

Case Study 4.2: Mrs Mapuru uses the look-and-say method

Mrs Mapuru is teaching Grade 2 in a school situated in a rural area. Her children have had more than a year learning to read in their mother tongue and are now learning English and building reading skills in English.

She has collected pictures of fruits and pasted them on to cards. Each card has the English name of the fruit under the picture. She has also made about 15 sets of four cards, each of which has only the name of a fruit with no picture.



Figure 4.1: Some picture cards

She holds the picture cards up one by one and makes sure that the learners know the names of the different fruits: banana, apple, pear, peach, mango, etc. She then shuffles the cards and holds them up in a different order, letting the children chorus the names of the fruits. She repeats the name and spells out the words: 'Mango, m-a-n-g-o, mango.' She does this a few times, encouraging the class to say it with her.

Mrs Mapuru then uses a set of cards without pictures and lets children put up their hands and try to read the words. She does not break down the names of the fruits into sounds; children have to read words as a whole. She goes back to the picture words once or twice and then tries the cards without pictures again. Then she sticks the cards with pictures and words on her English word wall.

She divides the class into pairs. Each pair has a set of four cards. They try to read them, turning them over one by one and reading them to each other. They try to read them without looking at the word wall first, but if they are stuck they can get help by looking at the wall. Pairs can exchange their sets of cards with another pair once they can read them well without looking at the word wall.

After this, Mrs Mapuru can ask the children about different kinds of fruits: 'What other kinds of fruits do you know?', 'What colour is a banana?', 'How do you eat a banana, do you eat it with the cover on or do you need to peel it?', and so on. She can let them talk in pairs about the fruits that they know and the ones they like the best. Then they can report back to the class about their favourite fruits, using a sentence she gives them: 'I like to eat (bananas).' As they say their sentence, they hold up the word.

Later, she reads a story about fruit to the children and builds a lesson around it. You can read about that in Section 5.