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DEVELOPING VOCABULARY THROUGH STUDENT-CENTRED READING ACTIVITIES

(Rozvoj slovní zásoby pomocí čtení a doprovodných cvičení aktivně
zapojujících studenty)

Závěrečná práce 96 - PF - KAJ

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OUTLINE

THESIS: USING STUDENT-CENTRED ACTIVITIES SUCH AS BRAINSTORMING, CONTEXTUAL GUESSING, PREDICTION AND VARIOUS VOCABULARY EXERCISES LEADS TO STUDENTS' BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF TEXTS AND NEW VOCABULARY ITEMS WITHIN THE TEXT.

I: It is vital to involve students in deducing the meaning of new words through reading texts.

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CITATIONS: Jeremy Harmer, 1991: 24

Diane Larsen-Freeman, 1986: 9

Ruth Gairns and Stuart Redman, 1986: 76

Adrian Underhill (in Harmer), 1991: 160

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CITATIONS: Fredericka Stoller, 1994: 3

Fredericka Stoller, 1994: 3

Francoise Grellet, 1981: 4

Marianne Celce-Murcia, 1991: 306

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CITATIONS: Jeremy Harmer, 1991: 179

Jeremy Harmer, 1991: 160

ABSTRACT

Vocabulary development is a major prerequisite for perfecting a foreign language. There are many approaches to teaching vocabulary but most experts agree that it should be taught in context rather than through memorization. Reading texts provide important context and means of exposing students to new vocabulary.

This paper investigates various student-centred reading activities designed to improve students' understanding of new vocabulary in the text, and their comprehension of the text itself.

ANOTACE

Slovní zásoba je jeden z hlavních předpokladů k ovládnutí cizího jazyka. Existuje mnoho přístupů k učení slovní zásoby, ale většina expertů se shoduje, že by měla být raději vyučována v kontextu než pouhým učením zpaměti. Čtení textů slouží jako důležitý kontext a prostředek pro výklad nové slovní zásoby.

Tato práce zkoumá různá čtecí cvičení, aktivně zapojující studenty, která jsou určena k zdokonalení studentova porozumění nových slovíček a textu samotného.

ANOTÁCIA

Slovná zásoba je jeden z hlavných predpokladov pre zvládnutie cudzieho jazyka. Existuje mnoho prístupov pre učenie slovnej zásoby, ale väčšina expertov sa zhoduje na tom, že by mala byť radšej vyučovaná v kontexte než samotným učením sa naspamäť. Čítanie textov slúži ako dôležitý kontext a prostriedok pre výklad novej slovnej zásoby.

Táto práca skúma rôzná čtecía cvičenia, do ktorých sa aktívne zapájajú študenti, a ktorá sú určená k zdokonaleniu porozumenia nových slovíčok a samotného textu.

I. It is vital to involve students in deducing the meaning of new words through reading texts.

A. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1. INTRODUCTION: THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING VOCABULARY

Teaching and learning vocabulary is at the core of studying a language because without knowing words any interaction with the language cannot happen in any meaningful way. There are various approaches to learning vocabulary - some of which will be looked at in part 1 - which are based on different perception and views of what a language is and how a language is learned. From my limited experience, I believe that whatever approach the teacher chooses, vocabulary should be always taught in context because as Harmer (1991) says " If we are really to teach students what words mean and how they are used, we need to show them being used, together with other words, in context. Words do not just exist on their own: they live with the other words and they depend upon each other" (Jeremy Harmer, 1991: 24). I believe that reading texts can provide great contexts for learning vocabulary. Therefore I decided in my project to focus on various student-centred reading activities which can, in my opinion, help to develop students' vocabulary and at the same time increase their reading comprehension.

2. MY EXPERIENCE AS A LEARNER

a. The principles of the Grammar-Translation Method

As I said, there are many approaches to teaching a language but when I learned English at secondary school, the only approach I met with was unfortunately the Grammar-Translation Method. The aim of this method was for students to be able to translate a text from one language into another. As Larsen-Freeman (1986) puts it: "If students can translate from one language into another, they are considered successful language learners" (Diane Larsen-Freeman, 1986: 9). There is not much importance put on the ability to communicate. The Grammar-Translation Method sees language learning as consisting of memorizing grammar rules, facts and vocabulary so rather than learning the language I learned *about* the language.

At the beginning of each lesson we were told a new grammar rule and then we were "ready" to read the text. There were no pre-reading activities whatsoever. Each student read one sentence aloud and then translated it. Czech was used more often than English. There were no speaking or listening activities in the lessons. Having each lesson the same made learning very boring.

b. Vocabulary learning in the Grammar-Translation Method

With regard to learning vocabulary in the Grammar-Translation Method, at the end of each lesson we were given a piece of paper with the words for the next lesson. These words were written in English with their pronunciations and Czech translations so we just had to memorize them. It was very difficult to pronounce words I had never heard, let alone

remember them and be able to use them. The problem was that I did not have any context, any example where I could see the usage of the words. So seeing language learning as a system of facts and rules which has to be learned by memorizing was not very successful. It probably works with subjects like history or geography, however as you will be shown in the next section there are more effective ways to teach a language and more specifically, more effective ways to teach vocabulary.

3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH IN TEACHING VOCABULARY

a. The use of reading texts

As the Grammar-Translation Method did not bring much success in my own learning of vocabulary and reading, I decided for my own teaching practice to use a different kind of approach, the Communicative Approach. In this approach the language is taught for communicative purposes. In order to be able to communicate, students need to know functions, meanings of words and their usage. They work on all four skills. Students are actively involved in learning by negotiating meaning. Also, to emphasize the communicative purpose, the target language is used most of the time in the classroom, for example, in giving instructions. New words are taught in context because they can be easier to identify than in isolation and students can contribute in deducing their meaning. According to Gairns and Redman (1986) letting students guess or deduce the meaning of unknown words from context makes them more responsible for their own learning

(Ruth Gairns and Stuart Redman, 1986: 76). Involving students in the process of learning is best summed up by a citation from Adrian Underhill (in Harmer, 1991): "...engaging the learner ... is essential to any activity that is to have a high learning yield" (Jeremy Harmer, 1991: 160).

Reading texts can be used as contexts for learning vocabulary but also as a starting point for other activities - oral or written - in which students respond to the text.

b. roles of the teacher and students

The roles of the teacher and students in class depend on the teaching/learning approach. In the Grammar-Translation Method the roles are traditional. The teacher is the authority, the controller. She/he controls everything in the class: what students do, how they do it, when they speak or corrects their answers. Students do what teacher says. There is not much interaction among students as most interaction is from the teacher to the students.

In contrast, in the Communicative Approach the teacher's role is less dominant; the teacher is the organiser, the facilitator. She/he establishes and explains the activities but then lets the students do them. During the activities she/he monitors and helps the students if they need it so the roles of the teacher and the students are complementary. The students are actively involved in the activities, they interact with each other a great deal therefore they have more responsibility for their own learning.

As I wanted my students to contribute during the learning process and to get involved and work with the language, I decided to act as the organiser. I prepared the activities, set them up, gave clear instructions and examples and then let students work. While they were working, I worked as a guide and an advisor. I monitored and helped students with their difficulties.

