Moreland University

M27U2A1 – Vocabulary Lesson Plans Discussion Forum Post

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The vocabulary classes to be discussed are found here.

In initial planning for both classes, it was first necessary to consider whether the vocabulary at question needed to be explicitly taught or if it could be picked up implicitly. Indeed, if it could be learned implicitly, there would not necessarily be a need for a specifically planned class.

All words could likely be defined as being Tier 3 words, that is topic or content area specific, following the model of Beck, McKeown and Kucan (2002). Wei (2021) notes "Tier 2 and Tier 3" words are not clear-cut, Tier 2 being more general academic words. The same could perhaps be said for Tier 3 words. Of the words being learnt here, "leaves" from the plant parts in the first class, and perhaps some of the more common habitats in the second class, such as "forest" and "ocean", could maybe be defined as Tier 1.

However, in our context, students are generally being exposed to English at school and during the school day. This does limit words they might learn implicitly, certainly without purposeful effort from teachers. As is common practice in our context, many words need to be deliberately exposed to students or taught explicitly. (An interesting point is that perhaps how we categorize a word as to whether it needs to be explicitly taught likely depends on the context of individual students.) Regardless of whether some of the words being taught here would be more likely seen in our normal day, it was still useful to teach them explicitly together due to their connectedness. Any words students might already have been familiar with could have less time spent on them.

Actually, it is the case that in the lesson sequence around the lessons described, the words would be seen many times naturally and may still have been learnt implicitly. Nonetheless, it could be beneficial for

students to build up their confidence, including to use the words productively later, to have the words taught explicitly at the beginning of the unit. I hence chose to teach the words.

In addition to the principle of implicit instruction, the key principle and strategy underlying teaching both classes, was providing "Multiple exposures" as encouraged by Wei (2021). The more students see and experience a word, the more connection they have to it. Hence, I ensured students could hear and be exposed to the target words in both classes in different ways and through different activities, as well as actively working with the words.

As already touched on, this would continue following this class. In the case of the plant parts for example, students would in later days, practice the language with plants we found in the school vegetable garden, as well as the student's own photos of plants they had chosen themselves, and further plants we would see in upcoming field trips.

Further principles I apply to both classes are that of "Providing a language rich environment" (Wei, 2021) and that of modelling correct usage of the language, the important of which is emphasized by both Wei (2021) and Colorín Colorado (n.d.). Much comprehensible input is provided by all class teachers throughout both classes, and there is modelling of how to use the vocabulary words, for example through the book, and then the fictional passage the teacher models for students to make themselves in the first lesson on the plant parts, and through the making of different sentences using the names of each habitat during the game activity in the second lesson on the habitat names. Colorín Colorado (n.d.) also notes the importance of teaching words in context, not in isolation, which again, is a guiding principle for both classes.

I now look at each of the two classes separately.

Mini Lesson 1: Introducing the different parts of the plants and their functions

Two related principles were jointly considered here. The first is the idea that culturally responsive pedagogy should be incorporated, for example by using pictures, objects or gestures students can relate to from their background (Roessingh, 2020). The second is the principal of relating to students past experiences (Wei,

2021). Both are of course key principles of teaching more broadly, not simply vocabulary teaching, or even language teaching.

Hence, we use the tomato plants we have been growing as a class as part of our introduction of the new words and the bean plants that students are growing and caring for themselves, also making it very meaningful.

As stated in the plan, students will in a later class have the opportunity to consolidate the vocabulary for other plants they can associate with. First, plants in the school garden. Some of these, they have been helping to grow. Second, plants they have found themselves out of school and taken photos of. Some students had indeed taken photos of more exotic plants from their own towns, indeed one, a banana plant.

With regards, to strategies, several are used throughout the class, including "Using gestures", "Showing real objects" and "Pointing to pictures" (Colorín Colorado, n.d.). These are together used throughout the class to show the different parts of the plant as described in the plans as part of the process of making meaningful connections using different examples and senses.

A light version of ""Talk-through" Strategy with Reading Aloud" (Sibold, 2020) is employed as students are first being introduced to the vocabulary. The book is read with the key points here emphasized at the time and then returned to later to more formally introduce the words. This introduces the words within the context of a connected and more complete description of a plant, making it more meaningful. The book is only read once, with the vocabulary then practiced in different ways, but it can be returned to later.

Finally, ideas from the language experience approach (Roessingh, 2020) are used. It is short first introduction here, but students have the opportunity to be led by the teacher to contribute ideas to and follow along to a non-fiction passage using the language from the unit. Following the ideas from Roessingh (2020), this can be written up by the teacher for them to practice further later. They could also turn it into a fiction story for creative work.

Mini Lesson 2: Introducing different habitats and their characteristics.

The first key strategy used here is that of the using audio-visual materials, that as described by Karami (2019). Ideas from this are taken as I used the song video to first introduce the vocabulary words. Students have actually heard this song on several occasions before this class, so students already have some familiarity. The words heard in the song, along with the video for each habitat will apply to multiple senses and hence be effective in supporting students to have initial deep associations with the words.

The second strategy is that of games (Sibold, 2011), an action game used to practice the words and hear them used, being used after their first introduction. Ideas from total physical response (Asher, 1969) are applied here, and in the vocabulary introduction, although it should be noted that students are progressing in their level of experience in English and will likely be ready to speak very quickly. Nonetheless, the big focus on movement is engaging and important for young learners.

The final strategy taken is that of a graphic organizer, as discussed in Sibold (2011) and Colorín Colorado, (n.d.). Something of a graphic organizer is being drawn here, actually to relate all of the words to the concept of "habitat", a word from the previous class. They only draw one picture themselves, for one habitat, but are able to see those of classmates. This supports them to think about the words more deeply, further deepening the connection. Later in the unit, there will be the opportunity for them to take this further, by creating and independent and individual mindmap.

References

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