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Essential Academic Vocabulary:
Mastering the Complete Academic Word List
Helen Huntley
Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006.

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Huntley's *Essential Academic Vocabulary* is a rich, well-balanced textbook for second/foreign language (L2) vocabulary instruction. It is based upon theories in vocabulary acquisition and task-based instruction. The text is sourced from the Academic Word List (Coxhead, 2000) and aims to improve the vocabulary level of those who are preparing to study at college or a university. In addition to the supported word list based on corpus linguistics, the most remarkable feature of this textbook is its careful manner of applying theories to vocabulary acquisition and tasks.

Vocabulary knowledge generally refers to not only how many words a learner knows but also to how deep his or her understanding of a word is. The former is concerned with vocabulary size or breadth, measured by asking the definition of words. The latter is called vocabulary depth, which includes knowledge about a word's synonyms, collocations, and associates (Read, 2000). The textbook has a range of tasks designed to encourage learners to acquire this kind of vocabulary knowledge, such as *word forms*, *collocations*, and *word parts* tasks. Furthermore, in the word parts tasks, learners can acquire the skills to use prefixes or suffixes, whereby they learn how to infer the meaning of unknown words. In this way, this textbook is beneficial for ESL/EFL learners to increase the quality, as well as the quantity, of their vocabulary knowledge.

A prodigious variety of tasks also promote learners' vocabulary skills. The text has more than a dozen types of tasks in one lesson, most of which are relevant to reading, writing, or speaking. Huntley is aware of memory research on vocabulary. She applies the "11 Principles for Learning Vocabulary" (Schmitt & Schmitt, 1995) to the task design and sequence in her textbook. She organizes the task sequence of each lesson carefully, in particular paying attention to the timing of the occurrence or reoccurrence of a word. For example, she sees to it that two words with similar forms do not occur in one lesson, lest it lead to confusion.

In addition to the vocabulary tasks, her reading tasks are well thought out and well organized. The task starts with a picture, which is intended to stimulate learners' imagination and activate their schema. This exercise serves as a prereading task. In addition, postreading tasks concerning both *vocabulary in*

context and *reading comprehension* are presented. Performing these two tasks at the same time may maximize the effects of reading tasks on vocabulary learning. Even though it is generally accepted that extensive reading promotes incidental vocabulary learning, it has been found that learners sometimes remember only the context, and not the words in the text, largely because of the lack of focus on vocabulary. On the other hand, if a learner concentrates too much on learning specific vocabulary, he or she cannot pay much attention to the context. Huntley is aware of these drawbacks and carefully designs the postreading tasks to account for this problem. She also pays attention to the significance of both receptive and productive tasks, sequencing the *writing* and *speaking* tasks after the tasks on reading and word analysis. The subtasks of writing and speaking are also rich in variety. The writing task has a paraphrasing task and a paragraph-writing task using six to eight target words. The speaking task has pair and group discussion tasks. These multidimensional tasks with receptive and productive skills strengthen learners' vocabulary knowledge.

This is a valuable vocabulary-focused textbook with rich task resources. It is organized so that all 20 chapters can be dealt with in 1 semester or 2 quarters. Although its great array of tasks requires teachers to design their syllabi carefully, especially in terms of time allocation and choice of task sequence, instructors should feel free to focus on specific tasks depending on their students' needs. In this sense, it can be said that the text's task variety, in turn, gives instructors more flexibility to develop their lesson plans.

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Multiple Intelligences and Language Learning:
A Guidebook of Theory, Activities, Inventories, and Resources
Mary Ann Christison
Burlingame, CA: Alta Book Center Publishers, 2005.

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While many articles acknowledge the theory of multiple intelligences in its relation to second language learning, few published materials specifically depict how teachers can incorporate students' various intelligences in their language learning. *Multiple Intelligences and Language Learning: A Guidebook of Theory, Activities, Inventories, and Resources* addresses this very issue. Christison endorses Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (MI

theory) and provides numerous approaches to apply the theory in second language instruction.

For educators new to MI theory, Unit 1 describes each of Gardner's eight intelligences. The rationale behind the acceptance of the MI theory among educators is also a point of interest. The idea that the measure of intelligence is not limited to IQ scores, and that all learners possess a range of intelligences, is a positive affirmation that each student has the capacity to make strides in language acquisition by using his or her differing strengths within this format. The introductory unit also sets up a general guideline for teachers who want to implement MI theory in a second language classroom.

