

Colour dictation

This exercise emphasises the high skill element in learning languages.

Although the vocabulary is very easy and accessible, the high skill element ensures that pupils have to concentrate on the task in hand.

Even though only one pupil is doing the exercise at a time, the rest of the class are totally involved.

Invite one pupil to come to the front where there are four colours laid out in piles of twenty cards (see below)

grün rot blau gelb

Tell the pupil that you are going to read out some colours and after you have finished reading they are to place the coloured cards in the correct sequence.

Start off slowly with just three colours:

blau rot gelb

The pupil places the cards in a row as in a dictation. The pupil then puts the cards back.

rot gelb grün

Ditto.

Then move on to four colours and increase the tempo slightly:

blau rot gelb blau
grün blau rot gelb

Then increase the tempo again – watch the other pupils as they will be watching the invited one. They are all repeating the colours in their heads.

blau rot gelb rot grün

grün blau blau gelb rot

This time say that you will press a pause button with your hand – and the pupil must wait until you release it before setting out the cards in sequence.

rot blau grün grün gelb blau

&

blau gelb grün rot rot gelb

Check out what the invited pupil – and the rest of the class did whilst on pause – they repeated all the colours in their head.

Now see if the invited pupil can manage seven colours at speed without the pause button.

This is usually the limit for most people when trying to remember random pieces of information (cf a mobile phone number)

rot blau gelb grün rot gelb blau

This exercise can now be used for various items of vocabulary (eg numbers / pets / clothing) – it tests the ability to recall at speed and manipulate familiar vocabulary in a challenging way.

