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Developing Vocabulary

Vocabulary (lexis or words and their meaning) are the foundation of language: an under-developed vocabulary will impact a child's ability to make progress in reading and expression, which impacts progress across the curriculum.

Children learn vocabulary by:

- Practicing new words and applying them to different contexts in an interactive way (through games, activities and linking to other areas of the curriculum).
- Using a total physical response and all the senses.
- Extending their sentences e.g. 'I can jump' to 'You can jump very high.'

Teaching of vocabulary is effective when:

- New vocabulary e.g. 'cat', or a group of words: 'it's a cat', are within the children's range of understanding.
- Words are introduced in a natural contexts (on walks, through stories, songs and role play).
- Strategies are used to understand unknown words such as vocabulary displays where pictures show the meaning of words.

- Words are taught explicitly e.g. explaining unknown words prior to reading.

Example

Primary/Grade 2 – Grade 3

The teacher transforms the classroom into a restaurant and the children create the menus, cook the food and serve it.

Members of the community support the activity by talking about ingredients and supervising the cooking.

Children are split into groups for the cooking stage: some prepare the ingredients, while others chop (with supervision), and the rest either cook or set-up the classroom for serving (groups are rotated).

Designing menus is completed as group work.

Children are encouraged to think creatively about what they would like to make (e.g. magic stew making children fast runners).

Instruction is given on what ingredients they will use.

Correct vocabulary is used throughout cooking (such as peel, mash, chop, and stir). The activity will take two afternoons.



Developing Grammar

Grammar gives meaning to words and utterances through syntax (modifying words through prefixes, suffixes, as well as 'correct' word order) and semantics (meaning).

Early grade children learn grammar through informal interactions and formal instruction.

Children learn grammar by:

- Talking to more proficient speakers and listening to stories or the radio.
- Reading and discussing nonsense rhymes and poems.
- Learning different grammatical structures in their first language and English.
- Practicing and applying patterns in language structures (e.g. different tenses, adjectives, prefix/suffixes) through stories and play.

Teaching of formal grammar is effective when:

- Sentences made of pictures drawn by the teacher are used to highlight patterns in verb endings or correct word-order.
- Language structures are practiced in context (e.g. recounting an event: 'what will you do when you go home').
- Errors are corrected by teachers using the correct grammatical structure. Avoid telling children they are incorrect.

Example

Primary/Grade 2 – Grade 3

The children write about a recent school activity (such as a visit to the local market) to practice the past simple tense.

Before writing, the teacher asks the children to tell their partner what they did at the market. A child tells the class what they did first.

The teacher writes this on the board using the past simple (e.g. first we lined-up and walked to the market). The teacher draws attention to the past form of the verb.

The children draw a small picture of each stage of the visit to the market. They leave space to write a short sentence of what they did next to each picture. The children orally rehearse their sentences before writing them down..

Thank You for Reading

Looking forward to excelling in TEFL

There is only one guidebook you need to get!

