you the hand movements to the song, as well as a story about Kimmy that contains a number of words with the sound.

**Step Two:** Your next step is to develop a group of words containing the sound in initial, medial, and final position. You could ask each child to bring an item to school that had a k sound in it. As they present the item to the class, have them name the object and tell in what position the k appears. Jean Gilliam DeGaetano's Artic Plus contains bingo cards for most consonant sounds. You could use either her cards or create your own bingo sheets with pictures of objects containing the k sound. Another clever way of practicing the sound in any position is to make a set of twenty-four cards containing twelve pairs of matching pictures of things containing the sound. Place these face down and have the class play concentration by matching each pair. As they turn over a card, have them name the object. Susan Ross Simms' two books, SPARC Artic Scenes, Articulating: Stories and Activities and Stories & Activities for Articulation Reinforcement contain pictures that are filled with objects containing the sound. They can be used to have a picture hunt.

**Step Three:** In order to measure correct production of the sound, you'll then need to give them a chance to use the sound in conversation. Norma Jean Prater and Virginia I. Wolfe's book, Predictable Stories for Articulation, contains a predictable, easy-to-read story for most of the common consonant sounds. Each story is cleverly illustrated. You would then select the appropriate sound you've introduced. If k is the sound, then the story you'd read aloud to the class is "The Kite Contest." The story provides another bombardment of the sound. You'll need to develop a series of questions prior to the reading. The answer to each question must demand the child who answers to use the k sound in his response. When I used this story in a kindergarten class, here are some of the questions that I created.

1. When did the kite contest take place? on the weekend
2. Where did the kite contest take place? near the picnic table
3. The kites came in all different colors
4. What shape was the pink kite? an ice cream cone
5. When did the kites stop talking? when the kids came around
6. Where did the kids take their kites? to the rocky lake
7. What then did the kites do? climbed to the sky
8. Which kite was the first to go up? the rocket
9. Which kite flew the highest? the round coffee cup
10. What did the little red kite kiss? the clouds

You can always use a game format to play as the children respond to the questions. Brenda Brumbaugh and Nan Thompson-Trenta's book, Listening for Articulation All Year Round is a great resource for ideas about games you can play with any sound you've presented in class.

**CONTENT AREA:** Language Arts>Homographs

**APPROPRIATE GRADE LEVEL:** Third-Sixth Grade

**OBJECTIVE:** To assist children in recognizing that words have more than just one meaning and using that language skill to expand their vocabulary base.

**LESSON PLAN:** I would suggest that the best way to introduce homographs is to first explain the difference between the **homographs** and **homophones**. The **homograph** is a word that has two different meanings, but is spelled the same way. An example would be **set** as in: Mother asked me to **set** the table. Another meaning of the word is seen in this sentence: We need to buy a new **set** of luggage. The **homophone**, on the other hand, is a word that has two meanings, yet is spelled differently. An example would be **bear** as in: The children saw a grizzly **bear** at the zoo. Another meaning for this homophone is seen in this sentence: His **bare** feet became very hot, as he stood in the sand. Once you know they understand a **homograph**, you'll be ready to give them opportunity to use them. I've found it effective to present the student with one meaning of the word and ask him to either give its other meaning, or use it in a sentence. You'll need to prepare a list of homographs. To get you started here is a sample:

1. **bright**
  1. The teacher thought Johnny was a bright student.
  2. Sunglasses were needed due to the sun being bright.
2. **match**
  1. In the card game, you need to match like cards.
  2. Mother always told us not to play with matches.
3. **kid**
  1. Joey got to pet a baby kid at the petting zoo.
  2. The neighbors across the street have only one kid.
4. **chest**
  1. Grandfather has hair all over his chest.
  2. The pirates found a chest in the sunken vessel.

If you need some help, the following books will help you: Listening for Language All Year Round, Language Remediation and Expansion, and Language Processing Remediation.



**CONTENT AREA:** Language Arts>Prepositions

**APPROPRIATE GRADE LEVEL:** Third-Sixth Grade

**OBJECTIVE:** To assist children in recognizing prepositions and seeing how they can be used more effectively in both spoken and written language.

**LESSON PLAN:** I would suggest beginning by either showing the class a series of pictures that show an object or person in a position that would suggest one of the common prepositions or demonstrate locations through the use of actual objects or the children themselves. Your goal is to get them to generate a series of words like **under, around, behind, between, etc.** You'll need to show them that prepositions usually introduce a **phrase** that will be used either as an adjective or adverb. Here are some examples: The man in the red car is our city mayor. (adjective)  
We will arrive sometime between two and five o'clock. (adverb)  
Provide plenty of drill that centers around this part of speech. No-glamour grammar and Up With Language: Adjectives & Adverbs will again be of great value to you. I found an easy way to get them to begin using prepositional phrases in writing was by first reading aloud Stan and Jan Berenstain's book, Bears In The Night. This story is simply a series of prepositional phrases. After reading the story, have them write their own story in which either an animal or person leaves one place and later returns back to it by the end of the story. Always be sure that they are using adverbs in their writing.



**CONTENT AREA:** Language Arts>Creative Writing

**APPROPRIATE GRADE LEVEL:** Fourth-Sixth Grade

**OBJECTIVE:** To assist children in expressing themselves via the avenue of poetry by showing them how to write a cinquain.

**LESSON PLAN:** I've found that the **cinquain** is one of the easiest poems to write and that it challenges them to use their knowledge of everything they have previously learned in language. Here is the format of the cinquain and an example of this type of verse.

Line One: Noun

Line Two: Two adjectives that describe the noun

Line Three: A sentence that tells something more about the noun

Line Four: Two predicates that tell what the noun does

Line Five: Synonym for Noun in Line One

**Samson**  
**Furry and obedient**  
**He curls up on our bed to sleep.**  
**Barks and begs for treats**  
**Eskimo Spitz**

It would be advisable to let the class help you write one and you place it on the board before they write on their own.