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Teaching and Learning Vocabulary by I.S.P. Nation. New York: Newbury House, 1990. 275 pp.

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***Teaching and Learning Vocabulary*** by I.S.P. Nation. New York: Newbury House, 1990. 275 pp.

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In the recent past, pedagogical attention to vocabulary learning as a basic learner need for communicative language learning has too often been lacking. However, this situation may be reversed as teaching absorbs the increasing flow of information from research on the development of L2 lexicon (e.g., Laufer, 1986, forthcoming; Haastrup, 1987; Palmberg, 1987; Meara, 1984), on lexical-semantic relations in text (e.g., Li, 1988; White, 1988), and on the possible pedagogical applications of this research (e.g., Robinson, 1988; Sinclair & Renouf, 1988). I.S.P. Nation's *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary* is primarily composed of the familiar products of mainstream vocabulary teaching of past decades. However, it is mainly limited to recapitulating that experience, despite Nation's concern with linking instruction and recent scholarship. Viewed in this light, the book should be considered both a summation and a sign of a pedagogical tradition awaiting fresh input from the perspectives of contemporary theoretical and applied research.

*Teaching and Learning Vocabulary* is both a teacher-training primer and a field manual. Its first five chapters present an introduction to (and thus provide a working knowledge of) vocabulary learning/teaching issues: the means and ends of teaching vocabulary, a discussion of the acquisition of lexical items, what is meant by "communicating meaning" in the classroom, and procedural guides for measuring learners' foreign-language lexicon and for assessing textbooks' vocabulary frequencies. Sections devoted to application, with exercises for the instructor-in-training, appear at the end of each chapter.

Chapters Six through Nine are concerned with vocabulary teaching and the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This conventional approach to dividing up the skill areas certainly provides a familiar organization for the teacher who may be searching for particular guidance on teaching technique. Indeed, practical skill-specific suggestions are presented which deal with preliminary assessment of learner needs and the construction of appropriate teaching materials. Nation's consistent use of explanatory figures and sample exercises casts these practical presentations in the same "hands-on," teacher-in-the-field format as the rest of the book. One aspect of this section of the book which requires amendment in later editions, however, is the placement of exercises for one skill in a chapter on some other skill. For example, an exercise is suggested in which learners listen to native speakers and try to match the words and definitions they hear to pictures (p. 105), yet this exercise is presented in the chapter on "Vocabulary and Speaking." A similar problem is evident in the same chapter in which a confusingly worded exercise is suggested: learners are "given a word and four of its collocations. They write four sentences for each pair" (p. 101). Perhaps these exercises simply need to be extended so that a bridge from active reception to active production is clearly provided. Finally, the chapter on "Vocabulary and Writing" is too short and undeveloped to appeal to a composition teacher, but given the lack of research on acquisition and use of vocabulary knowledge in writing, this is understandable.

Diverging temporarily from a teacher's perspective, Nation includes a useful chapter (Chapter Ten) on "Learner Strategies," which is a consideration of meta-cognitive techniques to help learners expand and retain vocabulary--guessing word meanings from context, memorization devices such as the "key" method, and learning productive morphology--techniques which foster learner independence, an important but nonetheless under-represented consideration in *Learning and Teaching Vocabulary.*

Chapter Eleven cogently discusses a rationale for and methods of text simplification. To be sure, Nation values memorization of vocabulary lists as one among other possible strategies, but throughout the book other thoughtful and promising alternatives are presented. The most significant among these are exercises which call for vocabulary manipulations according to semantic structures and associations/collocations. Lexical syllabi can and should naturally involve the learning of syntax and communicative language use; this is implied and sometimes

demonstrated in Nation's book. On the other hand, most of the suggested activities still remain isolated from a broader, more communicative context which the classroom calls for. Perhaps it would be wise when actually applying the suggestions in *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary* to expect that effort will be necessary to incorporate newly learned vocabulary into a wider and certainly for the EFL classroom, an ultimately communicative context. In Chapter Twelve, a departure from the pedagogical objectives of the rest of the book, Nation briefly recounts the research into vocabulary and vocabulary learning. In addition to an exhaustive bibliography, Nation includes eight useful appendices, which range from word lists and example teaching texts to vocabulary puzzles and a "vocabulary levels test."

An association of vocabulary teaching with list-like syllabi, (e.g., sequences of grammar structures and rhetorical functions) may well account for some of the contemporary disaffection with teaching vocabulary per se in the classroom. Yet, recent work which has constructed learner vocabulary syllabi by analysing computer-generated lists for frequency, salient contextual meanings, and usage has gone far in demonstrating that the incorporation of a vocabulary-centered curriculum may not only be wise it may be indispensibly efficient (Sinclair & Renouf, 1988; Phillips, 1985). General departures from data-based course content, perhaps most clearly evident in the task-based approach (e.g., Long, 1989), have had the unfortunate consequence of retarding the process by which results from classroom trials of new pedagogical materials based on research in vocabulary learning inform both pedagogical and basic research. Basic research on the lexicon has also been retarded by the predominance of a theoretical linguistics-inspired, syntax-centered paradigm as well as perhaps by the common notion that acquisition of lexical-semantic structures is too complex to deal with in a sufficiently scientific way (Laufer, 1986; Meara, 1984). Yet given the promising nature of recent research on both L1 and L2 lexical acquisition and use (e.g., White, 1988; Meara, 1984) the emergence of plausible classroom applications of that research is sure to develop further. However, Nation's summative presentation of research includes some, but not enough, of the contributions of relative types of cognitive studies (e.g., Tyler & Nagy, 1990; Channell, 1988; Pressley et al., 1987; Zimmerman & Schneider, 1987), text-linguistics studies (e.g., Robinson, 1988; Phillips, 1985), and the work on the Birmingham Corpus and the COBUILD project (Sinclair & Renouf, 1988; Sinclair, 1987).

The mix of traditional pedagogy with new findings from research in I.S.P. Nation's *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary* partially satisfies the need for a practical manual for constructing vocabulary syllabi at any level, particularly for TEFL/TESL teacher training programs. As a teaching resource, the book can be recommended both to new and experienced English language instructors as a useful guide for supplementing an existing curriculum. It would also be helpful to those engaged in building a needs-based vocabulary program from the ground up. Perhaps it is not surprising that Nation's book should have appeared only recently and that it should be what it is: an up-to-date yet unmatured blend of traditional and experimental vocabulary pedagogy (the result being a retention of some familiar problems--i.e., lack of communicative practice and contextualization) and a much-needed summation for the language teacher of what is known and, by implication, what is not yet known about vocabulary learning and teaching. Nation's book makes a start in incorporating new and old wisdom about vocabulary teaching, but it thereby fails to satisfy the ultimate need: effective vocabulary instruction based on an adequate knowledge of how vocabulary acquisition actually takes place and how the lexicon is actually used.

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***Interaction: Language and Science*** by Terry L. Powell. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1990. 290 pp.

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*Interaction: Language and Science*, by Terry L. Powell, is not a book on the discourse of science, as one might expect from its title. It is actually a reading textbook for students of English for Science and Technology (EST). Two criteria relevant to evaluating such a textbook are the extent to which the author has responded to schema theory and attended to material authenticity. While the book