

Title:	The Effectiveness of Vocabulary Teaching Strategies Used by Teachers for Young ESL Learners in Hong Kong
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Abstract

As English proficiency is often correlated with higher income, social prestige, and educational level (Hyland, 1997), having good English language skills has become paramount for landing opportunities and career advancement for Hong Kongers. This study aims to find out what strategies are used by ESL teachers of young learners in Hong Kong to build up the students' vocabulary and make them competitive communicators so that they can grow up to reach their full potential. A literature review of five Hong Kong based ESL teaching research papers and interviews with six Hong Kong ESL teachers were carried out. It was found that due to Hong Kong's exam-oriented curriculum, limited instruction time, and parents' need to see evidence of learning, teachers relied more heavily on recognition and memorization-based strategies instead of strategies that would allow deep processing of the words. However, there is a need for emphasis on the application of the words so that students can retain and use them outside of the classroom context.

Reflection

As an English major who aspires to become an English language teacher in Hong Kong, the topic of second language acquisition and teaching has always been of great interest to me. Throughout my undergraduate, I have taken number of courses that cover how learners acquire a language that is different from their first and the various approaches ESL teachers can use to aid in their learning. As an educator, it is important to me that my students can reach their full potential and will not be hindered from landing opportunities simply because of lacking fluency in their second language. If I can do more to assure that they successfully acquire the language, I gladly will.

This project allowed me to further deepen my understanding of the various teaching strategies specifically employed in Hong Kong classrooms and how they provide an effective learning experience for students. It also allowed me to be aware of the limitations that are imposed on teachers due to the rigid school curriculum and parents' need to see evidence of learning. I was deeply inspired by the passion and efforts that the six ESL teachers that were interviewed put into their lessons despite having these limitations.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Jette Hansen Edward for guiding and encouraging me. The advice and support I received was truly invaluable as it motivated me to do my best in this project and I truly feel like this is the field for me. Finally, I want to thank all the passionate and inspiring teachers who participated in this project and happily discussed their experiences and teaching strategies with me. Without their expert, first-hand knowledge, this project would have never been completed.