

PART TWO

AN OUTLINE COURSE IN DICTIONARY SKILL TRAINING

PAYYAP UNIVERSITY

SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Importance of Dictionary Skill Training

The word *dictionary* is defined by Sweet (1964) as a collection of the isolated phenomena of a language --- those which cannot easily and conveniently be brought under general rules. He points out that the main function of the dictionary is to identify each word with its meaning or meanings, and give the details of its linguistic use in so far as they do not fall entirely and exclusively under the province of grammar.

Dictionary use is a sub-skill under the umbrella term, *reference skills*. Carter and McCarthy (1988) say dictionary use is a valid activity for foreign learners of English, both as an aid to comprehension and production. The famous dictionary maker, Samuel Johnson, said that dictionaries are like watches: the worst is better than none, and the best cannot be expected to go quite true. Dictionaries are essential tools and invaluable friends for learners from all subjects. This is especially true when applied to foreign language learning.

Nation (2001) says dictionaries can help learners with understanding and producing text, and with vocabulary learning. Gairns and Redman (1986) mention that a learner who makes good use of a dictionary is able to continue learning outside the classroom, and this gives him considerable autonomy about the decisions which he makes about his own learning. Gairns and Redman (1986) believe that a dictionary

is an important resource to clarify uncertainty because it can function as a backup to contextual guesswork.

As one of the most common type of reference materials, dictionaries are different in their coverage just as students vary in their level and needs. Dictionaries come in a lot of different categories and learners need to choose the most appropriate dictionary for their needs. When learners have got the appropriate dictionary, they need to know how to use it effectively. In most EFL learning settings, it is common to see learners consult a dictionary to look for meanings and synonyms, or to check spellings. Such straightforward technical and passive look-up activity is argued by Scholfield (1982). He proposes that making use of a dictionary is rather a complex process and looking a word up in a dictionary requires that certain skills be applied in a systematic way; it requires a strategy. Similar views are also shared by Cowie (1999), he says successful use of dictionary calls for a special competence, which without appropriate training, many students do not possess.

Hartmann (1999) notes that dictionary skills are not tools to be taken for granted, but sophisticated instrument that need high-level training. He also suggestes foreign language learning syllabuses in universities and examination boards should include the provision and testing of the reference skills required for advanced dictionary use.

The new trend of dictionary-related research pays more attention to dictionary users and usage than the linguistic content and structure of the dictionary. Teachers need to bear in mind that successful and efficient dictionary use is not only a matter of the quality of the dictionary being used, but also concerns the type of dictionaries needed at various stages of the learning process, learners' attitude and preferences, dictionary use strategies, and reference needs. These factors further make the design

of dictionary training course necessary and worthwhile.

Scheduling of the Dictionary Skill Training Course

The dictionary skill training course is designed for first year English major students in a Chinese university. They are about 18-20 years old. English is their foreign language and they have already learned English for at least 6 years before entering the university. Regarding their language proficiency, they can be defined as intermediate learners.

The dictionary skill training course is designed as one of the preliminary training courses in the university curriculum. Other preliminary courses may include teaching students to use the library, guiding students in arranging their time, and introducing the activities and clubs in the university. The main purpose of offering such courses is to help new coming students to get familiar with the life and studies in the university faster.

The dictionary skill training course does not focus on a certain dictionary or a certain kind of dictionary. It introduces general information in the dictionary which students can apply to their own dictionaries.

The dictionary skill training course should be offered at the beginning of the first semester together with other formal courses and preliminary training courses. Every English major student should take the course. The total course requirement is 20 hours. The course is divided into eight periods because there are eight sub-topics involved in the course. To ensure you have enough time to teach the dictionary skills and students have enough time to understand and digest the knowledge, the course is designed to be met once a week, with each class lasting for two and a half hours.

Aims

The aims of the course are to:

1. train the learners to become efficient dictionary users;
2. improve dictionary use skills to increase students' self-study ability and efficiency;
3. promote dictionary use as one of students' life-long learning tools.

Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. choose and use the right dictionary according to their needs;
2. be familiar with the dictionary codes, organizations and functions;
3. build up the dictionary skills needed for different learning purposes, e.g. reading, writing, speaking, and listening;
4. develop the ability to use dictionary effectively and confidently;
5. increase awareness of the dictionary as a self-study resource.

SECTION TWO

SCHEME OF WORK

In this section, content guidelines and sample lesson plans are presented to help you to get ideas of what to teach and how to teach the dictionary skill training course.

By following the content guidelines, you can get familiar with the topics and sub-topics involved in the course. Things mentioned in the content guidelines can help you to teach the lessons. In these guidelines, references are made for you to further explore related topics. The content guidelines can serve as materials for you to do self-training and professional development.

After the content guidelines in each lesson, a sample lesson plan is followed to provide you insights of how to teach the dictionary skill training course by emphasizing the idea of learner-centeredness. Various kinds of activities are suggested to make the course effective and interesting. Rationales are given after each activity to explain reasons and benefits of doing it. Specifically, Sample Lesson Plan Two and Sample Lesson Plan Five are detailed lesson plans which guide you how to make use of the content guidelines and prepare for lessons.

Lesson One: Introduction

Brief Dictionary History

You can introduce general dictionary information, dictionary development in recent years, dictionary makers and making process, dictionary criticism, etc. This part is not the focus of the dictionary skill training course, it just serves as an opening for the course. You can choose whatever you believe your students will be interested in from the books and articles suggested in section four of part two in this project.

Recent Trends and Arguments in Dictionary Use Research

The recent focus of dictionary-related research can be divided into four categories: the type of dictionary that is most useful for L2 learners; the preferences of dictionary users and learners' needs; how learners use dictionaries; and the effects of dictionary use on a particular language task. Detailed information of this topic can be found in Bogaards (1999) and Cowie (1999).

The Important Role Dictionaries Play in Language Learning

You can talk about how dictionaries help learners to learn vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. There is a lot of research to support the idea that dictionary use plays an important role in helping learners learn a language, for example, Gu (2003a), Gu (2003b), Hulstijn and Hollander and Greidanus (1996), Knight (1994), and Summers (1988). Most of the books and articles mentioned in

section four of part two address this issue.

The Necessity of Offering the Course

You can ask about the dictionary skill training students have before they take this course, the advantages they may get if they can make good use of their dictionaries, the unique features this course has other than the available dictionary workbooks and textbooks.

Topic Arrangement for the Course

You can introduce the topics involved in the course so that students will know what they are going to learn.

Requirements for Attending the Class

You announce rules and discipline for the class to ensure the quality of the teaching and learning. For example, how to deal with students who are late for class? How to deal with students who do not come to class? How to deal with students who do not finish their assignment?

Sample Lesson Plan One

Time: 2 and 1/2 hours

Aim: Introduce the course and the topic

Teaching aids: Blackboard, chalk, overhead projector, transparency papers, pens, and handouts

Procedure:

Step	Time (min)	Instruction	Rationale
Group Work and Presentation	40	Divide the class into 4 or 5 groups. Ask them to think about what related to a dictionary. Teach them to draw a mind-map. Give each group a transparency paper and a pen to write on. Give them time to discuss and finish their mind-maps. Let each group choose one representative to explain the mind-map in front of the class.	Check what learners already know about dictionaries.
Lecture	10	Topic: Brief dictionary history.	Open the topic and introduce the dictionary-related knowledge.
Lecture and Discussion	40	Topic: Recent trends and arguments in dictionary use research. Select some interesting research articles and give them to students before class so that students can discuss in class.	Let students know what is going on in the dictionary field. Arouse their interests of the course.
Discussion	25	Topic: The important role dictionaries play in language learning. Ask students to brainstorm and make a list describing what dictionaries can do in helping us to learn English. The whole class discusses together.	Through discussion, make students aware of the important role which dictionaries play in their study. It also helps students to know that dictionary functions.
Lecture	10	Topic: The necessity of offering the course.	Emphasize the importance of the course. Encourage and motivate the students to learn.

