
Chapter 18

Creating and Using Low-Tech Teaching Aids

by
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Introduction

"A picture is worth a thousand words."
Traditional saying

Teaching aids are very important because they are like a bridge you cross to reach your destination. Students learning English need as much help as possible to understand the new language. Teaching aids can help teachers to communicate meaning in a new language in many ways. A pupil's experience of learning is greatly affected by teaching aids and how well a teacher uses them. To be of widest use, this chapter will focus on teaching aids that are available to, or can be made by, all teachers in Egypt and do not demand expensive supplies or electronic equipment.

This chapter will show you:

1. The importance and usefulness of teaching aids in the Egyptian classroom
2. The many types of inexpensive, free or easy-to-make teaching aids that are available
3. How to make and use several teaching aids for your Egyptian primary classroom.

Importance of Teaching Aids

Teaching aids can help enliven your teaching and make it more effective as well. They can help:

- make the language used in the class come more alive and real
- keep the students' attention and make the lesson more interesting
- present new language or introduce a topic, as part of language practice, and review the language that the teacher has presented earlier. (Doff, 1988, p. 82)
- adapt the learning experience to learners with different styles of learning and different types of intelligence

-
- support understanding when the children are listening (Vale, 1995, p. 106)
 - teach the meaning of vocabulary directly
 - provide a topic to prompt speaking or writing
 - provide ways around communication barriers
 - save time and effort and increase the utility of learning (Jame'e 1999)

Once you have created teaching aids, you can use them again and again. You and your colleagues can also save time by sharing teaching aids you have made with one another.

Types of Teaching Aids

The chart below outlines the wide range of teaching aids that are available for use in your classroom.

Types of Teaching Aids

Visual Aids

pictures	realia	cut-outs
maps	diagrams	posters
wall charts	boards	word family strip
book making	drawings	pocket charts
flash cards	graphic organizers	

Audio Aids

Audiocassette Tapes or Audio CDs

- commercial language tapes/CDs
 - vocal music tapes/CDs
 - tapes from radio or TV
 - authentic tapes of native-like speakers
 - tapes of stories, articles, etc. from books
-

Radio

- English language broadcast radio intended for language teaching
- Short selections from radio broadcasts for English language speakers

In this chapter, we will focus primarily on visual aids. For more information on the use of audio aids, see Chapter 6: *Teaching Listening*. For more

information on using recorded songs and chants, see Chapter 4: *Songs, Chants and Rhymes*. For information on high-tech teaching aids, see Chapter 19: *Using Computer Technology for Language Learning in the Primary Classroom*. Many other chapters of SPEER suggest using aids like those you will learn to make and use here in Chapter 18.

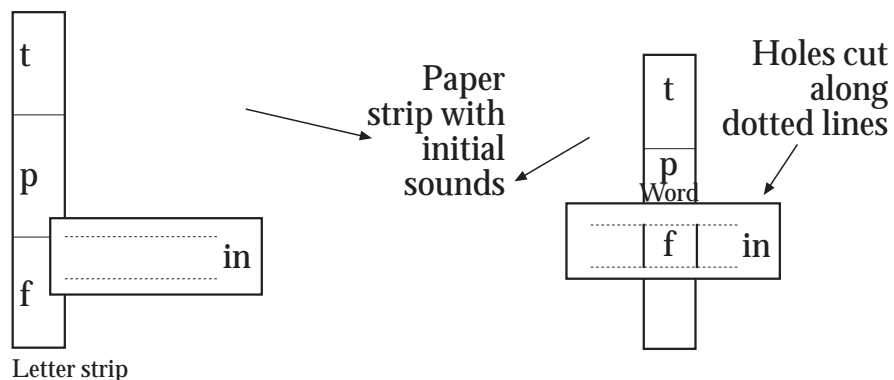
Sample Teaching Aids and Activities Using Aids

1. Word Family Strip (Levine & McCloskey, 1998)

A word family strip is an instructional aid that helps children to discover and remember common spelling and pronunciation pattern in words. Words which have the same ending pattern are called "Word Families." For example, "*hat*," "*cat*," and "*sat*" are members of the "-*at*" family. You can use word family strips in revision and sometimes in teaching lessons that have sounds or words from word families.

