



EFFECTIVE VOCABULARY ACQUISITION ACTIVITES FOR YOUNG LEARNERS THROUGH CONTENT BASED APPROACH

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Abstract

The content-based approach to second language acquisition is systematic and a well-established method among language instructors. To increase language proficiency among the students and to strengthen their confidence to meet the competitive needs is the direction of this approach. The potency of the content-based method is that language learning is contextualized and purposeful. The more language is used in the pursuit of a specific goal, the quicker the language is acquired. Language proficiency automatically enters into the student's stuff almost without noticing as the student's interest in the content leads to language solutions. Unlike the traditional approach concentrates only on language learning, the content based approach focuses on content subject and language competence. This paper reveals that content based approach to the young learners is an enthusiastic approach to acquire knowledge, subject and language. It helps students to develop valuable study skills such as note taking, summarizing and extracting key information from texts. Taking information from different sources, re-evaluating and restructuring that information can help students to develop very valuable thinking skills that can be transferred to other subjects with collaborative skills and enhancing critical thinking skills. When the students are passionate enough to gain the skills, this type of approach is the best one that they follow. Content Based Approach employs English at a comprehensible level so as to increase students' understanding of the subject matter and build language skills simultaneously. This study also explores that cognitive theory of learning through procedural and declarative methods to produce the mastery of the subject and also the linguistic skills. Practical activities for students in the classroom are the underscore of this study.

Key Words: content-based approach, vocabulary acquisition, language acquisition





Introduction

The comprehensiveness of learning English language and the acquisition of its rich text and structure can be highly successful in adopting a clear method or approach. "Content-Based Instruction (CBI) refers to an approach to second language teaching in which teaching is organized around the content or information that students will acquire, rather than around a linguistic or other type of syllabus." It is the teaching of content or information in the language being learned with little or no direct or explicit effort to teach the language itself separately from the content being taught (Krahnke). The practice necessary for linguistic mastery is gained through a natural cycle of language pattern leads to the discipline of study. The students focus on the subject matter than the language learning process. Supporting students' success by engaging them in challenging and informative activity helps them learn complex skills. The students learn language automatically. Keeping the students motivated and interested in the language training is the profound advantage of Content Based Approach. When students are interested and motivated in the material they are learning, they make greater connections to life situations, learning language becomes an entertainment and easy activity where information is retained for long time. Classroom's pattern of teaching is limited to grammar, reading and comprehension where the students are not particularly interested in the subject content and gains only a few practical applications. This gives a great struggle on real life situations while speaking before the public and facing communicative competence in acquiring job markets.

This approach is skill-based and task-oriented; ESL instruction and curriculum are driven by language functions and forms based on the functional-notional approach (Bruton, 2002; Kidd, 1996). English learners in the traditional classroom practice, for instance, how to politely apologize or disagree, to accept invitations, or how to talk to the doctor (Brown, 2004b; Snow, Met, & Genesee, 1989). In addition, they develop functional literacy through activities such as writing letters or personal stories. They also usually read short stories written exclusively for English learners. On the whole content Based Instruction is a theme based Instruction.

Cognitive view of Approaching Content Based Instruction: The cognitive approach emphasizes the role of learning in behavior, gets with the possible role of inherited mechanisms unlike behaviorism. For example, Gestalt theorists like Kohler believed that perceptual organization was based on innate principles. This duality of learning-with-heredity is well-illustrated in the area of language development. As discussed in the text, Noam Chomsky believed that language

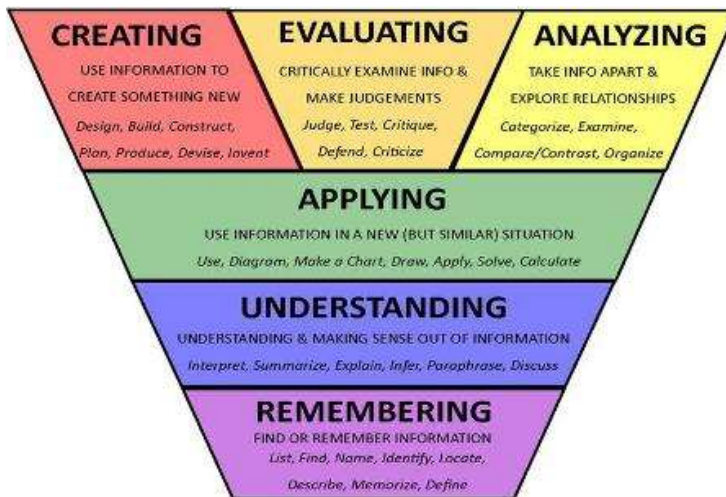


development depends on an innate mechanism that he called a "language acquisition device" which processes grammatical rules. Psychologically, we continually encounter a steady flow of information from our five senses, and yet we can process only a limited portion of this flow. As a result, most information which enters sensory memory is lost before it can be further processed in short-term memory. The process of focusing which underlies this is what we mean by attention. As William James noted, "Everyone knows what attention is. It is the taking possession by the mind, in clear and vivid form, of one out of what seem several simultaneously possible objects or trains of thought." (James, 1890, pp. 381-382)

According to current development in cognitive psychology, information is stored in memory in two forms:

- Declarative knowledge – what we know about a given topic,
- Procedural knowledge – knowing how to do.

