CREATING A FLEXIBLE SYSTEM FOR THE EXPLICIT TEACHING OF ACADEMIC AND TECHNICAL VOCABULARY

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2 THE CONTEXT

- English medium, research-focused university
- Engineering focus (Aerospace, Biomedical, Chemical, Civil, Electrical, Mechanical, Nuclear, Petroleum)
- Abu Dhabi, U.A.E. primarily national students
- Recently experienced a merger of three separate institutions together into one
- Students typically lacked vocabulary to succeed especially reading academic texts (generally non-readers even in L1)
- Academic vocabulary is a particular problem
- Students typically not independent learners

3 PREPARATION PROGRAM

- For students who enter without required math, science and English skills (about 75%)
- Students take remedial STEM and/or English courses for I-2 semesters
- About 400 students in Fall 2018 (300+ STEM, about 100+ English)
- 14 hours/week English and/or 12 hours STEM (Math, Chemistry, Physics)
- IELTS 5 to enter, IELTS 6 to move out of Prep

4 A BIT OF BACKGROUND

- Coming from one of the pre-merger institutions
- A colleague initially created 3 part explicit vocabulary learning system
- 1) Vocabulary booklet focusing on 350 AWL Words (out of 570 words)
- 2) Roughly 40-50 meaning focused quizzes
- 3) As well as word form focused quizzes (we were writing more)
- Not aligned with the program, only used by some teachers
- Very popular with students

5 THE QUANDARY

- The teacher who created the main part of resource retired
- The merger required changing textbooks
- The list would benefit from a more general focus on engineering
- Integrating the list with the curriculum would be very beneficial for students
- Resource could stay the same, but it could be significantly better if changed
- Keep focus on high frequency academic vocab + engineering
- I was working on an EdD in TESOL Focus on Vocabulary

6 THE MAIN TASK

- Decided to move forward Summer of 2017
- Breaking down the existing quizzes into two Excel worksheets
- Disassembling the vocabulary booklet into individual entries
- Combing the new coursebooks and STEM labs for appropriate academic (Coxhead's AWL) and engineering (Hsu's EEWL) vocabulary
 - Scan main reading texts using TextGrabber and use Compleat Lexical Tutor for comparing with lists
- Align vocabulary with the new curriculum
- Add new entries where necessary

7 HOW TO DO IT?

- Needed to be flexible and able to change with changes in textbooks
- Try to keep the three components vocab booklet, meaning based vocab quizzes, word form based quizzes
- The general idea low budget, flexible, based around an Excel database
- Looked into using Excel and Mailmerge didn't seem feasible
- Went to an online Microsoft Help Forum and got help
- Virtual Basic sheet that integrated the Excel sheet with a Quiz maker Form
- Took the programmer less than an hour to set up

8 PART I – THE VOCAB BOOKLET

- 8 limited word families / page / day
- Typically teacher introduces / reviews
- Physical and digital copies provided
- Included following information:
 - Base word form
 - Definition / synonyms
 - Sample sentence
 - Other common members of the word family
 - AWL sub list and EEWL frequency
 - Images where helpful/ appropriate

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Theodore Burkett 🔑 Share

В

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1	anticipate AWL9	verb	to expect or look forward to	I am studying hard because I anticipate the final exam will be very difficult.	n = anticipation adj = (un)anticipated
2	enhance AWL6/E150	verb	made better, improved	The latest smartphones are noticeably enhanced.	n = enhancement adj=enhanced
3	feature(s) AWL2	noun	something important, interesting or typical of a place or thing	A feature of KU is that all majors are related to engineering.	v = feature adj =featured
4	identical AWL7/E525	adj	exactly the same	The meanings of "predict" and "forecast" are identical.	adv = identically
5	liberal AWL5	adjective	not opposed to new ideas or ways of behaving that are not traditional or widely accepted	When he was younger, he was very liberal, but now that he has a family he is more conservative.	adv= liberally n=liberal (pers)
6	maintenance AWL2	noun	upkeep; keeping sth in good condition by checking and repairing it regularly	To avoid leaks, maintenance of pipelines is crucial.	v = maintain
7	prohibit AWL7/E573	verb	forbidden or banned	The use of mobiles is prohibited during class.	n = prohibition adj=prohibited
8	substitution AWL 5/E319	noun	the replacement one thing with another	The substitution of a chemical for sugar means diet drinks have less energy.	adj=substitute v = substitute for n(pers) = substitute