B. METHODOLOGY

1. THE NEED FOR VARIED COMMUNICATIVE READING ACTIVITIES IN TEACHING VOCABULARY.

In the following part of the paper I will focus on different activities which can be used for better understanding of the text and its vocabulary. As I mentioned earlier, the Communicative Approach calls for the involvement of the students in reading so communicative reading activities are designed to allow students to respond to the text, to help them to comprehend the text and to introduce and improve vocabulary which should allow them to communicate more easily. The Communicative Approach also suggests further accompanying activities. These activities, which accompany reading, can be done before reading the passage (pre-reading activities), while reading the passage (while-reading activities) and after students have finished reading the passage (post-reading activities). They link with one another and the teacher should integrate all three types into one lesson. It is the teacher's responsibility to carry the task beyond actual reading. But we should not forget what Stoller

(1994) states: "... teachers must be selective, because different exercise types lead to different outcomes..." (Fredricka Stoller, 1994: 3). In short, when designing the lesson, we should consider the lesson objectives, that is, what we want the students to learn. In my case I focused on communicative reading activities which focused on developing vocabulary.

2. DIFFERENT TYPES OF COMMUNICATIVE READING ACTIVITIES USED IN MY TEACHING PRACTICE.

a. Pre-reading activities

Pre-reading activities should prepare and motivate students for actual reading of the passage. This period should relate to students' experience as it enables them to bring something of their own to the reading. Pre-reading activities should be designed so they encourage and help students to understand, assimilate and evaluate the text. And the students should be encouraged to make guesses as they provoke desirable interaction with words.

Listed below are number of pre-reading options.

i. prediction from the title or pictures

Students can predict the content of the text from a title or a picture. The teacher writes the title on the blackboard or shows a picture accompanying the text and students guess what the text will be about. I tried this in lessons 1 and 3.

ii. brainstorming

The teacher gives students some clues, for example, key words from the text or a short question about the text and students come up with other words and ideas. I used this in lessons 1, 3 and 4.

iii. class discussion

Students can also discuss the topic and their expectations about text content in a class discussion. This is designed to encourage students to share their knowledge of the topic or their personal experience related to the topic with their peers. The teacher should prepare some probing questions before the lesson which can lead students into mentioning ideas that are important for the reading passage. I tried this in lessons 2, 3 and 4.

When students recognize that they know something about the topic, they are more likely to be interested in it. Discussion activities can also refresh students' knowledge of target vocabulary and, by narrowing the topic, also help them to guess new words. Stoller (1994) suggests that "...these activities increase students' concentration, stimulate curiosity, increase imagination, as well as give students a sense of purpose, a reason for reading" (Fredericka Stoller, 1994: 3).

b. While-reading activities

There are different techniques for reading the text. Among the most common are:

i. skimming

Students go quickly through the text in order to get the gist, a global comprehension of the text. I let students skim in lesson 4.

ii. scanning

Students go quickly through the text in order to find a specific piece of information. It can be, for example, finding a name, a date, unknown words, or answers to short questions. Students scanned in lessons 1 and 3.

iii. reading for deeper meaning, for detailed information comprehension

This involves understanding of the writer's message and can also lead to after-reading discussion in which students react to what they have read. Students can choose their own speed needed for comprehension. Students read for detailed comprehension in lessons 1 and 2.

iv. reading aloud

This is more a pronunciation activity but for practising pronunciation we can develop better exercises. While some student is reading aloud, others lose their interest and concentration and then they fail to get general meaning of the text. It is designed especially for the classroom as most people do not read aloud outside the classroom. But it can also be useful, especially as an efficient way of checking. Students read aloud the part of the text where the answer can be found so other students hear it and check their answers. I used this in lesson

2 for checking the right answers.

In real life these techniques are linked together. As Grellet (1991) states "These different ways of reading are not mutually exclusive. For instance, one often skims through a passage to see what it is about before deciding whether it is worth scanning a particular paragraph for the information one is looking for" (Francoise Grellet, 1981: 4). Therefore we should vary the activities in the class so the students develop all of the techniques.

We also cannot forget that reading is an active skill. In order to understand the text, students should be predicting and guessing the meaning of unknown words while reading. They should also be asking themselves various questions about the text.

c. Post-reading activities

There are a great deal of activities which can be done after reading but I will focus on those, dealing with new vocabulary because students need to develop their ability to deduce the meanings of unknown words from context in order to better understand the text.

All these activities focus on developing guessing skills, which will enable students to predict the meaning of new words and to lose their dependency on dictionaries. A study by Clarke and Nation (in Celce-Murcia, 1991) demonstrated that students can improve their guessing skills by being trained to search for context clues in a text (Marianne Celce-Murcia, 1991: 306). Celce-Murcia (1991) also writes that "Students may, then, be able to greatly increase their vocabularies by reading extensively at

an appropriate level of difficulty after having been trained in effective guessing strategies" (Marianne Celce-Murcia, 1991: 306). Students should then be encouraged to make guesses, to take risks because it makes them more confident and independent in reading.

i. contextual guessing

This is probably the most frequent way of discovering the meaning of new words from context. Students look at the surrounding sentences and try to guess the meaning of the new word. This was tried in lessons 2 and 3.

ii. synonyms and antonyms

Students are given synonyms or antonyms of new words occurring in the text and they search for the words. I used this exercise in lessons 1 and 4.

iii. crosswords

Students get the explanation of the words and then they look them up in the text in order to fill them in the crossword. I tried this in lessons 2, 3 and 4.

iv. gap filling

Students use words from the text in different context, in a given sentence. I used this in lessons 1 and 3.

v. short writing tasks

Students create their own context, their own sentences or a short story using the words from the text. I let students write

sentences in lessons 1, 2 and 3. They wrote a short story in lesson 4.

C. THE PURPOSE OF MY PROJECT

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the relationship of reading to student-centred vocabulary activities. I intended to show that through these activities students could learn vocabulary more effectively. Therefore I chose reading texts with relevant vocabulary and then I tried to develop the most appropriate pre-, while-, and post-reading activities which would increase students' involvement in the text and which would help them to learn and understand the meaning of new words better.

D. INTRODUCTION TO THE NEXT PART OF THE PAPER

In the second part of the paper I will discuss my teaching experience from four special lessons designed for developing students' vocabulary in student-centred reading activities.

In each lesson I will describe background information (synopsis, thesis objectives, teaching aims, target language, assumptions, anticipated problems and used materials), procedure (my plans and aims for the lesson), reflection (how and to what extent the lesson met with the plan and the expectations) and finally, conclusion (what I learned from the lesson).

In the third part of the paper I will draw conclusions from the teaching practice discussed in part 2 and theory and methodology described in part 1.

II.

CLASS PROFILE

Class

7th

Age

12 - 13 years

Number of
students

13

Girls/boys
ratio

6 girls
7 boys

Level

intermediate (3rd year)

Textbook

Project English 1

Lessons
per week

3 x 45 mins

Teaching
problems

Not all students on the
same level.

What was
positive

Enthusiasm. Participation.
Well equipped classroom.

COMMENT

1. Class

This was a seventh year class. It was their third year of English.

2. Age

As the students have reached their adolescent years, sometimes boys wanted to show off in front of the girls.

3. Number of students

13 was a good number because the class was quite small and I could pay attention to the needs of individual students. I was able to manage the class easily. Even during group work the students were not too loud.

4. Girls/boys ratio

The girls were more precise but on the other hand they were also slower than the boys. They sat separately but sometimes I mixed them so they could help each other.

5. Level

I was told that this class was the best class at school - they were the best in everything from P.E. to Maths and English. Their English was very good so I did not have to use Czech at all. The pace of the lesson was quite fast as students understood all instructions and were very keen on learning.

6. Textbook

They have just finished "New generation" textbook and because they had not talked about space they returned to "Project English 1" in order to increase their vocabulary. It was a good idea but the grammar was too easy and students were sometimes bored.

7. Lessons per week

Students have three lessons a week as they study German as well (also three lessons a week).

8. Teaching problems

As some students also attend a language school or have a private tutor, not all of them were on the same level. This meant that I had to find various activities for those ones who were quicker and finished earlier. I also changed the seating arrangement so the quicker students could help the slower ones.