In the content-based instruction, the content component represents declarative knowledge, while the language component aims at teaching the procedural knowledge students need to use language as a tool for learning. In addition to this a third component comes at play to train learners' autonomy through teaching learning strategies.



Outcomes of Content Based Approach:

- Learners are exposed to a considerable amount of language through inspiring content.
- Learners explore interesting content and are engaged in appropriate language-oriented activities.



- Learning language becomes automatic. This type of Approach supports contextualized learning.
- Learners are taught useful language that is embedded within relevant discourse contexts rather than as isolated language fragments. Hence students make greater connections with the language and what they already know.
- Content Based approach encourages the confidence in using real life situation words to meet communicative competence in recruitments.
- Complex information is delivered through practical life context for the students to grasp well and leads to intrinsic motivation.
- In Content Based approach information is reiterated by strategically delivering information at right time and situation compelling the students to learn out of passion.
- Greater flexibility and adaptability in the curriculum can be deployed to suit students' interest.

Widdowson (1968) first proposed academic subject matter as an ideal vehicle for language teaching, noting that vocabulary, linguistic structures and modes of expression tend to appear repeatedly in a given subject area. In art history courses, for example, native patterns are descriptive, while the social sciences use argumentation structures involving cause and effect.

AN ILLUSTRATION ON CONTENT BASED APPROACH: (For Beginners)



Topics are the main associates of content and creativity that makes the students enabled in activity which explore more specific aspects of the theme and make them more knowledgeable and through this they can capture right words to be used in appropriate situations. They are





selected to complement student interests, content resources, teacher preferences, and larger curricular objectives. In general, topics should be organized to generate maximum coherence for the theme unit and to provide opportunities to explore both content and language.

EXAMPLE

- Assigned Topic** : **HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF SOUTH INDIA**
- Number of Participants** : Students 6 – 8 in numbers
- Step by Step Process** :
- Chart preparation is instructed
 - Group Mentor will be chosen by the members of group themselves.
 - Task is assigned equally to the members like collecting images, preparing charts individually which gathers information, supporting pictures for the concerned topic etc.,
 - Information is written in paragraph or essay type.
 - Underlining the new words and words which appear like vocabulary.
 - Writing synonyms for each words in the chart
 - Preparing thesaurus for the contents.

Paragraph information on the above illustrated topic

The monuments of South India lie untouched and resplendent along the shores of the three oceans that surround and protect its beauty. The region is separated from the north by the Vindhya Range and insulated on the east and west by the eastern and western Ghats. Consequently the culture, architecture and heritage of the place have remained largely untouched.

The Dravidian style of construction has remained intact and can be plainly seen in all the temples and monuments that adorn this idyllic region. What is collectively referred to as South India comprises primarily of four different states- [Kerala](#), [Tamil Nadu](#), [Karnataka](#) and [Andhra Pradesh](#) as well as the Union Territories of [Puducherry](#) and the Lakshadweep archipelago.





A Vimana (a pyramidal tower over the sanctum sanctorum where the deities are placed) and hall with corridors are common to all south Indian temples. The most sacred place in the temples is the *Pitha or the pedestal* that is placed in the *sanctum sanctorum*. Christianity thus spread to all the areas of settlement of these colonial powers such as Puducherry, Nagapattinam, Tranquebar etc. Consequently a number of beautiful churches, such as, San Thome Cathedral, St Mary's Church and many more were constructed. St Andrew's Kirk and St George's Cathedral in Chennai, erected in the early 19th century, are two of the finest classical churches in India, *both based on the famous London prototype of St. Martin-in-the-Fields.*

The influence of Islam has remained brief in South India. Earlier, the first Muslim converts arrived in the region and went on to establish a number of mosques as well as to play an important role in the life of the city. A number of mosques now started coming up such as the beautiful thousand lights mosque in Chennai, Makka Masjid etc.

The Jewish *synagogue* built in 1568 AD in Mattencherry (Kerala) has gained popularity as the oldest synagogue in the Commonwealth Countries.

