

# HOW TO HELP UEH STUDENTS CONSOLIDATE THEIR VOCABULARY

Nguyen Thi Kim Thuy, M.A

Nguyen Luong Hoang Thanh, M.A

## ❖ IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEM

It is intriguing to recognize that "when students travel, they don't carry grammar books, they carry dictionaries." (Krashen in Lewis 1993: iii, cited in Teaching Vocabulary, n.d.). Thus, dictionaries are really helpful as they help them break through the barriers built by the unknown words in communication. Undoubtedly, this idea clearly puts a stress on the role of vocabulary. With the same viewpoint, Wilkins (1972:111) confirms that "Without grammar, very little can be conveyed. Without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed." It is obvious that vocabulary is a tool which helps language users express their ideas meaningfully.

In the light of this, Zimmerman (1975, cited in Richardson 2013: xi) also comments: "Lack of vocabulary knowledge will result in lack of meaningful communication." This means a poor stock of vocabulary will certainly give rise to poor communication on the part of language users.

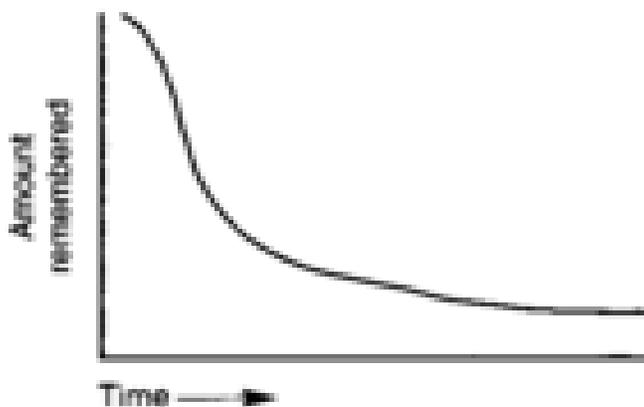
This problem has been common among students at Ho Chi Minh City University of Economics (UEH). The fact is that many of UEH students often complain that they fail to remember the vocabulary they have learnt in spite of burning the midnight oil, working very hard on the list of words written down. Others take it for granted that their bad accumulation of vocabulary is due to their bad memory.

Accordingly, this paper aims at indicating the need for vocabulary consolidation and recommending some activities which enhance UEH students' vocabulary review.

## UNDERLYING THEORIES RELATED TO THE PROBLEM

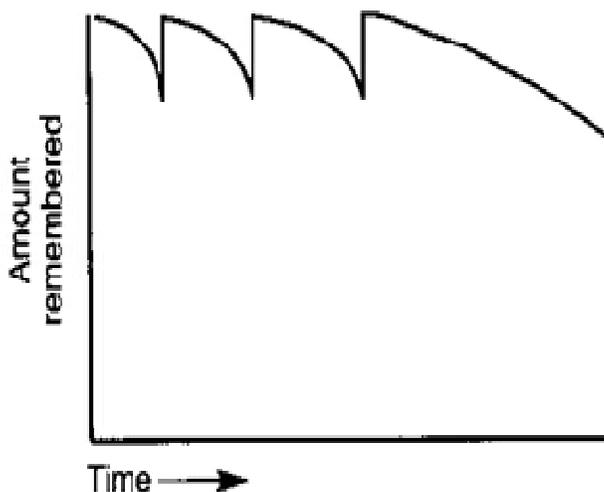
### Why is review needed?

For any kind of learning, reviewing is essential not only in the course of learning but also after the learning process. As illustrated by the chart below (Schmitt, 2000, cited in Schmitt, 2010), it is natural that forgetting occurs and the amount of knowledge we have acquired reduces as time passes by.



Typical Pattern of Forgetting (Schmitt, 2000: 131)

Accordingly, there is no point discussing why reviewing is indispensable to any kind of learning. In language learning, as what language learners are prone to forgetting the most is vocabulary, consolidating vocabulary should be included as a compulsory component. However, the frequency level of review depends on each individual's memory. The following chart (ibid) indicates that even if reviewing is not frequently done, forgetting may significantly decrease.



Pattern of Forgetting with expanding rehearsal (Schmitt, 2000: 131)

Furthermore, as defined by Tony Buzan (1986, p.84), the purpose of “review” is to “imprint the information you have in your mind, in order to make it more “solid”. In other words, without reviewing, what we have learned will drain out. Another benefit of review is that “people who do review will find that with the constantly available store of increasing information, new information will slot in more easily.” (ibid, p.85). This implies that if we review what we have learned, we are more likely to acquire new knowledge without any struggle. This practice should be applied to language learning in general and to vocabulary learning in particular. Specifically, before the new words are put in, the previously acquired ones should be firmly consolidated.

