

To make concept understandable and to put words on experiences



How do we create an understanding for new words and concepts? Are words necessary?
How do we learn new words and which one of them is important for communication?

New words are often acquired through an experience. A good question is how students put new words and concepts into a context to talk about.

You can picture yourself an experience without having the vocabulary, but if you want to communicate with others or write about it, the words become important. If you want to portray an experience without words you can use your body language, charts, models and drawings to explain.

The interpretation of concepts are often coloured by someone's personality. This is a knowledge quite often ignored in schools.

If you ask students to look up a word in a dictionary, they will quote printed explanations. That doesn't mean they understand or can relate the word to a context, given the fact that words can be interpreted in as many ways as there are pupils in a class.

Everyone has its own image of what a word means. Words like communist, activist and spider are words that can mean very different things to different people based upon their experiences.

How do we make concepts comprehensible and how do we put them into a context?



The environment teachers choose for teaching, how they plan to use it and the experiences being brought back to the class room affects how the students develop vocabulary.

By starting with the students practical experiences we give them an important contextual support. The school's surroundings and the different areas of the city will act as learning environment within the process.

For pupils to apply to new words, see connections and discover new ways of comprehending the environment, variety is required.

I have worked a lot with students from a second language perspective. It is important to connect their language development with how they develop their subject skills

Students can't always describe their experiences in words but nor are the experiences less important.

To become familiar with something simplifies further acquisition of knowledge and that is the foundation of teaching outdoors.

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Touch a...

Material:

- * Nothing

Exercise:

- Tell the students to form a circle
 - Encourage them to touch for example an oak tree. After they have done so they come back to the circle. The one who knows what an oak tree is leads the way and the other ones are following.
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- Touch/bring some/something...
 - a tree trunk
 - a leaf
 - a stone
 - grass
 - something that has two colours
 - something that smells good
 - big as a palm
 - soft
 - smooth
 - a leaf from a tree that starts with a "m"
 - something that looks like an "O"



Words that compare

Material:

- * Cards with words that compare, look at the next page. Laminate them and cut them out as single cards.
- * A pile of "things" that can represent some of the cards
- * A white cloth

Exercise:

- Tell the students to form a circle. Place the white cloth on the ground in the middle of the circle.
- Pick up a card, for example the word "short". Ask one of the students to read the word and put the card on the cloth. Ask another student to pick something from the pile of "things" that he/she thinks is short.
- Tell the students to get something from the area close by that is shorter (and show the card "shorter") and to come back to the circle. Each one of them shows their item, compares it with the first item they picked and say something about it. For example "this twig is shorter than the branch".
- Show the card with the word "shortest". Ask the students to bring something that is shorter than the second item. Each one of them shows their item, compares it with the second item they picked and say something about it.
- Vary the cards.

LONG
LONGER
LONGEST

YOUNG
YOUNGER
YOUNGEST

SMALL

SMALLER

SMALLEST

LONG

LONGER

LONGEST

YOUNG

YOUNGER

YOUNGEST

SHORT

SHORTER

SHORTEST

Patterns in nature through a magnifying glass.

Material:

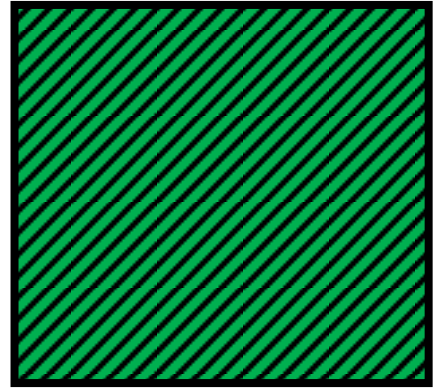
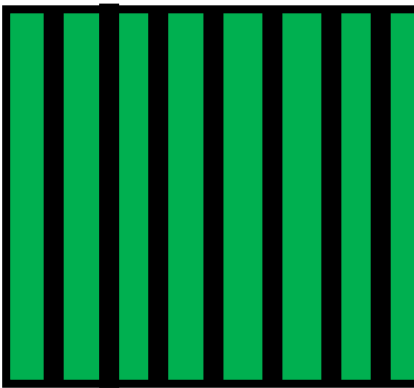
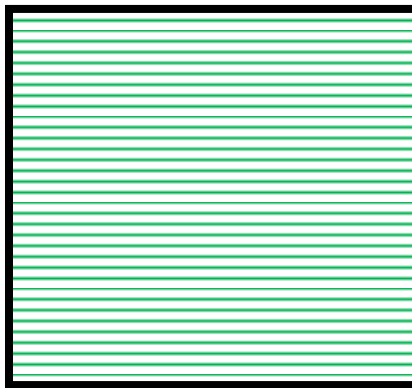
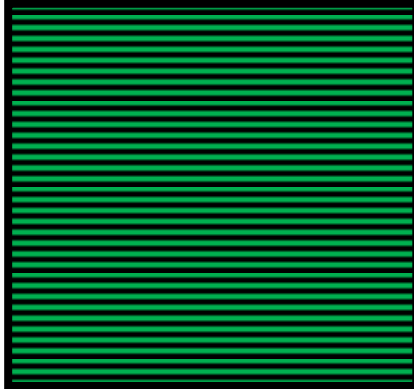
- * Magnifying glass, one for each student
- * Cards with different patterns, look at the following pages. Laminate them and cut them out as single cards.
- * A white cloth

Exercise:

- Tell the students to form a circle. Place the white cloth on the ground in the middle of the circle. Spread out the cards.
- Repeat the patterns that you have worked with before. Let the students point out those they recognize.
- Each student gets a magnifying glass and is asked to find different things in the nature that show different patterns.
- Bring back the students and discuss different patterns. Which one was the easiest to find and which one was the most difficult to find.
- You can continue to look at pictures or in real life at animals in the local area. What kind of patterns can you find?



STRIPED



SPOTTED

