

Amy Chi

Dictionary literacy training for EFL teachers



A. S. Hornby Educational Trust

Dr Amy Chi, based at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, designed and trialled a Teaching Pack aimed at EFL teachers to equip them with the knowledge and skills to integrate the use of learner's dictionaries into their teaching.

Who and why?

Amy identified that many EFL teachers receive little training in the use of learner's dictionaries in their teaching. She points out that while research into pedagogical lexicography advocates the need to explicitly teach dictionary skills to EFL learners as an integral part of language learning, many teachers are ill-equipped to do this, especially as digital dictionaries and their features have outpaced many teachers' own knowledge and experience.

How?

She created a set of materials around three key aims: to legitimize dictionary use in the communicative EFL classroom, to illustrate how dictionaries can facilitate vocabulary learning, and to teach the linguistic, lexicographical, and digital skills necessary to support classroom dictionary use.

These materials were then trialled at two LexTeach workshops that took place at the AsiaLex Conference online in 2022 and again, in-person, in Seoul in 2023.

Outcomes:

The project has resulted in a digital Teaching Pack that consists of:

- five videos, with the accompany PowerPoint slides used to create them, that raise awareness of some core concepts that are key to understanding contemporary learner's dictionaries and the principles that underpin them, discuss basic strategies for integrating dictionary use into vocabulary teaching, and demonstrate how learner's dictionaries can be integrated with teaching from a prescribed coursebook.
- three further sets of PowerPoint slides that illustrate sample lessons which target dictionary skills.

All the videos are self-explanatory and the PowerPoint slides have been given access for editing to allow teachers to adapt them for their own use.

Conclusions:

Amy describes the project as 'lexicographical outreach' to English teachers who value the use of dictionaries in their teaching.

With this Teaching Pack, I hope to convince EFL teachers to equip their students with dictionary use awareness and skills by showing that when students acquire such effective vocabulary learning strategies, they will potentially be more successful and capable of learning independently.
