From the TESOL Program to the Classroom: Practical Tips for New Teachers

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This paper reviews several practical teaching ideas that should be useful to new university teachers in TESOL and Applied Linguistics. The four packages reviewed here are consistent with theory and empirical research, but also have support from colleagues and conferences: (1) Word Engine, which teaches vocabulary through paired-associate techniques; (2) the Moodle Graded Reader Module, which provides opportunities to practice extensive reading; (3) Name Card materials, which motivate students by reporting their progress both in-class and out-of-class; and (4) a collection of teaching materials recommended by experienced teachers. Two themes running throughout this review are (1) the importance of online monitoring of student homework, and (2) ongoing review of in-class communicative tasks to provide feedback and maintain motivation.

本論文の目的は、特に近年、大学で教鞭を取るに至ったエントリーレベルの語学教員への教授法の紹介である。TESOL や応用言語学に基づくプログラムが実践的な教授法を提供する一方で、多くの指導法を同僚や学会参加によって得ることが可能である。本研究では、論理や経験に基づく実証的研究の成果である教授法の幾つかを紹介し、検証する。それは以下の4点である。(1) Word Engine を使用し、脱文脈化されたペアワーク学習の有用性、(2) Moodle graded reader のコンピュータープログラムの使用から、いかに学生の多読学習の効果を期待できるか、(3) 評価シート(evaluation sheet)の活用が、授業外での CALL を使用した課題や授業中における学生の学習意欲にいかに効果的に作用するか、(4) 奨励される教授資料。この論文を通じて、一貫して強調される著者の見解は、オンライン上での学生の課題の管理の重要性である。学生が与えられた課題を消化しているかどうかを管理し、授業内での時間を効率的に活用することが可能になると同時に、さらに、成績評価の過程が明確にされることで学生の学習意欲を維持・向上することにもつながると考える。

This paper introduces teaching ideas principally for new university teachers because, as practical as various TESOL or applied linguistics programs may be, new ideas and teaching suggestions will benefit new teachers, especially those who have completed online or distance master's degree programs. Four areas are covered in the review: (1) the use of computerized flash cards to optimize the benefits of decontextualized pair-associated vocabulary learning, (2) the use of extensive reading outside the classroom, (3) providing monitor sheets to give students feedback on their progress in class and out of class and (4) recommendations for free teaching materials.

Computerized Flash Cards

Research has demonstrated the effectiveness (Laufer & Shmueli, 1997; Webb 2007), efficiency (Fitzpatrick, Al-Qarni, & Meara, 2008; Mondria & Wiersma, 2004), and durability (Bahrick et

al. 1993; Bahrick & Phelps, 1987) of pair-associated learning. Despite the empirical evidence, some have questioned whether the direct learning of vocabulary leads to acquisition (Judd, 1978; Krashen, 1989) and use (Oxford & Crookall, 1990). However, Elgort (2011) demonstrated that vocabulary knowledge gained through flash card use was stored and accessed similarly as existing acquired L1 and high frequency L2 knowledge (Elgort, 2011). In contrast, other studies have shown that incidental vocabulary acquisition through reading is inefficient. Laufer (2003) estimated that from reading 200,000 words, a reader may learn 108 words. Waring & Takaki (2003) showed that on delayed tests, only one from 25 words learned through reading was correctly answered on post-tests.

There is a considerable a gap between the coverage of vocabulary necessary to access verbal and written discourse, and the vocabulary size of university students. The first 2000 words of English cover 87% of a general text (Nation, 1980) and 80% of academic texts (Hunt & Beglar, 1998). To understand a text without assistance, the reader must know 98% of the words in that text (Hu & Nation, 2000). However, university graduates in Japan have a vocabulary size of around 2000 words (Shillaw, 1995: Barrow, Nakanishi, & Nishio, 1995). For teachers, the question is: what is the most effective way for students to learn decontextualized vocabulary?

