

**SEMINAR ON 'LEARNING IN ACTION:  
LEARNING AND TEACHING  
INTELLECTUAL AND AFFECTION  
10 MARCH 2012**

**The magic of words: a learning programme to  
enhance pupils' vocabulary building strategies**

**Buddhist Chan Wing Kan Memorial School**

Ms Christine Yu, Ms Winnie Chan, Ms Phoebe Lai

Miss Jenny Chung

Senior School Development Officer,

**School-based Curriculum Development (Primary) Section, EDB**

# The role of vocabulary in the language system

- ✚ Vocabulary is the building material of the language system
- ✚ “Without grammar very little can be conveyed, **without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.**”

## Why teach vocabulary?

- Vocabulary has a direct impact on **reading comprehension**
- Pupils with larger vocabularies are more capable readers, with a **wider repertoire of strategies** for figuring out the meanings of unfamiliar words than less capable readers do

Tompkins (2003)

# What does it mean to know a **WORD**?

**Word knowledge** is identified by Richard (1976) as **knowing many of the different meanings associated with the word.**

**Knowing how to use a word in different contexts** are important to help pupils read and write.

## Different meanings in different contexts

*He has done well (adverb) to get water from the well (noun).*

× 他做了「井」，從「井」取水。

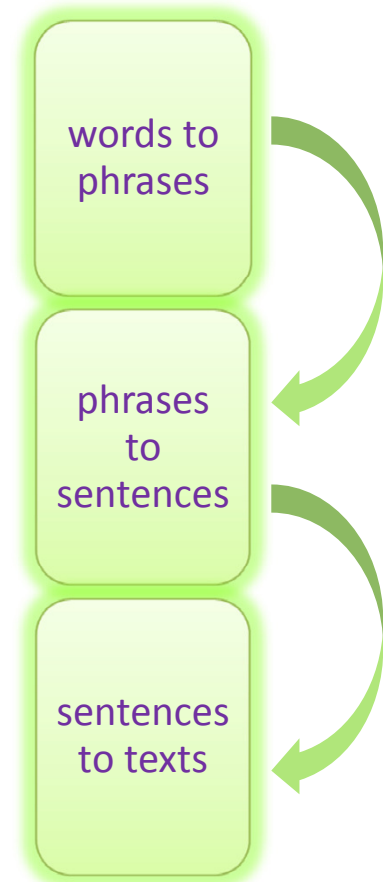
*The bank (noun) is just opposite the river bank (noun).*

× 銀行就在「河」的對面。

## A message in our Curriculum Guide

Learners need to acquire **good vocabulary** so that they can understand messages from others and combine **words to form phrases**, combine **phrases to form sentences** and combine **sentences to form continuous texts**.

English Language Curriculum Guide P1-6 (2004)



# How is vocabulary acquired and learnt?

According to Krashen and Terrell (1983), second language acquisition depends crucially on the input being comprehensible. And **comprehensibility is dependent directly on the ability to recognise the meaning of key elements** in the utterance. Thus acquisition will not take place without **comprehension of vocabulary**.

Students' attention is not on vocabulary learning per se but on communication, on the **goal of an activity**. In this way, we encourage true vocabulary acquisition.

## How could vocabulary be taught?

- ✚ Vocabulary should be taught **both directly and indirectly**
- ✚ **Repeated exposure** to vocabulary items are important
- ✚ A **rich context** fosters vocabulary learning
- ✚ **Depending on a single vocabulary learning strategy will not yield the best results**

Recommendations about teaching vocabulary from the National Reading Panel (2001)



Fountas and Pinnell (2001)

Phonemic strategies

Linking strategies

Morphemic strategies

Vocabulary learning strategies

Visual strategies

Research strategies

# Phonemic strategy (phonics skill)

Understand words by **sounding out** them in words such as in boom, ding, splash, bump, crash ...

For example:

They saw a flash of lightning and heard a loud noise.

