

LANGUAGE IN INDIA

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Internet as an Educational Resource in Vocabulary Instruction

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Importance of the Internet in Vocabulary Learning and Using a Second Language

Vocabulary knowledge is an important element in second language learning. By learning new words students can increase their language skills. Mastering a vocabulary is more than memorizing the denotative meaning of a word.

Internet resources in the classroom environment can promote vocabulary learning in the natural process of communicative activity. A wide variety of techniques can be used in the web to practice and learn both vocabulary and grammar. The web is a source of teaching vocabulary and grammar effectively and interestingly.

Learning Styles and the Internet

The various functions of the Internet appeal to different learning style. When a student is bored by books he may become excited by interactive games in the Internet. When using the Internet for vocabulary learning students become empowered since they develop self learning and confidence through increased responsibility for their own learning processes.

Variety Required

Improving vocabulary skills require constant attention. There are a number of strategies and exercises designed especially to help students increase their vocabulary. Language experts have invented word games that students can play as a warmer or as relaxation in the lessons and at home with their friends. Using the Internet for this purpose is a relatively new invention, and is becoming increasingly popular.

The real advantage of using the World Wide Web in language teaching is that it expands the possibilities for teaching and learning. It catches students' imagination and they learn new things unconsciously. The World Wide Web offers an extraordinary variety of language games.

Vocabulary Notebooks

Vocabulary notebook should contain at least ten entries for a week. This assignment will be much easier and much more beneficial if we write one or two entries every day instead of doing all of them on one day.

Each entry in the notebook should include all of the following:

1. The word, spelt correctly
2. Where it is found
3. The sentence or phrase where it is used
4. What part of speech it is (countable noun, uncountable noun, transitive verb, intransitive verb, adjective, adverb, pronoun, or preposition).
5. The one correct definition from a dictionary for the word.
6. Our own original example sentence using the word.

Vocabulary notebook should not contain words which we study in class. These words should be words we learn outside. Following are the places where we can find new words –

- newspapers and magazines
- books
- signs and advertisements
- mail
- the Internet
- food packages in the supermarket--anywhere you see words written in English

<http://www.ipl.org/div/news/>

For sheer variety and timeliness, it's hard to find a better source of teaching material than the newspaper, and on-line newspapers have made access to the news easier than ever. Such access is a great advantage, but finding articles appropriate to learners' reading level is a challenge.

The website listed above provides learning and teaching environment. It has a reading room where books, magazines and newspapers of all the countries are available. ipl2 is a public service organization and a learning/teaching environment.

Online Dictionaries

Online dictionaries, such as those of Longman, Cambridge and Collins Cobuild run sites called 'Word of the Week' or 'Word of the Day', where new words or phrases are offered on

a regular basis. They provide the reader with a short explanation of the words and highlight how they are used in context.

http://www.longman.com/ldoce/word_wk/index.html

The site provides a new word from the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. It helps keeping language fresh. The site is devoted to upper-intermediate to advanced learners and teachers of English. The page is very attractive. The explanation of words is illustrated by suggestive pictures.

<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/wordoftheday.asp>

The site provides words taken from *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. Words are chosen according to topics. The page is easy to survey. Its structure is similar to that in written dictionaries. Phonetic symbols can be seen after clicking on the link. The meaning of the word is highlighted in context. Previous days' words can be seen after clicking on the link.

<http://www.cobuild.collins.co.uk/pages/idiom.aspx>

The site automatically displays a random entry from the *Cobuild Dictionary of Idioms*. The site is written for upper-intermediate to advanced learners and teachers of English. The page is not very attractive, but easy to survey. Beside the explanation, some sentences are given to introduce the words' usage. Moreover, their origin is also highlighted in most cases.

<http://www.esltower.com>

ESLTower.com is a free ESL, EFL & ELT site that offers top quality printable and interactive English grammar and vocabulary exercises for teachers and students. These grammar and vocabulary resources will save English teachers lesson planning time and offer students free opportunity for online self-study. There are grammar and vocabulary quizzes, crosswords, word search and several fun puzzles that make the learning and teaching of English easy and fun.

<http://esl.about.com/blvocab.htm>

This website offers online lessons in vocabulary. Words and phrases are presented in context. The target audience of the site consists of older adolescents and adults. Vocabulary areas are arranged in an easy to survey table. There is a menu in the left of each page, where other services of English as 2nd Language are accessible. In addition, users can move to related pages or return to the collection of vocabulary items by clicking on the appropriate link at the bottom of the pages.

