

## **Application of Drilling Simple Sentences in Speaking Activity to Enhance Confidence to Converse in English for Pupils with Special Needs**

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### **ABSTRACT**

English has been widely used and spoken in Malaysia for a long time, making it the nation's second language by default. In terms of education, learning English has become essential to overcoming communication challenges in schools and colleges. However, Malaysia as well as many other non-English native speaker countries do have difficulty encouraging their students to speak in English. Among the reasons are that they have no confidence in conversing in English and even if they do know the vocabulary, they do not know how to convey the messages. It can be concluded that they do not know how to arrange the words to relay the messages or in other words, make simple sentences. Different social structures, geographical demographic, and learning abilities may worsen the confidence level of students to speak English. If the students know how to form a simple sentence from words introduced to them from time to time may create their confidence level. They may realize that it would not be that difficult to form sentences. Their confidence level may increase if they feel that it would be easy to form sentences. The student should start with a simple sentence that can fit in most day-to-day conversations. More words and vocabularies will be introduced to them using the same simple sentence. Towards the end of best practice stages, a few of other sentences would be introduced that may use the same word or vocabulary. In my opinion, practicing simple sentences through drilling orally and reading may encourage students with special needs to have confidence in conversing English.

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### **Introduction to Best Practices**

Practicing simple sentences in the native language is quite easy among students as they are used to the language since the children. However, when it comes to a second language such as English, in this matter the students will start losing their confidence. Many reasons lead to the difficulties of using the English language, among them are the numbers of vocabulary they have, the difference in sentence structure in English compared to their native language and they do not know there is a simple sentence structure that they can use or are familiar with.

The intervention to encourage students to practice simple sentences in this best practice may take a few steps. First, we must introduce the same simple sentence that could be used in varied contexts. Later, a few vocabularies will be introduced to the

students. Then, the students will practice using the vocabulary in a simple sentence. They will be drilled orally and through reading aloud.

According to research done by Bruce, Tammy, and Kristie (2018), teaching simple sentence construction, named sentence combining, then it can improve sentence construction ability and hence overall writing ability among students with learning disabilities.

### **Justification on the Implementation of Best Practices**

Based on teachers' observation, many students choose to stay quiet when being asked to make simple sentences in English, but the students are capable to make sentences in their native language. The students are also not confident to make sentences when they are in a new situation with new vocabulary being introduced. They are not aware that the same simple sentences learned before together with visual representation may be used with the new situation and vocabulary introduced. Referring to research done by Farzad Mashhadi and Golnaz Jamalifar (2015), using visual representation will give a better understanding of vocabulary learning as a second language.

### **Implementation Objectives**

The objectives for implementation of the best practice are:

1. To introduce Simple Sentences which may be used in different situations and vocabularies.
2. To gain students' confidence in practicing Simple Sentences after going through drilling orally and reading aloud.

### **Implementation of Best Practices**

To efficiently implement best practices, a group of special needs students needs to be identified. The students should at least recognize the alphabet and understand instructions which means that low-functioning students will be unable to follow this best practice.

The implementation of best practices is conducted in a few stages as presented in the table below.

<b>No.</b>	<b>Steps</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
1	Induction of simple sentences and vocabulary	There are two sets of simple sentences. The 1st set was used in the 1st week and the 2nd set was used in the second week. Each set of sentences consisted	The sentences and vocabulary were introduced using visual and concrete teaching aids

		of vocabulary that are based on themes. Examples of themes include things in the classroom or things in the living room.	
2	Prepare tables for drilling orally and reading aloud.	Prepare three sets of tables and put two sets of sentences that had been formed in step 1 into the first two tables respectively. Then, for the third table combine the two sets of sentences. All tables must use the same vocabulary. Students would be practicing orally and reading aloud the tables in groups and also individually.	The first table was to be drilled in the 1 <sup>st</sup> week and the second table was to be drilled in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> week. The third table was to be drilled in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> week. Refer to <b>Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3.</b>
3	Repeat steps 1 and 2 but now use a different set of vocabularies or subjects but these different sets must still be in the same theme.	For example, the vocabularies used in the 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> steps were things in the classroom while in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> step would still be using things in the classroom but different vocabularies.	The two sets of sentences were still being used. The duration of time for drilling orally and reading aloud would still be the same. Refer to <b>Exhibit 1.</b>
4	Repeat steps 1 and 2 but now use a different set of vocabularies or subjects and a different theme.	For example, vocabularies used in the 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> steps are things in the classroom while in the 4 <sup>th</sup> step are things in the living hall.	The two sets of sentences are still being used. The duration of time for drilling orally and reading aloud would still be the same. Refer to <b>Exhibit 2.</b>
5	Repeat steps 1 to 4 but now use a different set of vocabularies or subjects and also a different theme.	For example, steps 1 to 4 use things in the classroom and things in the living room but now in step 5, we would use things in the kitchen or garden.	The two sets of sentences were still being used. The duration of time for drilling orally and reading aloud would still be the same. Another two sets of sentences could be introduced to students should they be fluent in using the previous two sets of

