City University of Hong Kong

Information on a Course
offered by Department of English
with effect from Semester A in 2009 / 2010

This form is for completion by the *Course Co-ordinator/Examiner.* The information provided on this form will be deemed to be the official record of the details of the course. It has multipurpose use: for the University's database, and for publishing in various University publications including the Blackboard, and documents for students and others as necessary.

Please refer to the *Explanatory Notes* attached to this Form on the various items of information required.

Part I

Course Title: Vocabulary in Language Teaching

Course Code: EN6485

Course Duration: 1 Semester

No. of Credit Units: 3

Level: P6

Medium of Instruction: English

Prerequisites: Nil

Precursors: Nil

Equivalent Courses: Nil

Exclusive Courses: Nil

Part II

1. **Course Aims: To enable students to:**

   - describe conceptual frameworks and technical terminologies related to vocabulary learning;

   - to apply the frameworks and terminologies to analyze the formal and semantic relationships between English words;

   - To describe the basic principles and good practices of vocabulary teaching and learning;

   - To identify common problems involved in the teaching and learning of vocabulary in English as a second language, with special reference to the educational contexts in Hong Kong and Mainland China; and

● To apply the knowledge learned to generate effective learner strategies in vocabulary learning, and to generate effective methods to teach such strategies in classroom settings.

2. **Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)**
   (state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance)

   Upon completing the course, students should be able to:

No.	CILOs	Weighting
1.	analyze formal and semantic relationships between English words;	20%
2.	apply the basic principles and good practices of vocabulary teaching and learning to their classroom teaching;	40%
3.	**discuss** common problems involved in the teaching and learning of vocabulary in English as a second language;	10%
4.	**generate** strategies to teach their own students a subset of effective learner strategies in vocabulary learning; and	10%
5.	**apply** a variety of useful teaching techniques to enhance the effectiveness of vocabulary teaching.	20%

3. **Teaching and learning Activities (TLAs)**
   (Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course)

CILO No.	TLA1	TLA2	TLA3	TLA4	Hours / course (if applicable)
CILO 1	√				
CILO 2		√			
CILO 3	√	√			
CILO 4			√		
CILO 5			√	√	

TLA1: Readings, **interactive** lectures, class activities, and teaching demos (**non-assessed**)

The **interactive** lectures will be based on content chapters of a course book. The assigned reading(s) of the week will be indicated in the course schedule. **Through analysis and discussion,** student teachers are expected to have completed the assigned reading(s) of the week before class. The **interactive** lectures will consist of content input by the lecturer in the form of pre-loaded PowerPoint slides, class activities, and (occasionally) teaching demonstrations.

<u>TLA2: Reflective teaching and learning</u>

By reflecting (as ESL learners) on their own preferred vocabulary learning strategies, as well as their beliefs (as ESL teachers) regarding effective vocabulary teaching and learning, student teachers will **apply** basic principles and good practices of vocabulary teaching and learning to their classroom teaching. TLA2 will culminate in the first assessed activity (see 'Assessed Task 1' below).

<u>TLA3: Improving vocabulary teaching through action research</u>

By engaging student teachers in doing action research, this assignment will **enable** them to identify their own students' preferred vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs), and to provide VLS **training** to them. Student teachers will also **apply** a variety of useful pedagogically sound techniques to improve the quality of vocabulary teaching and learning. TLA3 will culminate in an assessed activity (see 'Assessed Task 2' below).

<u>TLA4: Teaching vocabulary using authentic material</u>

The merits of using authentic texts in language teaching have long been recognized. Research has shown that, where possible, using naturally occurring texts to supplement the teaching of structural patterns associated with specific lexical items is a very productive vocabulary teaching strategy. This assignment is designed to facilitate the **application** of useful teaching techniques to enhance the effectiveness of vocabulary teaching. TLA4 will culminate in an assessed activity (see 'Assessed Task 3' below).

4. **Assessment Tasks/Activities**
   (Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course)

CILO No.	Type of Assessment Tasks (ATs)	Weighting	**Remarks**
CILO 1, 2, 3	AT1: Reflective essay	30%	due Week 6
CILO 4, 5	AT2: Action research project report	40%	due Week 10
CILO 5	AT3: using authentic material to teach vocabulary	30%	due week 14

<u>AT1: Reflective essay "From learner to teacher: My vocabulary learning experiences and my beliefs in good vocabulary teaching practices"</u>

This short essay (between 1,200 - 1,500 words) requires students to reflect on some of their salient vocabulary learning practices when they were **ESL/ENL*** learners from primary to tertiary level. Then, as teachers, they should reflect on their own belief system of good / effective vocabulary teaching practices, and to explore the (possible) link between their preferred vocabulary learning practices (or strategies) as learners, and their preferred vocabulary teaching practices (or techniques) as teachers. In this way, student teachers will be able to **apply** basic principles and good practices of vocabulary teaching and learning to their classroom

teaching. The reflective essay will be assessed according to the following criteria and weighting:

- **Content** (level of interest, clarity, quality of discussion and insights): **50%**
- **Illustrations** (quality and relevance of examples): **20%**
- **Language use** (accuracy and style): **20%**
- **Organization** (coherence, layout and format): **10%**

* **ESL = 'English as a second language'**

  ENL = 'English as a native language'

AT2: Individual action research report "Vocabulary learning strategies commonly used by Chinese ESL students: Some data from a [level] class in Hong Kong"

"How do my students cope with vocabulary learning? Do they use specific strategies to study English vocabulary? If so, how effective are these strategies?" This **action research project** is designed to **enable** students to better understand how their own students learn vocabulary by identifying the typical kinds of VLSs that their students use to cope with vocabulary learning. This information is crucial when applying insights in VLS research by familiarizing their own students of a variety of VLSs through **strategy training**.

