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Conceptualisation of Language and Vocabulary Learning Strategies: Key Aspect in Every Curriculum Area.

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ABSTRACTTeaching vocabulary well is a key aspect of developing engaged and successful readers.In line with the constructivist theoryliteracy is a social practice, so learners learn academic vocabulary through social interactions as members of the learning community. Challenges of suchconceptualization and implementation of vocabulary development strategies are numerous.This conceptual paper examines Language learning (LLS) and Vocabulary language Strategies (VLS) used to teach vocabulary in schools. The paper reviews literature on the philosophical concept of Language learning strategies and Vocabulary Language Strategies. The paper analyzes the significant usage of VLS as prominent strategies in teaching vocabulary as informed by conceptual and theoretical frameworks of cognitive and metacognitive theories which have been proved by reading researchers in L1, ESL and EFL teaching contexts. A number of data bases in fields such as sociology; early childhood, psychology were used to examine literature on VLS. The paper includes strategies that teachers can use to enhance language and vocabulary learning to learners(that includes strategies that can increase vocabulary knowledge through direct instruction.)

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to review Language and Learning Strategies (LLS) and Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS). This paper explores vocabulary instruction and its benefits. Various aspects of vocabulary instruction will be covered, including practices, research based language and vocabulary learning strategies and share effective instructional strategies that primary grades teachers can use to teach vocabulary in the language and the difference between direct and indirect instruction. Teachers will be offered ideas and will learn what researchers have to say about this topic.

These strategies can be used to help teachers create a more conducive environment in which teachers can feel more comfortable as they progress towards the goal of teaching vocabulary. It is hoped that teachers will use these strategies to help learners to become competent readers who can read the text with understanding. In this article important research based language and vocabulary learning strategies share effective instructional strategies that primary grades teachers can use to teach vocabulary in the language.

It is believed that vocabulary learning strategy is one of the fundamental factors in gaining success in the academic field. Strategies play a very critical role in comprehension because readers use them to construct the coherent mental representation and explanation of the situation described in the text (Graesser, 2007). In a classroom setting, teachers must provide for a variety of learners with a variety of words to learn, related concepts and their meanings. Learners need strong instructional opportunities to build their personal warehouse of words to develop deep levels of word knowledge and acquire a toolbox of learning strategies that aids their independent acquisition of VLS (Butler, Urrutia, Buenger, Gonzalez, Hunt and Eisenhart, 2010). However, there continues to be little research that conclusively identifies the best methods or combination of methods of vocabulary instruction (NRP, 2000). In their research of first and second language reading/vocabulary, Hunt and Beglar (2005) recommend that teachers should use a combination of direct (explicit) and indirect (implicit) techniques in order to facilitate vocabulary acquisition. Using direct techniques refer to teaching specific words, such as teaching vocabulary prior to reading a selection. Employing indirect technique means helping learners develop an appreciation for words and having them read a lot (Baumann, Kame'enui & Ash, 2003, Hunt and Beglar (2005).

Teachers should incorporate vocabulary as an essential component of communication and comprehension competence and they should pay attention to learners' individual needs and be able to employ developmentally appropriate methods to help learners to do well. They should attach importance to current research-based strategies to teach language. Research indicates that without adequate vocabulary skills, the learners' ability to communicate are severely limited (Westwood, 2001).

Research has shown that vocabulary is a principle contributor to comprehension, fluency and achievement (Westwood, 2001; Graesser, 2007). Word knowledge is crucial to reading comprehension and determines how well learners will be able to comprehend the texts they read in middle and high school (Chall & Jacobs, 2003; Hirsch, 2003). This necessitates the need to have learners afforded strong instructional opportunities to build their personal warehouse of words to develop deep levels of word knowledge and acquire a toolbox of learning strategies that aid their independent acquisition of VLS (Butler, Urrutia, Buenger, Gonzalez, Hunt and Eisenhart, 2010). This paper thus aims to illustrate that vocabulary is the predictor of success in reading and that if we could find ways of supporting learners in class, more learners will be able to read the text with understanding (Wagner, 2005).

Problem statement

Research indicates that there are various causes of reading difficulties, some of which can be traced back to early years of learning. One such reading problem is founded on learners' inability to accumulate adequate vocabulary and relate vocabulary or words to contextual meaning or comprehension.

Purpose of inquiry and inquiry questions

This conceptual paper is intended to identify and understand the strategies that can enhance language and vocabulary in learners. Therefore, the inquiry questions for this paper are:

- How can various VLS be employed to enhance learners' language learning?
- How can various VLS enhance learners' vocabulary learning?

