

Language Experience Approach

Examples from the classes of Dr. Jenna Altherr-Flores at
the Pima Community College Refugee Education Program



Example 1

Students in this class are adult emergent readers from refugee backgrounds. They are learning to read for the first time as they learn English.

When we start class each day, we have a conversation about who is present and who is absent. We talk about if class is big or small. This helps students learn to write and recognize their names and their classmates' names.

The next slide shows what the class dictated to me. I wrote it exactly as they said it.

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SMART Notebook
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Today class is small.
Rougayatou, Ilyassa, Meena,
Zero, Rawda, Peter, and
Claudine here. And teacher!

10:12 AM
6/3/2011

I initially wrote the text just as they said it, and we practiced reading it. But then we discussed what was missing, and the students said “are, teacher, are!”

In the next slide, notice the addition of “are.”

Today class is small.

Rougayatou, Ilyassa, Meena,
Zero, Rawda, Peter, and
Claudine are here. And teacher!

I typed and printed the text for the next class. Notice that I used Comic Sans font for its realistic **a** and **g**. I used this printed text for later activities.

Today class is small.

Rougayatou, Ilyassa, Meena, Zero, Rawda,
Peter, and Claudine are here.

And teacher! And Edris!

Neguse, Samir, Ibrahim, Jema, Mbonimpa,
and Agnes are not here.

I wrote each word on a piece of paper. The class practiced putting the words in order. They could refer to the printed version of the text if needed.



I made a fill-in-the-blank (“cloze”) activity. They could refer to the printed-out full text if needed.

Today _____ is small.

_____, Ilyassa, Meena, Zero, Rawda,
Peter, _____ Claudine are here.

_____ teacher! And _____!

Neguse, _____, Ibrahim, Jema, Mbonimpa, and Agnes are _____ here.

Example 2

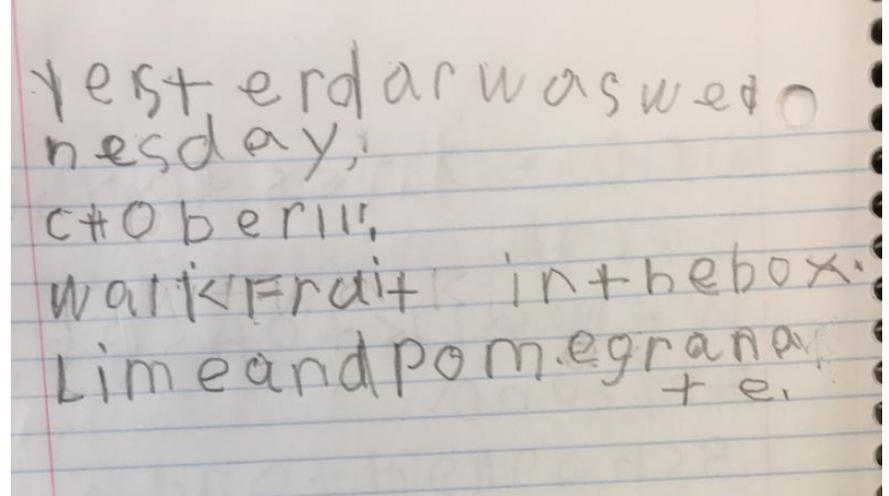
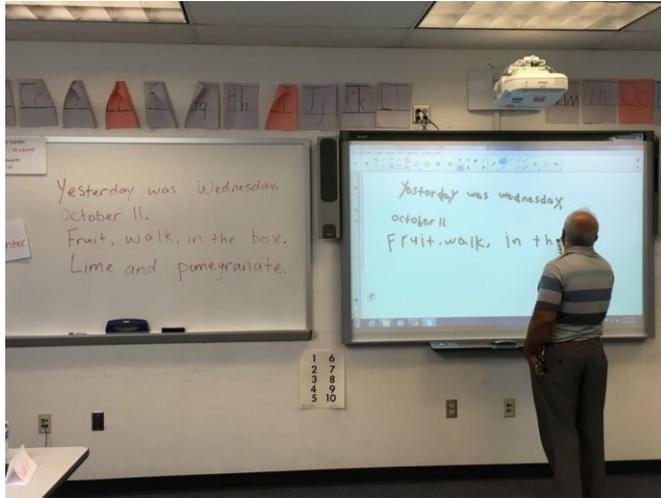
The class building is very close to the Arizona School for the Deaf and Blind, where there are many fruit trees. We took a field trip! During the entire field trip, we took photos of the students, what all of us did, what we wore, etc.