Lecture	20	Topic: Topic arrangements for the course. Requirements for attending the class Give syllabus to students. Introduce, explain, and answer questions.	Let students know what will be learned in the course and prepare themselves for that. Some changes may be made according to students' needs.
Closure	5	Ask students to bring as many dictionaries as they have for next class. Ask and answer questions.	

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Lesson Two: Which Dictionary?

Types of Dictionaries

According to the purpose of using dictionaries, there are three major dictionary categories, namely general-purpose dictionaries, children's dictionaries and learners' dictionaries. The general-purpose dictionaries and the children's dictionaries are designed for native users while the learner's dictionaries are designed for language learners. Because this dictionary skill training course is for Chinese students who are majoring in English, the dictionaries discussed in the course are learners' dictionaries.

When focusing on the learners' dictionaries, we can find a collection of very diverse lexicographic works. Dictionaries are different due to the characteristics of the vocabulary, of the languages in contrast, and of the material formats.

In terms of the characteristics of the vocabulary, there are general dictionaries and specialized dictionaries. General dictionaries are dictionaries that are commonly used for general look-up purposes. Specialized dictionaries are listing of words or other linguistic items in a particular category or subject with specialized information about them.

According to the language, there are monolingual, bilingual and bilingualised dictionaries. Monolingual dictionaries describe the meaning of an English word using other English words. Most studies of monolingual learners' dictionaries use have involved advanced and sophisticated learners. It is partly because a reasonable level of proficiency is needed to use a monolingual dictionary. Bilingual dictionaries give the equivalent in another language. Bilingual dictionaries are suggested for the initial stages of learning a language. After that stage, learners need to make a shift to

monolingual dictionaries as their proficiency increases. Bilingualised dictionaries retain semantic explanations of the original L2 text with translation equivalents. It satisfies both language teachers who insist that foreign learners should use dictionaries of the target language and learners who complain that monolingual (learners') dictionaries are too difficult. Researchers (Harvey & Yuill, 1997; Laufer & Hadar, 1997) found that bilingualised dictionaries generally gave better results than bilingual and monolingual dictionaries on comprehension and production test. The more skilled users were, the better they performed with the monolingual dictionaries.

Based on the material format, there exists both printed products and electronic media. The most common printed products are the paper dictionaries. They include pocket dictionaries, desk dictionaries and library dictionaries which are different in size. Electronic media includes portable electronic dictionaries, CD-ROM dictionaries and on-line dictionaries. The pocket versions are quite popular with students because they are easy to carry and use. Most of the major English language dictionaries are now available on CD-ROM, which allow the contents of the dictionary to be accessed and searched by using a personal computer.

Due to the development of high technology, computer corpora and concordancers are becoming more and more popular. They have become an important part of learner dictionaries published by the main publishers like Longman, Cambridge, and Oxford. Students can create their own corpora and use them as a basis for a dictionary, to create a word frequency list, to study some linguistic phenomenon, or to study the language of a particular author or time period. By using them, students can learn the form that certain grammatical items take, as well as how those forms are used. Also, it can help learners to learn vocabulary.

Dictionary Evaluation and Selection

Facing the ever-increasing range of dictionaries available in the market, learners are often confronted with the problem of which dictionary is the best one to buy. In order to distinguish good from bad, learners need to be equipped with the ability to select and evaluate dictionaries.

There are many criteria for judging dictionaries. Loughridge (1990) summarizes the checkpoints as target readership and purpose, authority, scope or coverage, organization, definitions, linguistic information and labeling, currency, supplementary material, and format. West (1987) proposes to check the dictionaries by examine their price, date and format, number of pages, level/coverage, workbook available and quality, pronunciation system, ease of use, definitions, grammatical assistance, illustrations, number of appendices, and comments.

Nation (2001) suggests three ways to choose the best dictionary: first, to examine and compare the kinds of information the dictionaries provide, and the ways of how the information is organized and presented; second, to look at what learners prefer and actually use; third, to see the effects of use of the different types of dictionary on text comprehension, language production and understanding dictionary entries.

The following is a proposed checklist for dictionary evaluation and selection.

- Target readership and purposes
- Authority
- Level and coverage
- Organization
- Definitions

- Price
- Date
- Format
- Number of pages
- Ease of use
- Grammatical assistance
- Illustrations
- Number of appendices
- Comments
- Linguistic information and labeling
- Supplementary material
- Workbook available and quality
- Pronunciation system

More information about this topic can also be found in Lougheridge (1990) and Tribble (2003).

Sample Lesson Plan Two (Detailed)

Time: 2 and 1/2 hours

Aims: Introduce various kinds of dictionaries

Introduce criteria to evaluate dictionaries

Teaching Aids: Blackboard, chalk, overhead projector, and handouts

Procedure:

Step	Time (min)	Instruction	Rationale
Group work and Presentation	35	<p>Divide the class into 5 groups. Ask them to look at the dictionaries they bring to class and identify the features of these dictionaries. Ask each group to make a table to compare the similarities and differences of dictionaries they have.</p> <p><i>(Similarities and differences of the dictionaries may include: 1. Target user group: dictionary for native speakers, non-native learners, or advance learners. 2. Characteristics of vocabulary: general dictionary, or specialized dictionary. 3. Language used: monolingual, bilingual, or bilingualised dictionary. 4. Size: pocket, desk, or library sized dictionary. 4. Fomat: paper, electronic portable, or CD-ROM dictionary)</i></p> <p>Choose one student in each group to present their findings.</p>	<p>To see what kind of dictionaries students have already had. Make them think through the features of each dictionary.</p>
Lecture	20	<p>Topic: Types of dictionaries</p> <p>Introduce the dictionary types in terms. Give definitions.</p> <p><i>(See the former introduction under the topic of Type of Dictionaries.)</i></p>	<p>Give clear explanations of the dictionary type available in the market. Make students aware of their choices when buying a dictionary.</p>

Group Work	20	Ask students to work in the same group as in the warm up activity. Ask them to divide the dictionaries they have into different groups according to different standard. Present their findings to the whole class and discuss if it is the right division.	Make sure they understand different ways and standards to group dictionaries. Enforce their knowledge of dictionary types.
Group Work	20	Divide the class into 5 groups. Ask them to brainstorm what influence their decision to buy a dictionary. Rank their answers in order of the most important reason to the least important reason. Ask the answer from each group, and write them on the blackboard. Compare these answers.	Make students think what factors they consider when they want to buy a dictionary and know what factors other students consider when they want to buy a dictionary.
Lecture	20	Topic: Dictionary evaluation Introduce why we need to evaluate dictionaries. Introduce and compare different sets of criteria that people used to evaluate dictionaries. <i>(Three sets of criteria for dictionary evaluation and selection are introduced in the content guideline under the topic of Dictionary Evaluation and Selection.)</i>	Let students know the criteria people often use to judge the quality and practicability of dictionaries.
Group Work	30	Divide the class into 5 groups. Ask students to choose one of the dictionaries they have and use different criteria to evaluate it. Make decision if the dictionary they choose is appropriate for them or not, give reasons. Present their evaluation in front of the class.	Make sure students understand how to evaluate dictionaries and know how to use the criteria for different purposes. Prepare them to do project 1.
Closure	5	Ask students to do Project 1: Choose three dictionaries of the same type, and write their own criteria to evaluate it. Recommend the best one and give reasons.	