Social constructivism as a theoretical Framework for VLS & LLS

According to Scott, Nagy and Flinspach (2008), vocabulary knowledge occurs within the socio-cultural environment of the home, community and classroom. According to them, literacy is a social practice, so learners learn academic vocabulary through social interactions as members of the learning community. Therefore, effective teachers of language and literacy provide practices that stimulate rich uses of language within a social context that promotes vocabulary learning. In this regard, vocabulary is referred to as the glue that holds stories, ideas and content together making comprehension accessible to learners (Rupley, Logan & Nichols, 1998).

For the purpose of this article the researcher identified the social constructivist theory as the most relevant learning theory. According to social learning theory, learning is a reasonably enduring change in observable behaviour that occurs as a result of experience (Slavin, 2000; Eggen and Kauchak, 2001). The emphasis is thus on the acquisition of new behaviours via the imitation of actions modelled by the other which is a teacher in the context of this article. The same applies to vocabulary knowledge: it comes about when the individual controls another to behave in a certain way. Usually in the classroom, it is the teacher who is the significant other to the learner, resulting in the learner acquiring some vocabulary competence. The social learning theory emphasizes that learning occurs as a result of reinforcement of particular behaviours by the learners social and environmental influences. Within the context of this article, vocabulary is viewed as a conditioned behaviour which cannot occur in a vacuum. The implication of this theory is that if teachers can provide rich and varied language experiences, teach individual words, teach word-learning strategies and foster word consciousness to the learners on regular basis, they act as positive role models (Graves, 2006).

The teacher must teach learners to acquire self-regulatory competence in order to become independent readers and learn to read and use the appropriate strategies needed for the text. These processes are planned and adapted to support the pursuit of personal goals in changing learning environments. Zimmerman (1998) proposed the idea of learners themselves being the source of plans, intentions, strategies and the emotions that are necessary to create meaning from the written text. According to Zimmerman (1998), teaching multiple strategies is important, since the self-regulatory strategy will not work for all learners and using a few strategies will not work on all tasks. Zimmerman suggests multiple self-regulatory strategies rather than single strategies and states that learners can be taught to become more self-regulated. This view is linked to the constructivist theory. By learning to self-regulate a skill from peers, parents or

teachers, each new generation of learners can build on the achievement of prior generations and avoid the mistakes of the past (Zimmerman, 1998). This is relevant to vocabulary learning strategies.

Language and Vocabulary Learning Strategies (LLS&VLS): Evidence from literature

A review of vocabulary learning strategies to be taught in developing language and comprehension in learners is important. The purpose of reviewing research-based literature is to provide teachers with the theoretical knowledge base of what research says about teaching vocabulary. Teachers teach from experience, it is appropriate and orderly that in their classrooms, they should integrate theory and practice to enhance learners' language and vocabulary. In addition, studies demonstrate that successful learners are those who apply a variety of strategies since this contribute to learners' success in language skills and vocabulary. Both L1 and L2 researchers agree that good language learners are those who have better ways of handling their problems in the learning process when the need arises(Nation, 2001).

Oxford(1990:8) states:

‘Learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations.’ In this view the learner is not passive but is actively involved in the learning process. In addition, Oxford points that the importance of learning strategies is that they improve proficiency and greater self- confidence in learners. The learner is confident because when the need arises he/she knows which strategy to use which makes learning more enjoyable.

There is an interrelationship between language learning strategies and vocabulary learning strategies. According to (Nation, 2001, Schmitt(1997) language learning strategies (LLS) form a sub class of learning strategies in general whereas vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) constitute sub-class of language learning strategies. In the same vein, researchers such as O'Malley and Chamot, (1990) and Oxford(1990) confirmed that VLS forms a subclass of framework for language learning strategies and for this reason are applicable to a wide variety of language learning (LL) tasks. In essence, the vast majority of language learning strategies listed in taxonomy by Oxford, (1990) are either vocabulary learning strategies or can be used for vocabulary learning tasks. In this paper the researcher reviewed language and vocabulary

Language and Vocabulary learning strategies

learning. This is because in learning any language, vocabulary becomes crucial and therefore it should be taught and learnt.

Oxford,(1990:9) states that:

Features of LLS contribute to the goal of communicative competence which allow learners to become more self-directed, expand the role of teachers, problem-oriented, specific actions to be taken by the learner, involve many aspects of the learner, not just cognitive, support learning both directly and indirectly, are not always observable, are often conscious, can be taught, are flexible and are influenced by a variety of factors.