Units 2 through 8 focus on Gardner's established intelligences, respectively: linguistic, logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, bodily/kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, musical, and naturalist. The cover page preceding each unit lists the upcoming activities and specific tasks these activities entail. Following the cover page are the instructions for carrying out each activity. The objectives, materials needed, and the specific intelligences to be used accompany each set of instructions. Additional information includes the activity's intended age group (e.g., pre-K to grade 2, grades 3-5, middle school, high school, and adult) and intended language level (e.g., beginning, intermediate, advanced).

The appendices comprise five parts. The answer keys offer solutions to the problems posed in the activities. Both students and instructors can use the multiple-intelligences inventories to assess their own areas of strength. If instructors don't find what they're looking for in the content index, they can scan the age and language-level index to quickly find a list of activities appropriate for any given age group and language level. Finally, the bibliography provides additional resources to instructors who wish to learn more about MI theory.

The main advantage of this book is its abundance of practical activities for all age groups and language levels. In addition, the photocopiable handouts and materials available at the end of each unit help reduce teachers' lesson-preparation time. A good example to illustrate this point is the possibility that teachers may use Dear Abby letters to elicit advice-giving language from students. Instead of rummaging through the newspaper to find appropriate Dear Abby letters for classroom use, an instructor can photocopy the book's collection of Dear Abby letters, which have been preselected for such an activity.

A minor drawback of this book is that the text and its accompanying materials serve only as a supplementary teaching resource for any second language applications in an inclusive learning environment. This book will not meet the needs of a second language instructor looking for a text supplying comprehensive instruction on a specific set of applications for a particular level and age group.

Nonetheless, Christison's work would meet the needs of the second language instructor who is searching for innovative teaching techniques and learning activities to keep students engaged in their second language development. *Multiple Intelligences and Language Learning* can be recommended to any teacher who seeks to understand more about how to use Gardner's theory in creative ways to motivate his or her students and to capitalize on students' different intelligences.

Password 1: A Reading and Vocabulary Text
Linda Butler
White Plains, NY: Pearson, 2003.

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Did you know that umami is a fifth type of taste, found in cheese, mushrooms, and meat? Were you aware that our bodies have more than 70 joints, or that San Marino is famous for its beautiful and unusual stamps? This is the type of information that ESL students learn from the reading passages in *Password 1: A Reading and Vocabulary Text. Password 1* is primarily a reading and vocabulary textbook, but it could also be used in a multiskills class. It targets high beginners and captures their attention with a variety of high-interest reading topics, covering such themes as free time, places around the world, our bodies, jobs, celebrations, food, and changes in our lives.

The book is organized into seven units, each containing four chapters. Each chapter begins with prereading questions to activate students' schema and then moves to the reading passage, where target vocabulary and phrases are highlighted and additional new or difficult words or phrases are glossed along the side of the page. The textbook includes a CD that contains the stories being read, including the target words from each chapter, so students can listen in order to practice their pronunciation and reading skills at home.

The reading passage in each chapter is followed by comprehension questions, sentence-completion exercises that require students to use the target words in new contexts, and exercises that involve scanning and finding the main idea in the text. This follow-up to each chapter also includes discussion topics and brief writing activities. In addition, the length of the reading passages gradually increases throughout the book, so students continue to be challenged. While multiskills teachers might want to supplement the content with additional writing activities, the textbook does provide opportunities to practice and develop the other language skills. Each unit is followed by a unit wrap-up section, which provides a nice review for students before the end-of-unit assessment (included in the corresponding instructor's manual).

A very attractive feature of *Password 1* is its principled selection and use of vocabulary. The words have been carefully selected based on frequency, according to authentic language data from various corpora studies. Rather than choosing the vocabulary based on the topic of the chapters, as many textbooks do, the *Password* series highlights words and phrases based on frequency and usefulness. The goal of the *Password* series, as stated in the introduction to the text, is to "help students reach the 2,000-word level in English, at which point, research has shown, most learners can handle the basic everyday oral communication and begin to read unadapted texts" (p. v).