**“Boom! Boom!”**

The car **crashed** with the bus and broke the water pipe, water began to **splash** around.

# Morphemic strategy (syntactic strategy)

**Stand-alone morphemes combine together** to add meaning to the word such as in affixation and inflectional endings

**For example:**

The teacher**er** is interested**ed** in finding interesting**ing** stories for the pupils.

**Affixation** - teach (verb) + er (suffix) = teacher (noun)

**Inflectional endings** – interested in (adjective) ↔  
interesting stories (adjective)

# Linking strategy (word formation and word association)

Using **knowledge about a word** to figure out a new word

The connection is not simply ‘words within words’

**For example:**

## Word formation

- ✚ Add **prefix or suffix** to the root word
- ✚ Form a new word by combining **two separate words**
- ✚ **Mix two words together** e.g. motor + hotel = motel
- ✚ **Use in different parts of speech**, e.g. to *dream* (V) something in a *dream* (N)
- ✚ Form new words by **affixation**, e.g. Happy (adjective) → happiness (noun)

## Word association

- ✚ **Synonyms** – similar in meaning, e.g. big, large
- ✚ **Antonyms** – opposites, e.g. tall, short
- ✚ **Collocation** – words that often go together, e.g. take (~~eat~~) medicine
- ✚ **Homonyms** – same word but different meaning, e.g. go to a *bank*, sit on river *bank*
- ✚ **Lexical sets** – word families, e.g. semantic, syntactical, functional

## Common vocabulary teaching/learning

- ✚ Convey meaning with visual aids and explanations
- ✚ Translate to L1 as a direct and convenient way to help pupils grasp the meaning in one instant
- ✚ Extensive reading
- ✚ Using word bank
- ✚ Quizzes, exercises, ...
- ✚ Dictations
- ✚ Tests and examinations

Ms Christine YU

Ms Winnie CHAN

Ms Phoebe LAI

**BUDDHIST CHAN WING KAN  
MEMORIAL SCHOOL**

# Collaboration

- ✚ Capitalise CLP to plan, discuss implementation and evaluate
- ✚ P5 & P6 participate in the (tryout) programme
- ✚ Pupils in P6 are of average ability whereas pupils in P5 need more support
- ✚ Link vocabulary learning and teaching to the existing GE programme.
- ✚ Vocabulary building strategies are explicitly taught

## Vocabulary learning activities

- **Spot the mistakes** (collocation, spelling, punctuation, grammar ...)
- **Bingo** (word families, word categorisation)
- **Tic-tac-toe** (prefixes, suffixes, phonics, compounding ...)
- **I spy with my little eye** (phonics, picture description, classroom objects)
- **Memory games** ...



Module	Grammar	Text Types	Macro Skills	Vocabulary
Changes  What do you want to be?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Use the connective 'unless' to express conditions</li> <li>✚ Use 'Perhaps', 'Maybe' and 'Why don't ...?' to make suggestions</li> </ul>	<p>Jokes</p> <p>Email</p>	<p>Writing Task – My dream job (personal description)</p> <p>Learning Outcome</p> <p><u>Content</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Write a short and simple description about your dream job by describing the personality of the job and why you like the job</li> </ul> <p><u>Language</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Use simple vocabulary related to the job and spell the words correctly</li> <li>✚ Use adjectives to describe the job, e.g. helpful, meaningful ...</li> <li>✚ Use adverbs to talk about manner</li> <li>✚ Use simple present tense and future tense appropriately</li> </ul> <p><u>Organisation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Establish links using simple cohesive devices</li> <li>✚ Arrange relevant ideas to show a generally clear focus, e.g. in the first part is on the personality of the job and why you like the job and its ends with how you will prepare for the job now</li> </ul>	<p>Vocabulary Items</p> <p><u>Names of different jobs</u> dancer, dentist, doctor, policeman, salesperson, lifeguard, tour guide, flight attendant, secretary</p> <p><u>Adjectives to describe personalities</u> brave, calm, outgoing, helpful, cheerful, creative, organized, humorous, artistic, cooperative, attentive</p> <p>Vocabulary Building Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Organising vocabulary</li> <li>✚ Word formation</li> <li>✚ Word association</li> </ul>

