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ՀԵՏԱԶՈՏԱԿԱՆ ԱՇԽԱՏԱՆՔ

Մասնագիտություն _____ Անգլերեն լեզու _____

Թեմա Թեմատիկ բառապաշարի դասավանդում/Teaching Topic - based
Vocabulary

Կատարող _____ Փանոսյան Սյուզաննա Էդուարդի
Ազգանուն, անուն, հայրանուն

Ղեկավար Բանասիրական գիտությունների թեկնածու, դոցենտ
Տիգրան Միքայելյան
Ազգանուն, անուն, գիտական աստիճան, կոչում

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Introduction

Vocabulary is the knowledge of words and word meanings. Vocabulary knowledge is not something that can ever be fully mastered; it is something that expands and deepens over the course of a lifetime. Instruction in vocabulary involves far more than looking up words in a dictionary and using the words in a sentence. Vocabulary is acquired incidentally through indirect exposure to words and intentionally through explicit instruction in specific words and word-learning strategies.

The **aim** of this work is the representation of topic-based vocabulary teaching, the main strategies and methods of teaching the new vocabulary. The first part concerns the historical and theoretical backgrounds of vocabulary teaching methods and their characteristics. It also devoted in general principles of vocabulary learning process.

Apart from the theoretical part the work contains practical part as well, where I will illustrate my own example of how to teach topic based vocabulary. It is based on practical work within a classroom. It consists of two lesson plans which have their key aspects as well. Practical part will set the initial goals for teaching the topic based vocabulary and we will show which the steps are that will lead to the final result.

Chapter I

Teaching Vocabulary Based on the Curriculum

Learning vocabulary is an important instructional aim for teachers in all content areas in middle grades schools. Recent research, however, indicates that vocabulary instruction may be problematic because many teachers are not “confident about best practice in vocabulary instruction and at times don’t know where to begin to form an instructional emphasis on word learning”.¹

Vocabulary can be defined as “the words we must know to communicate effectively: words in speaking (expressive vocabulary) and words in listening (receptive vocabulary)”.² Enlargement of vocabulary has always been and continues to be an important goal in literacy and learning.

Learning vocabulary is fundamentally about learning definition of words. Many teachers believe that defining words before reading a text is an effective instructional technique to support vocabulary growth and enhance reading comprehension; however, research indicates otherwise. For example, the popular practice of requiring students to find definitions of words and write those words in sentences before reading appears to have little apparent impact on their word knowledge and language use, and has not improved student comprehension of texts that contain those words.

While some vocabulary learning occurs in school, it is not just a school-based phenomenon. Many children begin formal schooling “with rich vocabularies but no formal vocabulary instruction”,³ and while they are in school they may continue to learn vocabulary without much direct and explicit help from teachers.⁴

Teachers can help students improve vocabulary by providing instruction that helps them see the value and relevance of word study and allows them to study interesting and important words that come from texts they read in the classroom. Teachers can also focus student attention on learning new words at both the literal level (i.e., dictionary or glossary definition) and the conceptual level; help them use new words in their speaking, listening, reading and writing; get them actively engaged in interactive word-learning experiences; focus their attention on learning clusters of words that share a common element or origin; demonstrate to them how to learn vocabulary before, during, and after reading; and stress to them that learning new words is not an end in itself but a tool to enhance reading comprehension.

¹ Berne, J. I., & Blachowich, C. L. Z. (2008). What reading teachers say about vocabulary instruction: Voices from the classroom. *The Reading Teacher*, p. 315

² Neuman, S. B., & Dwyer, J. (2009). Missing in action: Vocabulary instruction in pre-K., p. 385

³ Brabham, E. G., & Villaume, S. K. (2002). Vocabulary instruction: Concerns and visions, p. 264