9. What was positive

Students' motivation and participation were very positive. They were well behaved. They were also aware of the importance of learning languages as most of them had travelled abroad and used English and German in real life.

LESSON 1

Thesis: "USING STUDENT-CENTRED ACTIVITIES SUCH AS BRAINSTORMING, CONTEXTUAL GUESSING, PREDICTION AND VARIOUS VOCABULARY EXERCISES LEADS TO STUDENTS' BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF TEXTS AND NEW VOCABULARY ITEMS WITHIN THE TEXT."

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Synopsis

The lesson centred on a reading text (a fairy tale) called "The Princess and the bowling ball", a new, funny version of H.C. Andersen's "The Princess and the pea".

The focus in the first part was on speaking fluency. I elicited from the students the classic story "The Princess and the pea" by H.C. Andersen. Then the students predicted the story from the title and picture.

The focus in the second part was on listening and reading. First, I read the story aloud, students listened for general understanding. Then they read it for themselves, trying to spot the difference between the classic story and this one.

The last part focused on accurate usage of vocabulary. Students had to find words in the text matching given definitions or translations, then do a gapfill exercise and finally, write five sentences in which they used the new words.

Thesis objectives

In this lesson I intended to show that students would understand the text better if they do not come "cold" to it. I also wanted to give them activities which would help them to deduce the meaning of new words themselves.

To make students more familiar with the idea of the text

and its vocabulary and to ensure that students would get the general point of the new story I started with eliciting the classic story "The princess and the pea" from the students and predicting the new story from the title "The Princess and the bowling ball", from the picture and by asking some questions (stage 1).

I also wanted to show that if the students were involved in the process of deducing the meaning of new words, they would understand the meaning better and in wider context. For this reason I gave them the vocabulary activities: finding the words with the same meaning and a gapfill exercise (stage 3 and 4).

To see whether students could use the words themselves I had them do a freer writing activity where they wrote five of their own sentences (stage 5).

Teaching aims

- to develop students' ability to predict text content before reading by prediction from the title and picture.
- to develop students' ability to deduce the meaning of new words from the text by referring back to the text.
- to develop students' ability to use new words from the text, in different contexts by a. gap fill exercise,
b. creating their own sentences.

Target language

I wanted students to get more familiar with "fairy tale" vocabulary (i.e. King, Queen, once upon a time and so on) which they briefly met before.

The new words which appeared in the text and which I wanted students to learn were: "to pile, politely, to decide, lump, to slip, odd, satisfied".

Assumptions

I assumed that students would be familiar with the classic story "The Princess and the pea" but I was ready to elicit the story by target questions in case they did not know it. Students should also be familiar with all tense structures used in the text.

Anticipated problems, solutions

As this was the first "special" lesson I thought students might not know what to do or how to find the words in the text. In that case we would do one or two words together. I also decided that if they would not know much more words than I expected them to, they could use dictionaries (stage 2b).

Materials

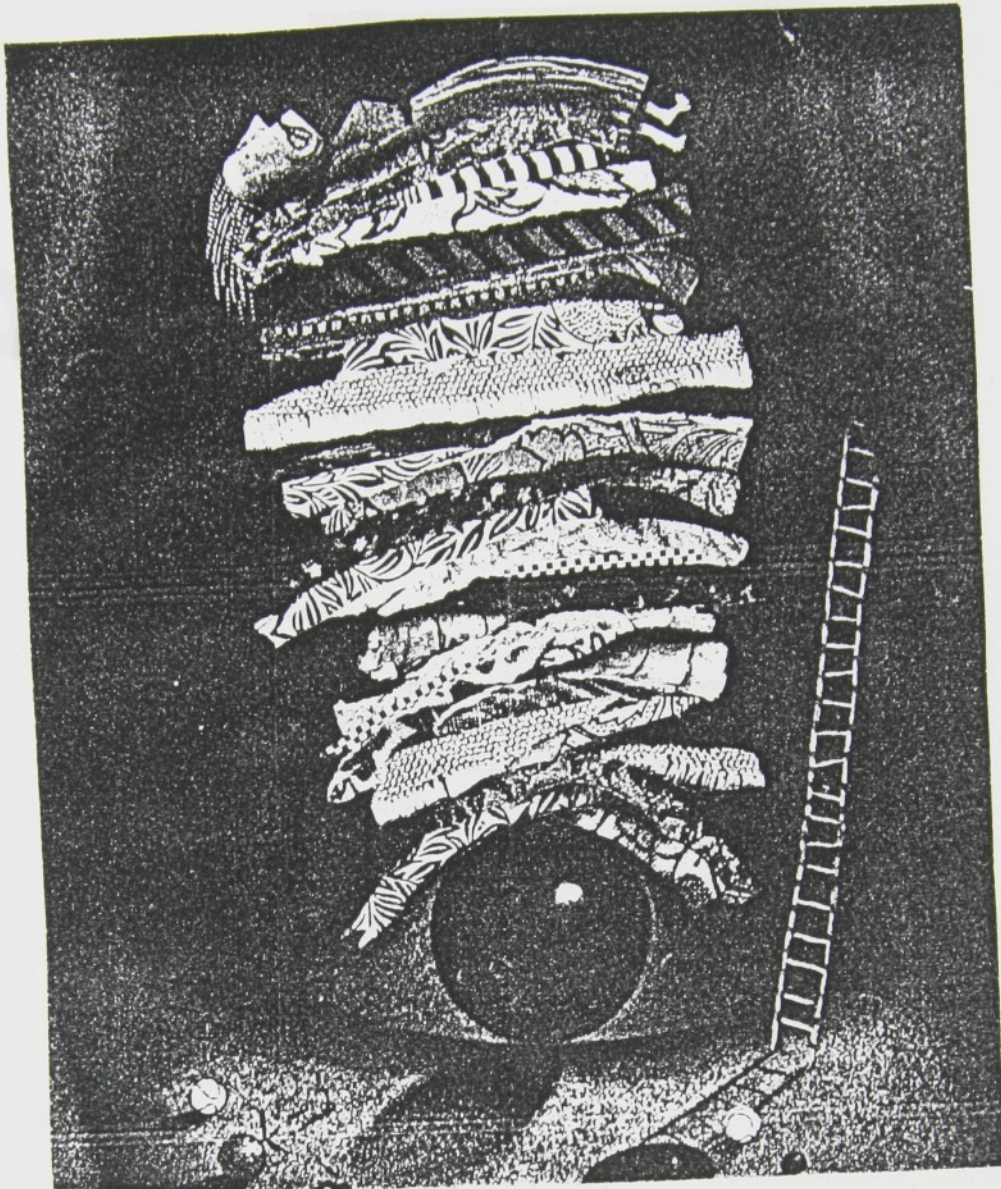
- text and picture from Forum magazine
- photocopy of exercises

B. PROCEDURE

1. Pre-reading (10 minutes)

- a. Elicit the classic story by asking students questions.
("Who are the main characters?" "What did the King and Queen want to do with their eighteen year old son?")
- b. Give students the title and the picture (see overleaf) and let them predict the story in pairs; then each pair gives their ideas. Write the key words on the blackboard.

aim: to get students to predict the new story, to make later reading easier by familiarising students with a similar story.



2. Reading (10 minutes)

- a. Read the story aloud (see overleaf), let students listen for general understanding.
- b. Give students the text and ask them a question: "What is the difference between this story and the classic one?"
- c. Give students time to read it silently and then discuss it with the class.

aim: to improve students' ability to understand the text without understanding every single word.

THE PRINCESS AND THE BOWLING BALL

Once upon a time there was a Prince. And this Prince's dad and mom (the King and Queen) somehow got it into their royal heads that no Princess would be good enough for their boy unless she could feel a pea through one hundred mattresses.