Considering the advantages of Computer Flashcard Sites (CFSs) over Traditional Flashcards (TFs) and wordlists (Nakata, 2008; Nakata, 2011; Nation 1990), one might question why CFS use is not more widespread. CFSs offer several advantages over TFs: more effective retrieval, expanded rehearsal, adaptive sequencing, information presentation through various media types, a broad spectrum of retrieval practice types, increasing retrieval effort, generative use, the open and closed nature of CFSs, the positive effect of learning items in groups of around twenty items, the absence of order effect, learner autonomy, student monitoring, and greater motivation for learners. Each of these advantages is discussed below.

Research has demonstrated that through strengthening retrieval routes, or meaningful connections, encoding specific aspects of word knowledge leads to greater retention of a word than simple exposure to word knowledge aspects (Barcroft, 2007; Ellis, 1995; Nation, 2001).

In this review method, the time between reviews increases algorithmically (Figure 1). Many researchers and writers have argued that expanded rehearsal is the most effective method of turning short term memory to long term memory (Cepeda, Vul, Rohrer, Wixted, & Pashler, 2008; Ellis, 1995; Hulstijin, 2001; Kornell, 2009; Mondria & Mondria-De Vries, 1994; Nakata, 2006; Nation, 2001). However, while expanded rehearsal is theoretically possible without the use of computers, it is highly impractical. Figure 1 shows a screen shot from *Word Engine* demonstrating expanded rehearsal and adaptive sequencing. When a word is correctly guessed, it moves from one box to another, ending in the *Fully Acquired* pile. The spacing between instances of word testing is displayed between the columns at the top of figure 1. *Missed Responses* refers to four incorrect responses, which then send the word to the unseen pile: an example of adaptive sequencing.

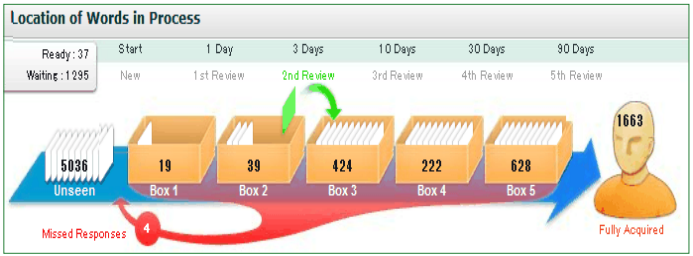

Figure 1. *Word Engine* Screen Shot.

Adaptive sequencing, which works hand in hand with spaced rehearsal, has been shown to improve vocabulary retention (Atkinson, 1972). In adaptive sequencing, items that are not recalled correctly are shown more frequently until correctly recalled, or returned to the first stage of a learning program (Figure 1). Mondria and Mondria-De Vries (1994) showed that this process is reliant upon learners judging their knowledge accurately.

Word knowledge can be broken into three parts (Table 1): form, meaning, and use, each containing subparts, along with productive and receptive aspects (Nation, 2001).

Table 1. Word Knowledge Types (adapted from Nation, 2001, p. 27)

Form	Written	What does the word look like?
	Word parts	What word parts are recognizable in the word?
Meaning	Form and meaning	What meaning does this word form signal?
	Concepts and referents	What is included in this concept?
	Associations	What other words does this make us think of?
Use	Grammatical functional	In what patterns does the word occur?
	Collocations	What words or types of words occur with this one?
	Constraints of use (register, frequency etc.)	Where, when and how would we expect to meet this word?

Although in theory the many aspects of word knowledge might lead to a cramped TF, many teachers find that in practice this is not the case. In addition, audio-visual media samples, including word pronunciation, can be added only to CFSs (Nakata, 2008; Nakata, 2011). Encountering word knowledge through various types of media, learners can also benefit from dual coding, the storing of information in verbal and non-verbal systems (Paivio, 1986).

Four methods of retrieval practice, receptive recognition, receptive recall, productive recognition and productive recall (Laufer, Elder, Hill, & Congdon, 2004; Nakata, 2011), are shown in Figure 2. These four methods have varying levels of difficulty. Receptive recognition is the selection of the L1 meaning from a list of choices in response to the L2 target form prompt. Productive recognition refers to the selection of the target L2 form from a list of choices in response to the L1 meaning prompt. Receptive recall is the production of the L1 meaning in response to the L2 target form prompt. Finally, and most difficult, is productive recall, where the target L2 form is produced in response to the L1 meaning prompt. In the recall methods of retrieval practice, possible responses are not shown: the test-taker must retrieve the correct response from memory.