In terms of vocabulary consolidation, Schmitt (2010) also reminds that “consolidating previously met vocabulary entails more than just recycling.” This expresses a viewpoint that apart from reusing the words through different activities like speaking, listening, reading and writing, some follow-up activities for vocabulary review should be considered.

In general, not only does continual revision help language learners accumulate a huge stock of words but it also contributes to building up a good foundation for them to develop their language skills.

#### ❖ **OVERVIEW OF VOCABULARY TASKS IN MARKET LEADER – ELEMENTARY AND PRE-INTERMEDIATE LEVELS**

Most of the vocabulary tasks in Market Leader – Elementary and Pre-intermediate levels focus on presenting the new words and expressions in accordance with the topic of each unit. The common task types are word-matching, sentence completion, formation of word-partnerships. Some other exercises require students to find the equivalent words or expressions through which they can learn the meaning of the new ones.

No matter what kinds of task are provided, they all serve the purpose of presenting the new vocabulary to the learners and help them obtain more understanding of the words through speaking, listening and reading tasks. However, one or two vocabulary tasks in the course of learning cannot create sufficient opportunities for the learners to consolidate the words they have learned.

As most forgetting occurs soon after the end of the learning session, different consolidation strategies should be supplemented. It is also worth considering the way how to help the learners review and revise their vocabulary.

#### ❖ **OVERVIEW OF COMMON ACTIVITIES FOR VOCABULARY CONSOLIDATION**

A popular activity for vocabulary consolidation is rote memorization, which is an effective method to learn in a short time, especially to memorize a list of words. To do this, many learners often read and write down a word several times, trying to load their memory with a stock of words.

Another common task which is often handled in the classroom involves filling in the gaps of a new context using the words they have just learned.

At Victoria University of Wellington, students of English for Proficiency Program are required to ask their partners a question for each new word. In this way, not only can they create a new context to memorize the word, but they can also consolidate how to use the word correctly through their speaking activity.

In general, these tasks are very familiar to our students, but to some extent not motivating enough to stimulate their interest. Since the way how the learners review and revise their vocabulary is critical, some interesting vocabulary consolidation activities should be recommended.

#### ❖ **RECOMMENDED TASKS FOR UEH STUDENTS' CONSOLIDATION OF VOCABULARY**

Based on the rationale for vocabulary consolidation, eight activities are designed in accordance with the eight units selected from Market Leader Course Book – Pre-intermediate Level (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition) for modules 3 and 4 of the English course at UEH. The words used for the activities are the key words relating to the topic of each unit.

#### **SAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES**

##### **1. Sample 1**

### **UNIT 1 – CAREERS**

#### **Target vocabulary: Career moves**

#### **Activity: Bingo Game**

##### **Procedure**

- Students take turns reading aloud the definition cards from the worksheet. Class members say the correct vocabulary word after each definition. The teacher writes the words on the board as students say them.
- Have students form pairs or groups of three. Distribute a set of definition cards to each pair and a blank bingo board and markers to each student.
- Students choose sixteen of the words on the board and write one word in each blank square on their bingo boards. They may write the words in any order they like.
- One student in each pair mixes up the definition cards and places them facedown in a pile. Explain the game: player A chooses a card and reads the definition aloud. Player B says the correct vocabulary word. If either

student has the word on his or her bingo board, he or she puts a marker on the square, if the student doesn't have the word, he or she does nothing.

- Player B chooses another card and reads the definition aloud. Player A says the vocabulary word. Play continues as described above.
- The first player to have four squares covered in a row (up/down, across, or diagonally) wins.

**Options/Alternatives**

- Students exchange bingo boards, shuffle the cards, and play again.
- Depending on the class size, you may also choose to do this game as a whole class activity.