OBSERVATION:

- ▶ Students form a group and discuss the information they know.
- ▶ Students start noting the vocabulary italicized and underlined above.
- ▶ They will find synonyms and use thesaurus for each and every word with a minimum of 6-8 words.
- ▶ The above double underlined words give extra information on the topic at study.
- ▶ Students from different areas discuss on the information still more profound.
- ▶ Social gathering in group among the students enhances the interpersonal skills and administrative skills.

VOCABULARY	MEANING & EXAMPLE	SYNONYMS
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RESPLENDENT	(very bright or attractive) Viswanath Anand is a resplendent genius.	Splendid, dazzling, glorious, brilliant, stunning, glittering, magnificent, stunning
INSULATED	(Wind up with or coiled) The furnace was insulated with copper wire.	Wrap, cover, Lag, wad, pile, fill, protect, shield, padding
INTACT	(Not broken or damaged) Storm left my house intact.	Whole, integral, undamaged, unbroken, together, entire, undivided
IDYLLIC	(Very peaceful, happy and enjoyable) He has an idyllic childhood.	Peaceful, calm, tranquil, pleasant, heavenly, blissful, divine, fantastic
ARCHIPELEGO	(Land surrounded by body of water)	Peninsula, cay, shelter, reef, sanctuary, isle, enclave, islet, bar.
PEDESTAL	(The base of a column or other tall object) The statue of the prince stood on the pedestal.	Base, plinth, stand, podium, dais, bottom, foundation, support, stand
SANCTUM SANCTORUM	(The holy of the holies) very private or secret place. God's place is at the sanctum sanctorum at every temple.	Sacred, holy, pure, private, secret, shrine
SYNAGOGUE	(a building that is used for Jewish religious services)	

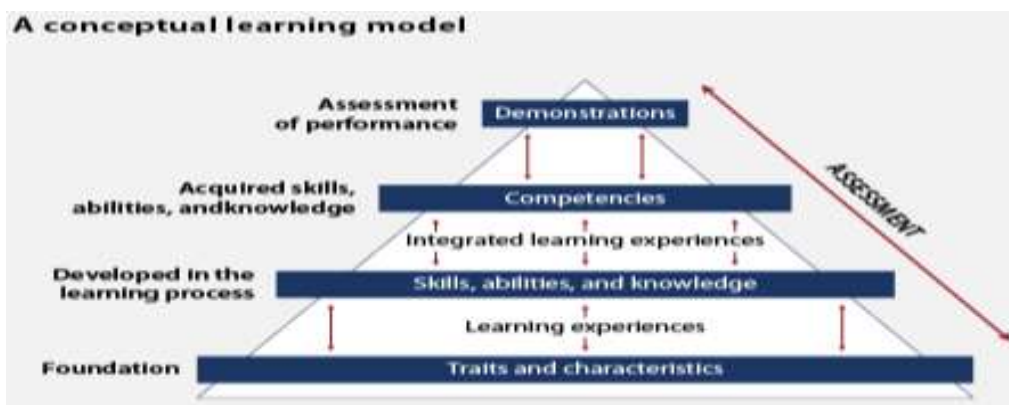
Students can acquire collocations and related vocabulary items when they are studied not in isolation, but in groups to acquire the knowledge with activity based and discussion already interested in or have some expertise with such as business, biology, sociology, technology, psychology, etc. in their first language. Kasper (1996) and Pally (1997) points out that college students and young learners need instruction that helps develop their linguistic proficiency, and



at the same time, prepare these students to transform to and succeed in a much more complex academic and social environment.

LESSON PLAN AND WORKSHEET ACTIVITY ON ENHANCING VOCABULARY TO MEET COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE (For teachers)

Human Experimentation in India (Illustration): Human experimentation refers to the use of human beings as experimental subjects. A subject is defined as an individual who is observed or experimented with by an investigator; an investigator is a qualified individual who conducts research. Humans have long been used as subjects for a variety of experiments. However, the most publicized are those that are medical in nature, for medical science has an impact on human health and life in crucial ways. Although most medical experimentation is carried out using laboratory animals, the results cannot always be extrapolated to humans with certainty.



- Teachers must not impose immediately on vocabulary or language initially at the activity assigned.
- Topic should be allotted in advance to collect the information from library or web.
- Students are asked to form a group and discuss the topic at the outset to get the content as well as the profound idea accordingly their view.
- Teacher should take part in discussion to carry out the topic effectively.
- Teacher should raise the questions in different logic to tune up the students in a lateral way of thinking. Here the teacher acts as a mentor to extract and share knowledge.

For example in the above topic the following questions can be asked such as:

- a) Why humans are experimented than animals?
- b) Can human experimentation be enhanced?
- c) What type humans are experimented?
- d) Why prisoners were forced into experimentation?