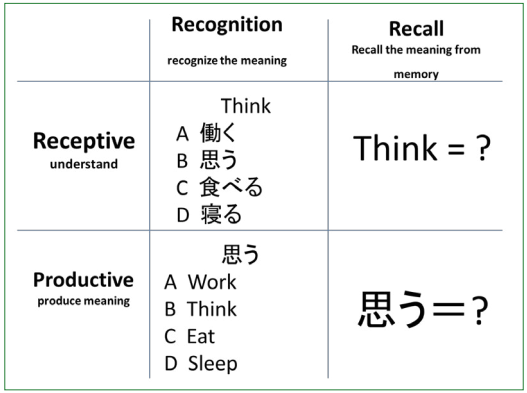

Figure 2. Four Types of Retrieval

The question of whether productive or receptive retrieval results in greater learning is complicated. Monderia and Wiersma (2004), Waring, (1997) and Webb (2009) claim that receptive learning leads more effectively to receptive knowledge, while productive learning more effectively induces productive knowledge when using word pairs. In contrast, Webb (2005), studying the effects of productive and receptive tasks on vocabulary knowledge, found that when time on task was controlled, receptive learning resulted in greater receptive and productive word knowledge. However, when time on task was not a factor, productive tasks resulted in greater productive and receptive word knowledge than receptive tasks. A closer look at the work of Webb (2009) reveals an even more complicated picture. Productive tasks resulted in greater productive knowledge for all tested aspects (orthography, meaning, association, syntax, grammar) and some receptive aspects (orthography and meaning) than receptive tasks. As a result, it may be concluded that, time permitting, a combination of receptive and productive learning will result in optimal learning conditions.

When these findings are applied to CFSs, TFs and wordlists, it appears that CFSs have an advantage. While word lists and TFs may be used in ways that encourage both receptive and productive learning, it may be questioned to what degree this actually takes place. In contrast, CFSs are commonly designed to ensure that the user completes both productive and receptive learning activities.

From the findings that receptive learning leads to greater receptive word knowledge (Monderia & Wiersma, 2004; Waring, 1997; Web, 2007; Web, 2009), a case may be made for CFSs that provide only receptive learning tasks for students who wish to take purely receptive tests like the TOEIC test. In addition, the case for receptive learning is even stronger when considering the time efficiency of receptive learning (Webb, 2005).

Closely related to the four retrieval types is the concept of increasing retrieval effort. The increasing retrieval effort hypothesis states that the greater the effort made to successfully retrieve information, the more the memory of that information is enhanced (Pyc & Rawson, 2009). CFSs can ensure that this happens, but it is doubted that this happens in practice with TFs or wordlists.

When words are encountered in unusual circumstances, they are processed generatively (Nation, 1990). Generative use, whether receptive or productive, has been shown to increase the effectiveness of vocabulary learning (Joe, 1995; Joe 1998). CFSs can create the conditions for generative use very effectively (Nation, 1990), and offer a unique, practical opportunity for paired-associate learning to harness the advantages of generative use.

The open and closed nature of CFSs offers something that TFs and wordlists cannot. CFSs offer learners the advantages of prepared courses based on corpus linguistics for specific learning goals. A course of study based on corpus linguistics, and accompanied by a reliable placement test, will ensure that the vocabulary being acquired is useful, and that the learning process is efficient. In addition, CFSs that facilitate flash card creation also offer students the motivating autonomy that accompanies flash card creation (Dörnyei, 2001).

When studying a list of flashcards, learners often experience the order effect, a phenomenon in which recall depends on the location within a series (Nakata, 2008; Nation, 1990). When adaptive learning and spaced rehearsal are used, the list effect is lessened.

Learning rate depends on the block size. Van Bussel (1994) demonstrated the effectiveness of blocks of twenty items rather than forty, while findings by Kornell (2009) and Pyc and Rawson (2009) found that blocks of twenty were more effective than blocks of five. Flashcard blocks of twenty seem most effective. Students using TFs tend to have only one block size: the number of all of their flashcards combined.

