

Value of Concordancing as a Teaching Aid“

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1. Encourage discovery learning.
2. Use authentic texts, not concocted by the teacher or some remote language textbook author.
3. Use their own texts in comparison with "model" texts and each others' so that they can see what kinds of differences there are.
4. Capitalize on perceived need to know instead of force-feeding.
Thus, you increase motivation and give learners immediate contact with the target language as it is used. [You are also likely to learn new things about both use and usage! This is a great research tool for teachers.]

Sample Activities

1. Deduce meanings of words from contexts. Using a concordancer greatly increases the chances of deducing meaning by showing several contexts of the word simultaneously.
2. Make cloze exercises with the same word missing from all contexts. Typically, only one word will fit in all contexts, but be sure to allow for alternatives.
3. Explore the grammar of a function word (such as "if") or a phrasal verb (such as "put on") or a polysemic word (such as "kind"), or a multi-functional word ("to").
4. Explore differences between forms and/or functions of words (present participle vs/ past participle, present participle vs. gerund, gerund vs. infinitive, tenses, etc.).
5. Look at "synonyms" and see just how much overlap there is (e.g., "rich:wealthy" or "poor:bad").
6. Examine a text for cohesion by looking at words like "this/these" and "such".
7. Look at punctuation in a model text are there any comma splices?
8. Teachers: Look at frequencies of words and forms. Are you spending a lot of time on rare items and a little time on things that occur extremely often??? (Many textbooks do..)
9. And then there are always articles! So many uses and omissions for which there are no "rules" or even agreement that you must or must not use an article in that slot., or even which article. Take all the articles out of a real text and see if you can replace them exactly as they were.