Categories of Language Learning Strategies (LLS)

A number of researchers have proposed several classifications of language learning strategies. For example Rubin (1981), Oxford (1990) and Oxford and Crookall (1990:404) classified language learning strategies into two broad categories namely direct and indirect strategies which they sub-divided into six categories. According to Oxford and Crookall (1990:404) the following is the definition of each strategy category:

Direct Language Learning.

These strategies are important because they are directly involved and deal with the target language. They include the following sub-strategies

Memory Language Learning. These are techniques specifically tailored to help learners to store new information and retrieve it later. For example grouping, imagery, rhyming or moving.

Cognitive Language Learning. These are skills that involve manipulation or transformation of the language material in direct ways. For example reasoning, analysis, notes taking, summarizing and practicing in naturalistic settings.

Compensation Language Learning. These are behaviours used to compensate for missing knowledge of some kind. For example, guessing meanings from context and using synonyms and gestures to convey meaning.

Indirect strategies

Language and Vocabulary learning strategies

These are important strategies that support and manage language learning.

They include the following sub-strategies:

Metacognitive strategies. These are behaviours used for centering, arranging, planning and evaluating one's learning.

Social strategies. These are actions involving other people in the language learning process. For example questioning and cooperating with peers.

Affective strategies. These are techniques which help learners to gain better control over their emotions, motivations and attitudes related to language learning. For example reducing anxiety, self-encouragement and self-reward.

Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS)

There are various strategies to teach vocabulary. It is important for teachers to know a variety of strategies because they can assist their learners' individual vocabulary learning needs. Vocabulary learning strategies comprise knowledge about the mechanisms used to learn vocabulary as well as specific actions or mental operations taken by learners to:

- find out the meaning of unknown words;
- retain them in long-term memory; and
- use them in oral or written mode (Catala'n, 2003:56).

There are many strategies that can affect the process by which vocabulary information is obtained, stored and retrieved for use (Schmitt, 1997:203). The National Reading Panel (2000) found out vocabulary learning strategies are a necessary and important factor in primary grades and can have long-term effects. The findings suggest that primary teachers may be able to help narrow, or halt the widening gap of word knowledge through explicit teaching of vocabulary by using VLS effectively. Therefore teachers should have a knowledge base of the research-based strategies and how to employ them.

As in language learning strategies several researchers classified vocabulary learning strategies in many ways. Gu and Johnson (1996) classified vocabulary learning strategies into 7 categories namely metacognitive regulation, guessing strategies, dictionary strategies, note-taking strategies, rehearsal strategies, encoding strategies and activation strategies. However, in order to address this gap, Schmitt (1997) proposed a taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) which are divided into two broad categories namely, discovery and consolidation strategies. These two

broad categories are sub-divided into five subcategories namely determination, social, memory, cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Social strategies are included in both categories. According to Schmitt, social strategies can be used for both discovery and determination purposes as is discussed below.

Determination/Discovery Vocabulary Learning (DET)

Discovery strategies help the student to discover the initial word that is introduced (Schmitt, 1997). Discovery strategies include several determination strategies and social strategies. A learner may discover a new word's meaning through guessing from context, guessing or by asking someone else. According to Schmitt (1997:205-206) all strategies employed in discovery activities could be used as consolidation strategies. Strategies for the discovery of a new word include strategies of determination which are used by an individual when faced with the discovery of a new word's meaning without recourse to another person's expertise. Determination strategies facilitate gaining knowledge of a new word by means of guessing from any available information and from mother tongue, texts and consulting reference materials such as dictionary, word list and flashcards.

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Guessing through Context

In order to succeed, Nation (2001) and Schmitt (1997) found that incidental learning via guessing from context is the most important of all sources of vocabulary learning. This shows that vocabulary learning can happen within a social context which may tend to be more interpreted as simple textual context. In addition, knowledge of the subject being read or knowledge of the conceptual structure of the topic should also be taken into consideration (Yu-Ling (2005).