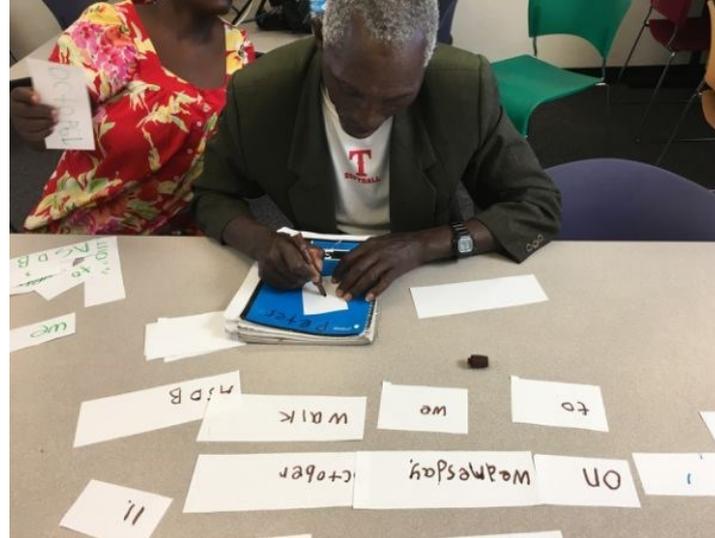
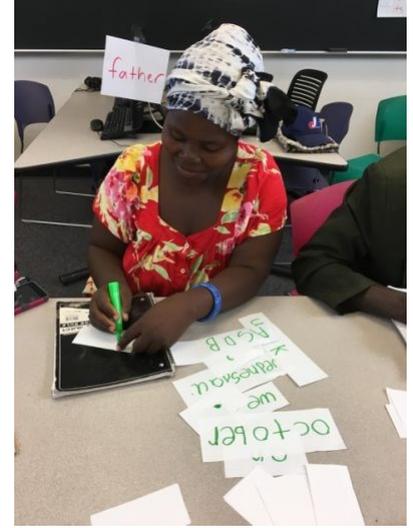


The next day in class:

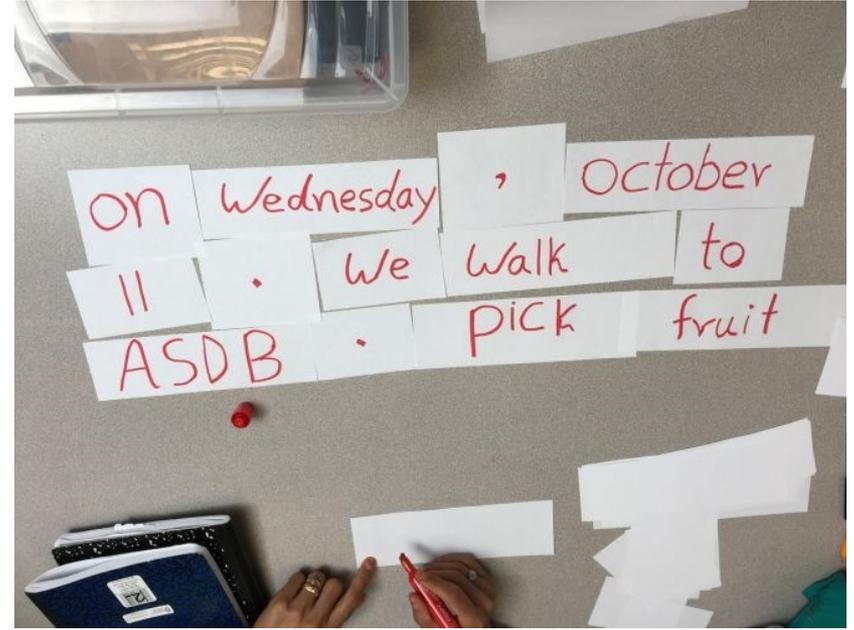
1. I asked the students what we did the day before.
2. We looked through the pictures I took, and I wrote the sentences the students said, e.g. **“Samir pick fruit.”**