Lesson Three: Bilingual, Bilingualized, and Monolingual Learners' Dictionaries

Dictionary Users' Needs, Preferences and Effectiveness of the Dictionaries

Most teachers doubt the use of bilingual dictionaries because they encourage the use of a translation which provides little information on how words are used. However, according to Nation (2001), surveys of learners' preferences and use indicate that bilingual dictionaries are the preferred option for most learners. Baxter's (1980, cited in Nation, 2001) survey of his Japanese university students showed that the students overwhelmingly used bilingual rather than monolingual dictionaries. The research done by Atkins and Knowles (1990, cited in Laufer & Hadar, 1997) which involved over 1000 participants showed that bilingual dictionaries were used by the majority of the students (75%). Bilingualised dictionaries could bridge the gap between monolinguals and bilinguals because they retain semantic explanations of the original L2 text with translation equivalents. Thus, they should satisfy both language teachers who insist that foreign learners should use dictionaries of the target language and learners who complain that such monolingual dictionaries are too difficult. Though it may have great potential to become a useful educational tool, this type of dictionaries has not yet been fully discussed.

The high preference does not mean high effectiveness. In the same study done by Atkins and Knowles (1990, cited in Laufer & Hadar, 1997), it was found that the monolingual dictionaries were more successful in helping users find relevant information than were the bilingual dictionaries. According to Bejoint and Moulin (1987, cited in Laufer & Hadar, 1997), bilingual dictionaries were ideal for quick consultation, while monolingual dictionaries, though more difficult to use, have the

extra merit of directly introducing the user to the lexical system of the L2.

Unfortunately, there are not many studies concerned with the use of bilingualised dictionary because it is relatively new.

Laufer and Hadar (1997) assessed the effectiveness of three types of dictionaries: monolingual, bilingual, and bilingualised dictionaries in both comprehension and production of new words by 123 high school and university EFL learners. The results showed that bilingualised dictionaries were significantly better than monolingual dictionaries on both comprehension and production. The study also linked the effectiveness of use of different types of dictionaries to the learners' dictionary use skills. For unskilled dictionary users, bilingual dictionaries produced the best results on overall dictionary use while monolingual dictionaries produced the worst results. For average dictionary users, bilingualised dictionaries yielded the highest scores and proved to be significantly more useful than the monolingual. For good dictionary users, there were no significant differences in comprehension, production, and overall dictionary use for the three types of dictionaries. Another interesting finding was that language proficiency did not determine the learner's ability to use information in dictionaries.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Bilingual, Bilingualized, and Monolingual Learners' Dictionaries

While most students prefer to use bilingual dictionaries, most teachers prefer their students to use monolingual dictionaries. The following table compares bilingual, bilingualized, and monolingual learners' dictionaries. Detailed information about the comparison among these three types of dictionaries can be found in Baxter (1980),

Cowie (1999), Koren (1997), Nation (2001), McCarthy (1990) and Thompson (1987).

Dictionary Type	Advantages	Disadvantages
Monolingual	Provide more information of words; Give more exposure to the target language; Help students with their speaking and writing; Have wider potential market for publishers.	Difficult to use; Hard to understand; Not cost-effective for most learners.
Bilingual	Easy to understand; Easy to use for writing and speaking purpose; Bi-directional when use; High preference.	Encourage one to one translation; Discourage the engagement with English; Provide insufficient information of words.
Bilingualised	Combine advantages of both	

Sample Lesson Plan Three

Time: 2 and 1/2 hours

Aims: Introduce the dictionary user's needs, habits and preferences

Introduce the advantages and disadvantages of bilingual, bilingualized and monolingual learners' dictionaries

Teaching Aids: Blackboard, chalk, overhead projector, transparency papers and pens, and worksheets

Procedure:

Step	Time (min)	Instruction	Rationale
Discussion	15	Ask students to discuss in groups of 4 about what do they use dictionaries for and what kind of dictionary they like to use and why. After discussion, ask every student to write down answers on a piece of paper. Choose some students to share their ideas.	Check students' dictionary use needs, habits and preferences. Prepare for the third activity.
Discussion	15	Use overhead projector to show students the following words: "spellings, grammar information, pronunciation, examples, translations, explanations, meaning, illustrations, notes about similar words, idioms, understanding when and how to use words, list of irregular verbs." Ask students to discuss how important they are when they use a dictionary. Ask them to put them in order of importance. You lead the whole class to discuss the answers.	Make students aware of their own dictionary use behavior and think about priorities in using dictionaries. Prepare for the next activity.

Group Work, Presentation and Discussion	50	<p>Divide the class into four groups. Choose four different research articles about dictionary users' needs, habits and preferences. Give each group one. Ask them to read it in class. Discuss the article within the group and prepare to tell other groups about the findings.</p> <p>Ask each group to briefly introduce their article to the other group. You lead the whole class to discuss the findings which have already been written on transparency papers and ask students to compare findings with their own answers from former two activities.</p>	<p>Make students aware what other dictionary users always do so that they can learn from others and improve their own skills.</p>
Group Work and Discussion	15	<p>Ask student to work in groups of 4. Ask them to think about and list the advantages and disadvantages of bilingual, bilingualized and monolingual learners' dictionaries. Write down the answers on the transparency paper and choose one student from each group to share their ideas. Discuss and make comparison among groups.</p>	<p>Check students' understanding of each kind of dictionaries and prepare for the next activity.</p>
Lecture	20	<p>Topic: advantages and disadvantages of bilingual, bilingualized, and monolingual learners' dictionaries Talk about each type and make comparison among them. Talk about the effectiveness of each in different tasks. Talk about the main features of each type.</p>	<p>Make students have a clear view of these three kinds of dictionaries so that they know how to choose and use them in a right way and for a right purpose.</p>

Group Work	30	<p>Divide the class into groups of three. Find a suitable text of 100 words which includes 5 or more new words and give it to each group member. Ask one member to use bilingual dictionary, one member to use bilingualized dictionary and the other one to use monolingual dictionary to look up the new words they meet in the text. Ask them to find as much information as they can for that word. Ask students to discuss the look-up result. For example, Did they look up the same word? Do they agree on the meaning for the same word? What information they find about the same word in each type of dictionary? Etc. Change the dictionaries and look up the word again. Discuss their findings and feelings of each type of dictionary. Write some representative words on the blackboard which most students look up. Discuss the meaning and information students find in their respective dictionaries. Make comments.</p>	<p>Make students compare how these three types of dictionaries help with reading comprehension. Make them aware of the different information the three types of dictionaries present and the different points which the three types of dictionaries emphasize.</p>
Closure	5	Ask and answer questions.	

Lesson Four: What is in the Dictionary?

