

# Vocabulary Teaching Techniques and Learning Strategies at Middle School Level

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## Abstract

Beginners often manage to communicate in English using individual words; and they can most of the time convey meaning without necessarily having acquired grammar. This is evidence that in learning a language, grammar is not sufficient and, thus, more importance has to be given to vocabulary. However, vocabulary instruction and learning have always been secondary to grammar, and vocabulary has been considered as only a means and not an end in language teaching and learning. Classroom blackboards are often littered with masses of new lexical items and learners often compile word lists rarely helpful in their learning. Teachers' techniques most often do not match their pupils' different learning styles and the different strategies the latter utilize when encountering new vocabulary. In this article we attempt to show the relationship between middle school teachers' techniques in presenting vocabulary and the strategies pupils use in order to deal with new vocabulary. At the outmost, we will show the degree of correlation between the teachers' techniques and the learners' strategies and give some directions to help develop the teachers' techniques in order to meet the learners' strategies and styles in learning vocabulary.

## ملخص

يلجأ المبتدؤون عادة الى توظيف المفردات منعزلة عند استعمالهم للغة الانجليزية، وفي غالب الأحيان يبلغون المعنى المراد رغم عدم اكتسابهم للقواعد. يعتبر هذا دليلا على أن عند تعلم لغة، تعلم القواعد لا يكفي و من هنا يجب اعطاء أهمية أكبر لتعلم المفردات. على الرغم من ذلك بقي تعلم المفردات عنصرا ثانويا بالنسبة الى تعلم القواعد، و تعتبر المفردات وسيلة فقط و ليس غاية عند تعليم أو تعلم اللغة. عادة ما نجد السبورة مليئة بالمفردات المكتوبة هنا وهناك و التي قليلا ما تفيد التلاميذ في تعلمهم. كما يلجأ المدرسون الى تقنيات لا تستجيب الى أساليب تعلم تلاميذهم و الإستراتيجيات التي يستعملونها عند مصادفتهم لمفردات جديدة. يرمي هذا المقال إلى تسليط الضوء على العلاقة ما بين تقنيات أساتذة التعليم المتوسط في تقديم المفردات و الإستراتيجيات المستعملة من طرف التلاميذ في تعاملهم مع المفردات الجديدة. كما نقدم بعض التوجيهات للأساتذة حتى يطوروا من تقنياتهم لكي تتماشى مع استراتيجيات التلاميذ و أساليب تعلمهم للمفردات.

### **Introduction**

Beginners often manage to communicate in English using individual words; and they can most of the time convey meaning without necessarily having acquired grammar. This is evidence that in learning a language, grammar is not sufficient and, thus, more importance has to be given to vocabulary. However, vocabulary instruction and learning have always been secondary to grammar, and vocabulary has been considered as only a means and not an end in language teaching and learning. Classroom blackboards are often littered with masses of new lexical items and learners often compile word lists rarely helpful in their learning. Teachers are most of the time not aware of their pupils' different learning styles and the different strategies the latter utilize when encountering new vocabulary

In this article we attempt to show the relationship between middle school teachers' techniques in presenting vocabulary and the strategies pupils use in order to deal with new vocabulary. At the outmost, we will show the degree of correlation between the teachers' techniques and the learners' strategies and give some directions to help develop the teachers' techniques in order to meet the learners' strategies and styles in learning vocabulary.

### **Vocabulary Teaching**

Language teaching used to focus mainly on grammar, and vocabulary was not given as much attention. Students used to be asked to memorize long lists of words without being given the opportunity to practice using them to communicate. Modern textbooks now focus much more on teaching vocabulary and words in combination (or lexis) and we now understand that this requires much more than memorizing word lists. There have been various directions in foreign language (FL) teaching from Grammar Translation, to Direct, to Audio-lingual Method, to Communicative Language Teaching. Each of these directions has its own view on how a FL has to be taught and has treated the question of vocabulary teaching / learning according to its beliefs and principles.