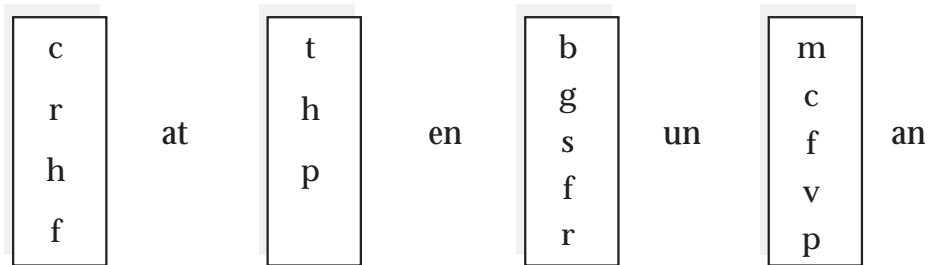
In order to make the word family strip, follow these steps:

1. Prepare letter strips and word family strips.
2. Cut along the dotted lines to make two slits (holes) on the word family strip.
3. Insert the letter slips in the holes before the word family. Pull the letter slips down to change the letter before the word family.



Word Family Strip

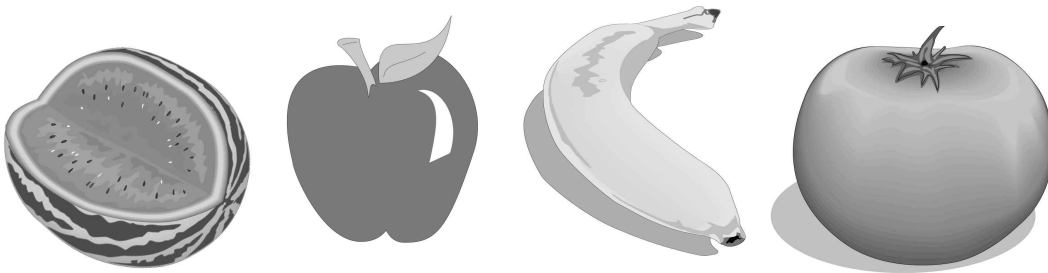
Here are some examples of Word Family Strips to make from *Hello 1 & Hello 2*:



2. Pictures

Teachers can use pictures for many purposes - to give directions, to show the organization of a text, and especially to illustrate the meaning of a word or phrase new to the pupil (Wright, 1994).

Pictures as answers. In this first example, pictures of fruits provide information for answers in an activity. The teacher has modeled and prepared students to ask one another questions about likes and dislikes. Students have pictures of a variety of foods and use the pictures for discussion.



watermelon

apple

banana

tomato

Pupil A: (picking up the picture of the apple), "Do you like apples?"

Pupil B: "Yes, Very much."

Or: "No, I don't."

Or: "Sometimes."

Teachers can also use pictures as answers by having students draw pictures and hold them up in answer to questions. The teacher asks, for example, "*Which fruit is long and yellow?*" The students respond by holding up the correct picture. Note: Students can draw their own aids on scrap paper for this activity.

Information Gap. You can also use pictures in an information gap activity. The teacher creates or selects two or three pictures which are the same except for several details. The students each examine one of the pictures and, without looking at the other's picture, try to determine how the two pictures are different.

Stimulus for discussion or composition. Use pictures as a stimulus for spoken and written composition. Choose or create a single picture or a sequence of pictures without text and ask your students to speak or write about the pictures. You can use some of the illustrations in the *Hello* textbook for this purpose.

Pictures in your lesson plan. You can use pictures at all three stages of the lesson plan -- in presentation, practice and production. In the following dialogue, the teacher is using a picture in the presentation stage in introducing present tense sentences with pronouns.

T: (showing a picture of a football player) Who is this?

S: He's

T: Is he your favorite player?

S: He's my favorite player.

Pictures of Verbs. Pictures can also help teachers depict action verbs.