TB Fall 2018

Words taken from: Academic Word List (Coxhead), English Engineering Word List (Hsu)



















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10 MEANING BASED VOCABULARY QUIZZES

- 20 sentence based questions (10 pairs with synonyms)
- 8 new pairs / 2 recycled pairs
- Typically the next class period
- Takes less than 10 minutes
- Teachers decide if graded or not
- Easy to succeed and get 100
- Helps build awareness of synonyms

12 WORD FORM BASED QUIZZES

- Word forms a major issue for students
- Typically given the next class after the meaning based quiz
- Meaning based + word form
- Requires students to transform word forms
- Builds awareness of word forms in sentences (parts of speech)
- Also works on verb tenses, singular/plural
- Much more difficult and typically not graded

14 QUIZLET LIVE

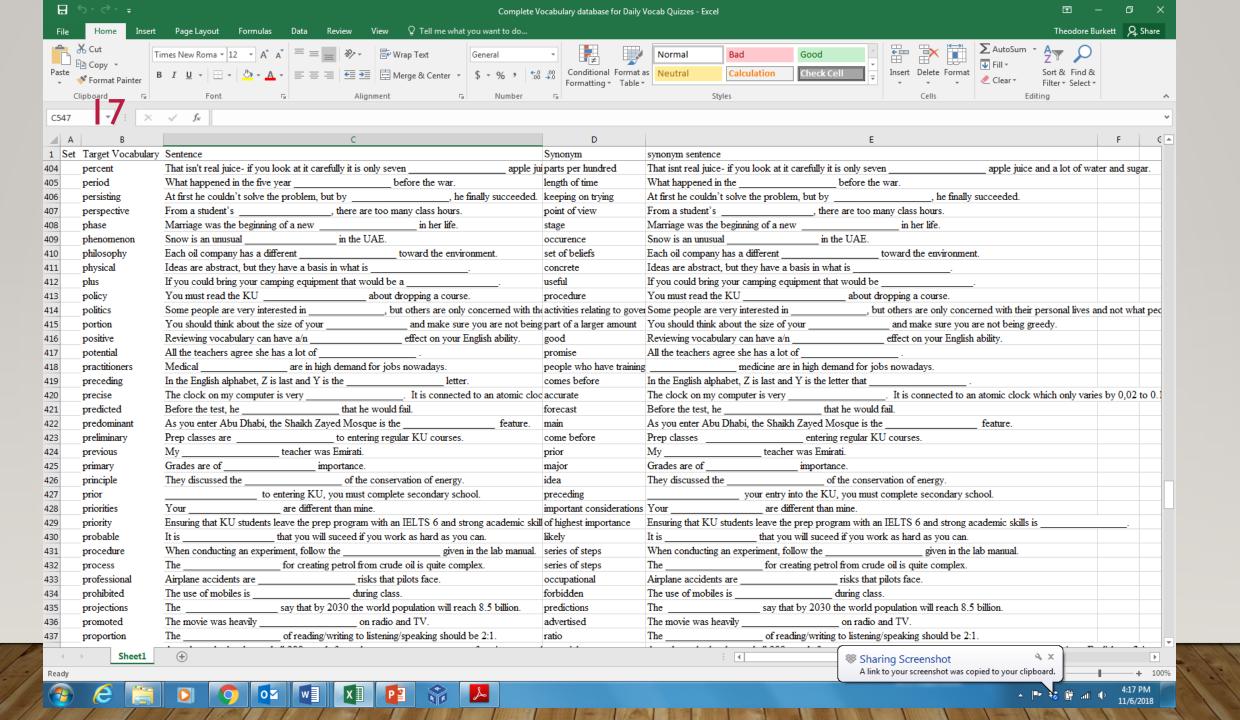
- Used with sets of 16 + words to review
- Engaging and competitive game
- Definition based match word + definition
- Students teach/ remind each other
- Can do weekly /every couple of weeks
- Helps cement learning

