

MYR

## Talk 2

Pre-teaching new words isn't easy.

How can you teach students the new words they are going to meet in a reading passage in such a way that they <sup>actually</sup> remember them?

If you simply translate or explain a dozen new words one after the other the chances are that many of your students will simply forget them.

I think the key to pre-teaching words is that the students should be active. Ideally the student should be put into a position of wanting to use the word and therefore wanting to know its meaning.

This is exactly what happens in the following vocabulary pre-teaching exercise.

I'd like to take you through it step by step.

In <sup>your</sup> preparation, pick out 10 words ~~from~~ the passage that will be new to the class and ten known words.

When you get into class the first step is to write these 20 words up on the board.

Step 2- ask a student to come to board and circle three words.

He or she then dictates a sentence to the class that includes the circled words.

If the sentence is grammatically correct you do nothing.

If the sentence has mistakes in , you write it down on the board, exactly the way the student said it.

Ask the student " Are you happy with your sentence?"

Give him or her time to find out where the <sup>le</sup> mistakes are.

At first protect the protagonist student from help from classmates. <sup>Only</sup> allow help from the class if the student can't see what's wrong. Let him or her take the chalk and correct the sentence on the board.

Step 3 The student designates another student who rings three more words and again dictates a sentence to the class that includes the words. You follow the same procedure: only take the sentence down on board if it's wrong. etc.....

~~Students will often play safe and start off working <sup>with</sup> the words they already know. The time comes when they have to use unknown words and this is the time to explain. <sup>them</sup> Explaining <sup>a</sup> word a student has asked about is very different from explaining it just because it ~~is~~ there.~~

~~The pre-teaching part of this activity finishes when all the words ~~on the~~ board have been used in sentences. You then give out the passage for the students to read.~~

This way of teaching vocabulary is effective for a number of reasons:

- All the students are active: ~~the person at the board has to choose the words to work on and make a sentence. The others have to take the sentence down and decide if it is correct.~~
- The main focus of attention is on getting the sentences correct- the learning of the new words becomes a secondary task. The human mind <sup>struggles</sup> often works better when it is engaged in two things at once.
- <sup>the</sup> student is only taught the meaning of a new word when he or she decides to ask.
- the teacher's role is one of feed-back and reaction to student initiatives. While being a key figure in the process, the teacher does not dominate the work being done.

You can use this pre-teaching technique with any level from post beginner to advanced and with virtually any type of text.

Have fun with it.

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