

Vocabulary Development Strategies for the L2 Classroom

Elham Yahia

St. John's University, Queens, New York
United States

Richard Sinatra

St. John's University, Queens, New York
United States

Abstract

This paper presents some important considerations in word instruction and learning for the English Language Learner (ELL). Specific strategies and techniques are provided for English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers to assist others to apply in home and classroom situations. The two broad areas of direct, sequential instruction and incidental learning of vocabulary through contextual experiences are discussed and word list sources are presented of high utility English words. The key throughout instruction is for the ESL/EFL teacher to be *word-conscious* or word mindful of the power of vocabulary to enrich thinking and understanding. Vocabulary knowledge has been identified as one of the best predictors of reading comprehension and fluency while facilitating the learning of a second language (L2). Specific techniques such as the use of concept maps, word webs, and word sorts are presented to help students learn content-specific, academic vocabulary.

Keywords: Vocabulary development; L2; EFL/ESL instruction; academic vocabulary; word-conscious teaching; modeling