Dictionary use as Vocabulary learning strategy

Another vocabulary strategy that is important in vocabulary learning is the using of dictionary. A dictionary can be used in both receptive and a productive skills in language learning. Teachers help learners to develop a called dictionary by writing new words in the book. Scholfield (1982:185) maintained that looking for a word in a dictionary is far from performing a purely mechanical operation. Instead, a proficient dictionary user is often required to formulate and

pursue several hypotheses and make use of prior knowledge of various sorts, especially information derived from context the advantage of the dictionary as a tool to enhance vocabulary (Scholfield, 1982:185). Except for locating the unknown word in the alphabetic list, which seems to be the skill most dealt with in respect of training dictionary use, other important facets involving effective dictionary use receive little attention Scholfield (1982). Since many lexical terms in a language have more than one meaning, learners should be instructed how to reduce multiple options by elimination. Scanning all of the definitions in the entry before deciding which one that fits their context is a good idea proposed by Underhill(1980).

After choosing a seemingly reasonable sense from the definitions in the entry, a user then needs to understand the definition and integrate it into the context where the unknown was met (Scholfield,1982:190). The most sophisticated parts involving dictionary use arise when none of the senses in the entry seems to fit the context or more than one fits. In these situations, a user may need to infer a meaning that comes from the senses in the entry or seek further contextual clues in the source text to disambiguate (Scholfield, 1982:193). Each of the above skills may be practiced separately through well-designed activities and only in this way can effective dictionary use be maximised and misunderstanding minimised.

Word part analysis as a vocabulary learning strategy

Word part analysis is important in helping learners to learn both high frequency and low frequency words (Nation, 2001). Firstly, learners need to be able to recognise prefixes and suffixes so that they may break unknown words into parts. Secondly, they need to relate the meaning of the word parts to the dictionary meaning of the word. To achieve this goal, learners have to know the meanings of the common word parts and to be able to re-express the dictionary definition of a word to include the meaning of its prefix and if possible, its stem and suffix (Nation,2001:278).

Consolidation strategies

The second category of vocabulary strategies is the consolidation strategy.

Consolidation strategies help in remembering a word once it has been introduced (Schmitt, 1997:206). After the learner has been introduced to a new word, he/she needs to make some

effort to consolidate or remember the word by using social, memory, cognitive and metacognitive strategies. This includes the following categories:

Social vocabulary strategies (SOC)

Vocabulary learning is a social concept. Teachers must provide learners with an opportunity to interact with others. Social strategies involve disobeying a new word's meaning by asking someone else who knows, such as classmates or by discussing during small group work. Teachers can be helpful to the learners by translating

Memorisation as learning strategy (MEM)

Memorisation strategies refer to those strategies involved in making connections between the to-be-learned word and some previously learned knowledge, using some form of imagery or grouping. Memorisation strategies play an important role in helping learners to commit new words into memory and in the whole process of vocabulary learning. These strategies according to Schmitt (1997:213) can have long term retention. In his taxonomy of VLS Schmitt, (1997) includes 27 memorisation strategies which can enhance vocabulary learning. In this view, learners can learn to memorise words using certain techniques. These include, study word with pictorial representation of its meaning, associate the word with its coordinates, use semantic maps, group words together within a story line through Peg Method or Loci Method, group words together by colour, size, function, likes/dislikes, or any other feature that makes sense. Learners can also paraphrase a word's meaning, use multi-word chunks (phrases or idioms, or put the words in a meaningful context or explicitly study a word's spelling or pronunciation, study the grammatical or morphological aspect of a word, use cognates or physical actions to aid recall, study the spelling of a word, use Keyword method and use physical action when learning a word. Researchers, such as (Pressley et al., 1982) have indicated that the Keyword method is an effective method of improving retrieval. The Keyword Method involves learner finding a L1 word which sounds like the target L2 word and creating an image combining the two concepts (Nation, 1990).

Cognitive strategies (COG)

These strategies exhibit the common function of manipulation or transformation of the target language learner. Researchers such as Lin, (2001); Fowle, (2002), Schmitt and Schmitt, (1995)

indicate the advantage of the cognitive strategies as the enhance of vocabulary acquisition. According to Schmitt, (1997) taxonomy and cognitive strategies are similar to memory strategies. However, they are not focused specifically on manipulative mental processing. Cognitive strategies refer to written and verbal repetition as well as some mechanical means involving vocabulary learning. Whereas mechanical means involve taking notes in class or making use of study aids such as word list, flash cards, vocabulary sections in text books, labelling physical objects, tapes of word lists and vocabulary notebooks.

