

Notes about 'Disappearing Definition'

This method supports the 'leaning to learn' principle. Students are learning how to learn information through memorising and repeating, in this case, a definition.

Learning the definitions of words in this way provides children with opportunities for maintenance of ideas and vocabulary.

One definition of 'treasure' for classroom use:

Treasure is a precious or valuable object. It is often an heirloom that is handed down from past generations.

Students are shown the definition for 'treasure' and repeat it aloud together. Gradually, the teacher removes some words (beginning with articles and other small words), replacing each word with a line. Eg:

Treasure ___ a precious or valuable object. It ___ often an heirloom that ___ handed down from past generations.

Students then repeat the definition, recalling the missing words too. The teacher continues to remove words, until lines representing each word of the definition are left. (Another method is to write the definition on a programme such as Powerpoint and animate squares that gradually eliminate words).

Students respond positively to this technique and enjoy learning definitions this way. They can recall a whole definition without any words! Some recalling past definitions over a year later!