
Designing Reading Materials to Enlarge Students' Active Vocabulary

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Abstract: *the article deals with the issues related to designing reading materials to enlarge students' active vocabulary. Anyone who learns a new language is likely to recognize more words than he can produce. Moreover, reading is helpful for enlarging students' vocabulary. It inspires their intellectual competence. In addition, in this article we tried to define the notion of teaching reading and strategies of designing reading tasks and working with the vocabulary in this process.*

Key words: designing, active vocabulary, passive vocabulary, vocabulary, reading process, reading comprehension, authentic, selecting texts, scanning, pre-reading discussion, word map, context clues.

As it is known that, reading is the process of understanding written texts. It is a unit of speech which contains both perception and thought. Reading contains of two associated procedures: word acknowledgment and knowledge. Word acknowledgement mentions to the procedure of recognizing how written symbols agree to one's spoken language. The process of understanding words is called comprehension so it learns sentences which connected in the text. Readers always use background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, experience with text and other tactics to help them comprehend written text.

Most educational theses are devoted to investigating reading materials, then come speaking and writing. Let's describe it in more detail. First of all, they are doctoral research dedicated to the contribution of various types of reading, for example, skim reading – Agapitova¹, extensive reading – Zhirkova² professionally-oriented reflexive

¹ Agapitova, T.G. Teaching foreign language skim reading when developing professional culture of the future teacher of a foreign language. PhD thesis (Education), Perm. 2000

reading – Krylova³. Moreover, the types of texts used in reading,- Widdowson⁴ offers a method of teaching multi-language abstracting of texts.

Moreover, reading is helpful for enlarging students' vocabulary. It inspires their intellectual competence. In short, reading is necessary to students in order to recognize the world and enlarge their outlook.

Vocabulary is a collection of words that a person understands and uses in his speech. Vocabulary can be divided into two types: active and passive.

-Active vocabulary - these are the words that a person regularly uses in speech and writing.

-Passive vocabulary - this set of words that a person knows and understands by ear or reading, but he does not use them. You can check your passive vocabulary on this site.

Typically, the volume of passive vocabulary exceeds the amount of active vocabulary several times. At the same time, the volumes of active and passive vocabulary are mobile quantities: a person constantly learns new words and at the same time forgets or stops using words that he has already learned.

Before developing students' active vocabulary while reading process it is necessary to clarify the specifications of the task you are going to develop. The following questions may be useful for this purpose:

1. What materials am I going to use for the development of the task?

(e.g. existing textbook, literature source, newspaper or other authentic materials)

² Zhirkova, O.P. Teaching methods of fiction extensive reading in the process of training German for students of the second language specialty in the teacher training university. PhD thesis (Education), Vladimir. 2004

³ Krylova, S.A. Methods of teaching professionally-oriented reflexive reading to the 1st and 2nd year students of historical specialties in the teacher training university. PhD thesis (Education), Moscow.2008

⁴ Widdowson, H.G.English for Specific Purposes: Criteria for Course Design In English for Academic and Specific Purposes: Studies in Honor of Louis Trimblar. Newbury House.2001

2. What level of vocabulary should the task is aimed at?
(e.g. pre-intermediate, intermediate)
3. Should the task focus on the expansion of passive vocabulary or active?
4. What type of task am I going to use? (e.g. open/banked gap filling exercises, comparing synonyms in context, replacing nonsense words in a text, using word combinations and phrases in speech, using the text with thinking questions, labeling and describing objects in a picture etc).
5. Is there any need to pre-teach some vocabulary? If yes, how am I going to do this?
6. What stages will be there in the text?
(e.g. pre-, while-, post -reading)
7. Will my task be integrated with other skills/aspects?
(e.g. speaking skills and grammar)
8. Will the task combine different interaction patterns?
(e.g. individual and pair work activity)

Table 1

Some principles for effective designing reading materials with active vocabulary

Students should be encouraged to notice how certain words perform in different contexts, preferably at the level of a text or paragraph. Words don't exist in isolation.

Students should be encouraged to guess the meaning of unknown words where possible and to deduce the principles of vocabulary use in English on their own. This develops their awareness of how words work in context.

Students' dependence on their first language in clarifying the meaning of English words should be diplomatically discouraged. Understanding the meaning of a certain word in context can often be avoided by word-for-word translation. Therefore, where possible they should use a monolingual (English-English) instead of a bilingual dictionary.

The purpose(s) for reading and the type of text determine the specific knowledge, skills, and strategies that readers need to apply to achieve comprehension. Reading comprehension is thus much more than decoding. Reading comprehension results is when the reader knows which skills and a strategy are appropriate for the type of text, and understands how to apply them to accomplish the reading purpose.

While designing reading tasks, we should keep in mind that complete recall of all the information in a text is an unrealistic expectation even for native speakers. Reading activities that are meant to increase communicative competence should be success oriented and build up students' confidence in their reading ability.

In order to develop students' communicative competence in reading, classroom and homework reading activities must resemble (or be) real-life reading tasks that involve meaningful communication. They must therefore be authentic in three ways.