General Dictionary Organization and Structure

By studying dictionaries published by Oxford (2000), Cambridge (2000), Random House (2001), Macmillan (2002), HarperCollins (1996), you can find that they provide basic information such as guidelines of how to use dictionaries, guide to understand dictionary entries, pronunciation, styles and symbols, usage labels, pragmatics, grammar codes, inflected forms, abbreviations used in dictionaries, and etc. Besides that, some dictionaries provide illustrations, phrasal verbs, idioms, topic pages, geographical names, common first names, and so on.

Dictionary Codes, Symbols and Terms

Most dictionaries list codes and symbols in the introduction of the dictionary. They are almost the same. You can introduce and let students get familiar with these codes and symbols.

Wright (1998) explains most of the dictionary terms which can help students to understand their dictionary better. It defines terms like *abbreviation*, *antonym*, *chunks*, *derivative*, *homograph*, *stem*, *word field*, etc. Detailed information can be found in the glossary part of his book.

Sample Lesson Plan Four

Time: Two and half hours

Aims: Introduce general dictionary organization and structure

Introduce dictionary codes, symbols and terms

Teaching Aids: Blackboard, chalk, overhead projector, transparency papers, pens, handouts and worksheets

Procedure:

Step	Time (min)	Instruction	Rationale
Group Work	15	Ask students to work in groups of 4. Ask them to read the table of contents of their dictionaries and list what information their dictionary provides. For example, guide to use the dictionary, illustrations, pronunciation, and grammar. Compare and discuss their findings. You write down what the students' dictionaries contained on the blackboard.	Make students aware of ways that most dictionaries organize content. Students will notice what information they can find in their dictionaries. It also informs students of the differences between publications.
Group Work and Presentation	50	Organize students into groups according to their interests in different dictionary sections. Ask each group to work on the section they choose and prepare for telling other groups what the section is about and how they help the users. You give immediate comments after each presentation and lead discussion.	Help the students have a deeper understanding of their dictionary structure and content. It also gives students chance to know how a dictionary helps them in language study.
Lecture	30	Topic: dictionary codes, symbols and terms Give students a worksheet of the most often used dictionary codes, symbols and terms. Ask them to write down what these codes, symbols and terms mean without looking at their dictionaries. Then, ask them to check their answers in groups of 2. Finally, you show the answers through the overhead projector and give explanations.	Help students to get familiar with the dictionary codes, symbols and terms.

Group Work	25	Divide the class into groups of 4. Choose several typical word entries include the dictionary codes, symbols and terms mentioned above. Copy them onto transparency papers. Give each group a different entry. Let group members discuss and study the entry and explain the entry to the rest of the class by using the overhead projector.	Reinforce students' understanding of the dictionary codes symbols and terms. It also helps students to be familiar with the entry information in the dictionary.
Project Work	25	Divide the students into groups of 3. Tell them they are going to do project 2, that is design their own mini-dictionary and write a rationale for it. Give handouts with instructions for the project like the dictionary should include at least 5 entries and each entry needs to include all of the necessary information, students can use the information in the published dictionaries but cannot copy them, etc. Ask each group to make a plan for the design. You go around the class to help and explain. Ask students to do the project if you approve their plan.	Students will learn more about the dictionary information through making their own mini-one. You can also check how much students have learned from the former classes.
Closure	5	Ask and answer questions	

Lesson Five: Using a Dictionary for Comprehension

Skills

Dictionaries can be used for a lot of purposes. The main reasons why learners use dictionaries include looking for meanings and synonyms, checking spellings and translation.

Using a dictionary for comprehension is also called using a dictionary for decoding or the receptive use of a dictionary (Nation, 2001). The receptive use of a dictionary involves looking up the meaning of a word that has been met while reading and listening.

Jordan (1997) points out that in general, students are probably more successful in using dictionaries for comprehension purposes than for production purposes.

Nation (2001) specifies using dictionaries for comprehension as: look up unknown words met while listening, reading or translating; confirm the meanings of partly known words; confirm guesses from context. He further suggests the steps in a strategy that can be the basis for learner training as: get information from the context where the word occurred; find the dictionary entry; choose the right sub-entry; relate the meaning to the context and decide if it fits.

Strategy	Skills Included
Get information from the context where the word occurred	Decide on the part of speech of the word to be looked up; Decide if the word is an inflected or derived form that can be reduced to a base form; Guessing the general meaning of the word; Deciding if the word is worth looking up by considering its relevance to the task and general usefulness.
Find the dictionary entry	Know the order of the letters of the alphabet; Know the dictionary symbols for the different parts of speech; Know alternative places to search, for example, separate entries, word groups, derived forms, and appendixes.
Choose the right sub-entry	Scan all the entries; Guess and predict.
Relate the meaning to the context and decide if it fits	Adapt the meaning found in the dictionary to the context of the word in the text; Evaluate the success of the search.

Activities

You can choose the activities from the books mentioned in Section Four of Part Two in this project. You can also design your own activities according to your teaching style to fit the learners' needs.

Sample Lesson Plan Five (Detailed)

Time: Two and 1/2 hours

Aims: Introduce dictionary use skills for reading and listening purposes

Practice the skills

Teaching Aids: Blackboard, chalk, overhead projector, transparency papers, pens, worksheets and handouts

Procedure:

Step	Time (min)	Instruction	Rationale
Warm Up	10	Ask students to think what they usually do when they come across new words. You summarize students' answers and list them all on the blackboard.	Check students' dictionary use habits when they meet new words. Open the topic.
Lecture	40	Topic: Introduce dictionary use skills needed for reading and listening purposes. Give handouts of the skills mentioned by Nation (2001). <i>(You can use the table mentioned in the former content guidelines under the topic of skills)</i>	Make students clear about the skills mentioned by the former researchers. Give students a clear picture of all the skills needed when using a dictionary for comprehension.
Activities	70	You choose or design two or three tasks that are suitable for the students' level. Give worksheets and let students use their dictionaries. <i>(See Activities followed by the sample lesson plan.)</i>	Let students practice the skills they have just learned so that they can get familiar with the skills. Through the practice, you can identify problems like misunderstanding of the skills and solve it.
Discussion	25	Ask students to work in groups of 4. Ask them to study the skills listed on the handouts. Compare look-up strategy. Discuss questions like: What skills do they usually use and what skills do they seldom use? Do they think these skills or steps are necessary and helpful? What do they learn from these skills? Etc. Ask each group to share their opinions in front of the class.	Make students think of skills they used to look-up words. Through comparisons, they can conclude their own best way to use dictionaries.

Closure	5	Ask students to write self-reflection report about their ideas of the skills they learn today. The self-reflection reports may include what students think about the teaching and learning in the class, how they feel about the skills, what do they want to know more, and their experience of using the skills. Ask and answer questions.	
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Suggest Activities:

1. Work in pairs. Ask students to open any page of their dictionaries and tell each other where they can find the following information: (15 minutes)

Headword	Grammar facts	Phonemic transcription	Definition
Example	Abbreviation	Part of speech	Usage notes
Running head	Cross-reference	Entry	Derivative

Ask them to answer which piece of information from the above tells you about:

the pronunciation of a word

the spelling of a word

other related words

how we actually use the word

what the word means

the first or last word on the page

what sort of word it is?

2. Give the following sentences. Ask students to use monolingual dictionaries to finish the task. Ask them to work in pairs to finish the table step by step. Discuss their answers after they finish. (20 minutes)

He was *picked up* by the police for questioning.