In the Grammar Translation Method, great accumulation is set by the learning of many FL words. Lexis is not presented in context but in bilingual lists that are to be memorised; the arrangement of these lists and the classification of lexis follows the grammatical ordering of word classes. Textbooks, following this method, begin each lesson with very long

bilingual vocabulary lists. The students have to learn these lists by heart and try to translate these words from the FL or vice versa into very complicated sentences which are most of the time beyond their level. However, it is noticed that the vocabulary learned for one unit is not reinserted in other units, and as a result, students rapidly forget a great amount of it. In addition, vocabulary teaching through the Grammar Translation Method does not allow the learners to get the meaning of words easily or at all because they are not put in any context. However, this method can, at least, help the learners have their equivalents in the mother tongue or target language.

The Direct method posited by Berlitz by the twentieth century, whose basic tenet was that SL learning is similar to first language learning, involved the students in the learning of words referring to many objects about which they can talk and to many actions they can perform. In other words, the method focuses on the learning of everyday vocabulary. The words students learn are combined not with first language equivalents but with pictures, actual objects (realia) or actions. This combination is used relying on the exclusive use of the target language.

In the 1940's, the movement of Structuralism in Linguistics has given rise to structural approaches that have relegated the learning of vocabulary behind the scene and have downgraded it to a secondary level in the learning and teaching process of a FL. The belief at that time was that in learning a new language, it is more important to master its sounds and its grammatical structures than learning its vocabulary. All what learners need, at first, is just enough elementary vocabulary to practise the syntactic structures. At that time, different views and orientations in Linguistics and Psychology from Structuralism to Behaviourism helped the progress of the Audio-lingual Method, which was primarily for the mastery of structure. Vocabulary learning in this method is given a minor role until the students achieve a complete mastery of the elementary structural patterns and are able to express themselves freely within a limited area of language. Vocabulary teaching is contextualised; but while pronunciation and intonation are given high credit, meaning is disregarded. The view that saw vocabulary as mainly a problem of grading and selection in the teaching of foreign languages largely dominated up to the 1960's. At that time, the emergence of different works dealing with word lists knew a large success, for example, "A General Service List", a book produced by Palmer and West in 1953 which proposed a list of 2000 words that offers the opportunity of comprehension of 80 per cent of any written text.

The decline in emphasis on vocabulary learning was accelerated by movements in Linguistics that concentrated on Phonology, Morphology, or Syntax with a corresponding neglect of Semantics. However, an aspiration seemed to emerge with the advancement of notional syllabuses: notions, topics and settings seemed to bring a new life for the word. Wilkins (1972), deplored the neglect of vocabulary in the period dominated by the audio-

lingual approaches, and wrote that if “without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed”. Therefore, by the mid 1970’s, we started to take care of the word and insist that it has to be learned in “context”. Semantics started to play a very important role in the teaching of vocabulary; we have even started to regard vocabulary as a skill that should not be subsumed by other aspects of language. By the 1980’s, came the time to assert that having the vocabulary we need, it is usually possible to communicate. Following the development of CLT, many researchers supported the teaching of vocabulary in relation with situations and contexts, encouraging inferences and activation of learners’ previous knowledge. Allen (1983) was for the introduction of the social and cultural components; Rivers (1983), and Gairns and Redman (1986) stressed the importance to make learners learn by themselves.

Thus, vocabulary, which was considered as a Cinderella in the teaching of foreign languages and suffered neglect for a long time, started to benefit from theoretical advances in the linguistic study of the lexicon. Nevertheless, it is not always given the consideration it deserves in the teaching programmes.

### **Vocabulary Selection**

Several authors have proposed diverse criteria to help textbooks writers and teachers make valid decisions on the right vocabulary items to teach at every educational level. For example, Gairns and Redman (1986) have proposed frequency, need and level, cultural factors and expediency as being the criteria that would assure a good understanding and thus an adequate learning of vocabulary items, and that a teacher has to take into consideration in her / his teaching. High frequency words are those items that are used in different occasions either in speech or in writing. Gairns and Redman state that the most frequently used words should be taught first, and add that they should appear in a wide variety of texts. As concerns need and level, the vocabulary taught should correspond to the students’ level and respond to their needs. For example, at an elementary level, learners will show limitations in their use of lexis, something which correlates with their needs, which is not the case of advanced learners who have wider perspectives and need to develop a larger selection. When teaching vocabulary, we also have to take into consideration that in certain countries there are topics and thus words that are very important in the SL / FL environment but have no importance in the learners’ society and vice versa. Therefore, the learners’ socio-cultural dimension of the language needs great consideration by teachers. Expediency is important because, in the classroom, the learners are always in need for specific types of vocabulary in order to understand the teacher or fellow students and to deal with the activities proposed to them. Hence, certain vocabulary such as grammatical terminology and activity instructions are required in a classroom.