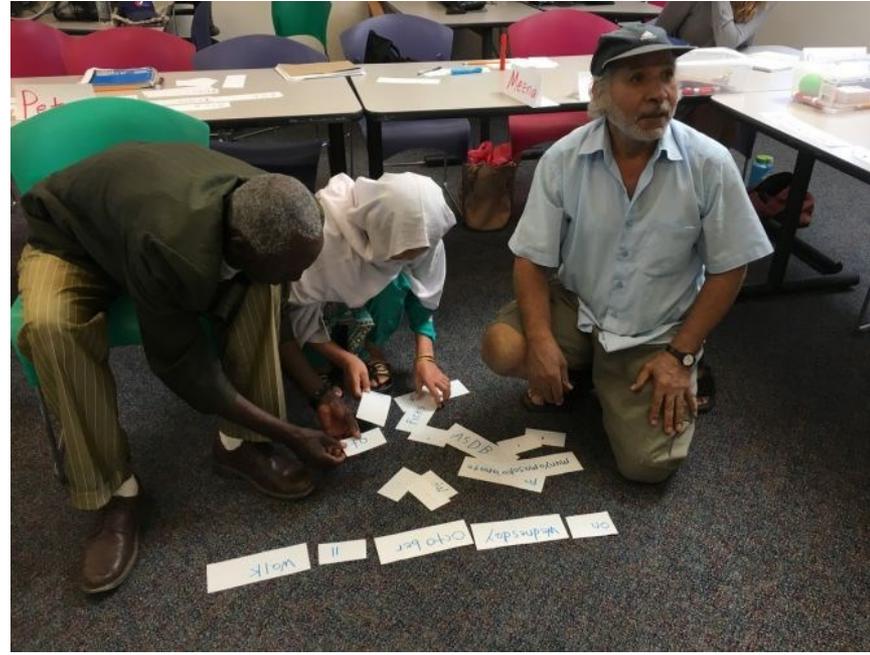
3. Students wrote each word (and punctuation mark) on a strip of paper.



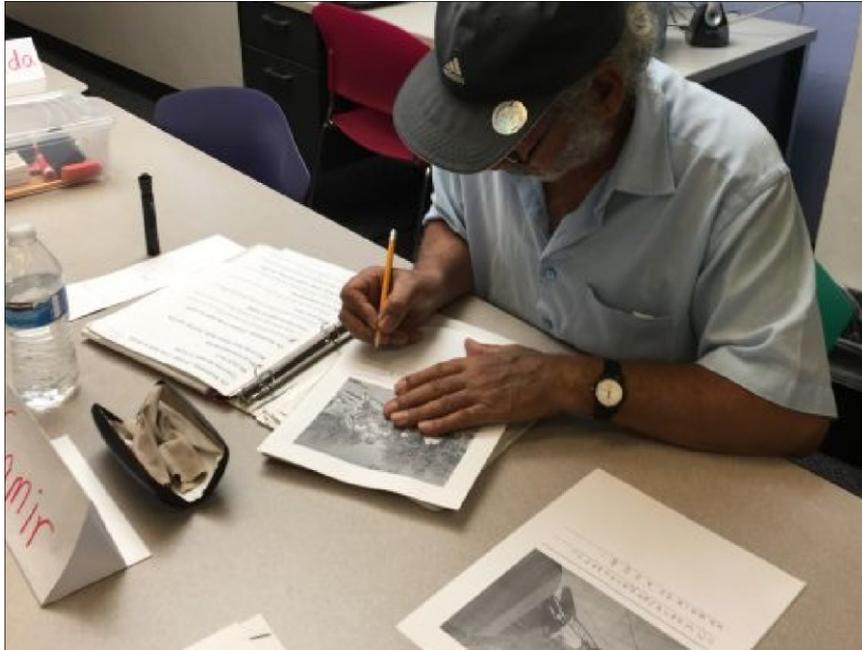
4. We organized the strips in sentence order.