Other advantages of CFSs over flashcards and word lists include effects from learner autonomy, carrying out various learning exercises (Ellis, 1995, Nakata 2008) and teachers' ease of monitoring CFS use and recording it on a chart. While CFSs do have disadvantages, such as the necessity of a computer or mobile phone and their financial cost, the advantages seem substantial.

The *Word Engine* provides a variety of advantages for monitoring vocabulary learning (<http://www.wordengine.jp/>). Such monitoring ensures that students, who have limited class time, conduct vocabulary learning outside of class. Nation explains that students taking responsibility for their own vocabulary learning is beneficial (Nation, 2003, 2005, 2006). Displaying students' final grades on the Word Engine admin page (Figure 3) ensures that students know that their progress is being noted. Figure 3 also shows how quickly and simply a weekly check on a class's progress can take place.

Words Known		Location of Words in Process							Total Learned Words	Time-on-Task		Start Date
Initial	Now	Unseen	Box 1	Box 2	Box 3	Box 4	Box 5	Acquired		Total	Per Day	
1495	4233	357	127	5	38	539	298	1731	2738	56 hr 40 min	29 min 4 sec	2011/04/15
3013	3524	1130	4	2	15	26	93	371	511	52 hr 21 min	35 min 41 sec	2011/04/15
2388	3875	1046	23	115	38	26	358	927	1487	50 hr 32 min	29 min 43 sec	2011/04/15
2172	3545	1352	36	83	130	16	297	811	1373	50 hr 1 min	43 min 29 sec	2011/04/15
770	3374	1548	116	44	141	353	995	955	2604	50 hr 0 min	21 min 16 sec	2011/04/15
1486	2309	2553	19	3	0	13	131	657	823	49 hr 49 min	37 min 50 sec	2011/04/15
1345	2433	2400	0	53	69	140	324	502	1088	49 hr 44 min	20 min 18 sec	2011/04/15
1635	3543	1432	75	135	89	58	576	975	1908	49 hr 1 min	34 min 12 sec	2011/04/20
2312	3864	721	116	68	45	58	415	850	1552	49 hr 0 min	33 min 24 sec	2011/04/15

Figure 3. Partial Screenshot of *Word Engine* Admin Page

Monitoring Extensive Reading

Extensive Reading (ER) encourages students to read large amounts of material of a manageable level, for pleasure, to promote global understanding of the material and to build a reading habit (Day & Bamford, 2002). Extensive reading contrasts with intensive reading, in which learners generally read a small amount of difficult material slowly and carefully for the purpose of language study (Welch, 1997).

Numerous research studies have demonstrated learners' language development through ER, including vocabulary knowledge development (Day, Omura & Hiramatsu, 1991), writing proficiency (Mason & Krashen, 1997), motivation (Takse, 2002), reading comprehension (Bell, 2001; Mason & Krashen, 1997, Tanaka & Stapleton, 2007) and reading fluency (Bell, 2001; Iwahori, 2008; Tanaka & Stapleton, 2007). In Japan, where students spend many years experiencing English at little more than the sentential level, ER seems particularly popular and beneficial. However, like Word Engine, ER is effective only if it takes place; in this writer's experience, supervision and graded assessment will be needed for some students. Figure 4 displays a screenshot of the *Moodle Graded Reader Module* admin page, which provides a way to monitor Extensive Reading. Once registered, students can test their understanding of the books and get instant feedback. This module confirms whether and how often students are reading, and also enables teachers to set reading levels and targets. By speading tests out one test every three days), the module encourages a regular reading habit and ensures that students will distribute their reading practice across the school term.

Taken Quizzes	Passed Quizzes	Failed Quizzes	Total Points	Total words this term ↑	Total words all terms
25	23	2	23	98982	98982
26	22	4	22	98223	98223
28	21	7	21	83288	83288
36	21	15	21	75972	75972
26	22	4	22	74230	74230

Figure 4. Screenshot (Personal Details Removed) of *Module Graded Reader* Admin Page.