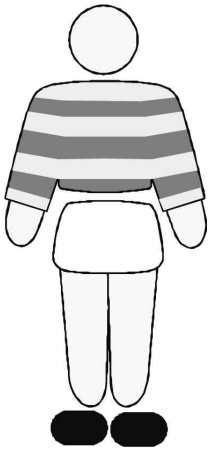
ride



ride



throw



stand



think










run

3. Chalk Talks

In Chalk Talks, teachers draw on the chalkboard -- just stick figures or little symbols that tell a story. This activity, developed by Shapiro & Genser (1994, p. xi), allows a classroom conversation to develop and continue. Start a conversation with a pupil about something he or she has done and draw symbols for the events on the chalkboard. You and your students can practice each sentence as a group and with partners until each one can tell the story.

In the following sample Chalk Talk story, a pupil comes into class with bandage on her arm. The teacher uses the event to create a story that the students use to develop and practice their language.

Drawing/Symbol	Teacher	Pupil (s)
<p>1.</p> 	<p>Huda, we missed you Yesterday! Can we talk about your bandage?</p>	<p><i>Huda:</i> Yes, Teacher.</p>
<p>2.</p> 	<p>What happened to your arm?</p>	<p><i>Huda:</i> Fall down, teacher.</p>
<p>3.</p> 	<p>Huda fell down yesterday. Who can tell me what happened ?</p>	<p><i>Individuals and whole class:</i> Huda fell down yesterday.</p>
<p>4.</p> 	<p>Were you unhappy?</p>	<p><i>Huda:</i> Yes, I think broken.</p>
<p>5.</p> 	<p>Huda was unhappy. She thought her arm was broken. Let's practice.</p>	<p><i>Individuals and whole class:</i> Huda was unhappy. She thought her arm was broken.</p>
<p>6.</p> 	<p>Was it broken?</p>	<p><i>Huda:</i> No, no. Doctor X- Ray. No broken.</p>
<p>7.</p> 	<p>The doctor took an X-ray, Huda's arm wasn't broken.</p>	<p><i>Individuals and whole class:</i> The doctor took an X-ray. Huda's arm wasn't broken.</p>

Steps in Chalk Talk activities:

1. Use a conversation with a pupil to create a story.
2. Draw simple pictures to illustrate events in the story.
3. As you draw the story, introduce the language that goes with it.
4. Read the story to the pupils several times.
5. Encourage pupils to retell the story.
6. Use the story for reading and writing activities and encourage students to re-create the drawings and tell the story to one another.
7. Then encourage students to draw and tell their own stories.

4. Real Objects (Realia)

You can use real things in the classroom such as food, clothing, containers, household objects, etc. to convey meaning and introduce vocabulary. Show the students the object as you introduce the new language. You can use the object during both the practice and production parts of the lesson as well (Doff, 1988).

Examples:

T: (Showing a book) Book.

T: (To students) This is a _____

Ss: Book

In Hello 5, Unit 7, you can use a real teapot, a plate, a cup and a knife to teach the lesson vocabulary.

T: (Showing a teapot) Teapot. This is a teapot.

T: Pick up the cup.

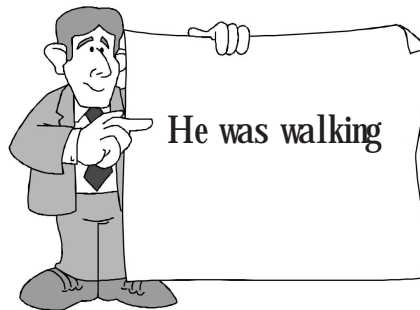
T: Put butter on the bread with the knife.

For more examples of the uses of aids in vocabulary teaching, see Chapter 8: *Teaching Vocabulary*.

5. The Chalkboard

The chalkboard is one of the most useful visual aids. It is always available and can be used for various purposes such as presenting new words, showing spelling, giving a model for handwriting, and writing prompts for practice.

Don't hide the board. When you use the chalkboard, be careful not to hide the board. Stand sideways as you gesture to the board in order to give your students a chance to see what the writing on the board clearly.




