

(This article was first published in *Resources*, January 2006)

## Cause and Effect

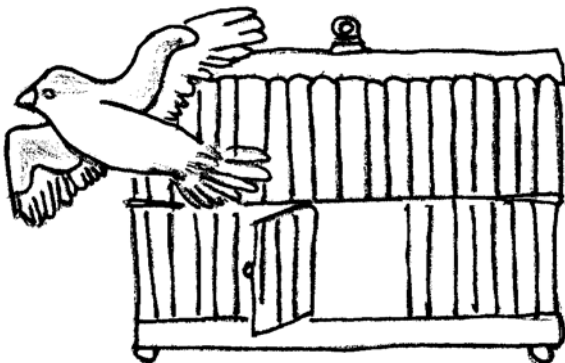
Surely, at one time or another teachers find themselves struggling to explain to their pupils the difference between 'cause' and 'effect'. Hopefully this article will help learners understand (a) what is a cause (b) what is an effect and (c) what is the relationship between the two. Learners will be able (i) to search for a cause when presented with an effect and (ii) to identify which is the cause and which is the effect when presented with two events. As always, pictures will greatly help teachers in their endeavour.

Challenge pupils with the following three pictures, one at a time. Let them reflect on what they see, and help them by asking relevant questions such as:

- What could have brought about such an accident? (picture 1)
- How come the bird flew out of the cage? (picture 2)
- What could have caused the boy to be taken to hospital? (picture 3)



picture 1



picture 2



picture 3

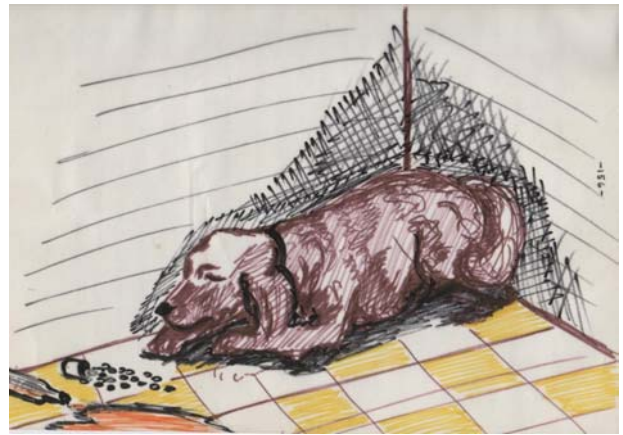
The answers to these questions will help children realise that what they see in the picture is the effect or the result of something that had happened before. The job of the children is to find out the cause, that is,

what brought about the event presented in the picture. This will help them to distinguish between 'cause' and 'effect'.

The relationship between 'cause' and 'effect' and the distinction between them could be further clarified by the following four pictures particularly in the case of older children.



picture 4



picture 5



picture 6



picture 7

Learners will realise that Fido the dog was healthy but unfortunately he abused drugs (picture 4) and became very ill indeed (picture 5). Fido had to be taken care of and was persuaded to take the necessary medicine (picture 6). As a result of this he was cured and became happy again (picture 7).

It is necessary for teachers to ask the right questions because the pictures on their own will not have the desired effect. Developing an effective questioning technique is an integral component in the implementation of formative assessment.

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