Challenging Student Approaches to ESL Vocabulary Development

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ABSTRACT Vocabulary is a "current word" in second language (L2) pedagogy (Anthony & Menasche, 1991). In a communicative approach to language teaching, this is helpful due to the importance of meaning both in learning and understanding English as a second language (ESL). However, to date student approaches to vocabulary acquisition have essentially been neglected in the classroom. This article describes an activity that used a questionnaire on student methods of vocabulary learning as a springboard for class discussion of helpful strategies suggested in the literature. After introducing the background for the activity, the procedures and results are outlined. Then suggestions for using a similar questionnaire in other adult ESL contexts are summarized.

HOW TO CITE


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Developing an expanded vocabulary is a critical component of the complex undertaking of learning a second language. Introduction (Continued). If you go to Google and type in “ESL vocabulary development” you will be overwhelmed by the amount of information retrieved. We couldn’t possibly survey all the known strategies. Instead: Andy Gibbons will focus on the Lexical Approach. Bill Camarinos will explain a personally developed strategy he calls the “Practical and Involved Vocabulary Development Process for ESL Students.” Some Ways of Teaching Vocabulary. Grammar Translation Method. Focus on reading to improve vocabulary. Audio-Lingual Method or Structural Approach-vocabulary secondary to structural patterns. The Lexical Approach. Strategies for Vocabulary Development. by Dr. Kate Kinsella, Dr. Colleen Shea Stump, and Dr. Kevin Feldman. A Rationale Directly Addressing Vocabulary Development What Doesn’t Work? What Does Work? Strategies for Conceptually Challenging Words Authentic Assessment of Vocabulary Mastery Summary References. Teaching word meanings should be a way for students to define their world, to move from light to dark, to a more fine-grained description of the colors that surround us. —Steven Stahl. A rationale directly addressing vocabulary development. Successful comprehension is, in some significant part, dependent on the reader’s knowledge of word meanings in a given passage.