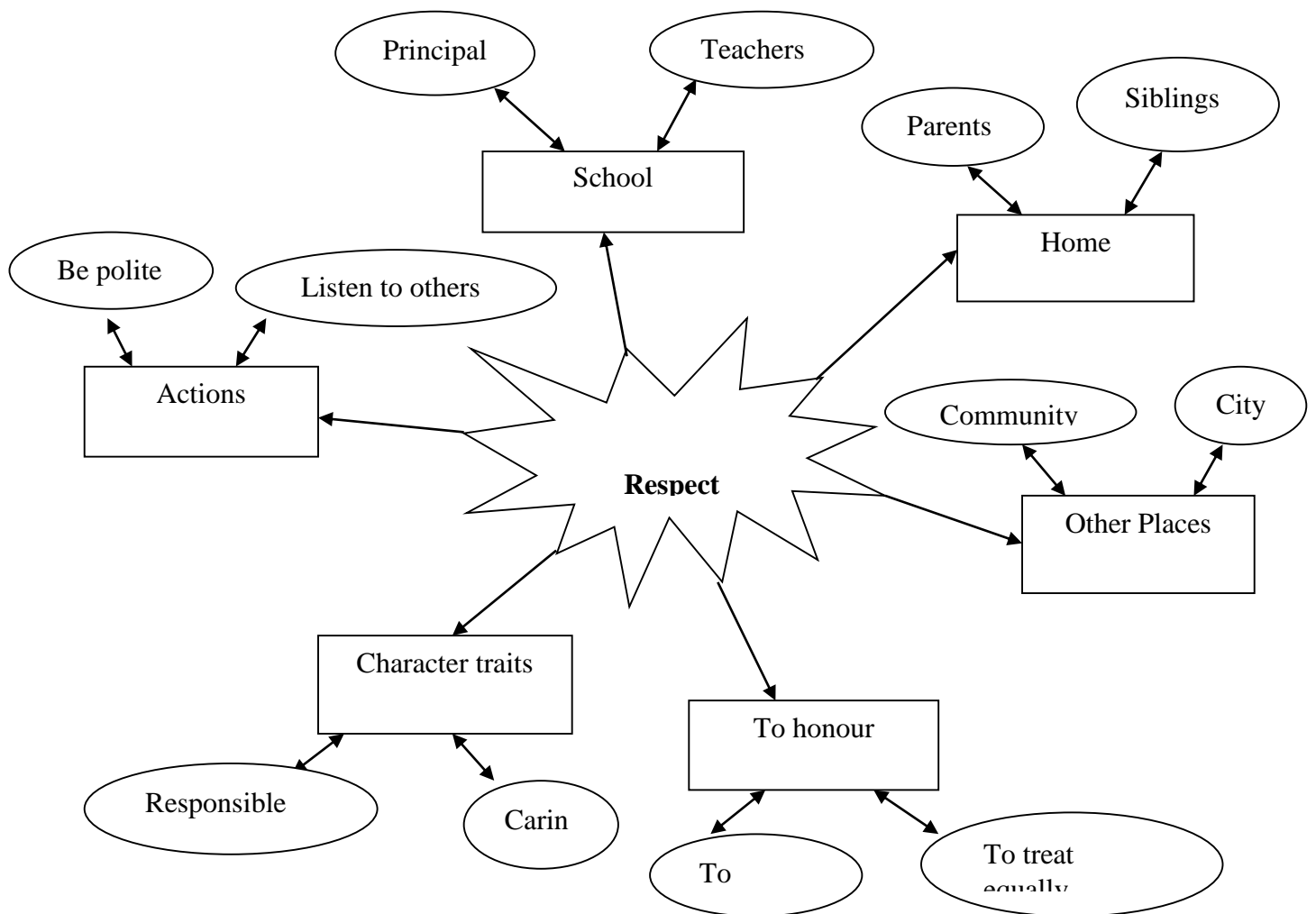
⁴ Carey, S. (1978). The child as word learner. In M. Halle, J. Breslin, & G. A. Miller (Eds.), *Linguistic theory and psychological reality* (pp. 264-293). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

Teachers can also display an attitude of excitement and interest in words and language. This can be a catalyst for students to actively, and even playfully, engage in learning new words. Using the thesaurus to develop synonym games and puzzles is just one way teachers can accomplish this.⁵

Some of the activities that will help a teacher to teach the new vocabulary are the followings:

➤ **Word Map**

Word maps help deepen understanding of a vocabulary word by relating it to other words and concepts students already know. The word map activity generally has the following shape:



A word map is a visual organizer that promotes vocabulary development. Using a graphic organizer, students think about terms or concepts in several ways. Most word map organizers engage students in developing a definition, synonyms, antonyms, and a picture for a given

⁵ Mountain, L. (2008). Synonym success—Thanks to the thesaurus. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, p. 318

vocabulary word or concept. Enhancing students' vocabulary is important to developing their reading comprehension.⁶

➤ **The Frayer Model**

Frayer models are a popular way to learn new words and concepts. Students define the word in their own terms, then list facts and characteristics, examples, and non-examples. An example of this model is the following:

Definition in your own words		Facts/characteristics	
1. A part of speech.		1. Can be singular or plural	
2.		2.	
3.		3.	
4.		4.	
		NOUN	
Examples		Non-examples	
1. a book		1. beautiful	
2.		2.	
3.		3.	
4.		4.	

In other words Frayer Model is a graphic organizer that helps students determine or clarify the meaning of vocabulary words encountered while listening, reading, and viewing texts. It is used before reading to activate background knowledge, during reading to monitor vocabulary, or after reading to assess vocabulary. This strategy supports students' acquisition of new words and using resource materials by providing students with a structure to examine words for their definitions, characteristics, examples, and non-examples. Word learning requires multiple exposures to the word within meaningful contexts.⁷

⁶ https://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/word_maps

⁷ https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/ela/bank/6-12_L.VAU_Frayer_Model.pdf

➤ **Fill in words from A to Z**

This vocabulary game is fun and challenging, and you can play it at any age. Choose a word, then challenge children to come up with related words for as many letters as possible. These could be synonyms, antonyms, examples, and more.

A (2 points) _____	N (2 points) _____
B (3 points) _____	O (4 points) _____
C (2 points) _____	P (2 points) _____
D (2 points) _____	Q (4 points) _____
E (5 points) _____	R (2 points) _____
F (2 points) _____	S (1 points) _____
G (3 points) _____	T (1 points) _____
H (2 points) _____	U (3 points) _____
I (5 points) _____	V (1 points) _____
J (4 points) _____	W (4 points) _____
K (3 points) _____	X 5 (points) _____
L (2 points) _____	Y (4 points) _____
M (1 points) _____	Z (5 points) _____

Word knowledge is more than just reading a word. Knowing words is multidimensional and the process occurs over time. Therefore, effective instruction and assessment in vocabulary will take into account the students' development in reading words correctly, knowing the meaning of a word within several different contexts, using words in reading as well as writing, using word-learning strategies, and being word conscious. As teachers apply the rubric for evaluating students' performances, they will see patterns emerge in each of these areas that need improvement and may use the results for selecting a Response to Intervention strategy. For example, one teacher of students with special needs analyzed the assessment results and found that four students were not "word conscious." The students had little or no awareness of new and exciting words, and their lack of a positive disposition for words hindered their vocabulary development. The teacher used these results for selecting a Response to Intervention strategy. ⁸She chose and implemented the Vocabulary SelfCollection strategy and found there was an overall difference in her students' stance toward learning new wor

⁸ https://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/40627_4.pdf

Chapter II

Teaching Topic-based Vocabulary

However many theories about vocabulary learning process were written, it still remains the matter of memory. Thus, there are several general principles for successful teaching, which are valid for any method. The main principles are:

- aim – what is to be taught, which words, how many;
- need – target vocabulary should respond students' real needs and interests;
- frequent exposure and repetition;
- meaningful presentation – clear and unambiguous denotation or reference should be assured.

Learning vocabulary is a complex process. The students' aim to be reached in learning vocabulary process is primarily their ability to recall the word at will and to recognize it in its spoken and written form.