An example of the teaching plan in P6

## Macro Skills

## Vocabulary

### Writing Task – My dream job

### Learning Outcome

### Content

- ✚ Write a short and simple description about your dream job by describing the personality of the job and why you like the job

### Language

- ✚ Use **simple vocabulary related to the job** and spell the words correctly
- ✚ Use **adjectives to describe the job**, e.g. helpful, meaningful ...
- ✚ Use **adverbs to talk about manner**
- ✚ Use **simple present tense and future tense** appropriately

### Organisation

- ✚ Establish links using simple cohesive devices
- ✚ Arrange relevant ideas to show a generally clear focus, e.g. in the first part is on the personality of the job and why you like the job and its ends with how you will prepare for the job now

### Vocabulary Items

#### Names of different jobs

dancer, dentist, doctor, policeman, salesperson, lifeguard, tour guide, flight attendant, secretary

#### Adjectives to describe personalities

brave, calm, outgoing, helpful, cheerful, creative, organized, humorous, artistic, cooperative, attentive

### Vocabulary Building Strategies

- ✚ Organising vocabulary
- ✚ Word formation
- ✚ Word association

# Writing task – My Dream Job

## Task description

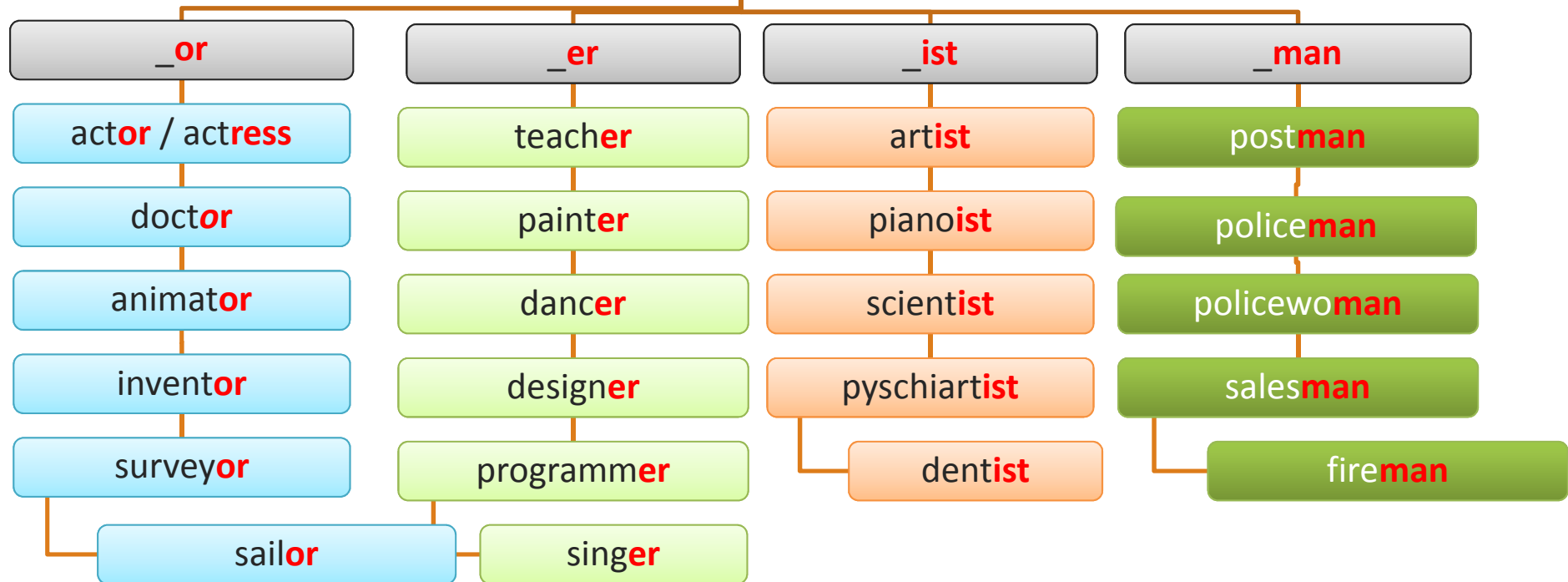
Pupils write about their dream job (Module: Changes/Unit: What do you want to be?). They expressed what they liked about their dream job, why they liked it and how they would prepare themselves for it.