She entered the church, and felt the *cold flags* under her hot and tired feet.

He came home *plastered* after the party.

This year, Wimbledon was won by the number three *seed*.

The word you don't know	Guess the meaning	Dictionary definitions	The right definition according to the context	L1 translation for the sentence

3. Give the following sets of words. Divide the students into two groups. One group use monolingual dictionaries, the other group use bilingualised dictionaries. Give them time to look-up these words. Remind them to pay attention to how their dictionaries distinguish among the changing meanings of these words.

After they finish, you guide them to discuss the meaning of these words. While discussing, compare which kind of dictionaries provides more clear information and help students better. (35 minutes)

bay leaves, at bay, bayed at the moon, bay window, bomb bay, a breeze from the bay

head of lettuce, head the procession, a head of steam, heads or tails, over the listeners' heads, went to his head, heads of government, head off complaints, not have a head for figures

car of recent make, make the beds, make money, make excuses, makes my blood boil, make a speech, makes easy reading, made him a sergeant

repair a car, repaired to the meeting, in good repair, repair the damage

straight to the point, straight alcohol, straight party line, the comedian's straight man, straight hair, thinking straight

a tender smile, tender an apology, legal tender

Lesson Six: Using a Dictionary for Production

Skills

Productive use of dictionaries refers to find word forms to express message. It is a process to turn ideas into language and thus we call it encoding.

Scholfield (1982) describes the strategy as: finding the wanted word form; checking that there are no unwanted constraints on the use of the word; working out the grammar and collocations of the word; checking the spelling or pronunciation of the word before using it.

Strategy	Skills Included
Find the wanted word form	Use bilingual dictionaries; Use a dictionary like the Longman Language Activator; Use synonyms, opposites or related words in a monolingual dictionary
Check that there are no unwanted constraints on the use of the word	Interpret the dictionary's style labels and codes, for example, whether the word is in current use or archaic, whether it is formal or colloquial, and whether it is impolite.
Work out the grammar and collocations of the word	Read the example sentences in dictionaries; Interpret grammatical coding schemes
Check the spelling or pronunciation of the word before using it	Read phonetic script

Dictionaries can be used for both comprehension and production purposes. But it is true that in most EFL teaching and learning settings, learners only use dictionaries for simple activities such as looking for meanings, pronunciations and spellings. McCarthy(1990) suggests that much practical training may be necessary to

encourage fuller and more productive use of dictionaries. You can give such training by introducing students to use production dictionaries, for example, Longman Language Activator.

Activities

You can choose activities from the books mentioned in Section Four of Part Two in this project. You can also design activities by getting the ideas from the activities mentioned in those books. Activities are included in the workbook of the production dictionary: Longman Language Activator is especially useful for the training.

Choose Different Dictionaries for Different Purposes

While bilingual dictionaries are used at all levels for decoding, the monolingual learner's dictionary comes into its own as a source of meaning at a more advanced level, where the students' proficiency in the L2 has improved. In the study conducted by Atkins and Varantola (1997, cited in Nation, 2001) to examine how learners perform a translation task, the learners have access to both bilingual and monolingual dictionaries. The result showed that most look-ups were to find or check on an L2 translation. The success rates were higher with the use of bilingual dictionaries for both tasks.

Nation (2001) provides detailed features and ways of checking the features of a learners' dictionary to be used to look up word meanings, and the features to be used for writing or speaking. The features to be used to look up word meanings include: the

dictionary should contain lots of words and word groups; the meanings should be easy to understand; derived words and word groups should be easy to find; the meanings should be easy to find; there should be examples and collocations to guide the search and confirm that the appropriate meaning has been found. The features to be used for writing or speaking contain: there should be ways of finding the appropriate word; the dictionary should provide information about constraints on use of the word; the dictionary should provide plenty of understandable example sentences as models for use; the dictionary should contain easily understood information about the grammar and collocations of the word. Detailed ways of checking these features are also listed in Nation (2001).

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Sample Lesson Plan Six

Time: Two and 1/2 hours

Aims: Introduce dictionary use skills for writing and speaking purposes

Practice the skills

Introduce how to choose different dictionaries for different purposes

Teaching Aids: Blackboard, chalk, overhead projector, transparency papers, pens, worksheets and handouts

Procedure:

Step	Time (min)	Instruction	Rationale
Warm Up	10	Ask students to think what they often do when they want to find English words to express certain meanings. List answers on the blackboard and discuss the effectiveness of each.	Open the topic. Check students' way of finding new words to express themselves.
Lecture	30	Topic: Introduce dictionary use skills needed for writing and speaking purposes. Give handouts of the skills mentioned by Nation (2001). Explain by showing examples.	Make students clear about the skills mentioned by the former researcher. Give students a clear picture of all the skills needed when using a dictionary for production.
Activities	60	You choose or designs two or three tasks that are suitable for the students' level. Give worksheets and let students use their dictionaries.	Let students practice the skills they have just learned so that they can get familiar with the skills. Through the practice, the teacher can identify problems like misunderstanding of the skills and solve it.
Discussion	20	Ask students to work in groups of 4. Ask them to study the skills listed on the handouts. Compare the look-up strategy. Discuss questions like: What skills do they usually use and what skills do they seldom use? Do they think these skills or steps are necessary and helpful? What do they learn from these skills? Etc. Ask each group to share their opinions in front of the class.	Make students think of skills they used to look-up words. Through comparison, they can conclude their own best way to use dictionaries.

Lecture	25	Topic: Choose the right dictionary for different learning purposes. Talk about research articles and give handouts about checking features according to Nation (2001) for choosing dictionaries for comprehension and production purposes. Explain and discuss these features.	Make students aware that different kinds of dictionaries are good for different learning purposes.
Closure	5	Ask students to write self-reflection reports about their ideas of the skills they learned today. Ask and answer questions	

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Lesson Seven: Using a Dictionary for Vocabulary Learning

Skills

Nesi (1999) proposes skills which university-level students might need in order to use dictionaries effectively chronologically. These skills vary in difficulty and degree of abstraction. They cover six stages: before study stage, before dictionary consultation stage, interpreting entry information stage, recording entry information stage, and understanding lexicographical issues stage. In these stages, the sorts of skills required by language learners when they use dictionaries are exhaustive and clearly specific. Thus, as a whole, it can help learners with vocabulary learning.

Stage	Skills Included
Before study	Know what types of dictionaries exist, and choose which dictionaries to consult and/or buy; Know what kinds of information are found in dictionaries and other types of reference works.
Before dictionary consultation	Decide whether dictionary consultation is necessary; Decide what to look up; Decide on the appropriate form of the look-up item; Decide which dictionary is most likely to satisfy the purpose of the consultation; Contextual guessing of the meaning of the look-up item; Identifying the word class of the look-up item.
Locating entry information	Understand the structure of the dictionary; Understand alphabetization and letter distribution; Understand grapho-phonemic correspondence (and the lack of it); Understand the use of wildcards in electronic dictionary searches; Choose amongst homonyms; Find derived forms; Find multi-word units; Understand the cross-referencing system in printed dictionaries, and hyperlinking in electronic dictionaries.

