

Contents:

Introduction.....	2
Theoretical Background.....	5
The importance of vocabulary.....	5
Vocabulary targets.....	6
Factors influencing the learning process of vocabulary	7
The national curriculum	8
Selection of vocabulary to teach in class	9
Aspects of a word (what does it mean to know a word)	9
Vocabulary cards.....	10
Vocabulary notebooks.....	11
Current research	13
Method	13
Participants	13
Materials	13
Research design	14
Results	14
Discussion	16
Conclusion	17
References:.....	18

Introduction

The process of teaching and learning a new language is complex. It entails knowing numerous aspects of the language- its grammar, spelling, writing system, pronunciation, syntax, pragmatics and many others. But, according to Folse (2004), the most important aspect to focus on in this process is vocabulary, as, without it, "comprehensible input is neither comprehensible nor input" thus "learners need vocabulary" and should see its "acquisition as their greatest challenge" (p. 2, Folse, 2004). Given its importance, it is necessary to establish the setting and methods most effective to meet this challenge in a language course.

A lot of research has attempted to delineate the process of teaching English. Nation (2007), for instance, suggests that the activities in a language course can be divided into four strands: meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning and fluency development. These strands should all coexist in a learning process and be given an equal amount of time. Each strand requires a few conditions.

The first strand is *meaning-focused output* and it is defined as incidental learning. It is learning the language through passive repetitive exposure to large quantities of input- it occurs in reading and listening. This strand requires a few conditions:

- Most materials to which the learners are exposed should be familiar to them.
- The materials should be interesting to the learners.
- Learners should know most running words- 95-98% coverage of all words in the material.
- Learners should be able to retail the meaning of the unknown words through context.
- There should be large quantities of input.

As the gains of incidental learning are relatively small, large quantities of input are necessary in order to have enough repetition to learn new words.

The second strand is called *meaning-focused output* and it involves a productive form of learning such as writing and speaking. Its conditions are similar to the ones required by the meaning-focused output strand:

- The materials should be largely familiar to the learners.
- The learners should want to convey a message to someone else.
- 95-98% of all words should be known.
- The learners should be able to make up for the gap in their knowledge through dictionary use, communication strategies and previous input (Nation, 2007).

The third strand is *language-focused learning*. It is defined as intentional learning of language items through focusing of language features such as pronunciation, grammar, spelling, vocabulary and discourse. Learning vocabulary from word cards and vocabulary notebooks are two of the activities of this strand. As the other strands, it requires certain conditions:

- Giving deliberate attention to language features.
- Deep and thoughtful processing of language features.
- Repeated attention over time to the same features.
- Simplicity of the features the learners focus on- they should not require developmental knowledge.
- The features studied in this strand should occur in the other strands as well (Nation, 2007).

In a comparison between incidental exposure and intentional vocabulary learning (which refers to this strand), the second is way more effective. In fact, according to research, explicit attempts to learn new words bring better results in terms of retention and proficiency compared with incidental learning (Schmitt, 2008). Therefore a great attention should be given to activities of this strand.