So it should come as no surprise that the Prince had a very hard time finding a Princess. Every time he met a nice girl, his mom and dad would pile one hundred mattresses on top of a pea and then invite her to sleep over.

When the Princess came down for breakfast, the Queen would ask, "How did you sleep, dear?"

The Princess would politely say, "Fine, thank you."

And the King would show her the door.

Now this went on for three years. And of course nobody ever felt the pea under one hundred mattresses. Then one day the Prince met the girl of his dreams. He decided he better do something about it. That night, before the Princess went to bed, the Prince slipped his bowling ball under the one hundred mattresses.

When the Princess came down for breakfast the next morning, the Queen asked, "How did you sleep, dear?"

"This might sound odd," said the Princess. "But I think you need another mattress. I felt like I was sleeping on a lump as big as a bowling ball."

The King and Queen were satisfied.

The Prince and Princess were married.

And everyone lived happily, though maybe not completely honestly, ever after. The End.

3. Deduction of meaning of new words (10 minutes)

Let students work on their own. They refer to the text and find the words which mean the same as the words on their work sheets (see overleaf).

When they have finished, check together by asking individual students for the right answers.

aim: to get students to deduce the meaning of new words by finding words with the same meaning.

1: FIND IN THE TEXT WORDS WHICH MEAN:

zdvořile
rozhodnout se
boule
pozvat
cítit (se) - min.čas
put something somewhere quietly and secretly
strange
put something on the top of something
become husband and wife

2. FILL THE GAPS

You can what to do next.
Peter weak yesterday . He can be ill.
Don't all the books on the table.
John and Mary will get soon.
Paul does not like wearing a hat but his mum it into his pocket.
People think John is because he does not talk to anyone.

3. Write 5 sentences using words from ex. 1

4. Gap filling (10 minutes)

Students individually fill words in blanks on their work sheets (see above).

aim: to get students to use the new words in different context while providing the context.

5. Writing (5 minutes)

Students write five of their own sentences using the new words. When they have finished, check together both stages 3 and 4.

aim: to get students to use the new words in different context and more freely than in stage 4.

C. REFLECTION

1. Pre-reading

a. I wanted students to talk in pairs about "The Princess and the pea" but they did not know it so I had to elicit it by asking questions and giving clues. Then some students remembered the story and were able to retell it.

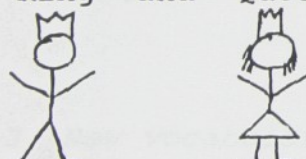
b. (prediction)

Students had the following ideas which they were able to express in English:

- the King and Queen will want the Prince to marry a Princess who wins a bowling competition.
- they will want the Prince to marry a Princess who can sleep on a bowling ball under one mattress. That shows that she is not spoiled.
- they do not have a son but a daughter and she can marry a Prince who will not feel a bowling ball under one mattress.

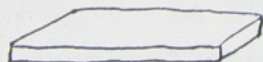
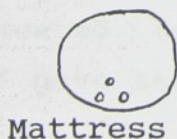
Students wrote the key words on the blackboard:

King and Queen -----> Prince and Princess



Pea

Bowling ball



It went well because the students enjoyed predicting the story and found their predictions very funny, they all laughed. It motivated them for reading because they wanted to know what

really happened in the story. They knew all the needed vocabulary.

2. Reading

First, I read the story aloud and the students listened for the gist. They enjoyed listening as I expected, because most of the children like fairy tales. They were very interested in it, listened carefully and when I finished they laughed, which, I thought meant, that they had got the gist. I asked them if they knew what happened. They gave me an answer in Czech: "Princ podváděl." I gave them the translation: "The Prince cheated."

Then the students got the text and read it silently. Their task was to spot the differences between the classic story and this one.

They gave me answers like: "The Prince took the pea and put there a bowling ball because he wanted to marry this Princess."

This went very well. Students got the gist after the first reading and then read it carefully again because they liked the idea of the story, it made them laugh.

3. New vocabulary - work with photocopies

Students were not used to working with a reading text (especially not after they have already read it). I had to keep reminding them to refer to the text to find the answers. They seemed to have difficulties so we did one word together and I gave them some clues.

Teacher: "Take for example 'put on the top'. What kind of a word is it?"

Students: "Verb."

Teacher: "Yes. So the word you are looking for should be a verb too. Now, where in the text does someone put something on the top of something?"

Students: "When they put mattresses on the pea."

Teacher: "Yes. Find it in the text and read it."

Students: "They would pile one hundred mattresses. PILE."

After this example students knew what to do. Most of the students enjoyed it as they competed among themselves. Everyone wanted to be the first one finished. They found it interesting because it was something new for them, they had not done it before. We checked it together and most of the students found the right words.

The only mistake was '*strange*'. Some students thought it meant '*royal*'. The right word from the text was '*odd*'. One student told me that he could not find any other adjectives that he did not know so he thought that royal meant strange even though it did not make much sense to him. When he heard the right answer he agreed and said he must have overlooked it.

4. Filling the gaps

This went well. Students worked quickly and made no mistakes because they had done gap filling before.

5. Writing

This went surprisingly well. I did not expect the students to produce very good sentences because I thought it was quite difficult but I must admit that I underestimated them. Students came up with very good sentences such as:

"I have a big lump on my head because I had a fight with Pepa."

"I felt sick this morning but I went to school."

"I felt terrible after lunch at school."

"Honza is odd because he doesn't like Rambo and all my friends like him."

"I slipped a mouse into Jana's shoe."

D. CONCLUSION

I found that it is very important to choose the "right" text. Our text was suitable, students enjoyed reading it and it provided good vocabulary. It was not either too easy, nor too difficult because students knew a great deal of vocabulary and were also familiar with most of the grammar structures but there still were some items they did not know which made it challenging.

Prediction from the title and picture was very useful because it warmed up the students, it familiarised them with the topic and vocabulary. Students came to the text prepared and got the gist after the first reading.

Students are not used to working with a text after reading, even though it provides a great deal of vocabulary. Because they had to think about the meaning of the words rather than memorizing them, they understood it in wider concept. That was proved in gap filling and writing where students used the words in different context. Evidence, in my opinion, that they enjoyed it, was that they came up with some "silly" ideas (stage 1) and sentences in stage 5.

In order to make the answers in the stage 3 clear to all students I could have asked them to read the sentences which contained the new words and to explain their decision.

I will do that next time to make sure that students really know what they are doing and to develop their orientation in the text.

LESSON 2

Thesis: "USING STUDENT-CENTRED ACTIVITIES SUCH AS BRAINSTORMING, CONTEXTUAL GUESSING, PREDICTION AND VARIOUS VOCABULARY EXERCISES LEADS TO STUDENTS' BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF TEXTS AND NEW VOCABULARY ITEMS WITHIN THE TEXT."

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Synopsis

This lesson centred on a reading text "Zoos to the rescue" about development of zoos. It describes the first public zoos and their terrible conditions and the zoos today. It also considers the relation between men and animals in the past and in the present.

It began with a warm-up discussion about people keeping animals and about Liberec ZOO.

Then students read the text for themselves and that was followed by contextual guessing activities focused on accurate usage of vocabulary. Students needed to refer to the text in order to find the answers. Finally, students wrote five sentences in which they used the new words from the text.

Thesis objectives

In this lesson I wanted to show that for better understanding it is important to prepare students for the text; in this case by a discussion related to the topic. I also wanted to give students interesting activities which would help them to deduce the meaning of new words themselves and to understand the new words better and in wider context than if they just memorised a list of words with their translations.

The first discussion activity was student centred to the extent that they were able to give their own ideas in a genuine

class discussion, which familiarised students with the text and some vocabulary (stage 1).

To get students involved in the process of learning I had them work individually on deducing the meaning of new words in a contextual guessing activity and a crossword (stage 3 and 4).