			sentences. The duration of time for drilling orally and reading aloud would still be the same.
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Table 1  
 2 Simple Sentences

Theme: Things in the classroom	
<p><b>Set 1</b></p> <p>1. This is a _____.</p> <p>2. I like the _____.</p>	<p>pen</p> <p>pencil</p> <p>sharpener</p> <p>ruler</p>

Table 2  
 2 Simple Sentences

Theme: Things in the classroom	
<p><b>Set 2</b></p> <p>1. I have a _____.</p> <p>2. The _____ is very beautiful.</p>	<p>pen</p> <p>pencil</p> <p>sharpener</p> <p>ruler</p>

Table 3  
 4 Simple Sentences

Theme: Things in the classroom	
<p><b>Set 3</b></p> <p>1. I have a _____.</p> <p>2. The _____ is very beautiful.</p> <p>3. I have a _____.</p> <p>4. The _____ is very beautiful.</p>	<p>pen</p> <p>pencil</p> <p>sharpener</p> <p>ruler</p>

Exhibit 1  
 4 Simple Sentences

Theme: Things in the classroom	
<p><b>Set 1</b></p> <p>1. This is a _____.</p> <p>2. I like the _____.</p>	
<p><b>Set 2</b></p> <p>3. I have a _____.</p> <p>4. The _____ is very beautiful.</p>	

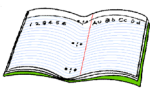
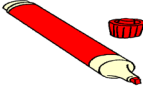





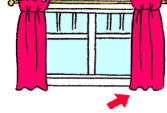
			
notebook	Marker pen	chair	table

Exhibit 2  
 4 Simple Sentences

Theme: Things in the living room			
<b>Set 1</b>			
1. This is a _____.			
2. I like the _____.			
<b>Set 2</b>			
3. I have a _____.			
4. The _____ is very beautiful.			
			
television	bookcase	sofa	curtain

### Effectiveness from the Implementation of Best Practices

#### Observation Analysis

Based on the observation analysis, we found that students now knew a few basic general sentences that they may use in most situations. The students may introduce lots of objects whether the objects are in the garden, in the supermarket, in offices, or in new places as long as the students knew the vocabulary of the objects. They may use the basic sentences they learned based on the things in the classroom and living room to be applied in different locations.

Once the students were familiar with a few basic sentence structures, the students were ready to be introduced to other sentences that they might apply to a variety of locations. Question and answer sentences might also now be introduced to them. The table used for drilling really helped the students to memorize new sentences introduced to them. The tables were used for reading aloud in groups and individually.

### **Questionnaires and Interview Analysis**

Based on questionnaires and interviews done among the students, we received few findings. Among the familiar answers from the students was that they agreed English was not as difficult as it seemed. It was quite easy to start a sentence by introducing objects to friends. They got to know that the same sentence could be used in different situations or locations.

Most of the students also mentioned that their confidence levels had increased when introducing new objects to others. This was because they now knew a few sentences that they might use to introduce new objects. Their pronunciation also got better as they practiced and were corrected during the drilling process.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Implementing this best practice could help students increase their confidence level in conversing and communicating in English. Students realized they might use the same sentences in a variety of situations. The drilling table really helped to improve students' pronunciation as they would be practicing in groups and individually and corrections were also being done during the drilling. Introduction to new sentences was also easy to be implemented using the drilling table. Based on a few benefits gained from the best practice, hence, it is recommended that this best practice is to be continued and implemented further.

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