<http://www.manythings.org>

The website contains exercises for people who study English as a second or foreign language. The exercises are intended for young adolescents and adults, although this largely depends on

the task. There are some quizzes that can be also done by younger children, which is indicated on the relevant pages.

‘Manythings’ offers a large variety of Hangman games. Words are chosen from a wide range of vocabulary. If a letter appears in the answer, it is written down in the correct position or positions. If a letter is chosen that does not appear in the answer an extra line is drawn in a simple picture of a man being hanged. It is also possible to guess the whole word at any stage, but if it is wrong the man is hanged. Players win if the word is guessed right before the picture has been completed.

<http://a4esl.org>

There are three categories, such as grammar quizzes, vocabulary quizzes and crossword puzzles, each of which contains easy, medium and difficult exercises. Most of the vocabulary quizzes are multiple-choice exercises. A great number of them are self-assessment tests, where right answers are given in a pull-down menu under each question. Originally, ‘Answer’ can be seen in the menu, and after clicking on the button the right letter is pulled down in the list. This is very practical, as students can do the exercise in any order, and it does not matter if they return to a question several times.

www.vocabulary.co.il

Vocabulary.co.il is a great vocabulary builder. Vocabulary.co.il is a fun site dedicated to helping you build reading, phonics, or English language skills. Vocabulary.co.il can also help build vocabulary skills for other high-stakes, vocabulary-rich exams such as the GRE, the SAT, and PSAT.

Crosswords

Crosswords build skills in vocabulary, reasoning, spelling, word attack and differentiating between similar terms.

Word Search

Searching for words hidden in a grid of letters requires careful attention to correct spelling, and improves eye tracking.

Match Game

This is an introductory reading level game that allows new readers to match pictures and words. Similar to games such as “Concentration”, Match Game builds both reading and visual memory skills. The words can also be clicked to be heard aloud.

HangMouse

This is a “Hang-man” style game where the object is to guess the word by choosing random letters. If the correct letters are picked, they will light up in their proper places, and the mouse will be a little closer to stealing the cheese. But look out! By making incorrect

choices, you come closer and closer to waking up the sleeping cat at watch. Hangmouse requires several educational skills such as sequential reasoning, phonetic order, and word attack.

Accessibility The games on Vocabulary.co.il are accessible from any computer with an internet connection. There are no login codes to remember, and no subscription fees to pay.

Ease of Use There are no instruction manuals for the games on the site, because they aren't needed. Each of the games is self-explanatory and easy to play.

No Lesson Planning Needed Because the games on Vocabulary.co.il are designed for individual practice, teachers don't need to prepare in advance for students to get the most out of the site.

Great for Independent Self-Study Students who use the vocabulary games on Vocabulary.co.il will feel proud of their ability to practice English skills on their own. Each of the games on the site is designed to be not only educational, but fun, so students will come back again and again to grow their word skills.

<http://www.vocabulary.com>

More vocabulary resources are given in this site. On-line puzzles and exercises to promote vocabulary development for students can be found here. After successfully completing the puzzles and exercises, students can print out a diploma from VocabularyUniversity.

<http://www.freerice.com>

FreeRice is a non-profit website run by the United Nations World Food Program. For each answer you get right, we donate 10 grains of rice to the United Nations World Food Program. This game may make you smarter. It may improve your speaking, writing and thinking.

Other Important Vocabulary Learning Websites

www.eslflow.com

www.vokabel.com

www.itools.com

<http://www.world-english.org/>

<http://www.onlineenglishvocabulary.com/vocabulary.html>

www.ehow.com

Conclusion

The Internet is occupying an important part in the learning-process. In the same way as computers have promoted and facilitated more effective and motivating learning experiences, the World Wide Web can be also used very effectively in vocabulary teaching. Preparing for an Internet-based language lesson may be rather demanding, as looking for information on the World Wide Web requires a considerable amount of time. However, it is absolutely rewarding using it in teaching languages, as students benefit from it enormously.

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It may not be out of place here to mention that we in India do not really have any website that would offer vocabulary items with a focus on errors committed by Indian learners of English. A dictionary is very important, because it cites and gives us correct spelling, grammatical function and even examples of using a particular lexical item. But, we also need to focus on common errors committed by Indian students and users of English in India so that even as we choose the right word, we will also learn explicitly how to use words and phrases without errors.

UGC perhaps should initiate a project for this purpose.

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