Motivating name cards are simply A4 cards (cards are better than paper) that are folded into an elongated pyramid shape., an idea to which I was introduced to at the JALT event Osaka Tech Day Plus in 2010. On one side students write their names and on the other side their learning progress, along with class schedules and rules. Referring to students by their name and not "you" or "the tall lady wearing fake glasses" builds rapport and stops discipline problems before they occur. They also allow teachers to pre-arrange class seating. When students add information like the number of allowed absences or various deadlines (figure 6), it demonstrates that students are aware of the rules. This action places responsibility upon students and ensures that they know the rules.

Name cards also show which students are doing well and not so well. Together with *Word Engine* and *Moodle Graded Reader Module* they enable teachers to communicate to students that their progress is being monitored weekly. It is motivating for students to see how they are progressing; my observations show that students check the name cards as soon as they enter the classroom, and appear to take them seriously. Perhaps most importantly, name cards encourage students to participate in tasks, as shown in Figure 6, where marks in the grade column were given for a participating in speaking tasks and completing in-class tasks.

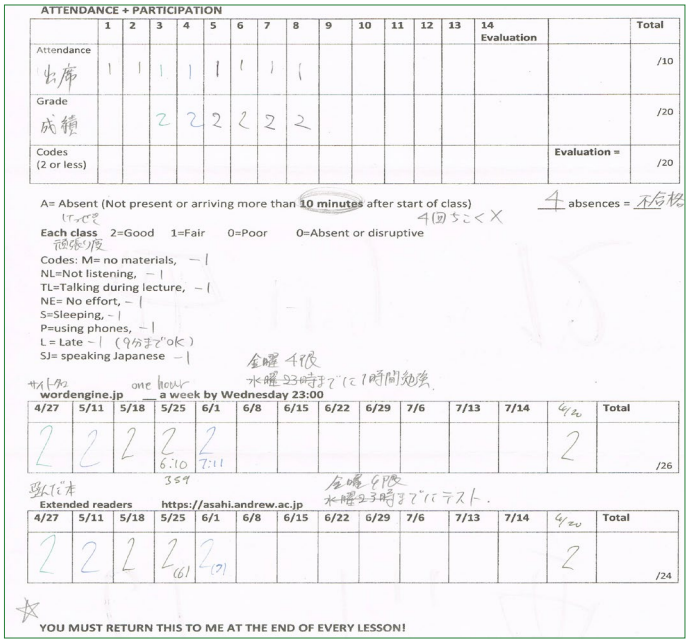

Figure 5. Student's Name Card and Progress Evaluation Sheet

Recommended Teaching Materials

Below are several of my personal favorites from teaching materials and techniques learned at conferences and from experienced teachers:

- **Speed-reading and forced output**: The speed-reading courses of Quinn, Nation and Millet (2007) and Millet (2005a; 2005b).
- **Extensive reading**: *Moodle Graded Reader Module* - ensures that reading is taking place.
- **Dictogloss with focus on form:** Teaching grammar in second language classrooms (Nassaji & Fotos, 2010) - combines theory, research findings and pedagogy.
- **Listening**: *English Central* (<http://ja.englishcentral.com/>) - provides authentic, graded dialogue—importantly, with visual, audio and written aids to assist and listening task authenticity and comprehension.
- **Vocabulary**: *Word Engine* – If vocabulary learning isn't monitored, it will not take place, and it should not take up valuable class time.

Moodle Graded Reader Module and *Word Engine* have already been covered; the other teaching techniques are discussed below.

The two speed-reading courses, one titled *Asian and Pacific Speed Readings for ESL Learners* (Quinn, Nation & Millett, 2007) and the *New Zealand Speed Readings for ESL Learners Book 1*(Millett, 2005a) and *Book 2* (Millett, 2005b), use the first thousand (20 passages of the same length) and second thousand words (40 passages of the same length) of English. Speed-reading courses have been shown to improve reading speeds significantly (Millett, 2008), and their use as input for a forced output exercise is strongly recommended. The speed-reading passages' use as information gap material is not explained in the speed reading users' guide, so here is a personally guided explanation. Students read the passage as quickly as possible and record their reading time. Without re-reading the passage, students then try to answer ten related questions. Students in groups must agree on answers to questions, supporting their opinions without reference to multiple choice answers as "A," for example. Students write their answers on the board. Then students race to find the answers to the questions within the passage, explain where the answer is within the passage and explain why it is the appropriate answer to the question.