## Pre-task / language input

- Learn the **names of different jobs** (using suffixes/compounding, if appropriate) in the module ‘Changes’.
- Learn the **different adjectives** used to describe the needs of the job e.g. helpful, patient, meaningful ...

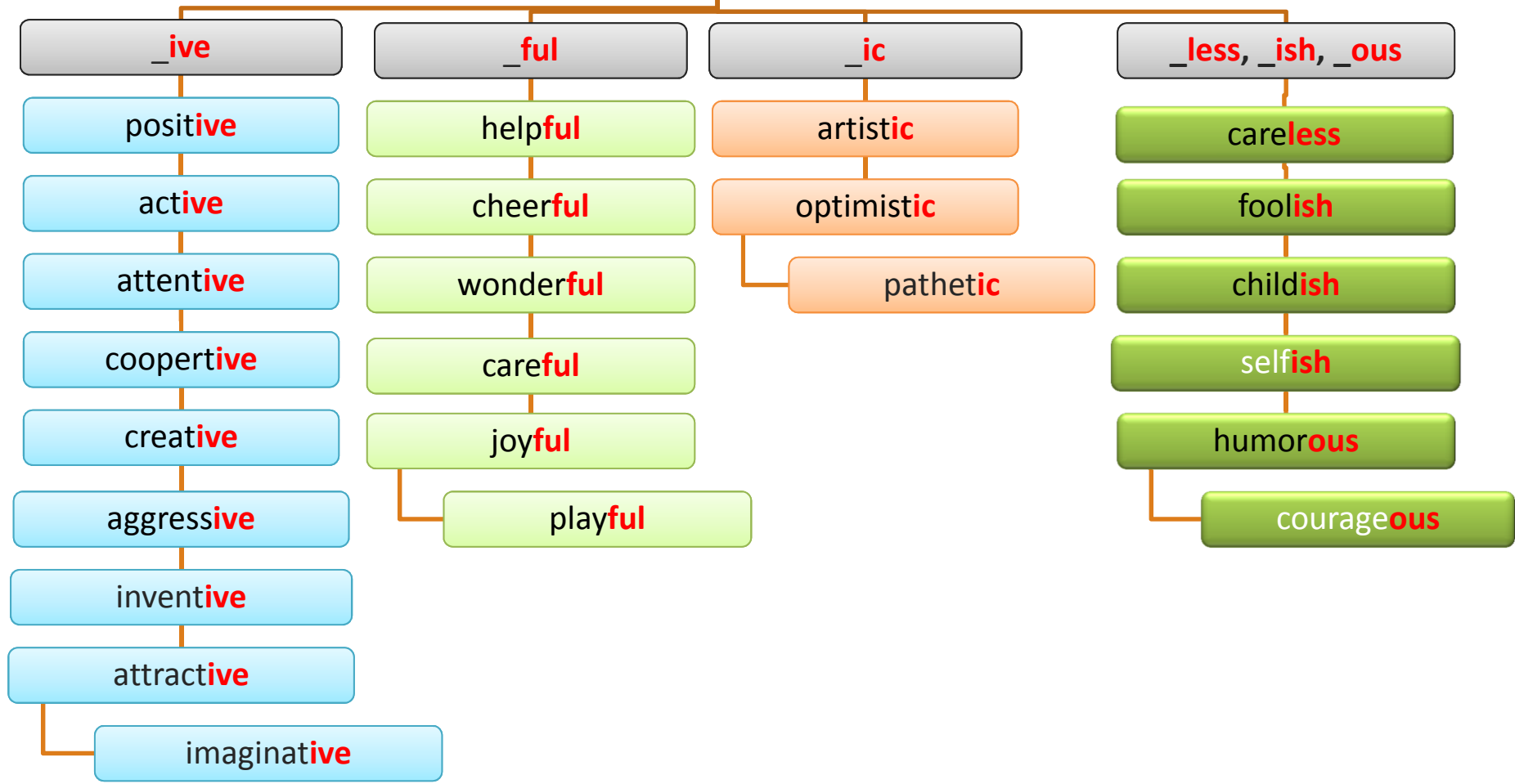
# Organising vocabulary

Using **suffixes** to the base words and form new words of different jobs



# Organising vocabulary

Using **suffixes** to the base words and form adjectives to describe personality



**What do you want to be?**

**What is your interest?**

**Why do you want to be ...?**



**What do you like about the job?**  
**(use adjectives to explain)**

**What will you do to do the job  
well?**

Module	Grammar	Text Types	Macro Skills	Vocabulary
Changes Time flies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Use the reflexive pronouns 'myself, ourselves, yourself, yourselves, himself, herself, itself, themselves' to emphasize that someone does something without any help from anyone else</li> <li>+ Use the modal 'could' to talk about past abilities</li> <li>+ Use the connective 'when' to express time</li> <li>+ Use the simple past tense to talk about past states</li> </ul>	<p>Personal descriptions</p> <p>Notes</p>	<p>Shared Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Adapt the story "Up" to cater for pupils' needs e.g. use ppt to share read with the class</li> <li>+ Develop pupils' receptive language and relate pictures to words</li> </ul> <p>Shared Writing</p> <p>I am growing up (profile)</p> <p><u>Content</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ What can you do now?</li> <li>+ Can you take care of yourself now?</li> <li>+ What could you do when you were in kindergarten?