

THE ULAT PROGRAM'S ENGLISH I COURSE DESCRIPTION

Introduction

The ULAT (Universal Language Acquisition Tool) world language program, located at www.theulat.com, is a two-year course of studies respecting the Natural Language Acquisition Sequence. This means that the ULAT seeks to replicate the natural means by which native speakers acquire mastery of their first language, moving in focus from the skills of listening and speaking to elementary reading and finally, only in the second year of language learning, to elementary writing.

Methodology

The ULAT trains students to think as does a native speaker of the target language, producing speech without recourse either to translation from a second language or to envisioning printed text. The students' exposure to linguistic elements occurs in the following sequence:

- 1) The meaning of new vocabulary is presented visually through the use of video clips and mime.
- 2) A key still image is selected from the video presentation to represent the word's meaning.
- 3) The image is recombined multiple times with other already recognizable images to form sentences and thus to reinforce the word's meaning by placing it in a variety of contexts.
- 4) As students begin to master a particular sentence structure, the lessons thereafter present that structure in an accelerating PowerPoint video whose final rate of presentation obliges students to form their statements as a reflex action, without the time to think about them in their native language.
- 5) This process is repeated until the students have achieved "relative oral fluency." (For a definition of this term, see the video entitled "Verifying the attainment of relative oral fluency" that is found in the teachers' section of the ULAT website).
- 6) Once a solid oral foundation has been laid, the ULAT provides students with extensive and recurrent times of phonics instruction, combined with word recognition activities, making use of the words and structures that students already comprehend when spoken at a conversational rate and can employ in fluent speech.
- 7) Students then begin engaging in elementary reading around themes that highlight the aforementioned vocabulary and structure.
- 8) Finally, and not until the second year of study, students are led to begin writing statements composed of elements learned during the first year and which the students are already fully capable of expressing orally. Written activities progress from the transcription of a single dictated statement, to question-and-answer responses, to open-ended descriptions and narratives and finally, in the third year, to the writing of various types of essays.

Content

First year vocabulary: the 60 most commonly used verbs and commonly associated nouns, items found in the school setting, interrogative words, vocabulary of daily routine, time expressions, modals (can, could, should, will and may), professions, interpersonal relationships, problem-solving, human description (physical appearance, emotions, clothing and colors, health, parts of the body and family relationships), the alphabet and numbers to 9,999.

First year grammar: personal pronouns, the simple present tense, negation, question formation, definite and indefinite articles, the use of infinitives, the use of interrogatives, reflexive pronouns, the present progressive tense, the near future tense and adjective placement and agreement.

Evaluation

For an extensive explanation of the forms of evaluation used in the ULAT program, consult item number 20 in the teachers' section of the ULAT website. Depending upon the option selected by the educator, this evaluation can either be provided by the individual responsible for the student's education or by a ULAT instructor.