Using a **Vocabulary Organizer** in EAP courses

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**Overview**

- **Part one**  
  Genesis

- **Part two**  
  The pilot

**Aim**

To present feedback on the piloting of the Vocabulary Organizer on the pre-sessional EAP course, Warwick University 2014

**Part one**

**Genesis of the Vocabulary Organizer**
A brief history of Lexical Notebooks

1990

1998

Collins online dictionary

Word Frequency

Band 5 – just over 700
Band 4 – just over 1000
Band 3 – just over 1500
Band 2 – just over 3000
Band 1 – just over 8000

No frequency tag – c. 17,900

Word – translation

“Write it in your lexical notebook!”

“What’s that?”

Pre sessionals

Pre sessionals

Photographer: Pete Sharma

Photographer: Pete Sharma

Collins Birmingham University International Language Database (COBUILD)

1980’s - electronic corpora

Red***

Red**

Red*

Black

A1, A2, B1, B2

CEFRL

Oxford3000™

S1 / W3

◊◊◊

◊◊

◊

No diamond

Word Frequency

● Band 5 — just over 700
● Band 4 — just over 1000
● Band 3 — just over 1500
● Band 2 — just over 3000
● Band 1 — just over 8000

No frequency tag — c. 17,900

Collins online dictionary

Knowing a word

- Meaning
- Use
- Spelling
- Pronunciation
- Collocations
- Register
- Class/form
- Connotation
- Etymology
- Synonyms/antonyms

The good language learner:
- Thinks about how they are learning
- Is willing to experiment and take risks
- Is independent - does not expect to learn English just by sitting in the classroom
- Is organised and active
- Has insights into their preferred learning modality [VAK]

TWO PARTS

Vocabulary to use

Part one:
- Bands 5, 4, 3, 2
- 6,200+

Vocabulary to recognise

Part two:
- Band 1 / no frequency tag
"How do your students store their new words?"

writing down a word with the translation alphabetically, as in a dictionary

in a diagram, e.g. a 'word tree' / 'mind-map' in lexical sets i.e. in groups of related words

on index-cards (translation on back)
No single ‘best way’ to record and review – all students are different

‘A’ system is better than ‘no system’

Using the Vocabulary Organizer encourages good practice!

The Pilot

Vocabulary Organizer piloted in a five week course, August – September 2014, by four teachers

Students given a feedback sheet with quantitative and qualitative questions

79 feedback sheets collected

Not all questions were answered

Data

Q1: Did you enjoy using the V.O.?
Q2: How often did you use your V.O.?

Q3: How useful was the V.O.?

Q4: Will you continue to use your V.O.?

Q5: Which sections did you use?

Q6: What should happen next year?

Comments

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>+</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Useful (10)</td>
<td>More examples (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useful / very useful (3)</td>
<td>More space (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good (8)</td>
<td>More pages (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could be smaller / more portable (5)</td>
<td>Didn’t use (2) – don’t know how to</td>
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<tr>
<td>App version (2) / electronic version (3)</td>
<td>More pages for new words (2)</td>
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Conclusions & recommendations (1/2)

Scope to develop a Teacher’s pack to supplement the Vocabulary Organiser with tasks - already developed during the pilot

Feedback bears out the hypothesis that uptake is linked to learner training

Link any future pilot to following students on in-sessionals to see if students continue to use it

The future

More feedback?

Build in changes?

More adoptions?

Conclusions & recommendations (2/2)

Upon reflection, many students not autonomous learners - would have appreciated more direction from teacher

e.g. how to construct a word map which words to build word maps around

I asked SS to bring books every Friday. In future, leave books in room weeks 1-2, & use every day

Bibliography and further reading

Business English (LTP: 1990) Peter Wilberg & Michael Lewis
English Collocations in Use Advanced (CUP: 2008) Felicity O’Dell & Michael McCarthy
English LearnerNotebook (Enlano) Ken Goméz
From corpus to classroom (CUP: 2007) Anne O’Keefe, Michael McCarthy and Ronald Carter
Learning to Learn English (CUP: 2009) Gail Ellis and Barbara Sinclair
Vocabulary Study Book (Garnet Education: 2007) Colin Campbell
Word Knowledge (OUP: 2009) Cheryl Boyd Zimmerman

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