Besides including carefully and meaningfully selected vocabulary, *Password 1* also introduces students to the concept of collocation (i.e., the co-occurrence of words), an important characteristic of vocabulary. Schmitt (2000) discusses the difficulty of acquiring collocational knowledge and explains that such knowledge normally distinguishes native speakers from

nonnative speakers. Therefore, as we aim to help our students increase their proficiency in English, it is important to increase their awareness of collocations, which *Password 1* does address.

One weakness of the textbook is the very short comprehension check at the end of each reading passage. It consists of only six true/false questions that may not be enough to challenge students. Teachers will need to supplement these with additional activities for assessing students' learning. For instance, using the CD at this point would be helpful by having students listen to the story to focus on finding the answers to the comprehension questions.

Overall, *Password 1* is an interesting, well-organized, and useful textbook for high beginning students. It could be used in either an ESL or EFL classroom, as its topics are not limited to one particular culture. Students from a wide variety of countries may enjoy the readings in this book. The carefully selected, high-frequency vocabulary would help equip students with the words they will need to use often in daily conversation.

While *Password 1* would be most effective in a vocabulary or reading course, it could also be used effectively in a multiskills course with some supplementation. The variety of reading topics will keep students interested and the corresponding activities will challenge them to use new knowledge in different ways. If you are in the market for a new reading- or vocabulary-based textbook, pick up a copy of *Password 1*. You won't be disappointed.

Reference

Schmitt, N. (2000). *Vocabulary in language teaching*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Adventures in Composition: New Pathways in Writing
Judith Kay and Rosemary Gelshenen
Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007.

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Ever wonder how to keep your students engaged with the course text when teaching a reading and writing class? *Adventures in Composition* is a reading and writing textbook that balances appealing reading material with accessible writing activities for the ESL student. Through captivating short stories, this intermediate textbook grabs the students' attention as readers and then transfers that interest into scaffolded writing activities that guide students through developing successful compositions.

The book is organized into four sections: Narrative Writing/Humor, Descriptive Writing/Personal Growth, Comparison and Contrast/Making Choices, and Expository Writing/Surprises. Each of the 11 chapters begins with an intriguing story that is likely to fascinate the student. Some of the stories are famous, including "Charles" by Shirley Jackson and "The Necklace" by

Guy de Maupassant. Also included is a unique adaptation of the well-known story "The Ant and the Grasshopper" with a surprise ending by W. Somerset Maugham. However, not all of the stories are so well known. One titled "My Friend Eddie" by Judith Kay is published for the first time in this book. Seeing stories other than those by well-published, prominent authors allows the student a comprehensive and exciting perspective on the writing process and the stages an author (or a story) may go through.

After each story, there are discussion questions based on the plot of the story to clear up any comprehension issues the student might have. The book then shifts into step-by-step activities to build the students' composing skills. The writing activities are organized into three divisions: grammar exercises, stylistic techniques, and writing prompts related to the topic of the section. In response to the needs of intermediate students, *Adventures in Composition* first addresses the basics of a well-formed sentence and then branches out to a wide range of elements for successful writing, including intermediate grammar exercises covering useful items such as modals, conditionals, and possessive pronouns. These topics are often revisited in following chapters, reinforcing skills the students have already mastered. Regarding text structure, whether it be compare/contrast or narrative, the book includes student models, in addition to the short story, to highlight the elements of text. The writing prompts at the end of each chapter begin with paragraph-length texts and vary afterward according to the type of writing the student is practicing.

Though the book is strong in student engagement and accessibility, it does have a few weaknesses. The audience remains unclear, for each story begins with a childlike drawing that might possibly undermine an adult student's interest in the chapter. Teachers of adults might hesitate to use this book because the drawings may detract from the positive academic features of the book. At the end of each chapter, other than a brief peer-review exercise, the book provides little as far as encouraging students to draft and revise. Nonetheless, *Adventures in Composition* should be recommended as an interesting and practical composition textbook that will motivate students to read and write.

Great Paragraphs: An Introduction to Writing Paragraphs
Keith S. Folse, April Muchmore-Vokoun, and Elena Vestri Solomon
New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2004.