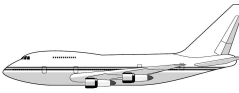

Write neatly and clearly. Your handwriting serves as a model for the class. Your handwriting should be large enough to read from the back of the class. Walk to the back and check to see that your writing is legible. Write in a straight line by writing across a section of the board, not across the whole board, half facing the board and half facing the class with the arm fully extended.

Partition the board. Many teachers find it useful to partition the board, showing new words in a section on one side, the lesson content in the middle, and the assignment in a section on the other side. Below is an example of a partitioned blackboard.

New Words	Today's Lesson Goals	Assignment

6. Flashcards

You can use flashcards for presenting and practicing new words and structures as well as for revision. The flashcards can have words/phrases on one side and pictures on the other, or words and definitions, or words and translations. They are cards with pictures, words or numbers that the teacher can hold up. For example:

Side 1			
Side 2	a car	a plane	swimmers

-
- a. First present the vocabulary using the cards.
 - b. In the practice stage, distribute the cards among the students (or have them make their own):

T: When I say the word, the pupil who has it please hold it up.

T: Apple [Student with apple card holds it up.]

T: Right, Nayra, apple.

T: Hold up your flashcard, Ghada. What is on Ghada's card, Shireen?

Shireen: It is a flower.

T: Yes, Shireen, a flower.

7. The Teacher as Visual Aid

As a teacher, you can use your own gestures, facial expressions and actions to show the meaning of words and to illustrate situations. Example (*Hello 5*, Unit 7, Workbook):

T: This is my head. [Points to his/her head.]

T: I use my nose to smell. [Points to nose.]

T: I use my hands to clap. [Claps.]

8. Cutouts

You can cut out pictures from magazines and newspapers to use as teaching aids. Use them for warming-up at the beginning of a lesson or during the presentation, as well as in practice and production stages.

9. Bookmaking

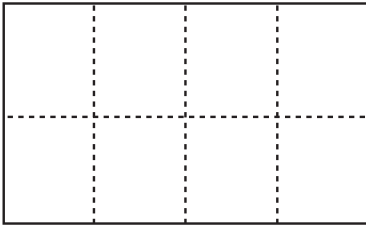
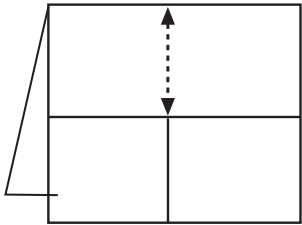

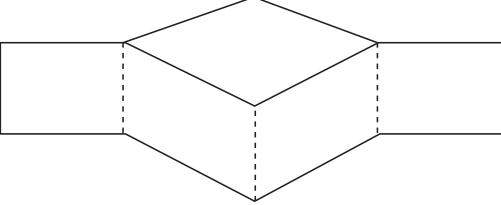
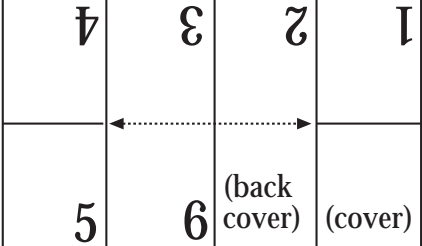

Teachers and/or students can cut, fold, and staple sheets of paper to become their original books. They can write about themes like family, kitchen, sports, etc.

T: (To students) This book is about the family.

- *On page 1 write: father. Write your father's name. Draw a picture of your father.*
- *On page 2 write: mother. Write your mother's name. Draw a picture of your mother.*
- *On page 3 write: brother. Write your brother's name. Draw a picture of your brother...*

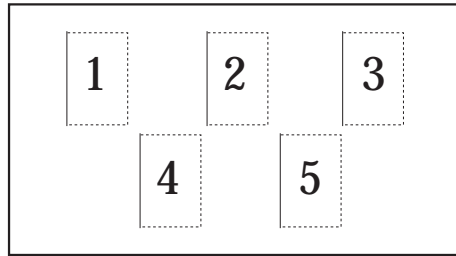
Below are instructions for making a Fold-It Book. You and your students can make these from paper that is used on one side, as the used side will be inside the fold.

