Learning Theme-based Vocabulary with the 'Magic School Bus'

1. Introduction Vocabulary knowledge is essential to enhance students' language competence and gain their self-confidence to become successful communicators in English. Vocabulary can be learned most effectively when done in meaningful contexts in which students are fully engaged with words. In Korea, however, rote memorization of vocabulary has long been a common way for students to learn English words without meaningful contexts by translating English vocabulary into Korean word by word (Carlo, 2010). Students, thus, feel frustrated by English while trying to express themselves because they do not know how to use vocabulary in different situations, even though they have devoted a lot of time to memorizing vocabulary. This book is designed to improve students' vocabulary knowledge through Extensive Reading (ER) with Theme-Based graded readers as well as the Lexical Approach in an attempt to be as communicative as possible. The group of students my Portfolio seeks to address are in the 3rd and 4th grade of primary school and their language development is between level 3 and 4 according to WIDA. They can read graded readers at their level. Some, however, still have some difficulty in interpreting words depending on different contexts because they memorize only one primary dictionary definition of a word. For example, they cannot differentiate the meaning of “heart” between “My heart beat 60 times per minutes,” and “from all of my heart” as they read the 'Magic School Bus' “Has a Heart.” In addition their tendency to focus on single words rather than chunks of language or sentences is another problem.

2. Method and Rationale The target leaners can benefit from ER by encountering words multiple times in meaningful contexts. Day and Bamford (1998) claim that second language learners can learn how words and expressions are being used in different contexts. They also assert that by encountering words in different contexts, learners will be able to remember and use the words more easily. The problem my target students have with learning chunks of language will be addressed with the Lexical Approach. If students learn vocabulary literally word by word, they are not likely to acquire the sense of natural English. For example, heavy rain and make a mistake are natural in English although strong rain and do a mistake are not. Lewis (1993) argues that learners can learn and recognize collocated words as a unit, rather than learning definitions separately through the Lexical Approach. My textbook supposes that the target learners will enjoy ER with the 'Magic School Bus', which is a series of children's books about science. This series presents various contextual definitions of a word and a lot of chunks of language repetitively which helps students recognize word combinations rather than individual words. In addition, each ‘Magic School Bus’ book deals with a special theme which provides content for students to learn. Students can be led well to the language activities and become more familiar with the content and the meaning of the topic. As suggested by Cameron (2001), new vocabulary items can be learned easily with the theme providing a meaningful context for understanding, and for the natural use of a wide range of discourse types, both written and spoken. In regards to learning vocabulary in meaningful and communicative ways, the ‘Magic School Bus’ is appropriate for the target students. My Textbook essentially serves as a ‘post activity’ book to be used after ER at home. Some titles students will enjoy reading for fun are: The ‘Magic School Bus’ “Has a Heart”, “Takes a Moonwalk”, “Rides the Wind” and “Flies with the Dinosaurs.” From the titles it is evident that these books are theme-based that relate to content students are exposed to in their L1 (Korean). In the 4 units in my Textbook, they start with solving some riddles to elicit information pertinent to the theme such as “I am as large as your fist” to provide the size of the heart after reading “Has a Heart.” Also target lexical chunks which are related to the theme are introduced. While solving riddles such as “I am in the middle of your chest,” which provides information about the location of the heart, learners become familiar with the meaning of the target
The process of creating the mind map itself is a great learning. How to Use Mind Maps to Learn Chinese Vocabulary. For Chinese vocabulary learning, mind maps can be used, but not limited, in the following ways: Vocabulary of the same theme. Vocabulary of the same theme can be organized together into categories. Take "(emotion)" for example, the different emotions are linked together. Tutu Magic School Bus General subscriber only Toolbox Vocabulary. Copyright © 2018 Chinese4kids.net - Learning Mandarin Chinese is easy and fun. Survey. Literature Based Kindergarten Curriculum. Magic School Bus science. Middle Ages History. Fun Extras. Books– library books used to reinforce the learning content (any books from your library can be easily substituted). My intention was to choose one fiction and one nonfiction book for each category. Many of the Let's Read and Find Out Science books are scheduled. The following Scholastic eBooks were purchased during a Dollar Days sale, which Scholastic offers several times each year. My 4th grader uses the vocabulary supplement, and I expect a lot less writing when it comes to the experiments with my preKer…he mostly just watches. So I think anything in that age range would work well! Reply.