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Just like a newborn baby who cannot handle an entire meal of solid food, ESL students who have recently begun studying and acquiring the language usually find writing English essays hard to handle because of their limited language skills. As a result, many ESL students see writing as an arduous and daunting task. Moreover, a student's native culture will commonly espouse different rhetorical modes of writing, posing an additional obstacle to effec-

tive learning. The English writing style, as well as the basic way the English language expresses concepts, differs from their own (Sanders, 2000). These various factors may cause ESL students to perceive writing as an even more baffling and cumbersome task, which, in return, would cause those students to be reluctant to engage in any writing activities. However, if those ESL students are helped to understand that writing in English becomes much easier and a lot more fun when they learn the writing process step by step, they may feel more motivated to write in English. In this context, learning how to write a paragraph is definitely a very good starting point for many ESL students.

Folse, Muchmore-Vokoun, and Vestri Solomon address this issue in their text *Great Paragraphs: An Introduction to Writing Paragraphs.* The second level of a three-book series, the text is an invaluable resource for ESL/EFL teachers and a very insightful guidebook for those students who want to learn the basics of writing in English or to improve their language skills. This book will help any ESL student, whether it is used as a textbook in an ESL classroom or as a reference that students can benefit from when they study on their own.

Although *Great Paragraphs* mainly targets students at an intermediate level, it can also be used by more advanced beginners and by weaker advanced students, as the book uses simple language and clear explanations for students at any language proficiency. This book consists of 11 units in which the unit goals and the language focus are clearly defined at the beginning. Some common features shared by all the units are very useful for students and teachers alike. For instance, each unit includes a number of model sentences and sample paragraphs that are preceded by schema-building questions and followed by questions soliciting information about the organization, structure, and other features of a sample paragraph. These activities may help promote students' critical thinking. Additionally, novel words that can facilitate students' vocabulary development are underlined in the sample paragraphs. This is crucial, as using a variety of lexical items is important for encouraging good writing. Writers' notes presented in every unit provide students with useful suggestions to keep in mind and put into practice. The language-focus section in each unit highlights important grammar points that help students gain more awareness of these in the English language.

Along with the above features, the book provides different kinds of exercises that students can use to practice what they learn from the explanations and sample paragraphs. Some of these exercises include combining short sentences, proofreading, sequencing, copying, and analyzing paragraphs as well as writing sample paragraphs. Moreover, each unit has a peer-editing activity that can improve students' interaction and communication in class. This kind of activity is helpful for them as it not only improves the students' critical-thinking skills but also encourages them to express and share their ideas through the medium of writing.

Along with the 11 units, this book contains six appendices that provide students with additional writing exercises. Each of these appendices elaborates on different elements of writing, including the seven steps in the writing process (choosing a topic, brainstorming, writing a rough draft, cleaning up the rough draft, peer editing, revising the rough draft, and proofing the final draft), different ways of building better sentences, basic capitalization, and

punctuation and grammar rules along with additional peer-editing activities.

Practice is one of the most effective ways to improve a student's writing skills. *Great Paragraphs* provides ESL students with a great number of step-by-step activities that could positively promote students' writing and overall language development. Each unit in *Great Paragraphs* touches on different elements of a good paragraph. Units 1 to 5 basically introduce the characteristics of a good paragraph and how to build a good example. These first five units primarily focus on important features of developing a paragraph, including brainstorming ideas, writing a good topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentences. Unit 5 reviews paragraph skills introduced in Units 1 through 4.

Units 6 to 10 examine different rhetorical styles in writing, for example, definitions, process analyses, descriptions, opinions, and narratives. Unit 11 introduces the basics of essay writing, which involves linking good paragraph writing. The five kinds of paragraphs in Units 6 to 10 are explained and exemplified; however, other types of rhetorical writing (such as classification, persuasion, and comparison and contrast) are not covered in this book. It would certainly be helpful if the authors also covered these additional forms of paragraph writing so that students would better grasp the differences between them. For example, some students could easily confuse the characteristics of a descriptive and a narrative paragraph if these two types of paragraphs are not compared to one another. Providing a wider variety of paragraph types and examples would assist better understanding and student writing skills.

In spite of these minor shortcomings, *Great Paragraphs* has a lot to offer ESL students who aim to overcome their language barriers, particularly in writing. This book is indispensable for ESL/EFL teachers who are searching for insightful explanations, writing techniques, model sentences, and paragraphs on a range of topics with solid examples of paragraph organization and cohesion, as well as writing activities that can promote class interaction, students' critical thinking, and their motivation to write.