To allow students to utilize and practise the new words, I let them do a gapfill exercise and a freer writing activity in which students wrote their own sentences.

Teaching aims

- to develop students' ability to predict the text content before reading by a class discussion related to the topic of the text.
- to develop students' ability to deduce the meaning of new words by contextual guessing from the text.
- to develop students' ability to use new words in different contexts by having students to write their own sentences.

Target language

The following vocabulary appeared in the text and I wanted students to learn it: polluted, to worry, behind bars, extinct, to climb, to survive, wild, to depend on, to increase, to remain.

Assumptions

Students should be familiar with the tense structures used in the text.

Anticipated problems, solutions

I thought that students might have problems with contextual guessing exercise because they had not done it before. If they would not be able to tell the meaning of the words from the sentences on their work sheets I would have to remind them to

refer to the text; to look for the context from which they could guess the meaning. I would monitor and if they could not do it, I would help them by showing them where to look for the information.

Materials

- text (Beginnings, p.62)
- photocopies of exercises

B. PROCEDURE

1. Class discussion (10 minutes)

Brainstorm with students their opinions concerning the keeping of animals in zoos. Also ask about Liberec zoo.

aim: to get students to think about animals in zoos so they understand the point of the text better; to elicit some target vocabulary.

2. Reading (5 minutes)

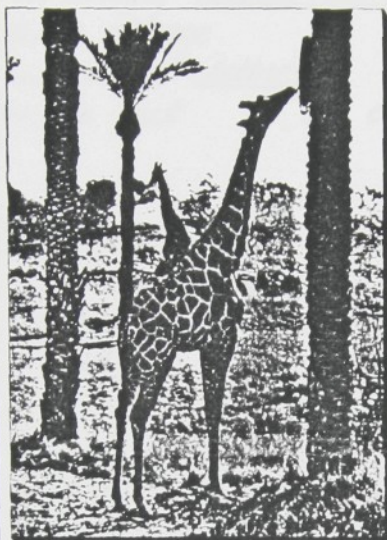
Let students read the text (see overleaf) silently (several times if they feel the need).

aim: to get students to read for the gist.

ZOOS TO THE RESCUE

Years ago, rich people collected strange animals and kept them in private parks. These were the first zoos. Later, public zoos were built for all people to enjoy.

- Do you care about animals?
- How have zoos changed in how they care for animals?



The first public zoos were simple places. The animals were kept behind bars in small cages. They had nothing to do all day. They looked at people and people looked at them. That was all. They had no trees to climb, no water to swim in, no caves to hide in. A zoo

was just a place for people to stare at animals.

Then, things changed. Many kinds of wild animals started to die out. There were a number of reasons for this. People began to take over lands where animals lived. The animals were crowded together in smaller places and did not have enough food to survive. People shot animals for food and for their beautiful skins. They killed animals for sport. Also, people polluted the land and the water that wild animals depended on.

People began to worry: Would endangered animals, like pandas, elephants, and tigers, become extinct? When an animal becomes extinct it means that there are no more animals of that kind alive anywhere on earth.

The zoos came to the rescue. It was no longer enough just to show animals sitting behind bars. The endangered animals had to be saved. So many zoos changed the way in which they treated their animals.

Today, many zoos don't keep their animals in small cages. Good zoos are designed to be like the natural habitats of the animals. The animals—especially endangered animals—can live naturally, have healthy babies, and increase in number. At the same time, you can see how they live in the wild.

A good beginning has been made, but a lot more remains to be done.

3. Contextual guessing (15 minutes)

- a. Students individually refer to the text and find the words that mean the same as underlined words on the photocopy (see overleaf).

Then they refer to the text and try to guess the meaning of new words.

- b. Check together by asking individual students to say the answer and read the sentences in the text which explain the meaning.

aim: to get students to deduce the meaning of new words by contextual guessing.

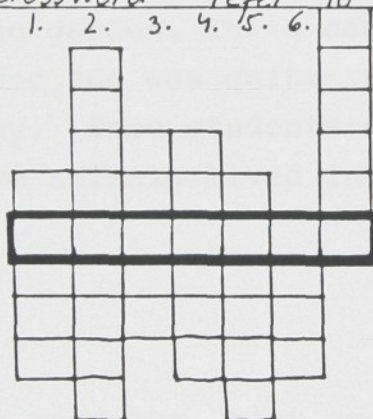
① Circle the letter of choice that best tells the meaning of underlined word

- * People polluted the land and the water...
 - a. made dirty, not healthy
 - b. cleaned
- * People began to worry...
 - a. to be happy
 - b. to feel bad, to fear
- * ... sitting behind bars
 - a. in a cage
 - b. in a restaurant
- * ... become extinct
 - a. die out
 - b. change

② Find these words in the text and try to guess their meaning

climb	survive	increase
wild	depend on	remain

③ Crossword - refer to the text



1. where animals were kept
2. start
3. people shot animals for this
4. what kind of places were the first zoos?
5. small children
6. people polluted it
7. endangered animals

4. Crossword (5 minutes)

Students refer to the text and fill in the crossword (see above). The given clues are sentences from the text.

aim: to help students to better understand the new words by finding the meaning in the text.

5. Writing (10 minutes)

Let students write five of their own sentences, using the new words. Check together by having individual students read their sentences.

aim: to get students to use new words in different context.

C. REFLECTION

1. Class discussion

Students like animals and most of them have a pet at home (cats, dogs, fish, hamsters, mice) so they were keen on talking about it. They said they kept them in different places (in the kitchen, in the garden, in a cage, in a box, in a tank). They said that Liberec zoo was quite nice, that animals had big cages and looked happy. Some students said that they had been in much worse zoos where animals lived in very small cages.

2. Reading

Students read the text once and said they wanted to read it again because it was quite difficult. After the second reading they said they had understood the gist but they did not know a great deal of words.

3. Contextual guessing

a. Students worked eagerly on this exercise. They were very competitive so everyone worked on their own to be the first one to have all the right answers.

The only problem was '*behind bars*'. Students did not look in the text because they assumed the "bar" is "bar" = "hospoda"

in Czech and wrote that '*sitting behind bars*' means in a restaurant. So I asked the students to find it in the text. They read the sentence "The animals were kept behind bars in small cages". They laughed because they realised that animals could not sit in a restaurant and corrected themselves that it meant "in a cage".

b. They already knew "*climb*" and "*wild*". Students guessed the meaning of most words. The only problem was "*remain*". Students thought it meant "*věci*" (things), "*příhoda*" (story), *udělat* (to do). I helped them by telling them that the word is a verb and by giving them some examples such as "one more exercise remains for you to do ". Then they guessed it.

4. Crossword

Students worked fast because they are used to doing crosswords and they like them. The first student wrote the answers on the blackboard and when the others finished they checked it. I monitored and saw the most students had the correct answers.

5. Writing

Students came up with very good sentences such as:

"Babies depend on their parents."

"I tried to climb the tree but I fell."

"The water in Nisa is polluted."

"I can't survive without food."

"Prizes of cars increased."

D. CONCLUSION

I found out in this lesson that the topic of the text is very important. If the students are interested, they are willing

to discuss it even with limited vocabulary. The discussion before reading not only prepared students for the text by revising the vocabulary but also made students more interested in it because they wanted to know what happened in the story, what the author's opinion was and so on.

Contextual guessing (stage 3) is an activity students are not used to even though everyone does it unconsciously while reading a text in a foreign language. That is why it should be further developed. It also helps students to understand the meaning of words better and they are able to use them in different context as in stage 5.

I could have asked students to underline the words in the text (stage 3) and I should have numbered the paragraphs for better reference in the checking stage. Students then could say, for example "simple - paragraph 1, first sentence, means...." and everyone could quickly find it. I will do that in the next lesson.