Interpreting entry information	Distinguish the component parts of the entry; Distinguish relevant from irrelevant information; Find information about the spelling of words; Understand typographical conventions and the use of symbols, numbered superscripts, punctuation; Interpret etymological information; Interpret morphological and syntactic information; Interpret the definition or translation; Interpret information about collocations; Interpret information about idiomatic and figurative use; Derive information from examples; Interpret restrictive labels; Refer to additional dictionary information (in front matter, appendices, hypertext links); Verify and apply look-up information.
Recording entry information	Sift entry information; Decide how to record entry information; Compile a vocabulary notebook or file of index cards; Use the notebook section of an electronic dictionary.
Understanding lexicographical issues	Know what people use dictionaries for; Know lexicographical terminology; Understand principles and processes of dictionary compilation; Recognize different defining and translating styles; Compare entries; Dictionary criticism and evaluation.

Summers (1988) notes that the most obvious way that dictionaries help students to learn words is through providing further exposures for the words in other contexts, with different collocates and constructions, by making the student think about the words in relation both to the passage being read and the dictionary information. Lupescu and Day (1993, cited in Nation) found that students who use dictionaries gained higher scores on the vocabulary test given immediately after the reading than students who did not use dictionaries. In another carefully designed experiment with learners of Spanish as a second language, Knight (1994, cited in Nation) found that learners who had access to dictionaries learned more words in both immediate and delayed (two weeks later) tests than learners who had no access to dictionaries. Learners with access to the dictionary also gained higher comprehension

scores. Gu and Johnson (1996, cited in Fan) found that Chinese students were very positive about dictionary use. They reported that Chinese learners have used a variety of look-up strategies, which correlated positively with vocabulary scores.

Many vocabulary-related researches (Fan, 2003; Gu, 2003a; Gu, 2003b; Gu & Johnson, 1996) mention about the use of dictionaries as an effective vocabulary learning strategy which helps learners to achieve learning.

The following three researches are about how dictionaries help learners to learn vocabulary. It may give you ideas of students' needs and habits in using dictionaries for vocabulary learning.

In the case study done by Gu (2003a), how two successful non-English-major EFL learners handled vocabulary learning during and after reading were compared. His findings showed that both of the learners employed a wide range of vocabulary learning strategies which included the dictionary use. The two learners showed similarity in the use of a dictionary: they used guess strategy before they tended to dictionaries for help; they used dictionaries for comprehension purposes, negotiation between dictionary definitions and contextual meaning; and they used dictionaries for vocabulary learning purposes, taking various types of notes when they felt necessary.

Another research conducted by Hulstijn, Hollander and Greidanus (1996) investigated the influence of marginal glosses, dictionary use, and reoccurrence of unknown words on the incidental vocabulary learning of advanced-level students of French. The results suggested that frequency of occurrence encouraged incidental vocabulary learning when advanced second language readers were presented with meanings of unfamiliar words through marginal glosses or when they can refer to a dictionary rather than when no external information concerning the definition of unknown words is available. The effect of marginal glosses was greater than that of

dictionary use because readers often did not make use of dictionaries. However, when readers use dictionaries, the incidence of incidental vocabulary learning was proved to be as good as, or even better than, when they are provided with marginal glosses. Also, this study suggested that intermediate and advanced L2 learners, when reading a fictional or nonfictional text of more than one page in order to understand the main idea, seldom use dictionaries. Only when they read a short text or when dictionary consultation has been made extremely easy, did some of them look up the meanings of unknown words.

The study done by Fan (2003) talked about the learning of English vocabulary of Cantonese speakers. More dictionary strategies than other strategies were included in the study because the students who took part in the pilot study emphasized the importance of it. The findings from the research revealed that students had a preference for dictionaries as one of the vocabulary learning strategies. Dictionary use as one strategy was considered as very useful and was used often by the students. Students consulted dictionaries for English definitions, pronunciation, derived forms, and appropriate usage of new words.

The three above studies are different in design and the focus: the first one focuses on how learners use dictionaries in their reading task; the second one focuses on comparison of the use of gloss, dictionaries and no additional information; and the last one focuses on comparison of the different vocabulary learning strategies. But they have one thing in common, that is, all three studies show a positive attitude toward the use of dictionaries in vocabulary learning.

As Summer (1988) hopes that the new awareness of the importance of vocabulary in language learning will go hand in hand with a greater appreciation of the dictionary's potential and that dictionary training will become an interesting and

valuable new addition to the students' timetable.

Activities

You can choose the activities from the books mentioned in Section Four of Part Two in this project. You can also design activities based on the ideas you get from the activities in the books according to the learners' needs.

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Sample Lesson Plan Seven

Time: Two and 1/2 hours

Aims: Introduce dictionary use skills for vocabulary learning purposes

Practice the skills

Teaching Aids: Blackboard, chalk, overhead projector, transparency papers, pens, worksheets and handouts

Procedure:

Step	Time (min)	Instruction	Rationale
Warm Up	10	Ask students to brainstorm what information they can find in the dictionary about one word. List all the answers on the blackboard and discuss it.	Make students think about what they can learn from their dictionaries.
Lecture	40	Topic: Dictionary use skills for vocabulary learning Give handouts of skills specified by Nesi (1999), focus on the skills mentioned in stage three, stage four and stage five. You explain the skills by showing examples. Talk about some research articles about using dictionaries as one of the vocabulary learning strategies.	Provide students theoretical background for using dictionaries for their vocabulary development. It also makes them aware of the important status which dictionaries play in their vocabulary learning process.
Activities	70	You choose or design two or three tasks that are suitable for the students' level. Give worksheets and let students use their dictionaries.	Let students practice the skills they have just learned so that they can get familiar with the skills. Through the practice, you can identify problems like misunderstanding of the skills and solve it.
Group Work	25	Ask students to work in groups of 4. Ask them to share their ways of recording dictionary information. Let them write down their ideas and present it to the other groups.	Teach students to make use of the dictionary search results, record useful information and make it become part of their knowledge.
Closure	5	Ask students to write self-reflection reports about their ideas of the skills they learn today. Ask and answer questions.	

Lesson Eight: Electronic Media

The Electronic Media Knowledge and its Use

The electronic media refers to portable electronic dictionaries, CD-ROM dictionaries, and on-line dictionaries. The teacher can define these terms and let learners learn by using them.

Advantages and Disadvantages of These Kinds of Electronic Media

The development of the new technology makes electronic dictionaries become more and more popular due to its convenience and quickness. The study carried out by Weschler and Pitt (2000) conducted an experiment to find whether electronic dictionaries were faster to use than paper dictionaries. The study used questionnaires to explore whether students were taking full advantage of their electronic dictionaries or not. The result of the experiment was students could look up words about 23% faster with an electronic dictionary. The results of questionnaires showed that students rarely use their electronic dictionary on the move. Most students used them both at home and in the classroom. None of the respondents took advantage of his or her electronic dictionary's superior look-up speed when speaking in or listening to the L2. As the experiment demonstrated, electronic dictionaries could be somewhat faster, but this small speed difference was probably not enough to justify their extra cost when looking up words needed to understand an L2 reading passage or write a report in L2 for homework. However, most of the respondents used their electronic dictionaries the most. The researchers concluded their research by saying that most students in Japan

were not taking advantage of either the portability or the extra speed that they paid for. They further suggested for these kind of students, or for this pattern of use, it seemed that an electronic dictionary is not a wise investment. However, for more autonomous students who wanted to translate or study on the move, or who wanted to learn from aural input, it may be a wise purchase.