When considering a language teaching or learning situation, we generally stress the importance made by the teacher or the material writer about which items are to be learned, and more stress is put on whether they are learned for productive use or only for purposes of recognition. Haycraft (1978) defines active or productive vocabulary as the type of language items students understand, can produce correctly and use constructively in speaking and writing, and passive vocabulary as vocabulary items that the learners recognize and understand in the context of reading or listening. However, since comprehension is not a passive activity, the term receptive is preferred to that of passive. According to these two definitions, we perceive that there is no dichotomy between productive and receptive vocabulary but rather a continuum of knowledge. Often, an item may transit from the learners' receptive vocabulary to their productive one. This transition is described as being a gradual process depending on the times the item is encountered through learning or reading over a period of time.

Harmer (1991) points out that concrete words should be taught at lower levels and abstract words at higher levels, taking as argument for this choice the cognitive development of the learner. Besides, he considers that a word that covers many aspects; in other words, a word with multi-meanings is more useful than if it has only one very specific meaning. Thus, it has to be taught first because of its wide use in different contexts and its generation of more language.

### **Techniques for Teaching Vocabulary**

Vocabulary teaching is often planned in the sense that the teacher chooses specific vocabulary items to be taught. Most of the time, they select high frequency words, use little slang and introduce few idioms. In their explanation of lexical terms, they make use of synonymy, antonymy or definitions. The latter are either explicit (for example, "This means x", "It's a kind of x" - using hyponymy), or implicit - through the use of intonation to convey the meaning (for example "A triangle?" - with a rising tone - "It's a geometric figure; it's got three sides." - with vocabulary adjustment, which Chaudron (1982) shows that they are major components of teacher talk. Vocabulary teaching can also be unplanned; it takes place when the need arises in the classroom for the words that have not been anticipated. During an SL/FL lesson, it often happens that learners ask for the meaning of a word or the word that expresses a given meaning. Such questions, as "What does x mean?" or "What is the word for x?" are very familiar in the SL/FL classroom. In these situations, the teacher generally supplies the needed word or meaning and goes on with the main topic of the lesson. On other occasions, when s/he feels that the vocabulary item that has just come up is unknown to her/his learners and needs to be clarified, s/he takes the opportunity to supply the word and explore it. In most cases, s/he analyzes its form and studies its meaning(s) in different ways mainly through examples or pictures in order to make the learners record it systematically.

Bunker (1988) found that the following teaching techniques help the learners develop vocabulary:

- 1- Use of common and familiar words so that other new words would be easily grasped and the message understood.
- 2- Consistency in the use of terms: the teacher must make sure to use the same words in the same contexts in order to emphasize the meaning of these words.
- 3- More than five repetitions of word: it has been noticed that the number of times a word appears counts in learning it. Some researchers agree that five repetitions are enough, while others are for a repetition of a word between seven and ten times in order to develop learning.
- 4- Definitions of words in contexts: words cannot have a full sense unless they are put in context; explanations of words in isolation cannot help the learners' understanding and acquisition.

Bunker also argues that, some adjustments dealt with by teachers do not contribute to understanding. These are:

- 1- Use of short words: it is considered as arbitrary and not important whether the words used to communicate a message to the learners are short or long. Length does not affect meaning, and thus understanding.
- 2- Use of fewer synonyms: there is no proof that the fewer synonyms we use, the better learners understand and retain meaning.
- 3- Repetitions of words fewer than five times have proved not enough for retention.