I could have also explained to the students why I wanted them to do contextual guessing (that they do it unconsciously every time they read) because I do not think that they are aware of it. It might have increased their motivation, if they knew it was "good" for them; that they could use it practically.

LESSON 3

Thesis: "USING STUDENT-CENTRED ACTIVITIES SUCH AS BRAINSTORMING, CONTEXTUAL GUESSING, PREDICTION AND VARIOUS VOCABULARY EXERCISES LEADS TO STUDENTS' BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF TEXTS AND NEW VOCABULARY ITEMS WITHIN THE TEXT."

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Synopsis

The lesson centred on a reading text "The Mystery Of The Dinosaur" about theories on how the dinosaurs died out (sudden weather change, asteroid crash, star explosion, food problems - no plants, no meat). It began with a warm-up discussion about the dinosaurs. Then students worked in groups and each group presented their theory on why the dinosaurs died out. Then I read the story aloud and the students listened for the theories mentioned in the text. Next the students read the story for themselves to find the theories which they did not catch for the first time. It was followed by activities focused on accurate usage of vocabulary - finding words with the same meaning, unscrambling words, gap filling, a crossword. Finally, students wrote five sentences using the new words. For homework students were asked to make a crossword using the new words.

Thesis objectives

What I wanted to do in this lesson was to show that students would understand the text better if they were familiar with the topic of the text before reading. So, to remind students of some vocabulary and to make them think about the topic, I started with a class discussion about the dinosaurs and reasons

why the dinosaurs died out which was also the topic of the text (stage 1).

I also wanted to show that if students were involved in the process of deducing the meaning of new words without too much help or interference, they would understand the meaning of new words better and in wider context. For this reason I had the students individually work on the vocabulary activities: finding words with the same meaning, unscrambling words and a crossword (stage 3). To ensure that the students had clearly understood the meaning of new words, the vocabulary activities were followed by using the new words in a gapfill exercise (stage 4) and writing sentences in students' own context (stage 5). To make students think about the practical usage of the new words I let them create their own context.

Teaching aims

- to develop students' ability to predict text content before reading by discussing a topic related to the text.
- to develop students' scanning by having them read for specific information.
- to increase students' ability to deduce the meaning of new words by finding the words of the same meaning and by filling a crossword.
- to develop students' ability to use new words in different context by a gapfill exercise and writing their own sentences.

Target language

The vocabulary that I intended to teach the students was:
to hide, to appear, to explain, fur and feathers, plants, to protect, to move, to catch.

Assumptions

I assumed that students would be familiar with most of the tense structures used in the text. I also assumed that students would know something about the dinosaurs from biology lessons.

Anticipated problems, solutions

I thought that students might have problems in stage 1 where I wanted them to talk about the dinosaurs because they might not know any words related to the topic. In this case I was ready to give them the words they would need and write them on the blackboard.

Materials

- text (Beginnings, p. 118)
- photocopies of exercises

B. PROCEDURE

1. Class discussion (5 minutes)

- a. Brainstorm with students what they know about the dinosaurs.

Ask questions like: "What were the dinosaurs?"

"What did they eat?"

"Do they still live?"

"Have you seen 'Jurassic Park' - what happened?"

- b. Students work in groups. They discuss theories on why dinosaurs died out. Write the theories on the blackboard.

aim: to make students familiar with the text by discussing similar topic, to elicit some of the target vocabulary.

2. Reading (6 minutes)

- a. Read the story aloud (see below), let students listen for specific information: "What are the theories on why the dinosaurs died out mentioned in the text?"
- b. Give students the text to read silently for the theories they did not catch for the first time.

aim: to develop students' understanding of the text without understanding every single word, to develop students' scanning by having them read for specific information.

THE MYSTERY OF THE DINOSAUR

More than 200 million years ago, dinosaurs appeared on the earth. About 65 million years ago, they disappeared.

- What happened to make the dinosaur die out?
- Will anybody ever really know?



1 Dinosaurs were the largest animals ever to live on land. For 140 million years, they ruled the animal world. Then, the dinosaurs all died out. There are many theories that attempt to explain what caused the dinosaurs to die out.

2 One theory is that during the time of the dinosaurs, the weather on earth suddenly became much, much colder. Dinosaurs had no fur or feathers to protect them from the cold. They were too large to hide in warm places. So they died.

3 Another weather theory has it that an asteroid crashed into the earth. Dust from the

crash blocked the light and the heat given off by the sun. Again, the weather became too cold for the dinosaurs.

4 Some scientists believe that a star blew up during the lifetime of the dinosaurs. The explosion may have produced dangerous radiation. The radiation could have killed the dinosaurs.

5 Other scientists believe that the dinosaurs' problems had to do with food. Some dinosaurs ate nothing but plants. The plants that the dinosaurs ate stopped growing. New plants appeared, but they were not good for the dinosaurs. So, the plant-eating dinosaurs had no food. And they died off.

6 The meat-eating dinosaurs had a different food problem. Many new kinds of animals began to appear in the places where the dinosaurs lived. They were smaller than dinosaurs, so they could move more quickly. That made them better able to catch the prey that they and the meat-eating dinosaurs needed for food. So, the meat-eating dinosaurs also had no food. And they died off.

7 There is probably no single theory that explains why the dinosaurs died out. We do know that conditions on the earth changed during their lifetime. And the dinosaurs could not change with them.

3. Deduction of meaning of new words (21 minutes)

Students work individually with the photocopies (see below). They refer to the text and:

- find the words in the text that mean the same as translation on the photocopy;
- unscramble the letters in the words from the text which translations are given;
- fill in the crossword.

aim: to develop students' ability to deduce the meaning of new words by finding words with the same meaning as words they have in Czech.

7.A

1. Find words from the text that mean:

- schovat se
- objevit se
- ryšvřtit
- kůži a perí

2. Unscramble the letters in the words from the text.

You have their Czech translation

- rostliny SINAPL
- chránit TECTORP
- polybovat OVEM
- chytat CCHTA

3. fill in the gaps

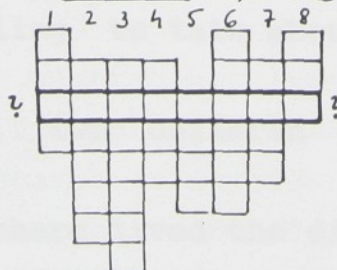
I can't find my book. Where did you _____ it?

Birds have _____.

I don't understand it. Can you _____ it?

You need warm clothes to _____ yourself against the cold.

4. CROSSWORD - refer to the text



1. dinosaurs were too large.

they couldn't

2. only one

3. dinosaurs were the largest...

4. when you don't have it, you're hungry

5. what exploded?

6. flowers and trees

7. what blocked the light?

8. dinosaurs did not have it

4. Gapfill exercise (6 minutes)

Students fill words in blanks on their photocopies (see previous page).

aim: to get students to use the new words in different context.

5. Writing (7 minutes)

Students write their own sentences using the new words.

aim: to get students to use the new words in different context more freely than in stage 4.

6. Homework

Students prepare a short crossword using the words from the text.

aim: to practise the new words.

C. REFLECTION

1. Class discussion

- a. Most of the students saw and liked the film 'Jurassic Park' so they were willing to talk about it. They gave me the plot of the film:

"An old man, two children and some other people went to a park."

"In the park there lived the dinosaurs."

"Once the electricity was switched off and the dinosaurs ... utekli." I helped them here and said: "Escaped".

"And they killed some people and eat them." Here I asked: "Eat?"
"Ate."