More research needs to be done in assessing the effectiveness of using electronic dictionaries so that the users can know more about their electronic dictionaries and take full advantage of them. Electronic dictionaries have certain unique functions which paper dictionaries do not have, such as error tolerant input, cross-referencing (e.g. synonyms and antonyms), word and spelling games, and their speed advantage.

Sample Lesson Plan Eight

Time: Two and 1/2 hours

Aims: Introduce the electronic media: electronic dictionaries, CD-ROM dictionaries on-line dictionaries, corpora and concordances.

Introduce the advantages and disadvantages of these kinds of electronic media

Introduce how to use the electronic media

Teaching Aids: Computers, Internet, portable dictionaries, CD-ROM dictionaries, blackboard, chalk, overhead projector, transparency papers, pens, and handouts

Procedure:

Step	Time (min)	Instruction	Rationale
Group Debate	30	Give a statement: The electronic dictionaries are more helpful than the paper dictionaries. Ask students if they agree with the statement or not. Divide the class into two groups according to students' opinions. Give students time to work in groups and list the reasons why they agree or not agree with the statement. Ask the two groups to debate.	Let students share their ideas towards the use of electronic dictionaries. Make them think about why it's good or bad.
Lecture	15	Topic: Different kinds of electronic based dictionaries. Introduce electronic dictionaries, CD-ROM dictionaries, on-line dictionaries, corpora and concordances. Show students examples.	Teach students to understand the concept of electronic media.
Lecture	20	Topic: The advantages and disadvantages of the electronic media. Compare the electronic media with the traditional paper-made products. Compare among different kinds of electronic media. Focus on the portable electronic dictionaries which students use most often.	Make students have a right attitude towards the new technology so that they can make best use of it for their language learning.

Lecture	30	Topic: Introduce the use of CD-ROM dictionaries, on-line dictionaries corpora and concordances. Ask students to go to the computer room. Show them the use of these computer assist programmes through the overhead projector.	Make students know how to use them and prepare for the next activity.
Pair Study	45	Ask students to work in pairs to practice using the different kinds of computer-based dictionaries. You go around offering help and checking their working progress. Ask every student to write a self-reflection of the use of the computer-based dictionaries.	Help students to get familiar with the use of these computer-based dictionaries so that they can use them independently for their own language learning.
Closure	10	Summarize the whole course and comment on students' performance.	

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SECTION THREE

IMPLEMENTING THE COURSE

The following parts help you to understand how to implement the dictionary skill training course by focusing on the idea of learner-centeredness. In order to help you to clarify the idea of what the course will be like and how you can teach the course, your role and the role of your students, the teaching methods, materials and language to be used in the class, time arrangement are discussed. Moreover, ways to assess students' performance and ways to evaluate the course are suggested. These ideas remind you of the important factors which need to be consider in the dictionary skill training course.

The Role of Teacher and Students

Teacher and students' roles are discussed respectively to help you to gain insights of how to handle the relationship between you and your students in learn-centered class.

Teacher

The course provides you with an opportunity to strike a balance between two classroom roles, teacher-controlled and teacher-monitored. Because this is a learner-centered course, you should behave like a collaborator and consultant rather

than a master so that your students will not be afraid to take the risk to challenge you as the authority. In the learner-centered class, you can have various roles. The actual roles will largely depend on the lesson plan, its objectives and processes.

First, since the focus of the learner-centered class is on the learners, you act as a facilitator, a supporter, a motivator and a guide. You need to help students to discover their own ways of learning so that they can work independently and cooperate with other students. You also need to find ways to encourage students to learn so that they are motivated.

Then, because you have more experience in the subject areas than the learners, you act as a problem solver and an advisor. You need to present the knowledge to the students and guide them how to use it before students involve themselves in the activities designed for enhanced learning. You also need to solve learners' learning problems.

Third, because your job in the learner-centered class is to help learners to learn, you should behave like a coordinator and participant. You can work with students as a member among them so that it is easier for you to find students' needs, and what they lack. Also when you work together with the students, students can feel less controlled and directed so they can make their own choice of what to learn and how to learn.

Fourth, because the classrooms need discipline, you have to work as an organizer, a manager, a communicator and a mediator. These roles require you to manage the interaction and learning in the class, structure the learning environment which will promote learning, choose appropriate activities and tasks to facilitate learning.

Students

In a learner-centered classroom, your students are expected to take an active part in the learning process. They are expected to initiate and maintain communication with other learners. They are expected to cooperate with other learners, and they are also expected to take risks and be creative. These expectations put them into the situation where they must share responsibilities, make decisions, evaluate their own progress, and develop individual preferences. Under these requirements, your students need to take many roles such as a group participant, a monitor of their own learning and those of their peers, a risk-taker, an analyst, an interactor, a negotiator, a performer, and an evaluator. Learners should involve themselves in the topics as much as possible. They are members of a group and learn by interacting with others. They learn from you and also from other students.

You need to help your students to be aware of their roles in the learner centered classroom and guide them to take responsibility for their own learning.

Teaching/Learning Methods

The teaching methods discussed below include lecture, discussion, pair/group work, activity, and presentation. They have all been used in the sample lesson plan of Part Two of the project.

Lecture

Lecture is the method which Chinese teachers use most commonly when teaching. Through lecturing, students will know exactly what the study point is so that the course objectives can be easily achieved. Most Chinese students are used to learn from teacher's lectures. Although the dictionary skill training course emphasizes the learner-centeredness, there are still some lectures included.

Discussion

Discussion is considered as a communicative activity where learners retain their own personalities and views. It is used to get students to talk and express their opinions. Through discussion, students not only reinforce their understanding of the topic but also learn from others.

Pair/ Group Work

Pair and group work provide students with an environment within which they can communicate easily and freely, and within which they can work together independently with only a minimum amount of direction from the teacher. Golebiowska(1990) notes that group work is an inherent part of any effective lesson because (1) it generates more students talking time than any other technique; (2) it frees the teacher to teach more effectively; (3) it is learner-centered and thus actively involves all learners; (4) it makes learners responsible for their own learning; (5) it is beneficial to the development of group dynamics.

Activities

Students will have chances to practice their newly learned skills through doing all kinds of activities. You can check how well and how many students have learnt from the class. By engaging themselves in various kinds of activities, your students can use their knowledge and thus gain confidence.

Presentation

Students can share their ideas through presentations. Students will treat the topic seriously and prepare it nicely because they have audiences. Both presenters and listeners can benefit and learn from the topic. Through presentations, you can identify problems and solve it right away.

Materials

There is no certain textbook to use for this course. You will take the responsibility to select appropriate teaching materials based on the course objectives and the learners' needs. The sources of the materials can come from published materials and the Internet.

Published materials are well designed for different purposes according to different learners. It includes all kinds of dictionaries and dictionary workbooks, reference books, activity books, and research articles. Those materials have presented important teaching points and structures, which are related to the development of particular skills.

The information conveyed in the Internet is likely to be more up-to-date. It may also be relevant to students' special interests and can thus be used to fill gaps in published materials.

The Language Used in Class

Because this is not a language teaching and learning class, you can use Chinese in the classroom to give explanations, and your students can use their native language Chinese to participate in the class activities.