Generally, knowing a word involves knowing its form and its meaning at the basic level. In deeper aspects it means the abilities to know its:

1. Meaning, i.e. relate the word to an appropriate object or context;
2. Usage, i.e. knowledge of its collocations, metaphors and idioms, as well as style and register (the appropriate level of formality), to be aware of any connotations and associations the word might have;
3. Word formation, i.e. ability to spell and pronounce the word correctly, to know any derivations (acceptable prefixes and suffixes),
4. Grammar, i.e. to use it in the appropriate grammatical form.⁹

Vocabulary is an important part of the English teaching process. It is supposed to be a very effective communicative device as it carries the highest level of importance within peoples' verbal interaction. However, language itself is not only individual lexemes put together, but it is necessary to follow a set of grammar rules to assure correct comprehension of speaker's intention. Therefore, vocabulary together with grammar rules acquisition plays significant role in foreign language teaching.

In this work I will represent the teaching of the topic-based vocabulary through task-based learning. This means, that the teaching of the new vocabulary will be implemented through different tasks, some of which are illustrated above.

Task based learning has a deep and in-depth application for learning in a classroom atmosphere. Classroom is a place for exercising and installing new ideas with a goal to teach and refine knowledge by providing a platform of opportunities to the learners. Task can range from

⁹ Harmer, Jeremy: The Practice of English Language teaching, Longman, 1993

simple to complex or even comprehensive work designs that favor the learners to develop skills in communication.

Task-based learning is an activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allowed teachers to control and regulate that process. Through this we can conclude that learners can be made to work on themselves through tasks and aim to develop all the basic skills of a language.

The whole process of task-based learning execution is based on a three step process which needs attention and that has to be monitored by the learners as well as the instructors. In some cases the organization and implementation may be fairly new especially when it is a rural crowd of learners or if they possess the dominance of second language or in some cases there may be more number of weak learners. However, in any circumstances the role of the instructor needs to be of utmost prominence. The three stages can be broadly classified as:

Pre- task: During this phase the learners are briefed on the topic and a collective framework is presented to them.

Task Cycle: This is the next step after introducing and selecting the text, this will enable and facilitate the phase of reporting and planning.

Post Cycle: This is the last step in the process, where the learners present and are analyzed through the attained results.¹⁰

Reflecting on the nature of children's learning of words confirms the strong relationship between vocabulary and comprehension and calls attention to the prominent place that vocabulary instruction should hold in the literacy program. Research related to vocabulary instruction and word knowledge shows that there is a robust correlation between knowing words and comprehending. Many educators feel that a strong vocabulary program just makes sense. Consider that words are labels for their meanings and when we know a word, we know what it represents. Some words are more complex than others, having multiple meanings, while others are conceptually rich and networked to countless other words. There are those words that may have different syntactic uses depending on their context within a sentence. For example, the word run can be used as a noun or a verb. Thus, learning a new word takes place over time. As students hear and read the word in many different contexts, their understanding and use of the word will develop and increase. Thus, the students within our classroom may have an understanding of a word, but the degree to which they know a word may differ. The Partnership for Reading has used the following three levels to describe students' knowledge for word meanings:

- **Unknown:** The word is completely unfamiliar and its meaning is unknown.

¹⁰ https://ejmcm.com/article_7004_628146eb3fdb5253321185030156e0ac.pdf

- **Acquainted:** The word is somewhat familiar; the student has some idea of its basic meaning.
- **Established:** The word is very familiar; the student can immediately recognize its meaning and use the word correctly.

The positive effects of vocabulary teaching are that it can provide help when learners feel it is most needed. This is particularly true for vocabulary teaching that occurs in the context of message-focused activities involving listening, speaking, reading and writing, and where the teaching deals with items that learners see as being very relevant for the activity. The small amount of research on such teaching indicates that it has a strong effect on vocabulary learning.

The first decision to make when teaching a word is to decide whether the word is worth spending time on or not. If the word is a low frequency word and is not a useful technical word and not one that is particularly useful for the learners, it should be dealt with as quickly as possible. Usually when words come up in the context of a reading or listening text, or of learners need a word or phrase when speaking or writing, they need quick help which does not interrupt the activity too much.

Sometimes however a teacher may want to spend time on a word. In general, time should be spent on high frequency words or words that fill a language need that the learners have. When deciding how to spend time on a word, it is useful to consider the learning burden of the word.