Metacognitive strategies (MET)

Metacognitive strategies are broad and concerned with more efficient learning (Schmitt, 1997:216). These strategies involve conscious overview of the learning process and making decisions about planning, monitoring or evaluating the best ways to study (Lin, 2001). The study of Gu and Johnson (1996) has found that metacognitive strategies play an important role in language learning. Within the metacognitive strategies teachers should train learners to control and evaluate their own learning through various ways (Schmitt, 1997). For example using spaced word practice, continuing to study word overtime and self-testing. Metacognitive strategies include strategies such as when learners take the decision to skip or pass a new words when it is judged to be allow frequency one which may not be met again for a long time

Research by NRP, 2000, Daniels and Zamelman, (2004) indicate that vocabulary instruction is a necessary and important factor in primary reading instruction and can have long-term effects. These observations clearly confirmed that vocabulary learning is a more complex process and that it involves seeing, hearing and using words in a meaningful way (Daniels & Zamelman, 2004:13).

RESEARCH-BASED VOCABULARY TEACHING PRACTICES

Researchers, Graves (2006), Christ and Wang (2010), identified four research-based vocabulary teaching practices that teachers can support young children in the teaching of vocabulary instruction which will be discussed below:

Rich Varied Language Experiences

Listening and speaking in the primary grades are ways teachers can promote vocabulary growth. Immersing students in a variety of rich language experiences that allow learners to learn words through listening, speaking, reading and writing is key to an effective vocabulary program. Most of the new words primary grades children learn come from listening and discussion. Teachers of primary grades need to directly build their learners oral vocabularies through interactive oral reading (Graves, 2006). Effective interactive reading includes:

- Using interesting and enjoyable books for children.
- Having adults read with expression to engage children.
- Reading books several times.
- Focusing children's attention to a small number of words.
- Interaction of the reader and children as they discuss and ask questions about the text (Graves, 2006).

Teaching Individual Words

There is an overwhelming quantity of words learners need to learn. Teachers cannot teach all of them directly in a school year, but that does not mean they should not teach some of them. Not every word a teacher wants to introduce to learners from a text requires rich instruction and knowledge. Context can give enough information about some words to acquire and maintain meaning. Rich instruction is needed only for words that are necessary for comprehension of the text or that turn up in a wide variety of contexts, or that require more than a brief explanation to be understood (McKeown & Beck, 2004). Experts on vocabulary learning strategies (Graves, 2006; Nagy, 1988) agree on the following effective ways to teach a new word:

- Use a definition of the word and have students work with the word in context.
- Have learners actively relate similarities and differences of a new word to words and concepts they know and practice using the word in various situations.
- Provide multiple exposures to a new word through games, definitions and using it orally and/or in writing.
- Review and remind learners about the word as it occurs in other contexts over time.

- Spend time learning the word.

Effective word learning instruction provides examples of a word used in various contexts and includes discussion of what the word means in each context. Learners need contextual and definitional information to gain understanding of how the meaning of a word changes in different contexts (Stahl, 2003; Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986).

Juel and Deffes (2004) conducted a six-week study with kindergarten learners comparing three forms of vocabulary instruction- context-based, anchored word and analytic vocabulary instruction. The teachers using the context-based method related word meanings to the background knowledge of the learners. The analytic word method had learners analyze word meanings along with connecting the word to background knowledge. The anchored word method had learners analyzing words, connecting words to background knowledge and focusing on the letters and sounds of the words. All of the instruction was delivered through storybook reading where five words were targeted from each book. The study found out that the analytic and anchored methods were the most effective in teaching word meanings to learners. There was no significant difference between the two methods. The study did find that learners who were behind their peers in letter-naming fluency seemed to make greater gains in vocabulary growth if they had received the anchored method of instruction (Juel & Deffes, 2004).

Teaching Word Learning Strategies

The use of word learning strategies can increase vocabulary acquisition. A teacher cannot teach every word his or her learners will encounter, but by teaching word learning strategies, a teacher can help learners become independent word learners (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2006; Graves, 2006; Nagy, 1988). Three important word-learning strategies are:

- teaching learners to use context to infer the meanings of unknown words,
- teaching students to use word parts to glean word meanings,
- teaching learners to use the dictionary (Graves, 2006:23).

In addition Christ and Wang (2010:86) suggested that teachers must teach learners how to do it. While reading aloud teachers should follow the three steps. Firstly the teacher must model how to use clues and background knowledge to infer word meaning several times. Secondly, teachers

must ask learners questions to guide them through the same process many times. Thirdly, the teacher must ask learners to infer word meanings independently and the clues in the text.