Fold-It Books (McCloskey, 1999)

8-Page Fold-It Book	
<p>1. Fold paper 3 times.</p> 	<p>2. Open. Fold like a hamburger. Cut halfway in from the fold side.</p> 
<p>3. Open and re-fold like a hot dog.</p> 	<p>4. Push the ends together so the middle comes out.</p> 
<p>5. Pages will look like this.</p> 	<p>6. Write and draw in your book.</p> 

10. Posters

Teachers and students can use posters to show views and experiences. Posters combine text and pictures in a simple and understandable way. To make posters, use a piece of paper or card no larger than A-1 size (84 x 594 mm.). You can use the poster either horizontally or vertically (Wright, 1994; McCloskey, 1999). Example:



In the poster above, the teacher has written numbers on the boxes. The boxes are "doors" that can be opened. Students can try to answer numbered questions and then open the doors to check their answers, which are written inside.

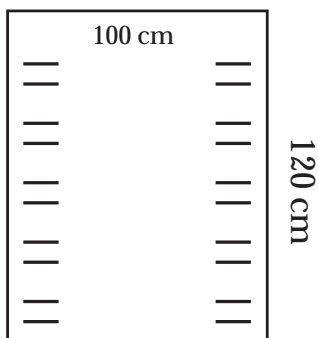
11. Making and Using a Pocket Chart (McCloskey, 1999)

Many teachers find pocket charts very useful for introducing and practicing vocabulary, word sounds and letters, and word and sentence patterns. You can use the chart to introduce and practice word families, to practice sentence patterns and sequencing of words in a sentence.



Making a Pocket Chart

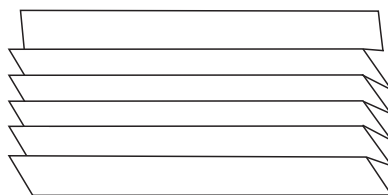
1. Start with a sheet of paper about 100cm x 120 cm. Use a double thickness if the paper is thin.



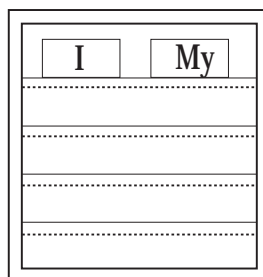
Ways to Use a Pocket Chart

- Letter patterns
- Word patterns
- Sentence patterns
- Vocabulary pictures/words
- Concept Charts
- Grammar Charts
- Story Maps....

2. Mark the long sides in this pattern: 10cm, 3cm, 10cm, 3cm, etc.
3. Fold across the marks



4. Secure sides with tape or to make pockets. stapled strips



5. Remember not to write on lowest 3 cm of word/picture/sentence cards. This space will be inside the pocket.

I _____	chart	my	love	pocket	.

(I love my pocket chart.)

12. Graphic Organizers (Levine & McCloskey, 1998).

Graphic Organizers are ways of teaching language with content. They help to provide a common visual language for your students and they help a student with academic thinking processes in the new language. There are many types of graphic organizers:

a. Storyboard

Pupils can use a Storyboard to help them sequence and outline a story. A Storyboard has boxes for writing and/or drawing the parts of a story or sequence.

Sample Blank Form for a Storyboard

Storyboard for _____ by _____		
1	2	3
4	5	6

Following are several suggestions for using a storyboard:

- Have students draw pictures of the parts of a story they have read on cards, then rearrange the cards in the order of the story.
- Have students write one-sentence summaries of parts of a story they have read in each box of a Storyboard.
- Have students use a storyboard to plan a story they will write.

b. Matrix

Use a matrix to show organization and relationships.

Animals	Food	Clothes
dogs	macaroni	blouse
lions	egg	jeans
zebras	chips	pullover
snakes...		

13. Audiocassettes

Listening helps students with pronunciation, intonation and stress. It improves the ability to understand authentic language. Audiocassette tapes promote our students' skills of listening and speaking.