"And the island exploded and the people escaped."

b. Students discussed the theories while I monitored and gave them the words they needed such as "ice age, asteroid, crash, aliens".

c. Students gave the following theories which I wrote on the blackboard:

- asteroid crashed
- aliens killed the dinosaurs
- they could not breathe because the air was polluted
- they did not have anything to eat because it was too cold (ice age)

2. Reading

Students listened carefully and heard four theories out of five for the first time. Then they read it silently to find the last theory which they found very quickly.

3. Deduction of meaning of new words

Students were very competitive and worked quickly. One student was much quicker than the others so I asked him to underline all the new words in the text.

While I monitored some students were asking me whether they had the right answers so I asked them to tell me where they found the words and why they chose them and whether it made sense. If it was right they usually knew and if it was not they realised that it did not make sense and continued working. I also helped some students to elicit the answer by giving them some questions, for example: "SCHOVAT SE"

I asked: "Why would you want to hide?"

student: "When I do something wrong."

I: "Yes. What else. If you are outside."
student: "If I'm afraid."
I: "What else?"
student: "If I'm cold."
I: "Now, what could dinosaurs not do when they were cold?
Find it in the text."
student: They were too large to hide.... HIDE."

4. Gapfill exercise

Students worked quickly and made no mistakes. We checked it together. Students read sentences and also translated them.

One student made a mistake while reading the sentence in English: "You need warm clothes to 'appear' yourself." So I asked her to translate it. "Potřebuješ teplé oblečení abys objevil... Já, to né ... 'protect' yourself."

5. Writing

I did not plan on doing this but students worked very eagerly and quickly so we had some time left so I asked them to write couple of sentences, using the new words. They came up with good sentences such as:

"I hide under the table at home."
"A new animal appeared in the zoo."
"We have no plants in the classroom."

D. CONCLUSION

I found in this lesson that if the topic of the lesson is interesting students are willing to discuss it even if their vocabulary is limited. The discussion before reading helped students to better understand the text because they revised vocabulary that occurred in the text and also predicted part of the text so they knew what to expect.

I saw that students knew what to do in contextual guessing activities but sometimes needed someone to guide them; to give them some clues as they are not used to the activity very much.

I also found that translation in the checking stage is quite useful as it helps students to realise their mistakes.

Because some students were much quicker than others I had to give them some special work. Next time I will have to be prepared for this by having some exercises with me. I could have also change the seating arrangement and the quicker students could have helped the slower students. I will try that in the next lesson.

In the writing stage I could have provided the context by asking students not to write just some sentences but for example a short story. I will try that in the next lesson as well.

LESSON 4

Thesis: "USING STUDENT-CENTRED ACTIVITIES SUCH AS BRAINSTORMING, CONTEXTUAL GUESSING, PREDICTION AND VARIOUS VOCABULARY EXERCISES LEADS TO STUDENTS' BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF TEXTS AND NEW VOCABULARY ITEMS WITHIN THE TEXT."

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Synopsis

This lesson centred on a reading text "Cross country flyer", about a boy who had taken his first flying lessons when he was nine and soon after that piloted a small plane from Los Angeles to Washington.

It began with a warm-up discussion about ways of travelling, places which students visited by plane and about flying.

Then I provided three titles, read the story aloud and students had to decide which title is the best and why. After that students read the text silently and decided on their own title.

That was followed by activities focused on accurate usage of vocabulary. Students had to find opposites of the given words and fill in the crossword.

Finally, students wrote a short story in which they used at least seven of the new words.

Thesis objectives

In this lesson I wanted to illustrate that students could grasp the concept of the reading text more easily if they were prepared for it by, in this case, a discussion related to the topic of the text (stage 1).

I also intended to show that if students were involved in deducing the meaning of new words they would understand the meaning better and be able to use them in wider context than if they just memorised a list of words with their translations. So to get students to understand the meaning of the new words themselves, I made sure that the activities were suitable for their needs. For example, I had them look for opposites of words they already knew, to see if they were able to deduce the meaning of the opposites. By this process I wanted the students to become more aware of the meaning of the new words than by a simple translation (stage 3). To make sure that the activities which practised the new words were also enjoyable, I had students fill in a crossword, using the words from the text (stage 4). To encourage the students to comprehend the meanings of new words and to develop their creativity, the crossword was followed by freer writing work where the students wrote a short story using some of the new words. That came in stage 5 when the students already knew the meaning of the new words and were hopefully ready to use them in different context.

Teaching aims

- to develop students' ability to predict text content before reading by a discussion related to the topic of the text.
- to develop students' skimming by having them read for general idea in order to find a suitable title.
- to develop students' ability to deduce the meaning of new words by finding the opposites of given words and by a crossword.
- to develop students' ability to use the new words in different context by writing their own short story using the new words.

Target language

The vocabulary that I intended to teach the students was: young, to take off, love, solution, small, to start, pilot, astronaut, alone.

Assumptions

I assumed that students would be familiar with most of the tense structures used in the text.

Anticipated problems, solutions

I thought that students might have problems with finding the opposites of the words from the text (stage 3) because they had not done it before. I wanted to give them some examples and I could also use Czech to explain it as they had done opposites in the Czech language classes.

Materials

- text (Beginnings, p. 12)
- photocopies of exercises

B. PROCEDURE

1. Class discussion (7 minutes)

Brainstorm with students about ways of transport, flying. Ask questions like: "How can you travel?"

"Have you ever flown?"

"Where did you fly?"

"Would you like to fly a plane?"

"Which activities can you not do because you are not old enough?"

2. Reading (10 minutes)

a. Write these titles on the blackboard:

"Flying lessons"

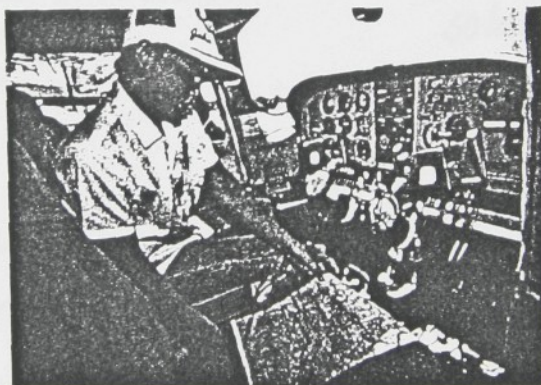
"Flying to the moon"

"Cross country flyer"

Read the text aloud (see below) and ask students which of the titles provided is the best and why.

b. Students read silently to find their own title.

aim: to develop students' understanding of the text without understanding every single word, to develop students' skimming by having them read for the gist and to find a new title.



1 John Kevin Hill did more than wish he could be a pilot. On June 24, 1987, he took off from an airport in Los Angeles, California. He was the pilot of a Cessna 210. Seven days later, he landed at National Airport in Washington, DC. John Kevin had piloted a small plane for 2,500 miles!

2 John Kevin first took flying lessons when he was nine years old. He loved the feeling of flying right from the start. He did have a problem seeing out of the plane, but sitting on two pillows took care of that.

3 Because John Kevin is so young, he is not allowed to fly alone. It is against the law for

anyone under 16 to fly solo. An adult pilot must always be on board. John Kevin's flying teacher, Mike Fields, flew across the country with him. Mike had his own set of controls. He could have taken over the plane at any time if something had gone wrong. But nothing ever did. John Kevin was the pilot all the way from Los Angeles to Washington, DC.

Now that John Kevin has flown cross-country, what does he plan to do next? He wants to fly around the world in 1989. After that, he hopes to become an astronaut. John Kevin really wants to go to the moon. He just might do it!

4

3. Finding the opposites (8 minutes)

Students work individually with the photocopies (see below). They underline the given words in the text and then refer to the text in order to match the opposites of those words.

Give examples: black - white, short - tall, cold - warm, happy - sad, small - big.

aim: to develop students' ability to deduce the meaning of new words by finding their opposites.

