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Inside Reading 2: The Academic Word List in Context		
Author:	Lawrence J. Zwier (2009)	
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Reading skills and vocabulary knowledge are two features of language learning that are essential for learners in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses. Learners in EAP courses expect to work through and learn appropriate readings and vocabulary that will prepare them for further studies in English-speaking universities. Due to Coxhead's (2000) Academic Word List (AWL), learners, teachers, and materials writers have a better concept of the types of vocabulary required. Research suggests that appropriate readings skills, along with appropriate vocabulary, will help develop learners' language proficiency (Tomlinson, 2003; Coxhead, 2000).

Inside Reading 2: The Academic Word List in Context by Lawrence J. Zwier (2009) is an intermediate-level reading text designed to develop and improve learners' reading abilities and vocabulary knowledge. This course book offers learners a variety of topics by working through ten units with numerous opportunities for the recycling of academic vocabulary, while also including a student CD-ROM for additional vocabulary work. The topics include engineering, business, technology, literature, meteorology, nutrition, geology, sociology, journalism, and medicine. The units are laid out in an easy-to-follow arrangement that allows for flexibility as they can be completed in any order.

One of the first aims of the course book, which is also its strength, is to draw attention to different reading skills that are clearly defined in each unit. Learners develop their reading skills by focusing on one skill at a time, for example, previewing and predicting, finding the main idea, scanning, or summarizing. For those with a need for EAP, effective

reading in a second language is critical (Carrell, Devine, & Eskey, 1998). Two approaches, both different but complementary, are utilized: a top-down and bottom-up processing approach. A top-down approach looks at the functional components of the text first, or the interesting and relevant materials for the learners, followed by an analysis of these components. A bottom-up processing approach begins by examining the textual components, paying attention to language proficiency (Biber, Connor & Upton, 2007). Learners work through both of these processes by reading two texts per unit and working through the language and vocabulary and working with the skills.

While developing reading skills is a major aim of the course book, vocabulary development is as equally important. A major selling point of the book is the utilization of Coxhead's AWL (2000). This list of high frequency words are stated to be widely used in all academic areas, essential for EAP students who invest time and energy on words expected in the academic setting. Fifteen words are introduced at the beginning of each unit and then are repeated throughout the authentic readings. Learners have frequent opportunities to practice and recycle the vocabulary in a variety of activities. For example, in the first part of unit three on Technology, the target words are 1) highlighted in the readings, 2) enforced with finding the one word or phrase with a different meaning in example sentences, 3) used with different contexts, 4) used in to answer questions and 5) used to make new sentences. Folse (2006) asserts that there is value of a vocabulary exercise "that requires multiple encounters with or retrievals of the target words" (p. 287), which *Inside Reading 2* effectively accomplishes.

A third aim of the course book is to encourage learner autonomy, mainly in becoming independent word learners. The self-assessment activities at the beginning and end of each unit allow learners to gauge their knowledge of the target vocabulary words. There is a clear chart at the beginning of each unit with six statements ranging from "I have never seen the word before" to "I understand the word when I see or hear it in a sentence" to "I used the word with confidence both in speaking and writing." Learners are encouraged to think about the target vocabulary words and place them in the appropriate columns before beginning the unit. Once they complete the unit, they are encouraged to go back to the self-assessment and reassess their knowledge. Monitoring from self, peers and teachers are helpful but it is the learners themselves who make the final decision and who take control of their learning. In addition, through reflection, learners will become aware of how they learn in different contexts and for different tasks; this can be achieved through self-reflection (Chamot, Keatley, Foster, Gonglewski & Bartoshesky, n.d.). Another feature is that learners are persuaded to use references and online resources for unknown words, as well as the provided CD-ROM for additional practice. The course book activities are designed for learners to work independently, whether through the readings or the writings, yet most allow learners to work together to discuss thoughts and opinions with peers once they have done their individual work. Independent learning allows learners to take on greater responsibility for their own learning, leading to a deeper approach to learner, eventually allowing for greater achievement. However, learner autonomy "can only develop in an atmosphere in which

both teachers and learners are sensitive to the mutual influences at play" (Lamb & Reinders, 2008, p. 7).

While *Inside Reading 2* has many strengths, three main drawbacks should be noted. First is the lack of cultural awareness activities. Material that is culturally appropriate will also build on students' cultural learning strengths and bring experiences to the classroom (Bailey & Pransky, 2005). The materials offer some insight into the culture of the target language, but very few readings are built on the culture of the learners. Of the 20 readings in the course book, 13 deal specifically with American culture and stories.

Another aspect that is definitely lacking throughout the course book is visuals to support language learning. The pictures are very small and in black-and-white, totaling 17 (not including graphs, maps, and charts, which total 4). Units 3, 5, 7, 8, 9 have one or no picture. Visuals are seen as necessary as they may spark students' interests, hence increasing acquisition of L2 and stimulating learners to become "autonomous acquirers" (Krashen, cited in Templer, 2009). Visuals are an important tool for learning as they sharpen and deepen visual literacy (Templer, 2009). Liu (2004) also found that pictures duplicating information in the text improve reading comprehension and memory.

Finally, there is little implementation of genre variety with the readings. While there are excerpts from an online newspaper, a nutrition manual and a chapter in a geology textbook, they all look the same; almost all are about two pages long and have the same format. Alternative reading materials have been found to be beneficial for language learners, such as the use of technology in the classroom (Meskill & Mossop, 2000), graphic novels and non-fiction narratives (Templer, 2009), and literature that is experienced, rather than studied (Tomlinson, 2003). By offering a variety of reading, learners will be apt to develop personal engagement and responses.

Despite its shortcomings, *Inside Reading 2* is a valuable book for those students wishing to improve their reading skills and vocabulary knowledge. This book offers learners a chance to become more successful autonomous learners, which will aid them in their higher education studies.

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Reviewed by
Leslie Sheets
Trinity Western University, Langley, British Columbia
<l_sheets@hotmail.com>