Reference

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Understanding Expertise in Teaching:
Case Studies of ESL Teachers
Amy B. M. Tsui
Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

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With the aim of encouraging readers to visualize the expertise of ESL teachers and to grasp what constitutes teacher knowledge, *Understanding Expertise in Teaching: Case Studies of ESL Teachers* presents

four case studies of ESL teachers at different stages of professional development in a Hong Kong secondary school. Tsui's study aims to answer three questions: What are the critical differences among the attitudes of expert, experienced, and novice teachers? How does a teacher become an expert teacher? What are the critical factors that shape the development of expertise?

To answer these three questions, Tsui starts in Chapter 1 by examining the conceptions of expertise and reviewing the established research on expert and novice teachers. While examining the different views of teacher knowledge (including teacher knowledge as a reflective practice and as personal practical knowledge, and teacher knowledge as situated and as content knowledge), Tsui synthesizes the theories in an organized and succinct manner. Seeing how teacher knowledge can be shaped by different contexts and discourse communities, in this chapter she also sets up a theoretical framework of the study to further understand the teachers and analyze their worlds of ESL teaching practice.

In the next two chapters, the four case studies are elucidated with descriptions of the ESL learning context in Hong Kong, the socioeconomic context of the school setting, and the students and teachers participating in the study. To illustrate the validity of the study, Tsui shows how her research was informed by a triangulation of the various sources of data with the processes of data collection and their analyses. She also provides the reader with an excellent sense of how she interacted with these teachers, how she positioned herself as a researcher, and the ethical dilemmas she experienced during the data-collection process.

The knowledge of the four teachers with varied teaching expertise is clearly displayed with regard to several important aspects of ESL teaching. Drawing from interviews and observational data, Tsui successfully illustrates and compares how these teachers, in various stages of ESL teaching experience, developed their knowledge of classroom management, struggled to establish routines of English teaching, and implemented ESL curriculum in their classrooms with regard to teaching grammar, vocabulary, and reading. Instead of tracing teachers' expertise along the usual routines of ESL teaching, Tsui explored teachers' knowledge by revealing stories about how an expert teacher challenged product-oriented writing models and helped her colleagues work collaboratively to implement process writing in their classrooms.

Finally, by concluding the description of her research and answering the three focal questions, Tsui challenges Dreyfus and Dreyfus's (1986) notion of expertise and claims that the expertise of teaching can best be characterized as "reflection and deliberation," "theorization of practical knowledge and practicalization of theoretical knowledge," and "constant engagement in exploration and experimentation, in problematizing the unproblematic, and responding to challenges" (pp. 277-278). She argues that not only was there not a unified notion of expertise in her sample of teachers, but also that expertise is a notion that is "multiple" and "distributed across individuals" (p. 279).

As teacher-education research has not been not widely conducted in EFL settings, Tsui's study sheds inspiring light on exploring the expertise of English teachers who work in a context where English is taught in large classes lacking authentic linguistic input. However, this book would be even more

valuable for English teachers, or teacher educators in similar settings, if some distinct characteristics of the Hong Kong English-teaching context were better depicted. For instance, more details on how students with a limited duration of English instruction interact with teachers, as well as how they respond to different teachers' teaching approaches, might be helpful to explore the expertise of ESL teaching from the students' points of view. Although the study's main focus is to understand the knowledge of teachers at different stages, input from students could have enriched the data under analysis as well as the interpretation of results.

Since students' learning performance, as Tsui pointed out in the introductory chapter, can be a useful criterion of selecting expert teachers, some issues absent from the research regarding students' performance should also be considered as factors in analyzing expertise in ESL teaching. These include the students' overall language proficiency, their motivation to learn English, willingness to communicate in English in class, and their response to instructions given by these four teachers. As the reader may wonder how the teaching of these four different teachers could influence students' learning, this relevant information would be useful in examining the relationship between students' learning and the variation in teachers' *expertise.*

Moving away from simply comparing expert and novice teachers, Tsui's study offers a new lens through which we can see how teachers' expertise develops and what elements are crucial for constructing their bank of knowledge. In its methodological design and ways of presenting the teachers' stories, this book serves as an exemplary sample of ethnographic research in teacher education. Both ESL and EFL teachers will benefit from sharing these journeys of the teachers' professional development and exploring the possibilities of improving teaching expertise. And for teacher educators, this study will add new perspectives on how to help in-service teachers continue to learn and develop within the practice of teaching.