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The VERB editors
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headwords of the Academic Word List, (2) vocabulary levels dictation list, and (3) function words in English.

Anyone interested in improving their approach to vocabulary teaching and learning, regardless of which of the four strands their lesson(s) fall under, should read this book. For the pre-service language teacher, it offers a comprehensive foundation on which to integrate approaches to vocabulary instruction. For the in-service teacher, it is an opportunity to reposition their lexical pedagogy or validate practicing methodology based on some of the latest research in the field. It offers a comprehensive look into a field that has recently risen to an elevated level of attention and highlights areas where inquiry is still possible. It is a valuable resource; one which I'm sure will be referred to many times as researchers and practitioners continually refine their approach to teaching and learning vocabulary in another language.

References

- Nation, I. S. P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
 Nation, I. S. P., & Macalister, J. (2010). *Language curriculum design*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Teaching Vocabulary by Michael Lessard-Clouston.

TESOL Publications (2013). vi + 39 pp.
 ISBN 978-1931185974

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New teachers need essential knowledge based on sound theory and best practices, which they can readily use in the classroom. Experienced teachers need the same knowledge to refresh themselves in current developments so they can keep growing as teachers.

To meet these needs, TESOL Press has provided a series of short, introductory books (15 at the time of this writing) on various topics, including such titles as "*Classroom Research for Language Teachers*," "*Teaching Reading*," and "*Teaching Vocabulary*."

This review focuses on "*Teaching Vocabulary*" by Michael Lessard-Clouston, and if this short book reflects the quality of the whole series, it should be a helpful series indeed. "*Teaching Vocabulary*" provides basic, practical, and essential information for teachers.

In five short chapters, Lessard-Clouston outlines essential ways for teaching vocabulary. As a classroom teacher and teacher educator, he regularly explains what he does in his classes, giving the text a personal tone full of practical advice.

In the first chapter, the author makes the case for the importance of vocabulary, as central to English language teaching. He defines vocabulary as single lexical items, phrases, lexical chunks, or formulaic sequences. He summarizes Nation's (2001) threefold conception of word knowledge, regarding form, meaning, and use, and then he

paraphrases Nation's 18 types of lexical knowledge. For those not familiar with these fundamentals of vocabulary, this is a clear and helpful chapter.

Chapter Two provides further background for teaching vocabulary, emphasizing the intrinsic relationship between grammar and vocabulary. In practice, teachers may tend to emphasize grammar much more than vocabulary, and this chapter reminds us to value them more equally. Chapter Two also introduces the frequency approach for teaching vocabulary based on corpus linguistics. This approach helps students and teachers know what words they need to learn first (i.e., high-frequency vocabulary). Lessard-Clouston also suggests ways for teaching and learning mid-frequency and low-frequency vocabulary. This summary of the frequency approach is vital for new or experienced teachers who might be unfamiliar with it.

With the essential background set, Chapter Three begins with an outline of nine empirically-based vocabulary teaching principles. Here is one example: "not all vocabulary is created equal." Paraphrased, this would be: Remember. Words that are long, abstract, or polysemantic are harder to learn. This is good advice, especially for advanced learners, and it is conditioned by Barker's (2007) guidelines that students should learn to decide about the costs and benefits of learning new words. Lessard-Clouston summarizes three questions from Barker to help learners evaluate the cost and benefit of learning new words.

1. Is this a common word?
2. Is it useful for me at my level?
3. Is there a reason to learn this word now?

These are helpful questions, and Lessard-Clouston is wise to stick to Barker's three basic questions. Barker (2007, 532) actually suggests 12 questions and a 13th, with 6 choices attached to it. Even if students only ask the three questions, it would be very time-consuming considering the number of words they must learn. To use this heuristic, students will need to learn how to use it automatically. We can tell teachers and students why some words are harder than others, but when we start to give them tools for deciding cost and benefits for learning, we need to take care not to burden them with strategies that might become unwieldy. Again, Lessard-Clouston does well to keep things simple and practical.

"*Teaching Vocabulary*" is a short and simple introduction, but just beneath the surface, readers will feel the complexity and massive size of the task of learning and teaching vocabulary. To help with this challenge, Lessard-Clouston gives "Reflective Breaks," asking questions and giving tasks to readers. Some of the questions and tasks are practicable, but others can require serious thought and time from readers where they will face some complicated challenges that will take them beyond the scope of the book.

Chapter Four sets out ways to assess the vocabulary levels of students in order to match instruction with student gaps in lexical knowledge. This raises two of the most important questions about vocabulary. For all levels of students, where are their gaps of lexical knowledge, especially for high frequency vocabulary, and how can we fill those gaps?

Lessard-Clouston lists a number of the well-known tests that assess lexical knowledge, for example Nation's (2008) Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT). Such tests provide general guidance for teachers and students, estimating student vocabulary size (e.g., vocab size 400 words) and telling learners where to start studying (e.g., start working on the top

1000 words). For many teachers this introduces something that may not be commonly practiced: assessing general vocabulary knowledge in order to know what vocabulary to teach.

Chapter Five closes out the book with a number of helpful guidelines for teaching vocabulary. These guidelines include suggestions on how to use Nation's (1996) Four Strands for vocabulary teaching: (1) meaning-focused input, (2) meaning-focused output, (3) language-focused instruction, and (4) fluency development. Though many teachers may know the four-strands as a description of a well-balanced language course, it is also helpful to apply them directly to vocabulary learning.

Lessard-Clouston has filled "*Teaching Vocabulary*" with sound guidelines based on current research and pedagogy, and veteran and novice teachers will find many ideas that they can use immediately. The book gives a concise digest of best practices. At times, I wished the ideas had been

enumerated in fuller clarity in the form of lists or precise outlines of step-by-step directions. But in a book limited to only 39 pages, it is certainly brimming with helpful advice.

References

- Barker, D. (2007). A personalized approach to analyzing "cost" and "benefit" in vocabulary selection. *System*, 35(4), 523-533.
- Nation, P. (1996). The four strands of a language course. *TESOL in Context*, 6(1), 7-12.
- Nation, I. S. P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
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VERB SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Short Papers

- Contributions to Short Papers, Word of Mouth, and Book Review sections must not exceed 1000 words, excluding references and titles. They are expected to adhere to APA 6th edition formatting guidelines. All submissions will undergo peer review, and may require rewriting and resubmission for acceptance.

- The call for papers deadline is:

June 30th

Event Info

- If you know of a vocabulary-related event, or if you are planning to organize an event, please let us know!

New Ideas

- We are always seeking new ways to make VERB tailored to the needs and the tastes of our members. Please let us know if you have any idea of new type of submission!

Please send your submission to: [jaltvocabsig.verb\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:jaltvocabsig.verb[at]gmail.com)
 For more information, visit: <http://jaltvocab.weebly.com>