Part of effective vocabulary teaching involves working out what needs to be taught about a word. This is called the learning burden of a word and differs from word to word according to the ways in which the word relates to first language knowledge and already existing knowledge of the second language and or other known languages.

Useful vocabulary needs to be met again and again to ensure it is learned. In the early stages of learning the meetings need to be reasonably close together, preferably within a few days, so that too much forgetting does not occur. Later meetings can be very widely spaced with several weeks between each meeting.

High frequency vocabulary needs to be met across all four strands of a course - meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development. Some low frequency vocabulary may not need to become part of the learners' output and so it is not important for it to be part of the meaning-focused output strand.¹¹

In this chapter I will illustrate the teaching of the topic-based vocabulary based on the following topics: *friendship* and *family*:

¹¹ https://www.asian-efl-journal.com/sept_05_pn.pdf

Topic: Friendship Baghdassarian, Gyurjayants, English 10; unit 10, pp. 114-115)	Hours: 2	Topic: Family Baghdassarian, Gyurjayants, English 10; unit 9, pp. 104-105)	Hours: 3
Goals			
1. Enhance students’ vocabulary in the context friendship words with a special reference to the words given in the unit (<i>e.g.: let down, betray, rely on, calm, gossip, feature, devoted, touchy, greedy, sympathy, patience, an only child, etc.</i>)	1. Enhance students’ vocabulary in the context friendship words with a special reference to the words given in the unit (<i>e.g.: nuclear/extended/single parent family, stepfather/mother, adopted child, widow, bachelor, divorce, wife, husband, etc..</i>)		
Key words <i>To get on well with, not to be on speaking terms, to be quite different/similar, make up, to spend a lot of time together, to argue, etc.</i>			
2. Develop speaking and persuasive discussion skills skills. 3. Develop linguistic competence. ¹² 4. To develop reading and note taking skills. Objectives Students will be able to: 1. Use the new vocabulary related to the units /friendship and family/. 2. Speak about the topics “My family” and “My friend” using the new vocabulary.			
Steps for teaching Vocabulary for the Topics			
1. In the lesson, learners first think about their own eating habits before discussing their initial thoughts and ideas related to Healthy Eating Habits. 2. Then they do pair work completing several activities based on the articles /matching, the Frayer Model, word map, who is it?/. 3. After doing the activities a whole class discussion takes place.			

¹² ՀԳՁ, U8-1, <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docid=149788>

After reading the text students are encouraged to guess the meaning of the words in the context and match the words with their possible definitions. The activity will look like the following:

Task 1: Matching the words with the definitions.

Text: A full-time shoulder to cry on?	Text: Healthy Eating Habits
let down, betray, rely on, calm, gossip, feature, devoted, touchy, greedy, sympathy, patience, an only child	nuclear/extended/single parent family, stepfather/mother, adopted child, widow, bachelor, divorce
<i>Definitions 1</i>	<i>Definitions 2</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. look to someone for help- 2. talk about other people in their absence- 3. having no brothers or sisters- 4. not to keep somebody's promise- 5. loving or loyal- 6. having or showing selfish desire for wealth or power- 7. easily upset or offended- 8. tolerance- 9. feelings of pity and sorrow towards someone- 10. quiet- 11. a distinguishing aspect- 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a family that consists of only parents and children- 2. a family that consists of parents, children and other members- 3. a man/woman who is the husband/wife of one's mother/father after the divorce or separation of one's parents or the death of one's father/mother- 4. legally made the son or daughter of someone- 5. legally dissolve one's marriage with someone- 6. family that consists only one parent- 7. a woman whose husband has died- 8. an unmarried man-

Task 2: Who is it?¹³

1. Students are shown images of people from the worksheet depicting family members.
2. Ask them to listen to descriptions of the people and try to identify which two people are being described. The students may need to hear the descriptions a couple of times.
3. Give them a chance to compare their answers and discuss what they heard. See if they can tell you what they know about each person and suggest logical explanations for their choices based on what they heard.