Using different techniques of presentation brings variety and helps the retention of new vocabulary items. Techniques of vocabulary presentation in the classroom are divided into two groups: visual techniques and verbal techniques (Gairns and Redman, 1986). Visual techniques include the use of "realia" (real objects), pictures, mime and gestures in order to promote the understanding and the meaningful retention of new vocabulary items. Verbal techniques are represented by the use of definitions and illustrative sentences (oral or writing), synonyms and antonyms, explanations and translation which has to be used only when other means have failed to represent meaning adequately or would be time consuming if used.

### **Learning Vocabulary**

When we learn our first language or mother tongue, we develop concepts and general notions. At the same time, we learn all the ways our language community expresses these concepts and general notions. Therefore, when we approach another language, we are already in possession of many concepts; we only look for the ways to express them in the new language. In other words, we seek the right vocabulary to label them.

Language teachers must arouse interest in lexical items and teach their learners how to learn vocabulary. They must train and prepare them to

deal with whatever words they may encounter after the class time, even if they do not have the same meaning because the first aim is to retain them. Internalization would be the result of these strategies, which the learner has to be conscious of and should take into consideration. Rivers (1968) states that vocabulary cannot be taught. It can be presented, explained, included in all kinds of activities but ultimately, it is only the individual who learns it. She urges teachers to make learners learn how to learn vocabulary and enable them to find their own ways of expanding and organizing their word store (Rivers, 1983). Hence, once we are aware of the learners' styles our teaching would be more efficient and would help them learn more and better. Learning tells us how to teach.

### **Learning Strategies**

In the early studies of Second Language Acquisition, research emphasised the acquisition of the syntax and morphology of the FL. Nowadays, more emphasis is directed towards the study of the strategies that learners use to facilitate their understanding and learning. Faerch and Kasper (1980) define "strategy" as being a plan for controlling the order in which some operations are to be performed to improve learning. In this sense, learning strategies are the particular techniques that learners use when they try to learn a FL. In other words, they are the means by which the learners handle the FL input in order to improve the linguistic knowledge. These strategies are mainly problem solving, that is, learners employ them when they are faced with some problems, such as how to remember a word. They can be behavioural like repeating words, or mental like using the linguistic or situational context.

Cognitive strategies are of two types: learning strategies used for FL learning (devices for internalizing or automatizing SL / FL and knowledge); and production and communicative strategies used for the speaking and the writing of the FL (devices for using existing resources automatically or for compensating for inadequate resources). As posited by Tarone (1980), learning strategies are different from production and communicative strategies; they even contrast with them in the sense that the first are considered mainly as reception strategies through which the learner adds new items to his/her knowledge of the FL, while through production and communicative strategies, the learner overcomes some difficulties in using the FL. Learning strategies explain how learners acquire language, while production and communicative strategies how learners use the language.

The study of learning strategies is of potential value to language teachers. If those strategies that are crucial for learning can be identified, it may prove possible to train students to use them. However, research on training FL learners to use learning strategies has been limited almost

exclusively to application with vocabulary tasks (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990).

Individual learners present many differences in learning because of different kinds of intelligence, different learning styles, and variations in aptitude and motivation. There are an almost infinite number of possible combinations of these factors, so it would be unrealistic to try to find out how each student learns best and to design individual lessons or techniques for that student. However, we can respond to learner's differences so that all pupils have opportunities to learn in the way that best suits them and so that our lessons are interesting and varied. A better understanding of the possible ways in which students learn can help us to reinforce material in a variety of ways by activating different intelligences and learner styles, and to tackle any situation in their lives. This can be achieved through guidance in the form of strategies, which can provide the language learner with the advantages of the possibility to improve vocabulary development once s/he has an access to a diverse number. Upshaw (1995) suggests four basic categories of strategies: translation, repetition and reinforcement, association and internalization. For translation, she favours the dictionary work, rather than asking the teacher or a friend (considered as human dictionaries) because such work would develop self-reliance on the part of learners. In repetition and reinforcement strategies, teachers must make learners drill themselves, every one at her/his pace in order to reinforce the meaning of a given word. In terms of associations, learners are shown how to make links between new words and old ones or with words from their mother tongue.

