

Using Signs in the LCTL Classroom

Sample Lesson Plan Overview

Level: Beginning

Aims: Promote literacy in languages where learners are encountering either a non-alphabetic language or a language that uses an alphabet they are unfamiliar with

Class Time: Variable (30 min-several class periods)

Preparation Time: Variable (20 min-1 hr.)

Resources: Pictures of street signs; shop signs, billboards, etc.; activity related worksheets

Encountering a language that is written with an unfamiliar alphabet or symbols can be very frustrating for learners since it causes them to feel illiterate. To lessen the feelings of frustration, it is useful for teachers to focus on literacy skills using familiar contexts such as street or shop signs. Such an activity has a dual focus: It allows learners to use their deductive skills to decipher and sound out words while at the same time enabling them to acquire high-frequency vocabulary.

The following two lesson plans promote literacy skills using a fun, game-like atmosphere.

- **Bob's Pizzeria—Literacy bingo with street or shop signs**
- **Shoe Repair—A mad dash for spelling**

Bob's Pizzeria—Literacy bingo with street or shop signs

Level: Beginning

Aims: Practice literacy

Class time: 30 minutes

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Resources: 16-24 pictures of street and shop signs mounted, worksheet

The game bingo, with its universal appeal, is used here to provide a game-like atmosphere for students to practice their developing literacy skills in the LCTL. In the first phase of the activity, students decode words related to street or shop signs, transcribe them using a familiar alphabet, and assign meaning to each word. They then prepare individual bingo boards and play literacy bingo to enhance their mastery of the unfamiliar alphabet/symbols and to reinforce mastery of new vocabulary.

Procedure:

1. Before class, locate 16-24 pictures of street signs.
2. Prepare a worksheet for the activity (see appendix).
3. In class, post the pictures around the room (using tape or blue gum).
4. Handout worksheets to pairs and have students go around to all the pictures to fill out the top portion of their worksheet (providing a transcription and a guess at what the word is).
5. After students finish, go over the words with the students.
6. In the bingo phase, explain the rules for the game and pass out bingo cards to all students.
7. Have students fill out their grid by randomly placing the numbers corresponding with words into the bingo grid without duplicating numbers.
8. Put all the words on slips of papers and drop them into a hat
9. Call on student volunteers to come to the front of the room and select a slip from the hat to read aloud. Seated students should mark the square on their bingo grid that corresponds with the word they hear.
10. The first one to a bingo wins. Bingo is achieved when a row of squares are filled either horizontally, vertically, or diagonally.

Caveats and Options:

1. Mounting the pictures on heavy construction paper or cardboard and/or laminating them will increase their durability.
2. As an alternative to tape or blue gum, small magnets can be used to affix posters to most blackboards or whiteboards.

3. With minimal pairs, this activity could be easily modified to become a pronunciation drill.
4. If you don't have enough pictures of signs, use cognates or recognizable names (Lenin, Dar es Salaam, etc.)
5. Distributing small prizes (e.g., candy, pencils) to the bingo "winners" adds to the fun of the activity.

Appendix

Word	Transcription	Meaning		
1. автомойка	avtomoika	car wash/ gasoline station?		
2.				
3.				
etc.				
<p>Fill in the following boxes with numbers between 1-24 in any order without repeating numbers.</p>				
		Free Space		

Shoe Repair—A mad dash for spelling

Level: Beginning

Aims: Practice literacy and spelling

Class time: 20-30 minutes

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Resources: A handful of pictures of street and shop signs mounted and legible at a distance; two sets of alphabet letters that correspond to the words on the signs; a certain amount of free space to move around in

This game-like activity gets students out of their seats, thus employing their kinesthetic sense to promote literacy acquisition. Students compete in teams to line up and correctly spell the street or shop signs. In this way, they enhance their mastery of the unfamiliar alphabet/symbols and reinforce mastery of new vocabulary.

Procedure:

1. Before class, locate 5-6 pictures of street and shop signs which are visible at a distance (3-4 meters away). It is best if the target words on the signs have been previously presented.
2. On index cards or small pieces of tag board, prepare two sets of letters that correspond to the words on the signs. Put one letter of the alphabet (or, if desired, consonant clusters) on each card.
3. Separate students into two groups and hand each group a set of letters to distribute amongst themselves.
4. Present a sign and read it.
5. Have students rearrange themselves to spell the sign. When they are in order, ask them to pronounce the word in unison. The first team done scores a point.
6. Repeat this procedure for each sign.

Caveats and Options:

1. This activity will not work well for languages without an alphabet (e.g., Chinese).
2. Mounting the signs on heavy construction paper or cardboard and/or laminating them will increase their durability.
3. It is important that the students have adequate letters to spell the words, especially if there are many duplicated letters.
4. If there are multiple words on a sign, verbally or visually highlight the target word.
5. Giving bonus points for meaning can add to the fun of this activity.
6. If you don't have many students, give each student a letter per hand. This makes the game rather like twister.