

More about wall-chart primers

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Many of us are part of cultures that reward individualism so we consider it natural to use individual primers as well as individual desks and chairs. It may not occur to us that other peoples may feel more comfortable working together from the same primer.

The first Maxakalí primer set consisted of small books for individual use. Later, a new campaign started and we decided to write a completely different set, this time in chart form. The 17 teachers-in-training barely knew how to read but they pitched in together to create these primers. The ideas they presented on one day they could see on a chart the next day.

Each one in the class took turns leading the class by pointing to the place where they were reading. They had the class read in unison or individually and developed the lesson as they saw fit. They thought up clever methods. The problem of “where is the place?” disappeared when the teacher was pointing right at it. Also, students developed teaching skills before finishing the primer set. Some were teaching certain primers without having the slightest idea what the later primers contained. Some of them asked for their own materials so they could take them home to teach their own family group.

At this point, we began to think of ways to duplicate the charts. Copying them with felt-point pen on poster board would be too much work. We began asking ourselves what would be the most visible wall-chart presentation that we could fit on a legal-sized page which then could be photocopied. Such a layout was easily visible to a class of 25 learners, which is about the limit of Maxakalí classes. However, we can now enlarge to 11 by 17 inches. (On pages 46 and 47 is a greatly reduced copy of Lesson 12.)

Writing also was a public affair. We taught on slates which, although individual, could be easily read by other students and teachers alike.

(1989). *Notes on Literacy*, 58.

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pe	ta	xe
pe'	ta'	xe'

tu'
ta'
xe'

tu'	ta'	xe'
tuk	tak	xek

pe' 'Ūpe' mōg.
pe' mōg 'Ūpek mōg.

ta' tu ta' mōg
ta' mōg tu tak mōg

xe' 'Ūxe' mōg.
xe' mōg 'Ūxek mōg.

'Ūxe' mōg. 'Ūxek mōg.

'Ūxe' mōg. 'Ūxek mōg.

Ūpe tōt ulāā dōtō. Ūpe tōt ulāā dōtō.
u nōt tōt u nōt tōt
Ūpe tōt ulāā tōt. Ūpe tōt ulāā tōt.

It is good to note two other advantages of wall-chart primers. One is that for evening classes, they are easier to illuminate than individual books. Another is that their printing costs are considerably lower.

One disadvantage of wall-chart primers is that they can be used in such a way that students lose face. However, in such societies, reading in unison may work, but if it does not, then individual primers may be the answer.