Primary school teachers can informally begin to teach these strategies through modeling, scaffolding and discussing with their learners. More formal teaching of word learning strategies should occur in Grade 4 and above (Graves, 2006). The goal of a primary teacher is to help learners be aware of words they do not know and decide if the word is important to the meaning of the text. This metacognitive approach to word learning encourages learners to think about the unknown word, determine if they have heard it before, try to find the word's meaning from the rest of the sentence or paragraph, and look at the parts of the word in order to determine the meaning. This process is most often taught informally through shared storybook reading (Lubliner & Smetana, 2005).

Fostering Word Consciousness

Word consciousness is an effective way to facilitate learner's vocabulary development (Christ & Wang, 2010). 'Word consciousness refers to the knowledge and dispositions necessary for learners to learn, appreciate, and effectively use words' (Scott & Nagy, 2004). When a learner is word conscious, they have an interest in and an awareness of words around them- words they read, hear, speak and write (Graves, 2006). Word consciousness is not another component of vocabulary instruction, but rather the goal teachers strive for their learners to attain as they teach individual words, word-learning strategies and provide rich language experiences (Scott & Nagy, 2004).

To foster word consciousness, a teacher must model and encourage an enthusiasm for new words. The use of games, riddles, homophones, and puzzles is highly motivating in primary school classrooms. Reading instruction in primary grade is not just teach students that printed words convey meaning, but that words can feel and sound good and can incite laughter and be fun to play with (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2006; Graves & Watts-Taffe, 2002). According to Christ and Wang (2010) there are three main approaches to directly teaching learners' word meanings. These include eliciting-type of questions: to evoke learners thinking about word meanings. For example teachers can ask them questions to elicit recognition of a vocabulary word.

The advantages of using eliciting-type of questions to the learners are that they learn more word meanings than simply being exposed to words in a context (Senachal, 1997). During this exercise teachers can also ask learners questions that request information about the concept represented by the vocabulary word (Justice, 2002);

- embedded definitions: embedded definitions is when teachers explain the word meanings quickly to the learners when learners encounter unfamiliar words (Christ & Wang, 2010). The reason for this is that the explanation of the word explained by the teacher is embedded in the natural context in which the word occurs
- extended instruction (multistep approach): Learners learn more about word meanings from extended instruction than embedded instruction or exposure alone (Silverman, 2007). Teachers use extended instruction when they want to help learners develop a nuanced understanding of a word teachers use (Silverman, 2007). Researchers Beck, McKeown and Kucan, (2002 cited in Christ and Wang, 2010:88) suggest the steps to be implemented after read aloud exercise namely, contextualise the word as it appears in the story; explain the word's meaning; ask the learners to repeat the word aloud to create a phonological imprint; offer examples that extend beyond the story context; have learners demonstrate word-meaning understanding by making judgement, articulating an example and so on and have learners restate the word to reinforce its phonological imprint.

In a study of vocabulary learning, Beck et al., (1982) found that students in one particular middle school class learned more incidental vocabulary (words that had not been taught) than the other classes. Researchers, attempting to find the cause, found a poster of interesting words in the classroom. The teacher stated it was the class "word wall." Whenever a student encountered a new word from TV, conversation or reading, they could write the word on the poster and share where they heard or saw it. The students received points in a class contest when they used the new word. This simple activity fostered word consciousness by motivating students to look and listen for new words and use them in their speech and writing. Teachers therefore play a vital role in helping their students become word conscious.

When teachers use rich vocabulary in the classrooms, teach words fully so that their students can develop new word schemas and create an environment where students can explore and use

words, they are giving their students tools necessary for success in school and beyond (Scott & Nagy, 2004).

CONCLUSION

A number of studies have shown that vocabulary size in young children is a strong predictor for success in later grades. Literature confirmed that the larger the learner's vocabularies in the primary grades, the greater their academic achievement in the upper grades. Primary grade teachers have the ability to influence the future reading and school success of students through teaching direct, effective vocabulary instruction. From the literature review it became clear that vocabulary can be taught directly and indirectly. Successful readers use a variety of language and vocabulary strategies in comprehending the texts. The more complex the texts are the more strategies are supposed to be used. The teacher, who looks for opportunities to use interesting words and is an active, enthusiastic word learner, can instill a lifelong love of words in his or her students by implementing the strategies appropriately. This can be achieved if readers can use various strategies to read the words and understand the written words.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the discussion the following recommendations are made;

- The goal of vocabulary instruction should be to build students' independent word learning strategies that can empower them for lifelong learning
- Constant monitoring of vocabulary performance of students is imperative and clear early warning signs for underperformance should be in place to identify underperforming students.
- support programmes should be in place and constantly evaluated by experts in the field of curriculum teaching and learning.

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