### **Intentional Vocabulary Learning**

Vocabulary intentional learning results from a planned activity, intended by the teacher or the student. In intentional learning, the intention of the learners to learn vocabulary can be planned through different activities where the primary concern is vocabulary. These activities require the learners to:

- Make up charts and memorize them.
- Learn words in contexts.
- Learn words that are associated.
- Use new words in phrases.
- Use a dictionary when necessary.
- Carry a notebook to write down new items.

Naiman et al (1978) and Pickett (1978) report how the learners develop their second language (SL) vocabulary. According to them, some learners prepare and memorize vocabulary lists by keeping a notebook where the English word, its pronunciation and its equivalent in the mother tongue are written. The arrangement of these lists is held in an idiosyncratic way. Some learners referred to the use of alphabetical lists, or associations of words by themes or topics or simply writing the words at random. Others



did not attempt to keep lists; they relied on picking out key vocabulary items from the contexts in which they were used. Others reported that they drilled themselves deliberately putting words into different sentences or reading or playing word games. The techniques – used for learning vocabulary – are similar to those used for learning other aspects of language learning such as grammar and pronunciation, but vocabulary seems to be the area that learners are most conscious of. Naiman et al. (1978) concluded that the techniques associated with vocabulary learning were the most frequently used.

### **Investigating Learners' Strategies when Dealing with Unknown Words in Class**

In the context of a study we held to investigate the impact of reading for pleasure on young foreign English learners' vocabulary acquisition, two questionnaires, one to the middle school teachers and the other to learners who were at their final year in middle schooling, were administered in order to investigate the area of vocabulary teaching and learning, and the use of children literature as a context for teaching / learning an FL in the area of Constantine (Fadel, 2005).

#### **The Teachers' Questionnaire**

The administration of the questionnaires and their collection was held from hand to hand. 55 questionnaires were given to teachers in 21 schools and were collected a week later. 43 questionnaires were given back: the teachers who did not return 12 questionnaires were absent the day of the collection of the questionnaire and did not hand them in at a later date.

This teachers' questionnaire sought to collect data about the teaching experience, teaching vocabulary and dealing with unknown words. It consisted of 21 questions divided into four sections. Section three "Teaching Vocabulary" (questions 9 and 10) dealt with the investigation of the different techniques teachers use when teaching any new words in class, and section four "Dealing with Unknown Words" (questions 11 through 21) inquired about the different procedures teachers have recourse to whenever dealing with an unknown word in class.

#### **The Learners' Questionnaire**

The learners' questionnaire was handed in at the beginning of the first term of the school year. It was finished in class and collected immediately. 125 questionnaires were distributed. The aim of this questionnaire was introduced first in English and then in Arabic so that the learners understand what is intended from them and that they can answer it as appropriately as possible. Because of their age and level of proficiency in English, it was also explained that they could ask any question, even in Arabic, whenever they do not understand a question or an instruction.

This questionnaire sought to gather information about the pupils' learning environment, and their strategies in learning vocabulary. The pupils were requested to answer the questionnaire by ticking the appropriate box and making full statements whenever required. The learners' questionnaire consisted of 15 questions divided into three sections. In Section Two "Dealing with Unknown Words in Class" (questions 7, 8 and 9), we investigated what strategies the learners draw on when they encounter an unknown word in class; the type of dictionary they use if they do, and what they prefer as a means to explain a word.

### **Analysis of the Results of the Questionnaires**

It appeared from the teachers' questionnaire that the most used techniques are giving synonyms and opposites, and putting words in context. Teachers believe that these two techniques make the learners memorize the new words easily and help recalling them at any moment. Overall, teachers state that they use translation only "if necessary", in other words, after having recourse to all the other techniques. This implies that teachers think that since they are teaching a foreign language, the use of the first language must be prohibited. They sometimes have recourse to the use of definitions which can be explained by the fact that it is difficult for the learners to memorize or write down a definition since most of the time the latter necessitates the use of other unknown words.

Few teachers mentioned other techniques they use when presenting new words. Some gave more than one. They mentioned the use of visual aids, mainly pictures, drawings or concrete objects; very few teachers mentioned they explain words using gestures or mimes; and only two teachers stated that they give the opportunity to their learners to look up the words in the dictionary.