<b>BINGO CARD</b>			
			a department whose activity is to make/manufacture things (production)
			a department whose activity is to be in charge of people and run the organization (management)
			a department whose activity is to deal with clients/customers (customer service)
			a department whose activity is to sell products or services (sales and marketing)
			a department whose activity is to work with figures (finance)
			a department whose activity is to deal with employees and training (human resources)
			a department whose activity is to manage and run (research and development)
an action you take to progress in your career (career move)	the direction your working life takes (career path)	a large and powerful company that produces and sells goods in many different countries (multinational)	
a period of time away from your job to, for example, look after your children (career break)	a series of levels or steps in your working life (career ladder)	an agreement of money given to you as a present or reward (bonus)	
what you have for your future career (career plan)	payment to someone who sells goods which is directly related to the amount of goods sold (commission)	a long distance walk, usually over land such as hills, mountains or forests (trekking)	
chances to develop your career (career opportunities)	what someone is asked to do (often to make important decisions or make a presentation)	a measurement of money, goods or property (turnover)	

**2. Sample 2**

**UNIT 2 – COMPANIES**

**Target vocabulary: Describing companies**

**Activity: Card Game**

**Procedure**

- Have students form pairs or groups of three or four. One student mixes up the cards and places them facedown in a pile.

- Explain the game: player A tosses the coin (designate one side as one point and the other as two points). This determines the number of points the player will get if he or she answers the question correctly.
- Player B takes a card and reads the question and the options A B C aloud. If player A answers correctly, he or she gets the number of points corresponding to the side of the coin flipped. If player A answers incorrectly, he or she gets zero points. (The correct answers have been marked in the cards).
- Students keep scores as they play.
- Students switch roles. Player B tosses the coin, and player A reads the question.
- Anytime a “Lose a turn” is drawn, the player’s turn is immediately over and he or she gets zero points.
- Play continues as described above. The first player to get ten points wins.

**Options/Alternatives**

- Have students form teams and play in groups instead of in pairs.
- Teams discuss the answer to each question. They must come to a consensus before they announce their answer.

<p>The amount of economic activity measured from within a particular period is called the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. capital</li> <li>b. income</li> <li>c. <b>GDP</b></li> <li>d. investment</li> </ul>	<p>The main building or location of a large corporation is its</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>head office</b></li> <li>b. chief quarter</li> <li>c. major building</li> </ul>	<p>Business is an organized group consisting of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>firm</b></li> <li>b. <b>firm</b></li> <li>c. business</li> </ul>
<p>The primary responsibility of a firm is to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. minimize</li> <li>b. <b>maximize</b></li> <li>c. grow profits</li> </ul>	<p>The overall economic welfare is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. market price</li> <li>b. <b>consumer price</b></li> <li>c. stock price</li> </ul>	<p>Which business is an American company which supplies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>airline equipment</b></li> <li>b. computer software</li> <li>c. railroad equipment</li> </ul>
<p>A company which owns another company is called a</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>parent company</b></li> <li>b. sister company</li> <li>c. general company</li> </ul>	<p>A company which is more than 50% owned by another company is called a</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>subsidiary company</b></li> <li>b. sibling company</li> <li>c. subsidiary</li> </ul>	<p>Amazon is a _____ Company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>Internet</b></li> <li>b. Health Services</li> <li>c. Food Services</li> </ul>
<p>The employees in a particular country or business are called the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. workforce</li> <li>b. <b>workforce</b></li> <li>c. workforce</li> </ul>	<p>Which is a _____ company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>Google</b></li> <li>b. <b>Facebook</b></li> <li>c. <b>Apple</b></li> </ul>	<p>IBM, General and Walmart are examples of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>multinational companies</b></li> <li>b. national companies</li> <li>c. public companies</li> </ul>
<p>The percentage of value a company has in a particular market is its</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. market share</li> <li>b. market structure</li> <li>c. <b>market share</b></li> </ul>	<p>The main activity of Netflix is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>streaming video</b></li> <li>b. telecommunications</li> <li>c. <b>movies</b></li> </ul>	<p>What year did you start the as employee but had worked yourself? Times</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>unemployed</b></li> <li>b. <b>self-employed</b></li> <li>c. <b>business</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Lose a turn</b></p>	<p><b>Lose a turn</b></p>	<p><b>Lose a turn</b></p>

### 3. Sample 3

## UNIT 3 – SELLING

### Target vocabulary: Making sales

### Activity: Trivia Game

#### Procedure

- Put students in groups of four or six and then divide their group into two teams. One player mixes up the cards within each set and places them facedown in three separate piles: one point, two point, and three point cards.
- Players on team A decide whether they want to answer a question worth one, two, or three points (one point questions are the easiest, two point questions are moderately difficult, and three point questions are the most difficult). A player on the other team takes a card from the corresponding pile and reads the question aloud.
- Members of team A discuss the answer and come to a consensus. If the team answers correctly, they get the indicated number of points. Teams keep score as they play.
- Play switches to team B and continues as above. When all the cards have been read, the game is over. The team with the most points wins.