Procedures:

Pre-listening:

- Ask your students to look at the picture or the exercise.
- Write the new vocabulary on the board and help your students to understand meanings and pronounce the words.
- Give the instructions for the activity: Listen and identify; Write, match, etc.

While Listening:

- Play the tape once without stopping.
- Play the tape and stop it at the end of each sentence.
- Play the tape and ask your students to answer the exercises.

Post-listening:

- Ask questions about the listening activity.
- Ask the students to talk about what they have heard.

Touba (2000), suggests the following simple techniques for listening activities:

- Stand with your back to students to read and/or dictate
- If cassette is not available, ask another teacher to read to or dictate to your students. Other teachers are great resources and provide a new voice pattern to help students be able to understand English variations.

Conclusion

Now it is clear that low-tech teaching aids are very valuable for your teaching. Creating and using them will enable you to be a good teacher who motivates students to enjoy learning English.

You have a great deal of information about the different kinds of low-tech teaching aids. It is not necessary to use all of them in one period. Rather, choose the ones that are suitable for your lessons. This chapter has also told you about ways to use teaching aids as you use a textbook such as the *Hello!* series. Now, it's your role to apply what you have learned about teaching aids by giving them due care and interest. You will enjoy creating and using them and becoming a more active and creative teacher.

voices from the field

CREATING AND USING LOW TECH TEACHING AIDS FOR TEACHING ENGLISH

Voice: Mohammed Idris Farag Nassar Allah & Mahmoud Abd El Salam Ali Abd Allah
Student Teachers, FoE, New Valley
4th Year Primary

In fact, we didn't use any kind of low-tech teaching aids before except some cards and the board. But after attending the workshop, I knew the importance of using them. So I used low-tech aids in my class in the fourth grade especially the pocket chart. I was surprised when I saw the pupils very delighted. The class reacted to it in a great way.

The pocket chart attracted the pupils' attention and aroused their interest. They participated fully and shared energetically in the lesson. I enjoyed teaching our lesson, too. I got rid of my ordinary style of teaching, which is based on reading and speaking by the teacher and listening by pupils.

I used the pocket chart many times to teach a number of lessons from Hello! Second Term for example - Unit 17 Food we like and don't like, Lesson 1, page 11 and Unit 19 Grand-father's Farm Lessons 1-3 pages 17-19.

In my opinion, this technique is very suitable for the pupils in the New Valley. The pupils love to play and love action. I see that using the pocket chart has many advantages such as:

- It saves time and effort.
- It is easy to prepare.
- It can help the teacher organize and control the class.
- It is a good technique to teach vocabulary, grammar and structure.
- It makes the pupils more active.
- It can attract the pupils' attention.
- It helps them to learn.

voices from the field

CREATING AND USING LOW TECH TEACHING AIDS FOR TEACHING ENGLISH

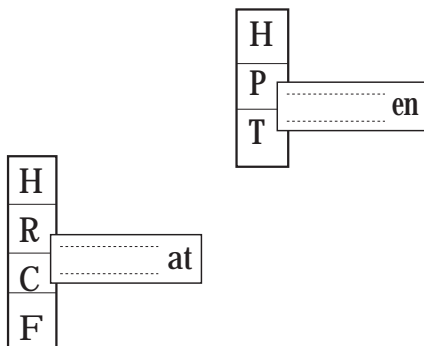
Sherine Wanis Wahba

MoE, Sohag

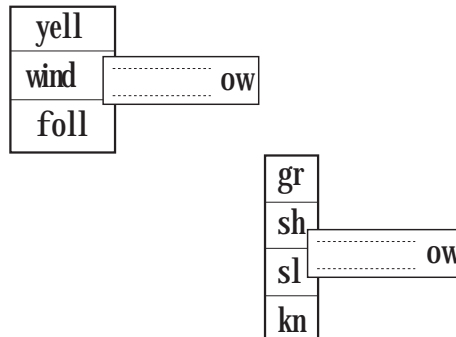
Thank you for giving me a chance to know more about teaching English in primary school. I used almost all the low-tech aids which we had learned before (pocket charts, word family strip, making books, word-cards and sentence cards) in my classrooms. These aids helped in teaching songs, shared reading, and in teaching new words, structures, and language functions).

