



Language Experience Approach:  
“Talk written down”  
Bridge between spoken and written language

- "What I can think about, I can talk about."
- "What I can say, I can write."
- "What I can write, I can read."
- "I can read what I can write and what other people can write for me to read."

(Professor Roach Van Allen)

**Language Experience Approach to Early Reading Instruction**

- Uses oral language and students' own experiences as the basis for reading/writing instruction
- **Integrates** thinking, listening, reading, writing, and speaking into instruction (i.e., is a comprehensive approach)
- Often used with younger readers, but can be an effective strategy for **older beginning and nonreaders**

- Is an especially effective strategy with English language learners
- Can use Language Experience with content areas and other literacy tasks
- Can integrate LE with Shared Writing to expand skills and increase student involvement

### Basic steps in Language Experience approach

- Students engage in an activity.
- The teacher elicits and records student-generated language about the activity (e.g., give a temporal sequence of what happened, description of what happened, or give opinions about what happened).
- The group (or each student) writes a text based on the activity, supported by the teacher (e.g., an expository text, a description, etc.) – Shared Writing

### Other Literacy Tasks using LE

- Students write personal opinion texts about an experience, using details from the experience to support their opinions
  - e.g., after watching a movie, reading a book as a class, trying out a new video game, listening to a news story, etc.
- Letters (e.g., letter to the principal about an issue affecting students, thank you letters to someone who did something nice for the class)
- Recipes

### More ideas for LE

- Set of directions for various tasks
- Books
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- Poems
- Songs
- At the end of the day (or on Friday), compose the “Daily News” for the class using a shared writing approach

**Mystery Person LE Activity** (On the board, write and draw clues about a special person in the class.)

- The children have to play detective to discover who the Mystery Person is.
- Ask the children to look at you: Write the following clue: *My eyes are (color)*.
- Use pictures and the appropriate color markers to illustrate the clues. For example, use blue to draw blue eyes, brown to draw brown hair, etc.
- Ask the children to "read" the clue. Point to each word.
- Next, write the second clue. *My hair is (color)*. Again, read the clue together.
- Continue writing and reading clues about the Mystery Person's favorite food, songs, stories, games, pets, family, etc.
- Tell the children when they think they know who it is to smile.
- At the bottom of the chart write, "Who am I?"
- Read over the entire chart, asking the Mystery Person to stand up at the end. (Make the clues fairly obvious and look directly at that person.)
- The Mystery Person can draw her picture at the bottom of the page and take it home.

(Jean Feldman, 2014)

### One way to use LE

#### Day 1

**Step 1: Build experiential background for the story.**

**Step 2: Discuss the experience**

**Jot down key words and phrases on the board.**

**Step 3: Students dictate the story.**

**Record their actual words; work on writing mechanics (e.g., ending punctuation)**

**Step 5: Teacher/EA and student(s) read story e.g., Echo reading**

**Step 6: Student(s) read familiar parts of the story**

### One way to use LE

#### Day 2

• **Step1: Re-read story**

– e.g., choral reading

• **Step 2: Match story parts**

– Put words from each sentence on cards.

Students match words to sentence strips.

– Take down the LE chart. Put words for the sentences on large cards and give to small groups. Group has to assemble the words to make the sentence.

### One way to use LE

#### Day 3

• **Step 1: Re-read story**

• **Step 2: Identify familiar words; work on phonics and sight word skills using the words in the LE text.**

• **Step 3: Publish (students type story into the computer/illustrate)**

– Put a copy in the class library; make individual copies for students to take home.

## Language Experience Resources

- Principles and Practice of Language Experience: <http://literacyconnections.com/Cramer.html>
- Literacy Connections: <http://www.literacyconnections.com/InTheirOwnWords.php>
- Language Experience Approach & Adult Learners  
<http://www.ericdigests.org/1993/approach.htm>

## Coming Up . . . .

### Week 11

- Vocabulary Development & Reading Comprehension

### Read:

- Chapters 6 & 7: Reading comprehension. In your text.
- Morgan et al. (2009)