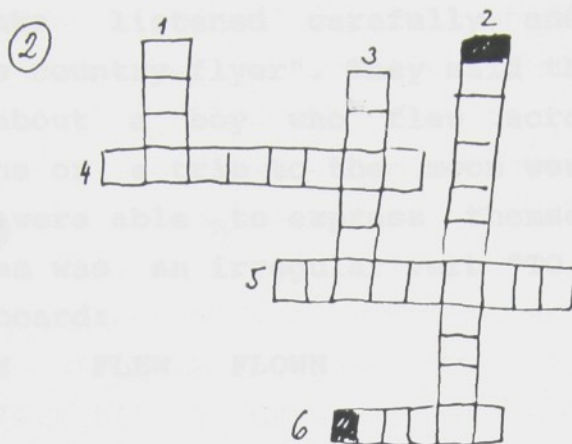
- ① The words on the left are all taken from the story. Underline them in the text and then find words that have opposite meanings in the right column. Draw a line from each word to its opposite.

young	hate
take off.	solution
later	large
love	something
problem	land
nothing	earlier
small	old
with	end
start	without

4. Crossword (6 minutes)

Students work with their photocopies (see overleaf). They fill in the crossword.

aim: to help students to better understand the new words by finding them in the text.



ACROSS:

4. system for operating an airplane
5. what John Kevin wants to become when he grows up
6. he is not allowed to fly...

DOWN:

1. alone
2. where John Kevin's plane ended up
3. person who operates an airplane

5. Writing (15 minutes)

Students work in pairs. Each pair writes a short story using at least seven new words.

aim: to get students to use the new words in different context.

C. REFLECTION

1. Class discussion

Students were willing to discuss travelling and the ways of transport (trams, buses, trains, cars, planes). Most of them have travelled by plane once but mostly they use buses and cars. One student said that he would like to be a pilot but the others said they did not want to do that because it is very dangerous. I also asked them what they could not do because of their age (I asked because the pilot in the text was about the same age as the students) and they said they could not drive a car, go to the cinema to see adult rated films, to work and earn some money, to buy alcohol.

2. Reading

- a. Students listened carefully and chose the original title "Cross country flyer". They said they had chosen it because it was about a boy who flew across the country. The flying lessons or a trip to the moon were mentioned but only once. They were able to express themselves in English, the only problem was an irregular verb "TO FLY" so I wrote it on the blackboard:

TO FLY FLEW FLOWN

- b. Students skimmed through the text and decided on their own titles. They came up with the following titles:

"Dreams come true"

"A young pilot"

"A future astronaut"

"John cannot drive a car but can fly a plane"

"2,500 miles in seven days"

3. Finding the opposites

Students did not know what opposites meant so I gave them some examples and then they understood and gave me a Czech translation "slova opačná". They did not seem to have problems with this. Only some students could not match "to take off" with its opposite but I elicited the answer by asking them to find the word in the text. They read the sentence: "He took off from an airport in Los Angeles, California." So I asked: "What do you think he did?" She answered in Czech: "Vzlétnul." And then she found the opposite "to land".

4. Crossword

Students worked fast because they like crosswords and they are used to doing them.

5. Writing

Students enjoyed writing short stories as they found it very funny because some of them came up with some "silly" ideas. I monitored and helped students if they needed some words they did not know. They also had dictionaries which they could use. There are some examples below:

"Once upon a time there was an OLD PILOT. His LOVE was his YOUNG dog. His name was Zoro. Once they FLEW to America in a big plane. Zoro bit a SMALL man in the leg. When they LANDED the PILOT took the SMALL man to hospital. But they had a PROBLEM because he did not have a passport. He had to fly back. Zoro bit him again. When they LANDED again, the police waited for him because he was a prisoner. He escaped. Zoro became a hero."

"YOUNG ASTRONAUT was on a magic journey. He TOOK OFF from the Earth and FLEW to the space. But it was dark and he did not know where he was. He LANDED on a OLD planet. Everything was SMALL. He was there ALONE. He was there for a very long time and then he died because he had no water and NOTHING to eat."

"One SMALL frog WITH LARGE eyes had a big PROBLEM. It LOVED one cat. The cat didn't like frog's eyes and the frog was very unhappy. It had no solution and it asked its mother what to do. The mother said: "It will be alright." At the END, when they were OLD, the frog married the cat."

D. CONCLUSION

I found in this lesson that a discussion before reading could make students more interested in the text. They can discuss some topic and then a question which seems not to relate to this topic can be asked (in this lesson "What can you not do because of your age?"). It is a bit puzzling for the students and they wonder what the text is all about.

I also realised that it is vital to give students some task to do while listening and reading because then they concentrate on the text much more (in this lesson it was choosing the right title).

Finally, I think that different contextual guessing exercises (stage 3 and 4) help students to better understand the meaning of new words and then they can confidently use them in different context (stage 5). I also found that translation could be useful while guessing the meaning of new words because it helps students to realise what a word really means.

In my paper I tried to verify the thesis that various student-centred activities can lead to students' better understanding of reading texts and the vocabulary they contain.

For that purpose I explored different pre-, during-, and post-reading activities and decided to try them in connection with reading texts. Pre-reading activities were brainstorming, predicting, and class discussion. During-reading activities included skimming, scanning, reading for deeper understanding and reading aloud. We could also talk about these as various reading techniques. Finally, post-reading activities were contextual guessing, finding synonyms and antonyms, gap filling, crosswords and short writing.

I found that all three kinds of activities (pre-, during-, post-reading) were linked together and they should not be omitted. They all involve students by letting them take an active part in the learning process because as Harmer (1991) puts it, students, rather than just learn words, should be able to manipulate them (Jeremy Harmer, 1991: 179), and this is exactly what these activities let students do.

Brainstorming and prediction in the pre-reading section were useful because they warmed up the students and familiarised them with some of the target vocabulary. Students created some expectations about the text, and because they wanted to confirm

their expectations they were keen to read.

I also tried different techniques of reading (reading for deeper understanding, reading aloud, skimming and scanning). Reading aloud was slow and the students lost interest quickly. In reading for deeper understanding, skimming and scanning, the students were keen and better prepared for post-reading activities.

After reading the students worked on their own. Contextual guessing was a small problem from the beginning, as the students were not used to it and did not know how to do it. Later, however it became a favourite activity. Finding synonyms and opposites was also new to students but did not cause any problems. Crosswords were not taken as an exercise but more as a free-time activity so the students enjoyed them while working and learning. That they learned the new words from the crosswords was proved in activities such as gap filling and short writing tasks (writing sentences and short stories) where the students successfully used the new words in different contexts.

At the end of my teaching practice, the students anonymously voted for the best and worst activities. Here are the results summarised in a chart. Twelve students took part in voting. In brackets, there are numbers of students that voted for the particular activities

THE WORST ACTIVITY - reading aloud (5)
 - guessing the meaning of new words (1)
 - none (6)

THE BEST ACTIVITY - crosswords (5)
 - guessing the meaning of new words (3)
 - opposites and synonyms (2)
 - prediction before reading (2)

It seems clear from these results that the students enjoyed most of the activities. The only thing they did not like was reading aloud which, as I wrote in part 1, is not a very efficient activity. It should be noted that not all students liked the same activities which highlights the need for variety in order to interest the majority.

Even though I only had a short time to try out various student-centred vocabulary activities connected with reading texts, I found that as Harmer writes (1991): "... involvement with words is likely to help students to learn and remember them. In other words, if we can provide the right kind of exposure to words for the students, ... then there is a good chance that the students will remember some or all of them" (Jeremy Harmer, 1991: 160). I would add to this that they will hopefully be able to use the words in meaningful communication. Some teachers might say that these activities are time consuming, but they have the huge advantage of involving students in the process of learning. They also provide a foundation for further development.

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