



Building new strategies for teaching English vocabulary

Workshop, led by Gaigalavas pamatskola

Lead in:

(in groups, discuss)

- How did you learn foreign vocabulary at school? How was it checked?
- What is more important- grammar or vocabulary? Why?
- How much of vocabulary do you need to learn?

Presentation:

Major things to remember!

- You can't memorize a bunch of words and rules and expect to speak the language.
- Rote memorization ("skill and drill") isn't very helpful when it comes to learning new vocabulary.
- While we understand the importance of vocabulary in a person's ability to effectively communicate, many teachers and material designers are still pushing vocabulary to the side and instead, focusing on grammar.
 - o researcher, Wilkins (1972) stressed that, 'While without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. Even if you have perfect grammar and go to the store to buy something, unless you know its name, or at least the nouns and adjectives needed to paraphrase what it is, you won't be able to ask for it'.

Strategies to use:

Eventhough learning English is a process that never ends. You learn and learn and learn, and it never seems to finish. Like a bottomless pit. BUT It doesn't have to be a nightmare. You can make life easier by making the process more manageable.



Main approach nowadays- HANDS ON EXPERIENCE

- 1) **Learn from context.** Always make sure students learn words in their context and never in isolation. (Related word groups together, e.g. clothes, materials they are made of, adjectives connected to clothes, synonyms, antonyms.)
- 2) **Memorize phrases.** While this will not work for building students' entire new foreign vocabulary, it will be helpful for providing a basis for communication. For instance, learn phrases such as "How are you?" or "I don't understand."
- 3) **Draw connections between new and old knowledge.** Learn to associate words with other words, sentences and ideas students. Learn from materials that students can already mostly understand, so that they learn the rest from context. Use word associations, word categories, net works.



- 4) **Get surrounded by new language.** Read, watch, listen to smt, make posters on classroom walls, encourage students to change the language on their social media accounts, computer and phone. Download movies, listen to music and podcasts; read novels, non-fiction and magazines; watch documentaries and cook from foreign recipe, etc.
- 5) **Combine learning modes.** Learn to vary learning techniques, methods, and sensory modalities to keep vocabulary acquisition fresh and interesting. (e.g. mime and act out the new words; labelling things in pictures, in real life, various vocabulary competition to make learners more motivated; spotting the differences (in real class environment); describing and drawing, use of various digital tools etc.)
- 6) **Make a use of new words.** A major part of foreign language learning is not only recognizing words but also speaking words for communication. Students learn best from explicit instruction that uses easy-to-understand definitions, engaging activities, and repeated exposure. Students need multiple opportunities to see, write, and use new words.
 - Flashcards still work (A flashcard should consist of the foreign language vocabulary word on one side and- depending on the level of knowledge- the translation/ definition (in your native language/ or foreign language) on the other side. (*For instance, quizlet.com allows you to make your own digital flashcards on its website*). Don't forget the power of visual images, so include pictures/ drawings on your flashcards.
- 7) **Play Games and Use Language Apps**

Today, there are countless language learning apps and games available – and many are free! Make the most of these free tools to build your foreign language vocabulary. (e.g. Duolingo, lingokids, beelingua, memrise etc.)

Learning foreign vocabulary is not only possible, but easy, if you use the right techniques and brain-friendly learning strategies. However, remember all teaching strategies WILL NOT work with all the students.



REVIEW REGULARLY!