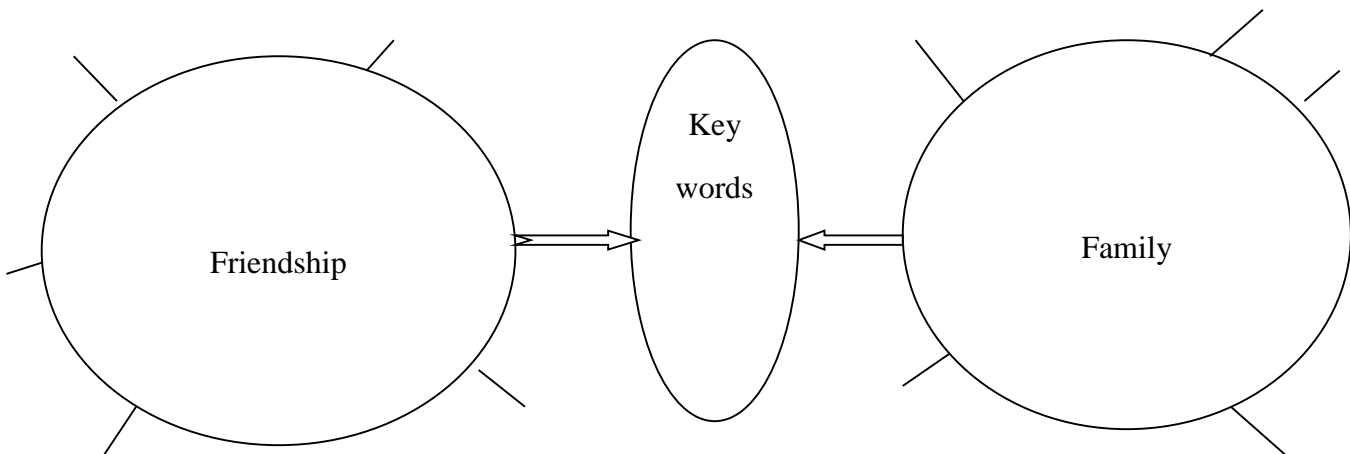
¹³ British Council Armenia /teachingenglish.org.uk/article/who-it /

- Give them the correct answers and encourage them to compare the results with a partner.

Task 3: Frayer Model /Define the words according to the following categories.

Definition in your own words		Part of speech	
1.		1.	
2.		2.	
3.		3.	
		1. divorce 2. rely on 3. touchy	
Possible synonym		Possible antonym	
1.		1.	
2.		2.	
3.		3.	

Task 4: Make word maps based on the topics /family, friendship/



Assessing student learning is a critical component of effective teaching and achievement. Therefore, part of the teacher’s literacy instructional plan needs to include the assessment of students’ vocabulary development. We aligned our progress monitoring of vocabulary with the following instructional goals:

- to enhance vocabulary development and use,
- to develop word-learning strategies, and
- (3) to build word consciousness.

The main problem with vocabulary teaching is that only a few words and a small part of what is required to know a word can be dealt with at any one time. This limitation also applies to

incidental learning from listening or reading, but it is much easier to arrange for large amounts of independent listening and reading than it is to arrange for large amounts of teaching. Teaching can effectively deal with only a small amount of information about a word at a time. The more complex the information is, the more likely the learners are to misinterpret it.

Conclusion

Coming to the conclusion we can state that vocabulary is an important part of the English teaching process. It is the key device of communication. But still, teaching vocabulary is a challenge for any teacher, since the strategies and steps must be appropriate for the level and the age group.

Teaching vocabulary must be a priority and it must not be shadowed by the generalized idea that teaching grammar is more important. The importance of empowering students with strategies for learning vocabulary from an early stage will help them throughout their studies. It is important to mention that teachers should treat the teaching of vocabulary not only at the level of teaching students vocabulary learning strategies and applying them as an isolated issue, but as an integral part of the group of contents that help the development of communicative skills of the speakers.

Based on my own teaching experience I strongly **recommend** applying task-based learning in vocabulary teaching because resorting to various activities you “make” the students come across the words again and again. At the end of the topic students memorize the new vocabulary based on their capacities and level.

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