- e) How far ethics is maintained during experiment?
- f) Is human experimentation a torture or pleasure?

Further more useful topics such as **Organic gardening, Global Issues, Professional Ethics etc., can be assigned.**

Enhancing HR English

Real life situation (Job Purpose): **An overlook on Phrasal Verbs**

Hello Madam! Good Morning. Congratulations. I feel glad to intimate you that you have got selected for our company. But before we offer you the job, we need to **follow up** on your references .The training is **followed up** by regular refresher courses over a six-month period. I'd like to discuss it further. Can we **set up** a meeting? I've **set up** interviews with the remaining three candidates. I'll **make up** the time next week for you ok.

Oh! Sure sir. I feel lucky and happy enough to join your concern. When shall I **meet you up**?

Damn sure! I will **ask out** you early and **ring you up** tomorrow definitely.

Hints are below to match:

follow up	to arrange for an activity or event to happen
Set up	to find out more about or take further action on something
Make up	Call over phone
Ask out	do or pay extra to cover a difference.
Meet up	to invite formally
Ring up	Arrange to see at your convenience

Another group of students are asked to collect Language Related Information from News paper. The output is as follows: (One of the students produced from "KNOW YOUR ENGLISH" Open Ed Page The Hindu)

Good lord! What happened to you? Did you fall off your bike?"





“I was thrown off, actually. Someone driving on the wrong side of the road hit me. Luckily, I didn’t break any bones. But it was scary. It was too close to call.”

“Too close to call? You mean it was a close call, don’t you?”

“What’s the difference between the two?”

“When you have a ‘close call’, you have a narrow escape. Something bad was about to happen to you, but you somehow managed to avoid it.”

“I see. So, ‘close call’ has the same meaning as ‘close shave’?”

“That’s right! We almost didn’t make it to the examination hall. It was a close call.”

“My friend missed being hit by a bus by inches. It was a close shave.”

“The doctor said if we had delayed taking my grandfather to the hospital by another ten minutes, he would have suffered a stroke. It was a close call.”

“Now tell me, what does ‘too close to call’ mean?”

“How many times do I have to tell you? When you say an election is too close to call...”

“Now, I remember. It means it’s a tight election; one in which it’s difficult to predict who the winner will be. At the halfway point, the two athletes were running neck and neck. The race was too close to call.”

“Good example. Who will win today’s match? I’ve no idea. It’s too close to call. You don’t look too good. Why don’t you go home and take some rest?”

“No way! I was in bed all morning. Hey, what’s this? A letter?”

“Do me a favour. Post it on your way home.”

“No problem. I don’t think I’ve been near a post box in a while. Who writes letters these days? By the way, your ‘r’ in ‘Mr’ looks like an ‘x’. Do you want to correct it?”

“There’s no need to. You know that it’s not my handwriting. It’s my friend’s.”

“The one from America? Doesn’t he know how to write an ‘r’?”

“I’m sure he does. But he’s addressed the letter to ‘Mx Smith’ and not ‘Mr Smith’.”





“Mx? What does it mean?”

“The abbreviation ‘Mx’ when used before names is pronounced ‘mix’. People have started using it instead of the usual ‘Mr’, ‘Mrs’, ‘Miss’, etc.”

“But why? It doesn’t make any sense.”

“Because unlike ‘Ms’, ‘Mr’, etc., ‘Mx’ is a gender neutral title. When you see a letter addressed to Mx Smith, you’re not sure if the person is a man or a woman.”

“So when you use this gender neutral title, I guess you write only the person’s last name.”

“I suppose so. If you include the person’s first name everyone will know whether it’s a man or a woman.”

“I see. Some people put a full stop after ‘Mr’ and ‘Mrs’ and some people don’t. So...”

“Actually, both are acceptable. Americans tend to add a full stop after ‘Mr’, ‘Mrs’, etc. The British, don’t.”

“My father always follows British English. He thinks British English is superior than...” “You don’t say that something is ‘inferior than’ or ‘superior than’ something else. The two words are always followed by ‘to’. I’ve always felt inferior to my sister.”

“Really? I’ve always felt superior to mine!”

Execution:

- ✓ Learners forming group will read this article
- ✓ Discussion is open up for the new words they read
- ✓ Arouse interest through discussion and the others may also involve with the similar articles they read.
- ✓ Each student will present their own collections in the classroom as a round-table presentation.

Conclusion

Content Based Approach is one of the practical and best approaches for learning. Here the focus is on content alongwith the language. Through team teaching and discussion the study environment is not bounded to class room and mere listening rather involvement and social





gathering besides organizational skills. This type approach arouses interest among the students and hence learning will not be monotony. Self-preparation, grooming in groups builds managerial skills and adaptability.

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