15 SOME OF THE NITTY-GRITTY

- Preparing the Vocab Booklet for each course
- Setting up complete Excel data bases for both quizzes
- Creating target vocabulary list for each course
- Setting up course specific course Excel sheets
- Running the Quiz maker application
- Checking the produced quizzes
- Adding target vocabulary to Quizlet

16 MEANING BASED QUIZZES – SOURCE DATABASES

- Overall Meaning based quizzes with synonyms
- Course Specific





















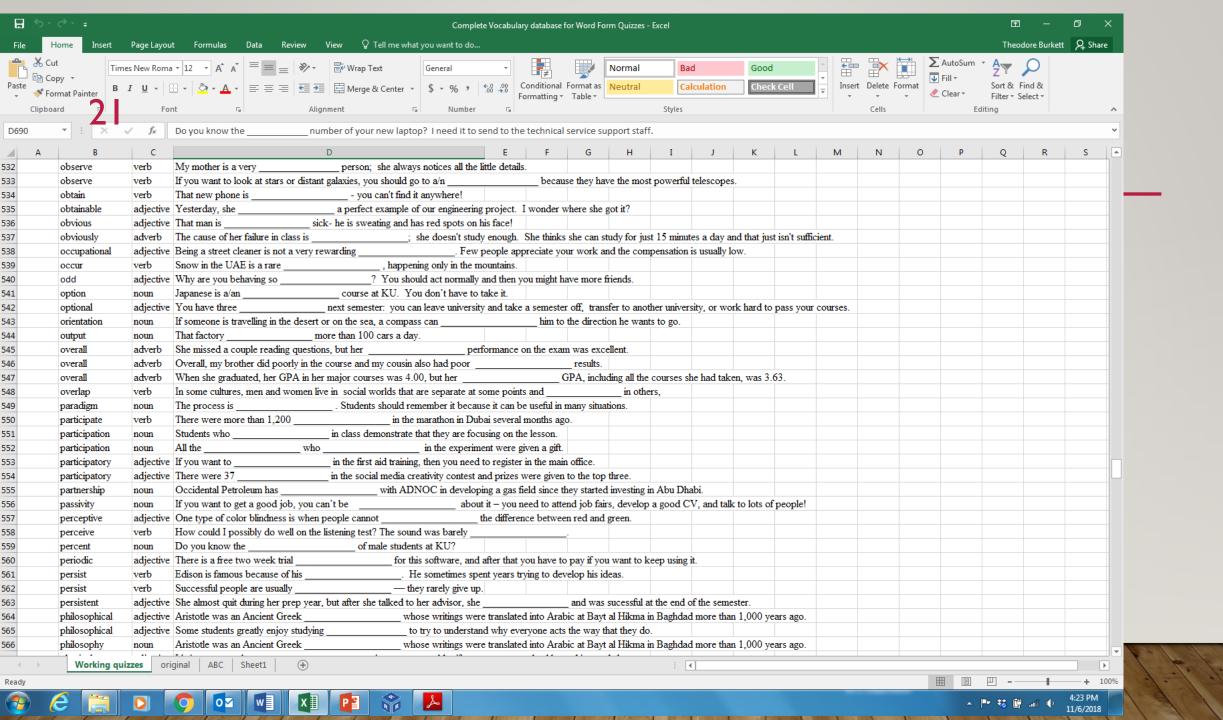


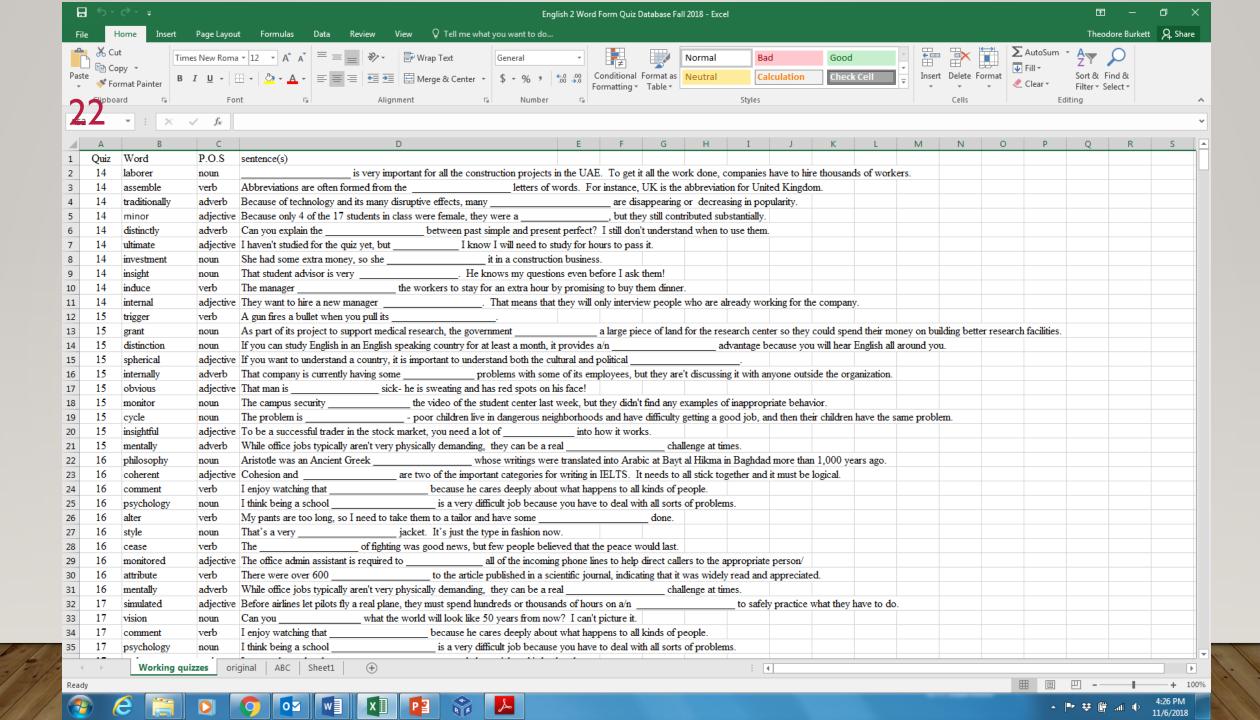




20 WORD FORM FOCUS EXCEL SHEETS

- Provide given word form
- Quiz maker classifies them





24 ADD VOCABULARY ON QUIZLET

- Use definitions from the booklet
- Easy to copy and paste once set up
- Create 8 word sets based on booklet
- Can be used to review/study individually (spelling is a major issue)
- Quizlet live

25 OVERALL ADVANTAGES

- Multiple exposures to the same word family (typically 4+)
- Vocabulary is seen in textbooks /Linked to curriculum
- Discrete focus allows for explicit assessment
- Clear concrete learning objectives
- Students feel a real sense of progress
- One of the most highly ranked parts of the course
- Helps in STEM classes and builds a link through the program

26 SOME DRAWBACKS

- Takes about 25 minutes of class time/ session
- No overt focus on collocation
- Primarily focused on meaning- not as helpful for active use
- Word form part can be frustrating for students
- Can't cover all the required vocabulary

27 FINAL NOTES

- Has been successful with two new iterations
- Changed books twice required resequencing
- Added STEM vocabulary based on lab reports
- Looking at ways to automate process more
- Remains very popular with students
- Informally seems to be very successful
- Looking to eventually set up formal research

28 THANK YOU!!!

• Any questions????

• Email me at theodore.burkett@ku.ac.ae