The papers and books which students read are all in English because there are no Chinese versions available. You can give students guidelines for reading or ask the teacher from the reading class for cooperation if the articles are too difficult for the students. For the writings and speaking activities, you can decide what language to use according to the task difficulties. But make sure it is skill in using the dictionaries and not the ability to use language which is assessed in this class.

Time Arrangement

Each week, there is one topic about dictionary skills presented. There are a total of 8 topics involved in the dictionary skill training course: Introduction; which dictionary; bilingual, bilingualized, and monolingual learners' dictionaries; what is in the dictionary; using a dictionary for comprehension; using a dictionary for production; using a dictionary for vocabulary learning; and electronic media. Thus, it lasts for 8 weeks.

For those who cannot follow this time arrangement, you can make use of the

content guidelines mentioned in part two of the project as a basis to design your own dictionary skill training course so that it can better fit into your situation.

Assessment

The whole design of the evaluation may be strange to students because they are used to the traditional way of assessment, which is tests. Usually the way of evaluation influences the way of learning. There is no traditional midterm and final exam in the designed course. In order to emphasize and encourage the importance of the learning process, the following way of assessing students' performance is suggested and discussed. They are in class performance and attendance, self-evaluation and peer-evaluation, use of portfolio, self-reflection reports, and projects.

In Class Performance and Attendance

Usually, Chinese students are not willing to take part in the activities due to their former learning experiences. Since Chinese students are always test-driven and score-driven, give them marks for class attendance and performance should be a good motivation for them to attend the class and participate in class activities. Students' attitude toward these activities and involvement in the activities can influence the learning result.

Self-evaluation and Peer-evaluation

This is a learner centered class. Students learn mainly in the form of group work and discussion. You cannot pay attention to all students all the time, so self-evaluation and peer-evaluation can reflect how well students perform in class. Self-evaluation and peer-evaluation is quite new to Chinese students, but it is worth trying since students need to take responsibility for their own learning from now on. They need to get used to evaluating and comparing their learning.

You can establish criteria for students to assess themselves and their group members' performance in the class. More ideas about self-evaluation and peer-evaluation can be found in Gardner and Miller (1999) and Nunan (1999).

Portfolio

Portfolio is a collection of information gathered by individual learners from their course. The content of the portfolio may include the classroom handouts, students' notes, dialogue journals with the teacher, materials that students use to help their learning, etc. Through the portfolio, you can gain a clear picture of the learner's current development and future potential. The aim of the portfolio is to describe and show what learners learn and how they learn during the course. It is a record of the learning outcome. The portfolio can also give students a sense of achievement and motivate their future learning.

Detailed information about the use of a portfolio can be found in Gardner and Miller (1999), and Genesee and Upshur (1996).

Self-reflection Reports

From the reports, you will know what students have learned and how well they learn. It is more like a writing dialogue between you and your students. Students can ask questions, propose better ways for teaching and learning, and question some ideas in the reports so that you can give feedback either face to face or through writing comments on the reports. The self-reflection reports can help you to know learners' needs, wants, and abilities as well as their goals and actions to fulfill their goals.

Projects

The project here refers to a writing assignment which can reflect learners' understanding of what is studied from the course. Through the final product of the project, you will know how well students achieve the course objectives and how well the teaching and learning happen in the course.

Evaluation

In order to know the effect of the dictionary skill training course so that improvement can be made in the future, you can evaluate the course by writing teaching logs, giving questionnaires and interviews, keeping records of the students' portfolios, self-reflection reports and projects work, and doing observation.

Teaching Logs

The teaching log is an ongoing writing assignment which requires you to briefly summarize your thoughts regarding your teaching experience in every class. A teaching log can be used to keep records of the teaching and learning that happened in the classroom. It can include aims and objectives of the lesson, assumptions and anticipated problems, retrospective, feelings, assessment of the effectiveness of the lesson in relation to the aims, suggestions for changes and improvements, etc. You can also share your teaching logs with colleagues to get comments and suggestions for future teaching.

Questionnaires and Interviews

Questionnaires can be used to help you understand how students feel about the course organization, content choice, teaching methods, etc. so that the improvement can be made in future teaching opportunities.

You can also interview the students formally or informally to get the information which can help you improve the teaching.

Portfolios, Self-reflection Reports and Project Work

Portfolios, self-reflection reports and project work are parts of students' assignments in the dictionary skill training course. From the students' own work, you can identify your students' needs, their feeling about the methods used in teaching, the skills which they have not yet mastered as well as changes and improvements that can

be made in the future.

Observation

You can observe students' performance during the activities. From their behaviors, you will know if the task is too difficult for the students or not, if the students like the teaching methods or not, and if the students really understand the topic or not.

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SECTION FOUR
RECOMMENDED READING

Useful books and articles are listed in this section to help you better understand dictionary-related topics.

Theory of Dictionary Use

- Cowie, A. P. (1999). *English dictionaries for foreign learners: A history*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hartmann, R. R. K. (ed, 1999). *Dictionaries in language learning: Recommendations, national reports and thematic reports*. The TNP sub-project 9: Dictionaries. Retrieved October 23, 2004, from <http://www.fu-berlin.de/elc/tnp1/SP9dossier.pdf>.
- Lougheridge, B. (1990). *Which dictionary? A consumer's guide to selected English language dictionaries, thesauri and language guides*. London: Library Association Publishing Ltd.
- Nation, I. S. P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sterkenburg, P. T. (ed, 2003). *A practical guide to lexicography*. USA: John Benjamins Publishing Co.
- Tickoo, M. L. (ed, 1989). *Learners' dictionaries: State of the art*. Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.

Activities for Learners

- Gairns, R. & Redman, S. (1986). *Working with words: A guide to teaching and learning vocabulary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Harmer, J. (2001). *The practice of English language teaching*. Malaysia: Pearson Education Limited.
- Lewis, M. (ed, 2000). *Teaching collocation: further developments in the lexical approach*. UK: Language Teaching Publications.
- McCarthy, M. (1990). *Vocabulary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nation, P. (ed, 1994). *New ways of teaching vocabulary*. New York: TESOL Inc.
- Taylor, L. (1990). *Teaching and learning vocabulary*. UK: Prentice Hall International Ltd.
- Wright, J. (1998). *Dictionaries*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.

Research Articles on Dictionary Use

- Ard, J. (1982). The use of bilingual dictionaries by ESL students while writing. *ITL Review of Applied Linguistic*, 58, 1-27.
- Fan, M. Y. (2003). Frequency of use, perceived usefulness, and actual usefulness of second language vocabulary strategies: A study of Hong Kong learners. *The Modern Language Journal*, 87(2), 222-241.
- Gu, P. Y. (2003a). Fine brush and freehand: The vocabulary learning art of two successful Chinese EFL learners. *TESOL Quarterly*, 37(1), 73-104.
- Gu, P. Y. (2003b). Vocabulary learning in a second language: Person, task, context and strategies. *TESL-EJ*, 7(2). Retrieved December 10, 2004, from

- <http://writing.berkeley.edu/TESL-EJ/ej26/a4.html>.
- Gu, Y. Q. & Johnson, R. K. (1996). Vocabulary learning strategies and language learning outcomes. *Language Learning*, 46(4), 643-679.
- Harvey, K. & Yuill, D. (1997). A study of the use of a monolingual pedagogical dictionary by learners of English engaged in writing. *Applied Linguistics*, 18, 253-278.
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