#### Options/Alternatives

- Instead of teams choosing questions by point value, they toss the dice and play as follows
  - If they roll a 1, they answer the question worth one point.
  - If they roll a 2, they answer the question worth two points.
  - If they roll a 3, they answer the question worth three points.
  - If they roll a 4, they answer the question from the pile they want.
  - If they roll a 5, they answer the question from the pile the other team wants.
  - If they roll a 6, they lose their turn (and don't answer a question).

Look if people realize that you learn	A supplier distribution representative is another name for a "producer"	The time when you can change your mind and cancel an order (ending off period)
Look if things people often sell in a street market	Suppliers often sell large quantities of goods in (wholesale/retail/wholesale/retail), who do not usually sell directly to consumers.	The same number of money left on your payment card (credit card details)
Look if someone shows that you learn	We offer a (refund/insurance/return) to customers who buy in bulk.	The way you pay for the goods you want (method of payment)
Look if things you can (NOT) buy in a supermarket	We sell (merchandise) who are not fully satisfied in (discount/wholesale) goods within certain days.	When you can pay more than after you buy, but at an extra cost (interest free credit)
Look if things you can buy in a department store	In order to get a full (discount/wholesale/return), customers must read back goods in the original packaging	When the goods you require are not available (out of stock)
Look if things you can buy from a specialist retailer	Goods will be (discounted/wholesale/retail) within 24 hours of your order.	A promise to return your money if you are not happy (money back guarantee)
Look if things you can (NOT) buy in a shopping mall	Goods are kept in our (stock/warehouse/warehouse) until ready for delivery	The help you get from a company when you start to use their product (after sales service)
Look if things you can buy from an online retailer	Benefits and services offered on a large discount are generally vital (cash back/gift cards)	Added by customers to return a discount on future purchases from the same organization (loyalty card scheme)

#### 4. Sample 4

### UNIT 4 – GREAT IDEAS

#### Target vocabulary: Verb and noun combinations

#### Activity: Jumble Game

##### Procedure

- Divide students into pairs or groups of three or four.
- Explain the game: distribute definition cards to each group (one at a time). Students in groups discuss the correct order of definition sentences. The first group to have the answer writes it on the board.
- Play continues as described above for the rest of definition cards.

##### Options/Alternatives

- Students make sentences with the phrases they have learnt.

means / chance / to / to / you / something / do / advantage / an / take / do / have / of / the / to / it / opportunity / when

to / status / more / raise / feel / somebody's / means / somebody / or / make / important / look / to

goods / to / a / services / market / start / or / a / new / selling / area / enter / means / in / to

larger / extend / a / variety / range / means / to / to / offer / a / of / goods / product

necessary / to / a / means / to / to / do / provide / need / something / meet / or / that / is

an / to / to / a / breakthrough / make / means / important / or / change / make / discovery