When asked about their learners' strategies in dealing with unknown words in class, the answer "ask the teacher" recorded the highest number of answers. "Look them up in a dictionary" comes second. A large majority of teachers affirmed that they help their learners when they look up the meaning of words in a dictionary and the use of the English-Arabic dictionary is largely preferred to the use of the other bilingual dictionaries. This seems to be mainly related to the fact that they are available and are at a reasonable price. Then, the option "Ignore them" followed by the one of "Ask a peer" recorded the lowest rate. Most teachers declared that their learners use a notebook to write down the unknown words they encounter, because they asked them to do so. When using a notebook, the teachers declared that the most used technique by the pupils is translating. This technique, they mentioned, is also used in combination with other techniques like "drawing", "writing synonyms / opposites", "using definitions" and "putting words in sentences". Another very interesting

technique, learners were shown to use, consisted in sticking pictures in their notebooks with both the word in English and in the mother tongue.

The learners' questionnaire results demonstrated that in most cases, the learners either have recourse to the dictionary (an English-Arabic dictionary due to its availability in the market and to the pupils' low level of proficiency at French) or to the teacher, considered as a "human dictionary". They showed their mutual help when they "ask a peer" and focused on guessing the meaning from the context through their insistence to understand by reading again; however, a few learners said that they ignore an unknown word while reading. The technique they preferred to explain a word unknown to them was "being given a synonym or an opposite". This is mainly because the learners are most of the time in a situation of looking for synonyms or opposites in the reading comprehension section in their official exams. The second preferred option was "getting a translation". The options of "putting the word in context" or "being given a definition" were not highly rated by the learners. Both options were considered as difficult to grasp at times and are time consuming. The question to be asked in this context is whether the learners prefer these techniques because they are the only techniques they were presented to or because they really suited their learning styles and would they prefer other techniques if their teachers used them.

In sum, the analysis and interpretation of the two questionnaires led us to the following results:

- The teachers give much importance to teaching vocabulary
- Few teachers use other than oral or written techniques of presentation and explanation.
- The learners make use of different strategies in learning.
- The learners showed their preferences to use the dictionary and to ask the teacher in class to get the meaning of unknown words.
- The use of the notebook to write down the meaning of unknown words has proved to be of great use by the learners who stated they have two major techniques to record the meaning of unknown words: translation to the mother tongue and using synonyms or opposites

However, we noticed that there was no correlation between the techniques used by the teachers on the one hand and the strategies used and preferred by the learners on the other, especially in what concerns the use of translation.

### **Recommendations to Improve Vocabulary Learning Strategies**

Traditional teaching strategies work very well for some learners, but unless we vary our techniques, we neglect the rest. Most teachers may probably did

well with the traditional 'chalk and talk' teaching style and this is probably because they are themselves auditory or visual learners. As a result, they imitate the way they were taught, and also include a lot of talking and writing activities. But how about students who need to move or touch to learn? Most kinesthetic learners don't do very well at school. They do not like sitting still for a long time, and as a result they stop paying attention, get bored and often misbehave. The question, then, is not so much, "How can I teach?" as it is, "How can I help the pupils learn?"

Responding to learners' differences and adapting one's teaching to them is the strongest link in the teaching/learning process. This is especially important in the English classroom when studying new lexis. Many language learners do not make a note of new vocabulary or, if they do, write it in the margins of their textbook, or on a piece of paper that they most of the time lose. The best pupils may record new lexis in their notebook, together with a translation. However, this way of recording it often leaves out a lot of important information, including the pronunciation, the word class, the use, etc. Helping pupils to keep a record of new vocabulary will make it more memorable than a simple translation list and because pupils need to meet new vocabulary again and again before they can use it fluently, we can also ask them to review lexis, perhaps adding new words to their lists or reorganizing them in a different way. Similarly, teachers need to create their own activities to help pupils remember new vocabulary. Below is a list of activities teachers can use to help pupils remember in doing so. You may have experienced some of them as a pupil or used them as a teacher in the past. Not all of them are appropriate for all pupils, or for all vocabulary, however, it is often possible to adapt the activities to make them better for you and your pupils. Finally, teachers need to remind pupils of new vocabulary by reviewing it often. New vocabulary needs to be reviewed regularly.

