TECHNOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT OF LEXICAL COMPETENCE OF STUDENTS

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Annotation: This paper presents the technology used in developing lexical competence and its effects to students as they learn to speak in English. Moreover, there are given ideas for improving learner's speaking skills during the class and lifetime in foreign language.

Keywords: vocabulary learning, technology, teaching vocabulary, lexical compitance.

INTRODUCTION

Why is vocabulary learning so important? To understand a text, one must understand the words that represent the ideas or concepts. Studies confirm the high correlation between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension . We also know that there are degrees of word knowledge, from "I've never heard this word before," to "I know this word and can apply it in multiple contexts", as well as metacognitive knowledge about how to apply prior knowledge and strategies to vocabulary learning.

Wordle (opens in a new window) is a free Web application that allows you to create a word cloud based on the frequency of words in a particular text. It can be used to stimulate students' thinking about the meaning, importance, and relationship of words as they analyze, create, and publish Wordles. One of the most effective ways of teaching vocabulary is to show students the word. Concrete words (mostly nouns) can usually be conveyed through pictures or realia (real objects). For example, a word like chair (as a noun) is quite easy to teach, by pointing to a chair or by showing a picture.

Of particular concern to educators is the development of academic language. Although we learn oral language that enables us to speak to one another fairly easily, learning academic language is more complex because it involves abstract literacy tasks and language not customarily used in oral speech. Academic language is a second language, because all literate people must learn it to enable them to access academic content.

METHODOLOGY

For English learners (ELs), academic language may represent the task of learning a third language. Thus, special care must be taken to give them every advantage in learning academic language, particularly in content areas. For example, research suggests that Spanish-speaking students can be taught to recognize cognates words with similar meanings that look and sound alike in two languages, such as operation [English] and operación [Spanish]) and use cognate information to comprehend English texts (Lubliner & Grisham, in press; Proctor, Dalton, & Grisham).

We know that there is a wide range in students' word knowledge and that as early as age 5, there is a 30-million-word exposure gap between "haves" and "have nots" (Hart & Risley). The results of this gap are manifested in students' literacy learning, particularly reading comprehension. The Matthew Effect, where strong readers get stronger and weak readers get weaker (Stanovich, 1986), as well as the fourth-grade reading slump (Chall & Jacobs, 2003), can be attributed, at least in part, to a less developed store of conceptual knowledge and vocabulary.

The good news is that we can improve vocabulary learning and address the gap by actively and systematically teaching vocabulary to our students. Teaching words, morphology, and word origins is an important component in any vocabulary learning program. It is also necessary to provide multiple exposures to the word in different contexts and to teach word learning strategies, such as using context clues, cognate information, and deciding when a word is important to know and remember. Although teaching can make a real difference in vocabulary learning, explicit teaching of vocabulary is not enough; a dedicated teacher can teach perhaps 300-400 words per year (Beck et al., 2008).

RESULT

Students will most likely conjecture that the article is about bees. Some students may notice the less prominent words-dead and poisons-and wonder if the bees are sick. When asked about the color choice, they may speculate that the author/designer chose bright colors to get your attention, or that black goes with poison. What is important in this kind of prereading discussion is students' close attention to the words and how they might relate to one another and to the larger text that they represent. Students actively engage with meaning as they draw on background knowledge about words and concepts as well as on visual literacy skills.

The same bees word cloud could prompt a discussion after reading the article, guided by questions such as,

- Do you think the word cloud captured what was most important to learn?
- Are there keywords or ideas that are left out?
- What superordinate terms reflect the main ideas?

As students manipulate the word cloud's layout, color, and font, they integrate verbal and visual representations, strengthening the multimedia learning effect (Fadel & Lemke, 2008) while developing an important digital literacy skill in our visual society.

For some students, the creative design aspect serves as the hook to engage them in meaning making; for others, it is the words themselves that entice them to explore meanings and relationships. Although Wordles can be published to the public gallery and printed, another option is to use a screen capture program to save the Wordle as an image, creating a bank of images on your desktop or school server. They can then be inserted into a document, PowerPoint, class blog, or other text.

CONCLUSION

Class libraries, read-alouds, book clubs, and independent reading time during the school day can increase the amount and variety of student reading. However, it is challenging to find the resources and time required to provide up-to-date material, to be responsive to students' interests, and to accommodate readers at different reading levels. Teachers can dramatically expand text options for students by including reading on the Internet and other digital texts. A high percentage of students already use the Internet for homework; we can extend their learning and exploration of words in context as they read and view varied text genres on the Internet, or read texts downloaded onto a class computer, an e-book reading device, or a smartphone.

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