

CALL Reading and Note-Taking Lessons

Levels

Intermediate +

Aims

Read expository texts
for main and supporting
ideas

Class Time

20–30 minutes

Preparation Time

10–15 minutes,
prepared lesson;
1–2 hours, new lesson

Resources

VAX computer system
Expository texts

A CALL reading lesson is a very simple way for students to read expository texts in small chunks. Key words in the center of the screen serve as reminders to the students of the main ideas of the text. Students are able to work at their own pace, although it is possible to clock or even allow them a certain amount of time to finish.

Procedure

1. Read through the available lessons and decide if they suit the content you are interested in teaching.
2. Log onto VAX computer and enter Courseware Authoring System (CAS). Create a group, assign lessons, and then assign students to the group.
3. Have students log onto VAX, entering name of group and lesson. Students will see the title page, followed by a page with directions. Then the lesson, which is divided into two sessions, begins.

In Session 1, the screen is divided into three sections. The top section consists of the reading passage, presented one paragraph at a time. In order to advance the reading, the student pushes the <NEXT SCREEN> key. The middle section displays key words for each paragraph. The bottom section displays whatever notes the student types. The notes simply scroll and are saved automatically by the computer.

Session 2 has three parts. First, the student reviews notes from Session 1 for as long as necessary. Then the student types everything remembered about the lesson; this is scored based on the number of main and supporting ideas recalled from the original text. Next, the student answers 20 multiple choice questions based on the main and supporting ideas of the lesson.

Caveats and Options

Finally, the student answers questions regarding how s/he feels about the lesson.

1. If available lessons do not suit your purpose, choose a different text. Divide the text into paragraphs of no more than 10 lines so that each paragraph fits on the computer screen.
2. Choose one or two key words per paragraph.
3. Write an outline of the text. Prepare a list of synonyms for all key words in the outline.
4. Write multiple choice items to serve as a quiz for the main and supporting ideas.
5. Results from the tests will tell you if students understood the main concepts or if remedial work is needed. Students' notes will be saved automatically and will give you an idea of what the student deemed important enough in the text to write down. This information will be useful for students who do poorly as well as those who do well on the lessons.

Contributors

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