

Incidental Vocabulary Learning through Reading

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Abstract

The purpose of the following paper is to take a closer look at the benefits of incidental learning through reading, with a specific focus on vocabulary acquisition. The teaching of vocabulary has traditionally been an explicit process where the target vocabulary is taken out of context and taught separately. However, this kind of explicit teaching and learning may only take into account a form-meaning connection. Therefore, this paper explores research on incidental learning and specifically looks at what it takes to acquire new vocabulary incidentally through reading while considering the coverage rates of texts, how many words must be known already from the text, how many repetitions it takes to learn a word, types of texts that promote learning, and the effects of pairing students' reading with learner tasks. After reviewing many studies, it can be concluded that more reading is better. More specifically, extensive reading of chosen novels at an appropriate level and interest to the students showed important gains in vocabulary. In addition, readings that were supplemented with additional activities that focused on both form and meaning showed an even higher increase in word retention.

Keywords: Vocabulary, Learning, Reading