Using a pocket chart was the most useful aid because it helped me many times in teaching songs, shared reading, new words and structures. It also was a good aid for pupils; they found it fun. I can say it's a wonderful thing for students to see the whole lesson in front of their eyes instead of showing cards one by one then putting them on the table. That helped my pupils to fully understand the lesson.

I used the word family strip technique with 4th graders.



I also used it after introducing new words in order to make a connection between words. When I used it with 5th graders, I found some difficulties because there were more than ten words ending with the same letters. I divided them into groups in order to make it easier.



Making a Book. This was a good activity, but I had some difficulty finding a suitable place to put the book where the whole class could see it (my class had fifty students). I was happy because my pupils saw it as fun and liked it. Also word cards and sentence cards were helpful when I used them with pocket charts especially in teaching songs and shared reading.

In all the lessons when I used these learning aids, students were pleased and they were racing to use these aids in class. They even asked me "How can we make one!" I am so satisfied with my student's improved understanding that I'll use these aids as much as I can.

voices from the field

SUPERVISOR'S REFLECTION:

CREATING LOW TECH TEACHING AIDS

Dr. Mohamed Safwat Hassan, New Valley Faculty of Education

Low Tech Teaching Aids are very useful tools that enhance teachers' performance and facilitate their job. In our context -in the New Valley- high tech teaching aids are not available on a large scale. So, the student teachers I supervise devised and used a low tech teaching aid: the pocket chart.

I taught them how to devise and use it many a time before entering the classroom. At the beginning the pupils' attention was drawn to the pocket itself, not to its use. So, there was some chaos and shouting on the part of the pupils. The student teachers had difficulty in managing the class. But, by time the class ended, the teachers could draw the pupils' attention to the aid and the pupils enjoyed it. It was greatly beneficial and amusing in teaching vocabulary and structures. It saved the teacher's time and effort and had a positive effect on pupils' performance.

Key Terminology

Visual Aid

A teaching aid that students can look at and manipulate as they learn language.

Word Family Strip

A visual aid that helps students learn letter sounds and phonetic patterns.

Chalk Talks

An activity in which a teacher or students tells stories aided by simple pictures.

Information Gap

Any activity in which learners need information from one another.

Realia

Real objects used to develop language in the classroom.

Pocket Chart

A large chart used in language instruction. It has pockets for letter, word, or picture cards.

Graphic Organizers

Ways of enhancing text by arranging it spatially and/or adding graphic elements.

Storyboard

A graphic organizer for showing the sequence and structure or plan of a story.

Matrix

A graphic organizer which is a chart with rows and columns of squares

Understanding Check

1. Why are teaching aids important for primary English teachers?
 2. What are the types of teaching aids?
 3. What teaching aid(s) might you use for these purposes:
 - To introduce vocabulary?
 - To introduce and practice word families?
 - To show the structure of a story?
 - To help students practice vocabulary they are learning?
 - To teach action verbs?
 - To help students talk English about something that has happened to them?
 - To keep a list of new words introduced in a lesson?
 - To give students something to write about?
 - To have students create their own texts?
 - To provide authentic listening materials?
 - To show text organization and relationships?
-

