

An Introduction to the “Word Surfing” Vocabulary Development Strategy

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The following notes compare “traditional” vocabulary notebooks with “Word Surfing” organized vocabulary notebooks. They suggest that language learners would benefit from knowing how to record new words and phrases in a more efficient, practical and motivating manner.

1. Concept. 2. Method. 3. Practice. 4. Testing. 5. Motivation. 6. Summary.

Traditional Vocabulary Notebooks

“Word Surfing” Organized Vocabulary Notebooks

<p>1. Concept</p> <p><i>learning by translation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using two columns • New word – translation <p>Note: Little opportunity to develop language skills</p>	<p>1. Concept</p> <p>The learner can choose between learning by doing and learning by translation</p> <p>either</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using three columns for learning by doing • New word – connecting words 1 – connecting words 2 <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using two columns for learning by translation • New word – translation <p>plus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using example sentences for learning by doing <p>Note: Good opportunities to develop language skills</p>
<p>2. Method</p> <p>The learner is encouraged to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • memorize lists of words and translations. <p>Note: This method is well-known and needs no further explanation</p>	<p>2. Method</p> <p>The learner is encouraged to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • start learning by doing whenever possible • use learning by translation whenever felt necessary • write example sentences whenever appropriate • use a testing system to check long-term progress <p>Note: This method is explained in detail within the Word Surfing file that can be downloaded at http://www.wordsurfing.co.uk/WordSurfingBook.pdf</p>
<p>3. Practice</p> <p>The learner is encouraged to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • memorize lists of words and translations. <p>Note: This method doesn’t involve any real practice.</p>	<p>3. Practice</p> <p>The learner is encouraged to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use new words as soon as possible • practise new words in a variety of ways • test knowledge over time through further practice <p>Note: This method involves real language practice.</p>

<p>4. Testing</p> <p>The learner is encouraged to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • test the short-term memory of translations <p>Note: The ability to use the new language isn't tested</p>	<p>4. Testing</p> <p>The learner is encouraged to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • test the long-term ability to use new words • identify those new words that require further practice. • use “Word Surfing” tests which are available at http://www.wordsurfing.co.uk/WordsurfingTests.pdf as a further indication of progress <p>Note: The ability to use the new language is tested</p>
<p>5. Motivation</p> <p>This vocabulary learning method enables the learner to experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • short-term successes in a series of memory tests • no real practice <p>Note: This method doesn't appear to be particularly motivating or successful except perhaps at the very earliest stage of the learning curve. Experience shows that most learners find the method becomes less interesting, less successful and less relevant as their language level increases. Learners want to be able to use their new words.</p>	<p>5. Motivation</p> <p>This vocabulary development strategy enables the learner to experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • long-term progress in language level • real practice <p>Note: This strategy accepts the early advantages offered by learning by translation – but encourages learning by doing at the earliest possible stage. The learner is able to gain both practical and important motivational benefits during the vocabulary development process. Both confidence and fluency will tend to increase as the learner becomes more and more capable of “learning by doing” over time.</p>
<p>6. Summary</p> <p>Word Surfing Vocabulary Notebooks were developed for the following basic reasons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary development is a vital part of the language learning process • Traditional Vocabulary Notebooks have various practical and motivational weaknesses • No improvement on Traditional Vocabulary Books seemed to be available to learners <p>The “Word Surfing” Vocabulary Development Strategy was designed to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide a more practical and motivating method of vocabulary improvement • encourage an emphasis on learning by doing • provide regular testing • give a long-term overview of real progress 	

Teachers and students who wish to give share their opinions on the above are invited to

- (i) join the **Word Surfing Discussion Group** at <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/wordsurfing/> or
- (ii) leave a message in the **Website Guestbook** at <http://www.wordsurfing.co.uk/122846/index.html>