Likewise, the teacher has to apply different techniques to match learners' strategies and to suit the different learning styles: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, musical and analytical.

**To help visual learners:**

- Write the words on the board
- Make pupils practice the words in writing
- Give them time to write down the words.
- Use pictures to clarify concepts
- Ask learners to draw pictures to remember information
- Put posters on the wall so that they are constantly reminded of useful information

**To help auditory learners:**

- Give students instruction verbally
- Give students lots of speaking practice of new language

- Ask them to repeat new words or information to help them remember.
- Ask them to read aloud (quietly, in pairs, or as a class)
- Ask pupils to give an example using the new word

**To help kinesthetic learners:**

- Use mime or gesture as much as possible
- Ask them to use mime and gesture as much as possible
- Ask them to use facial expressions to connected with words or verbal expressions
- Have spelling races.
- Take pupils out into the school yard to demonstrate understanding of lexis (e.g., walk *slowly, quickly, lazily*, etc., e.g., *run, jump, dance*).

**To help learners with musical intelligence**

- Clap to show word stress or sentence stress
- Use rhyme to help students remember pronunciation (e.g., She *said*, go to *bed*.).

**To help analytical learners**

- Give students examples of language and let them figure out the rule. (e.g., the pronunciation rule for plural 's' or 'es' on words).

Not all of the techniques above have to be included in every single lesson. However, bringing some variety in the way we work would make most learners learn better.

**Conclusion**

We would like to conclude this paper claiming that although we are teaching English, we are also responsible for teaching our students *how* to learn English. Many teachers are not aware about their learners' strategies especially when learning vocabulary. If they do use some techniques to make learning easy for their pupils, most of the time they are not successful because these techniques do not match all learning styles. Likewise, many pupils do not know how to organize what they learn, or simply do not know how to learn. If our pupils are ever going to be successful at learning English or at learning other subjects, teachers must give them some help in becoming effective learners. They have to be aware about learners' different strategies and learning styles to improve their teaching practices

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**Appendix:**

**Appendix I: The Teachers' Questionnaire:**

**Section Three: Teaching Vocabulary**

9-Do you present new words in every lesson?

- Yes
- No

10-When you teach new words do you use:

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	If Necessary	Never
Translation					
Definition					
Word in Context					
Synonym/opposite					

Other:Please,specify.....  
 .....

**Section Four: Dealing with Unknown Words**

11-Do you explain all the unknown words in a text?

- Yes
- No

12- If "Yes", you do it:

- Before reading
- During reading
- After reading

13- When you explain the unknown words, how do you proceed?

.....  
 .....

14- When the learners encounter unknown words, they:

- Ignore them
- Ask a peer
- Ask you
- Look them up in a dictionary

15- If your learners ask you the meaning of words in class, you:

- Give a translation
- Give a definition
- Put them in context
- Give a synonym / opposite
- Show a picture

Other:Please,specify.....  
 .....

16- If your learners refer to a dictionary, do you help them to use it?

- Yes
- No

17- In case they use a dictionary, what kind of dictionary is it?

- An English-English dictionary
- An English-Arabic dictionary
- An English-French dictionary

18- When your learners encounter unfamiliar words, do they use a notebook?

- Yes
- No

19- Do you ask your learners to use a notebook?

- Yes
- No

20- Do you have a look at their notebooks?

- Yes
- No

21- If "Yes", what technique(s) do they employ?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Appendix II: The Learners' Questionnaire:**

**Section Two: Dealing with Unknown Words in Class**

7-In class, when you encounter an unknown word while reading, do you:

- Read again to guess the meaning from the context
- Ask your teacher about its meaning
- Ask a peer
- Look it up in a dictionary
- Ignore it

8-If you use a dictionary, is it:

- An English-English dictionary
- An English-Arabic dictionary
- An English-French dictionary

9-What do you prefer as an answer to explain a word?

- A translation
- A definition
- A word in context
- A synonym / opposite
- Other: Please, specify: