

The Talk Write Approach

Rationale:

The main aim of the talk-write method is to develop fluency in writing-- the ability to get down the words on the page easily. This can only come with practice.

When students work according to this method they intensively focus on what they want to say and try to make it as clear and understandable as possible for others. They are involved in the creation of a complete piece of language which includes all aspects: talking, asking questions, listening, reading and writing with addition of mini-lessons in grammar, organization and punctuation.

Students progress at their own rate; each student writes his or her piece individually. They set their own agenda and writing is built on their knowledge and prior experience. Students are physically involved in learning which is especially important for haptic learners, and they are forced to interact in English.

Their writing process becomes public rather than private; they write for teachers and peers. Therefore they try to write more interestingly.

Being involved in the talk-write they experience a form of cooperative learning, which enhances learning.

Anat Marom, 1994.

Stages:

1. Model the method.
2. Pair or let students pair themselves; one will be the writer the other one the questioner.
3. Give students wide felt pens and poster papers to be taped on the walls.
4. Writer talks about what s/he wants to write; questioner asks questions of clarification and comments (e.g.: *Tell me more... I don't exactly understand*)
5. Writer starts writing, questioner helps put together the sentences.
6. Teacher moves around, encourages and offers advice. S/he should avoid negative criticism, especially at the beginning.
7. Writer reads the whole piece aloud.
8. Questioner reads the whole piece aloud.
9. Writer and questioner make corrections on the poster paper using a different colour.
10. When students are all finished, the teacher picks a few examples and points out good writing and punctuation.
11. Partners switch roles and repeat the process.

Assignments:

Should be short, a paragraph in length.

Should be considered first draft, therefore corrections should be seen.

Should not be graded; the aim is to develop confidence in the ability to get down words on the page easily.

Topics:

Should be determined by students either through self-selection or from a list provided by the teacher. Emergent topics should be allowed.

Modification:

Students may use the computer as a means to communicate at later stages. It facilitates the process of revising.

The method might be integrated with other methods; for example, paired reading or drawing as pre-writing.

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