While speed-reading and secondary speed-reading promote reading speed, the forced output using high-frequency vocabulary assists speaking frequency and development of vocabulary knowledge (Nation, 1990). In addition, gaps in the students' knowledge facilitate forced output and the gains that come with students being forced to communicate to achieve a semantic goal through meaningful forced output.

Wajnryb (1990) is credited with developing Dictogloss, a language instruction technique used to teach grammatical structures through forced output and the use of metalanguage. Small groups of students use listening and writing skills to summarize or complete a target-language text. A dictogloss activity follows the teaching of a target grammar form, and includes several instances of that target form. This activity reinforces learning, presents opportunities for informal assessment, and encourages form-focused, meaningful communication.

1. Students write the numbers 1 to 6 evenly spaced on paper.
2. Tell students that this is not just a listening activity, but also a communication and grammar task.
3. Students listen to a passage of six sentences read by the teacher, with a ten-second gap between sentences.
4. Students write key words that they hear.
5. The teacher reads the passage again, with normal pauses between sentences.
6. Students listen to the passage and write all that they can understand.
7. Students form small groups, and re-create the message of the six sentences. There can be individual word differences,

but the message must be the same, and the sentences must be grammatically correct.

8. Tell students to communicate only in English, and consider and discuss the grammar used when trying to form six grammatically perfect sentences.
9. Make further reading of the passage to assist the flow of the task.

Dictogloss tasks seem to work best with groups of four students who sit slightly spaced apart so that they cannot see each other's papers. The gaps in group members' knowledge of the passage and students' varying levels of grammatical proficiency result in forced output.

Students are motivated by the use of authentic reading materials (Field, 1998), yet these need to be readily accessible. English Central provides authentic English videos on a range of subjects and at various difficulty levels. Importantly, *English Central* also furnishes slow mode, subtitles, repeat and dictionary functions, helping to bridge the gap between student ability and the authentic material. These functions also allow students to make requests for repetition and confirmation, which occur frequently in second language learning (Field, 1998). In addition, the provision of visual content along with audio content, helps to overcome top-down listening problems from not understanding the listening situation context. The following suggestions also overcome the isolating nature of textbook listening tasks, and encourage communication (Field, 1998).

1. In pairs, students watch and take notes on the selected *English Central* video, and then discuss their findings, trying to make a more complete description of what they saw—not a transcription of the dialogue.
2. This activity may be repeated up to two times.
3. The teacher may repeat the problematic section of the video in response to students' requests in English.
4. The teacher may translate individual English words in response to students' requests in English.
5. If asked to translate, the teacher can simply open the subtitles of the video and click on the unknown English word. Its pronunciation and its meanings in Japanese and English will appear.
6. Collect each pair's attempt to write a complete description of the video, not a transcription of its dialogue. In addition, specific tasks may also be given such as reading for gist, dictation, or comprehension questions.

The combined use of authentic material and more realistic interactive listening activities encourages students to develop listening strategies used by second language learners, and also motivates them and encourages communication.

Conclusion

While some TESOL master programs provide a great deal of theory, which should influence our teaching and lesson planning, they may lack in practical ideas. However, such practical ideas may be gained from conferences and fellow teachers, and not only from textbooks. The research into decontextualized pair-associated vocabulary learning points to the CFCs being more effective than TFs or wordlists. At the same time, the literature on the benefits of extensive reading is clear.

However, monitoring is necessary to ensure that both extensive reading and CFC use take place. Fortunately, *Word Engine* and the *Moodle Graded Reader Module* allow for the monitoring of out-of-class, decontextualized pair-associated vocabulary learning and extensive reading. In turn, the communication to students through the use of name cards that their vocabulary learning and extensive reading progress are being monitored by teachers and evaluated for marks given is highly motivating. Finally, this paper looked at the some recommended and

personally used teaching materials and provides practical ideas based on research.

Bio Data

Stuart McLean is interested in vocabulary and ER research, and research methodology.

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