</li> </ul> <p><u>Language</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Use present tense to talk about things you can do in your daily life now.</li> <li>+ Use past tense to talk about what you could do in the past</li> <li>+ Use modals 'can' or 'could' to talk about abilities</li> </ul> <p><u>Organisation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Use the note sheet to organise the ideas in logical sequence</li> <li>+ Use paragraphs to distinguish the different stages of childhood</li> </ul>	<p>Vocabulary items</p> <p><u>Names of furniture</u> e.g. table, bookshelf, bed</p> <p><u>Noun/Noun phrases of daily life items</u> e.g. zips, necktie, table tennis, hula hoop, school bag</p> <p><u>Verb phrases to describe daily life things to do</u> e.g. make the bed, carry my school bag, tie my shoelaces, tie my hair</p> <p>Vocabulary building strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Organising vocabulary</li> <li>+ Collocation</li> <li>+ Word formation</li> </ul>

An example of the teaching plan in P5

An example of the teaching plan in P5

## Vocabulary

### Vocabulary items

#### Names of furniture

e.g. table, bookshelf, bed




#### Noun/Noun phrases of daily life items

e.g. zips, necktie, table tennis, hula hoop, school bag

#### Verb phrases to describe daily life things to do

e.g. make the bed, carry my school bag, tie my shoelaces, tie my hair

### Vocabulary building strategies

-  Organising vocabulary
-  Collocation
-  Word formation



# OUR MESSAGE

- ✚ Incorporate vocabulary learning and teaching into regular GE programme
  - ✚ incrementally through multiple exposures in multiple contexts
  - ✚ better through spaced exposures rather than fewer massive exposures
- ✚ Help pupils to become active collectors of words because meta-cognitive awareness enhances learning