#### 5. Sample 5

### UNIT 7 – NEW BUSINESS

#### Target vocabulary: Economic terms

#### Activity: Crossword Puzzle (without hidden words)

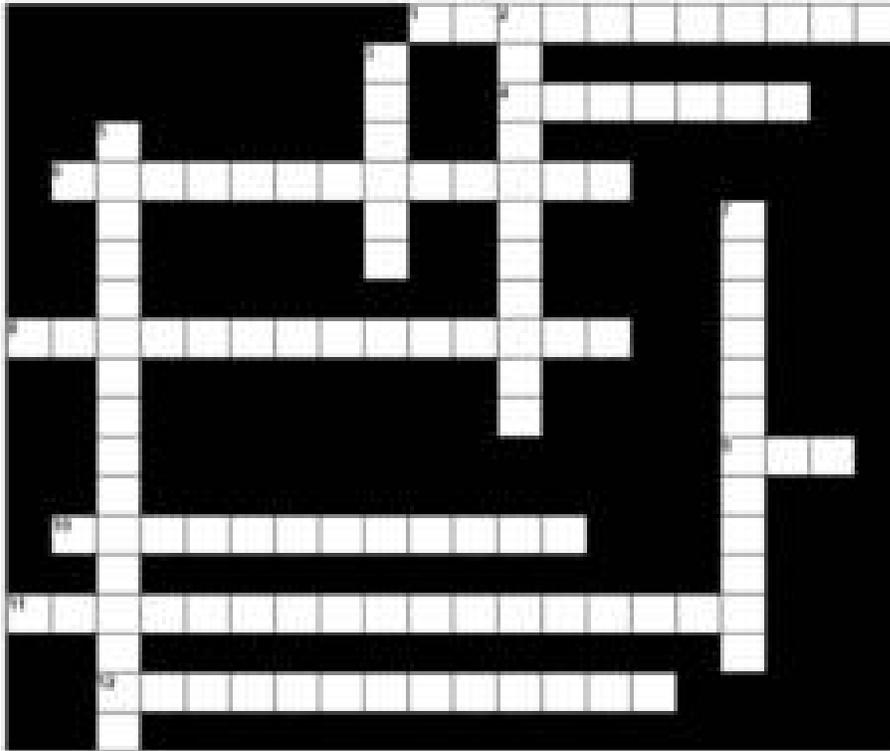
##### Procedure

- Have students form groups. Give each groups one worksheet (puzzle + clues).
- Explain the activity: students work together to complete the puzzle.
- Pencils should be used, if possible, as answers may need to be erased and changed.

- The first group to solve the puzzle wins.

**Options/Alternatives**

- After checking the answers as a class, have students write sentences using the vocabulary from the puzzles.
- Encourage some students to read their sentences to the entire class.



**Clues (down)**

2. a system for managing a country that is operated by a large number of officials who are employed to follow rules carefully
3. to send goods to another country for sale
5. percentage of people without jobs
7. price at which one currency can buy another

**Clues (across)**

1. the number of people working
4. official rules and processes that seem unnecessary and delay results
6. percentage increase in prices
8. difference in value between a country's imports and exports
9. total value of goods and services produced in a country
10. cost of borrowing money
11. money from overseas
12. low taxes to encourage business activity

**6. Sample 6**

**UNIT 8 – MARKETING**

**Target vocabulary: Word partnerships**

**Activity: Concentration Game**

**Procedure**

- Divide students into pairs (or groups of three or four). One student in each pair mixes up the cards and spreads them out facedown in a grid on a desk.
- Explain the game: one player flips over any two cards. He or she reads the card aloud.

- If the cards match (a vocabulary word card and the corresponding definition card), then the player picks up these two cards, sets them aside, and takes another turn.
- If the cards do not match, the player turns the cards over again and returns them to their original positions. As much as possible, players should try to remember the location of each card as it is flipped over.
- The next player takes his or her turn and does the same thing.
- Play continues in this way until all cards have been matched. The player with the most cards at the end of the game wins.

<b>product</b>	goods or services that are sold	<b>marketing</b>	a job that involves encouraging people to buy a product or service
<b>price</b>	the amount that buyers of goods or services	<b>product benefits</b>	advantages of a product or service
<b>promotion</b>	informing customers about the products and persuading them to buy	<b>product benefits</b>	benefits of how people continue to buy a product
<b>price</b>	what goods or services are available	<b>product range</b>	set of products made by a company
<b>market research</b>	information about what customers want and need	<b>sales forecast</b>	how much a company thinks it will sell in a period
<b>market segment</b>	a group of customers of similar age, income level and social group	<b>sales figures</b>	numbers showing how much a company has sold in a period
<b>market share</b>	the percentage of sales a company has	<b>sales target</b>	how much a company wants to sell in a period
<b>consumer behavior</b>	what and how people buy things	<b>advertising campaign</b>	a program of advertising activities over a period, with particular aims
<b>consumer profile</b>	description of a typical customer	<b>advertising budget</b>	an amount of money available for advertising during a particular period
<b>consumer goods</b>	things people buy for their own use	<b>advertising space</b>	a business which offers companies an advertising service





## EVALUATION

The above recommended activities, when included in our teaching schedule, will certainly bring a variety

to both teaching and learning because the type of activity differs from unit to unit. Another positive effect results from the opportunities to recall the words or expressions the students have learned from the lessons in Market Leader Books. These activities, therefore, attract students' active participation to a large extent.

However, it should be noted that limitations are unavoidable. As a matter of course, designing these kinds of activities requires a lot of teachers' effort and creativity. Due to the limited time allocated for classroom activities and UEH students' different levels of English, teachers need to flexibly adapt to various classroom contexts when applying this vocabulary consolidation approach to their teaching. In addition, time consumption is also a problem they have to deal with. In this case, "cut our coat according to our cloth" is the best policy.

On the part of students, they are expected to get used to the unfamiliar activities causing trouble to the students who are slow on uptake. This, in turn, burdens the teachers with more responsibilities for giving clear instructions which enable the activities to run smoothly.

In spite of the restrictions as mentioned, the achievements obtained from the vocabulary consolidation activities are promisingly fruitful and rewarding for both teachers and students.

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