The ECOSTAR Mobile Vocabulary App.

ECOSTAR

English as the Cornerstone
of Sustainable Technology and Research

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TEMPUS ECOSTAR's Vocabulary App

Central purpose of mobile app

In contrast to other vocabulary apps currently available, ECOSTAR's mobile app 'curates' CEFR vocabulary lists by providing flashcards and exercises for a common core of high-frequency general academic words. Words in this 'common core' include words on CEFR vocabulary lists that also appear on Coxhead's (2000) Academic Word List (AWL) and Davies and Gardner's (2013) Academic Vocabulary List (AVL).

Why do EAP teachers and students need a 'core' of general academic words?

For EAP teachers and students, many words on the CEFR wordlists - especially words related to leisure (see example below) and food - may seem less relevant to their needs.
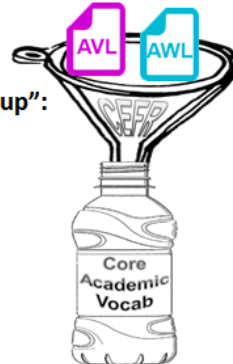

On the other hand, many high-frequency general academic words that are important for EAP students, for example, 'hypothesis', appear on CEFR vocabulary lists only at C level.

Creating a common core of general academic high-frequency vocabulary

Making sense of the "word soup":

Roads will support acquisition of "overlaps" on CEFR, AVL and AWL

Multiple Routes to Mastery:

How ECOSTAR's mobile app supports vocabulary acquisition

Route A: Personalized Learning Paths

Route B: Two Phases:

- **Learn**
- **Play and practice**

Route C: Separate Play Modes
- **Single player**
- **Multi-player**

How these three routes fulfill **Conditions for Effective Vocabulary Learning**
Classroom suggestions for encouraging use of ECOSTAR mobile app

Route A: <u>Personalized Learning Paths</u>

Learners can take their own paths to mastering ECOSTAR's CEFR – aligned 'common core' of academic vocabulary:

Customization Feature	Benefit
Learners select words they want to learn	Learners can check which CEFR words they already know. (Many B2 level students may not yet have mastered high-frequency general academic CEFR B1 level words).
Beyond 'one size fits all'	Learners can choose to play on a group of words or on one specific word.
Visualization of progress	To incentivize learners and help keep them on track, learners can track their incremental progress to see how many words they have learned.

Route B: <u>Two Phases:</u>

Phase 1: Learn this word - 'flashcards' provide background information on target word (part of speech, explanation, example sentence).

Phase 2: Play and practice

Learners answer questions to ensure they have internalized meaning of target word. Active retrieval of target word, with points for correct answers, reinforce learning.

Route C: <u>Separate Play Modes</u>

1. **Single player:**
Learners can choose to compete against themselves.
2. **Multi-player:**
Duel: Learners can also choose to play against other players on the list.

Tournament with leaderboard reflects results of duels played by pairs of players within a tournament. Leaderboard shows top-scoring players who won the most duels against their partners.

Conditions for Effective Vocabulary Learning

1. Multiple exposures to same word – 3 exercises on each target word.
2. To build a rich, multi-faceted concept of the word, learners identify three correct answers out of four possible answer options. Each of the correct answer options relates to an additional aspect of the target word.
3. Active retrieval – players interact with content and receive immediate feedback.
4. Social and competitive elements can increase learner engagement.

Classroom suggestions for encouraging use of ECOSTAR mobile app:

1. Explain how learning vocabulary increases fluency and that vocab is the single strongest factor that predicts reading comprehension levels.
2. Explain that ECOSTAR focuses only on words on CEFR vocabulary lists that also appear on other high-frequency general academic wordlists.
3. Let students download and **start exploring the app in class** so that students can help others who don't regularly use mobile apps.
4. Consider offering bonus points for students who work through a pre-defined number of mobile app exercises.
5. Check which words that appear on final exam have exercises on mobile app.
   If this number is significant, this may serve as an additional incentive for completing the exercises.

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