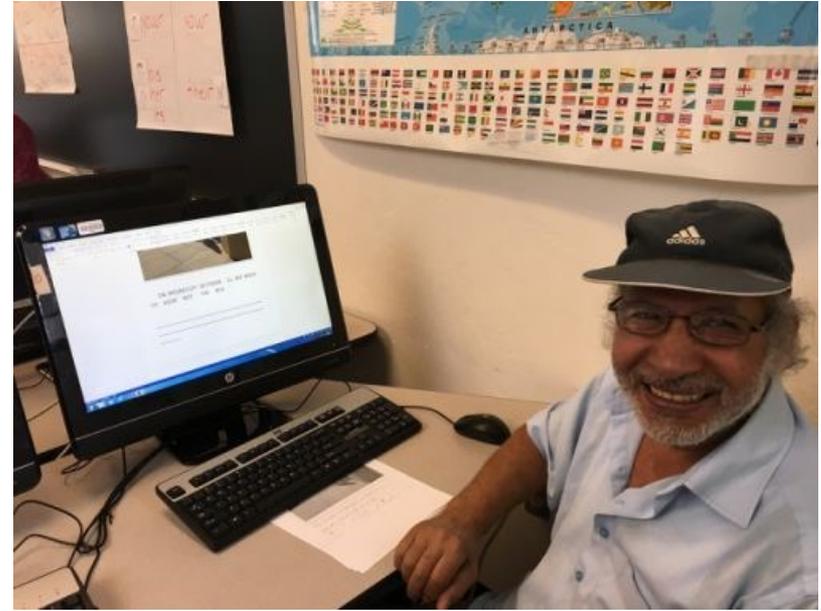
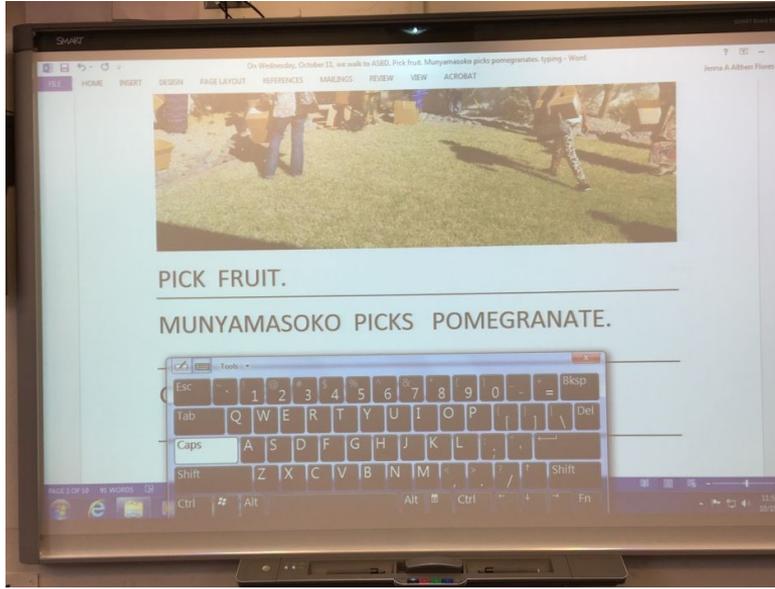
5. The students worked in groups to organize three sentences.



6. The students wrote the sentences on a piece of paper with a photo from the field trip.



7. Students typed the sentences with my help.



Look at this incredible work! I felt so proud of my students, and more importantly, they felt proud of themselves.