Recommended action research methodologies: questionnaire survey and focus group interview – to find out how students learn vocabulary, and to assess how effective they are toward the goal of developing receptive and/or productive competence in the target vocabulary words. More detailed instructions will be provided on the Blackboard website. The action research report will be assessed according to the following criteria and weighting:

- **Content** (accuracy of understanding of vocabulary learning strategies, appropriateness of methodological design, quality of discussion and findings): 50%
- **Data and methods** (data quality and appropriateness of data collection procedures) 20%
- **Language use** (accuracy and style): 20%
- **Organization** (coherence, layout and format, including references): 10%

AT3: Authentic material and vocabulary teaching (in pairs or groups of three) "Teaching vocabulary using authentic material: A report"

Together with one or two classmates, students will **apply** useful VLS teaching techniques by identifying a naturally occurring text of a suitable length (up to 500 words), and discussing how they would use it to present the meanings of **at least four to six** vocabulary items that have not been dealt with in-depth in class. At the time the vocabulary items are introduced, they may assume that the text has been taught in class, and that their students are reasonably familiar with the context already. The final output will be a teaching plan, which for the purpose of this assignment need not be tried out with students. There is no requirement for a detailed lesson plan.

Students need to specify (a) the target level of learners (e.g. Form 4; Primary 6),

and (b) the source (e.g. *Asia Week, SCMP*, the Internet) from which the text was adapted, including date and page number (e.g. [SCMP 2006.08.30. A12]). The original text should be attached as an appendix. If the original text is too long, they may use only part of it. The report will be marked using the following criteria and weighting:

- **Content** (understanding of basic principles of effective vocabulary teaching and learning, level of interest of the authentic text, appropriate selection of target words for the right level of students, choice of vocabulary teaching techniques and pedagogical soundness): 50%
- **Teaching plan** (overall design of instructional procedures): 20%
- **Language use** (accuracy and style): 20%
- **Organization** (coherence, layout and format, including references): 10%

5. Grading of Student Achievement:

(Refer to Grading of Courses in the Academic Regulations (Attachment) and to the Explanatory Notes.)

Standard (A+AA-…F). Grading is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities.

Part III

1. Keyword Syllabus

- What is the relationship between grammar and lexis (vocabulary)?
- What is a word?
- What does it mean to know a word?
- How many words are there in English?
- How many words should L2 learners know for academic study?
- How do we define or present the meaning of a word?
- The use of vocabulary differs depending on where a speaker comes from and whom the speaker is talking to. How do we account for this?
- How are words stored and organized in people's minds?
- How important is it to know the written form of a word?
- How is grammatical knowledge connected to vocabulary knowledge?
- As language teachers, how do we deal with high-frequency words and low-frequency words?
- What does research on language corpora tell us about collocational patterns of vocabulary in use?
- What can learners do to become active, autonomous learners in vocabulary learning?
- What are some of the most common and effective techniques for presenting

and consolidating word meanings?

2.   Recommended Readings

Course Book:

Schmitt, Norbert. (2000). *Vocabulary in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Additional Readings (optional):

1. Nation, I. S. P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (on reserve at CityU library: P53.9 .N37 2001)

2. Willis, D. (2003). *Rules, patterns and words. Grammar and lexis in English language teaching.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (on reserve at CityU library: PE1065 .W55 2003)

Useful Supplementary References:

(The references below are somewhat dated, but they are still relevant and useful regarding vocabulary teaching and learning.)

3. Allen, V. F. (1983). *Techniques in teaching vocabulary.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

4. Gairns, R. and Redman, S. (1986). *Working with words: A guide to teaching and learning vocabulary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

5. Lewis, M. (1993). *The lexical approach*. Brighton: Language Teaching Publications.

6. McCarthy, M. (1990). *Vocabulary.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

7. Nation, I. S. P. (1990). *Teaching and learning vocabulary*. Boston, MA: Heinle and Heinle Publishers.

8. Nation, I. S. P. (ed.). (1994). *New ways in teaching vocabulary*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL.

9. Sinclair, J. M. (1991). *Corpus, concordance, collocation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

10. Sinclair, J. and Renouf, A. (1988). A lexical syllabus for language learning. In: R. Carter and M. McCarthy (eds.) *Vocabulary and language teaching*. Harlow: Longman.

11. Willis, D. (1990). *The lexical syllabus*. Glasgow: Collins Cobuild.

12. Willis, J. (1996). *A framework for task-based learning*. Harlow: Longman.

Returned by:

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