1. The reading material must be authentic: It must be the kind of material that students will need and want to be able to read when traveling, studying abroad, or using the language in other contexts outside the classroom.

2. The reading purpose must be authentic: Students must be reading for reasons that make sense and have relevance to them. "Because the teacher assigned it" is not an authentic reason for reading a text.

To identify relevant reading purposes, ask students how they plan to use the language they are learning and what topics they are interested in reading and learning about. Give them opportunities to choose their reading assignments, and encourage them to use the library, the Internet, and foreign language newsstands and bookstores to find other things they would like to read.

3. The reading approach must be authentic: Students should read the text in a way that matches the reading purpose, the type of text, and the way people normally read. This means that reading aloud will take place only in situations where it would take place outside the classroom, such as reading for pleasure. The majority of students' reading should be done silently.

As we know, good reading lesson consists of:

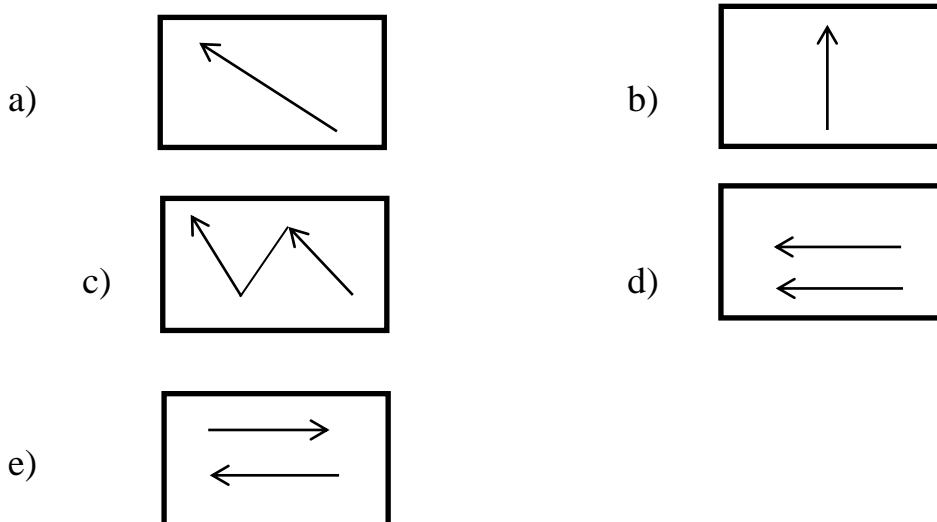
- has Pre-, While- and Post- stages
- has an interesting topic/content
- starts from background knowledge/experience
- has first reading for gist and then for detailed information
- deals with vocabulary in context
- involves other skills

Like pre-teaching, the keyword method occurs before a student reads a particular text. In this method, unfamiliar words are introduced prior to reading. However, rather than encouraging the student to remember a definition for a new word, the adult teaches him a "word clue" to help him understand it. This "word clue" or keyword might be a part of the definition, an illustrative example or an image that the reader connects to the word to make it easier to remember the meaning when reading it in context. The idea

behind the keyword method is to create an easy cognitive link to the word's meaning that the reader can access efficiently during a reading experience.

The word map is an excellent method for scaffolding a student's vocabulary learning. Like the other explicit instructional methods, the student should preview reading materials to determine which words are unfamiliar. For each of these new vocabulary words the student (with the support of the adult) creates a graphic organizer for the word. At the top or center of the organizer is the vocabulary word. Branching off of the word are three categories: classification (what class or group does the word belong to), qualities (what is the word like) and examples. Using prior knowledge the student fills in each of these three categories. Word maps help readers develop complete understandings of words.

When you scan for a word or phrase, avoid looking at other words. Scan the text to find the words, the underline them.



Picture1

- a) Scan the text from the bottom right of paragraph to the left.
- b) Scan vertically from the bottom to the top.
- c) Scan the text in a zigzag
- d) Scan from the bottom. Move right to left, right to left.

e) Scan from the bottom. Right to left, then left to right⁵.

Context skills are the strategies that a reader uses for incidental vocabulary learning. Texts are full of “clues” about the meanings of words. Other words in a sentence or paragraph, captions, illustrations and titles provide readers with information about the text that they can use to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words. These features are often referred to as “context clues” because they are contained within the context of the piece of writing rather than outside it.

When selecting texts for student assignments, remember that the difficulty of a reading text is less a function of the language, and more a function of the conceptual difficulty and the task(s) that students are expected to complete. Simplifying a text by changing the language often removes natural redundancy and makes the organization somewhat difficult for students to predict. This actually makes a text more difficult to read than if the original were used.

Rather than simplifying a text by changing its language, make it more approachable by eliciting students' existing knowledge in pre-reading discussion, reviewing new vocabulary before reading, and asking students to perform tasks that are within their competence, such as skimming to get the main idea or scanning for specific information, before they begin intensive reading.

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⁵ Rachel Roberts. Change and consequences. Scanning.: Macmillan, 2007 8p



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