Resources

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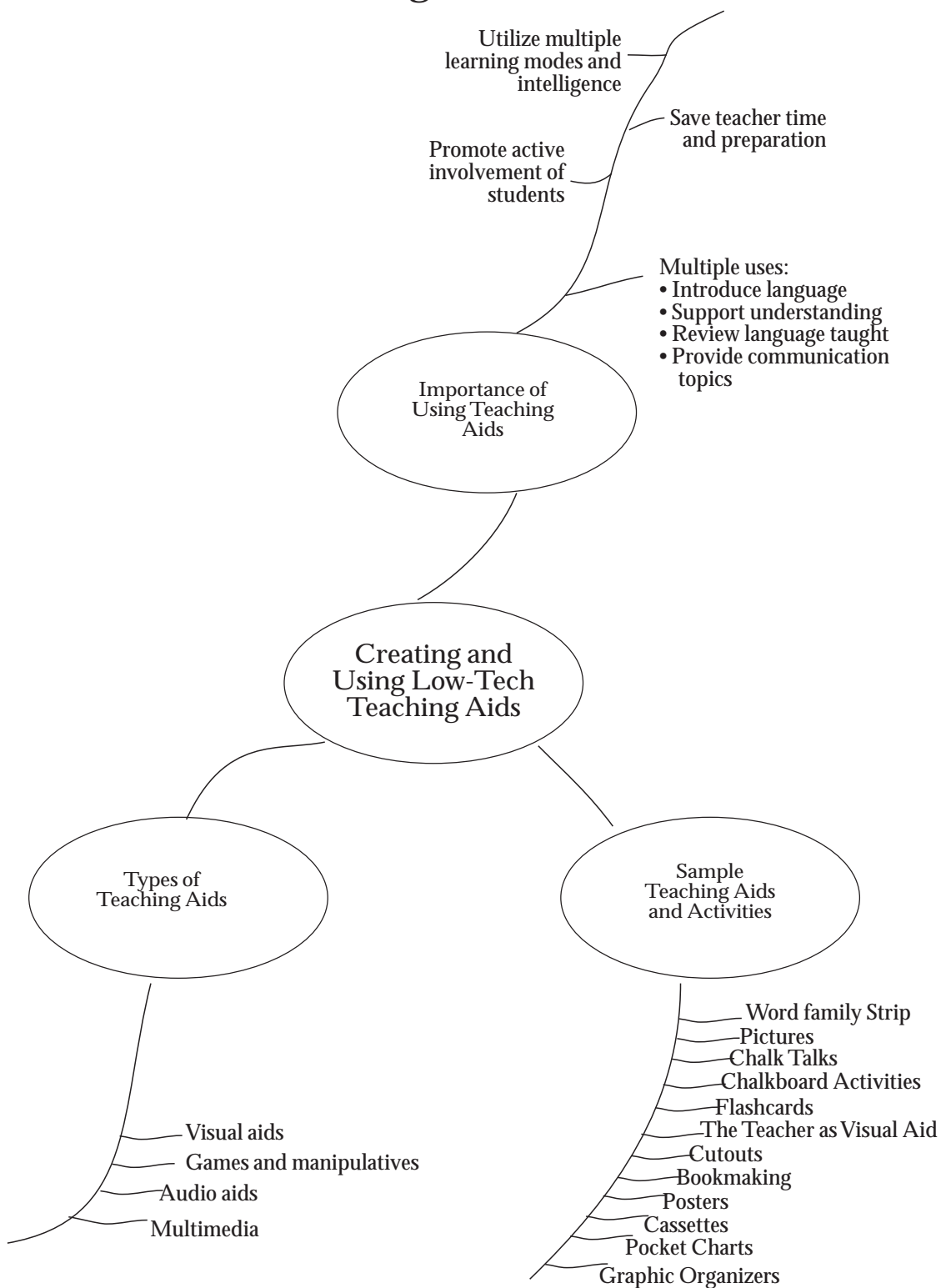
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Summary Handout for Chapter 18: Low-Tech Teaching Aids



Creating and Using Low-Tech Teaching Aids

Importance of Teaching Aids

1. They make language alive and more real
2. They keep students' attention
3. They help the teacher to present new language or topics
4. They support students' understanding during listening activities
5. They directly teach the meaning of vocabulary
6. They provide topics to prompt teaching or writing

Sample Low-Tech Teaching Aids

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Word Family Strip2. Pictures3. Chalk Talks4. Realia5. The Chalkboard6. Flashcards7. The Teacher8. Cutouts | <ol style="list-style-type: none">9. Bookmaking Posters10. Pocket Chart11. Graphic Organizers<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Story Boardb. Story Mapc. Matrix12. Cassettes |
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