‘Closing the Vocabulary Gap’

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How many languages does English borrow words from?

A. 50 languages
B. 100 languages
C. 200 languages
D. 300 languages
How many students in England are EAL?

A. 1 in 25
B. 1 in 15
C. 1 in 8
D. 1 in 5
What was the size of the Anglo-Saxon lexicon (their entire vocabulary)?

A. 1000 words  
B. 10,000 words  
C. 20,000 words  
D. 50,000 words
What is the typical vocabulary size of a successful 6th form student today?

A. 2000 words
B. 8000 words
C. 22,000 words
D. 50,000 words
All disadvantaged pupils

Secondary School: 19.3 months
Primary: Year 6 (KS2) 9.5 months
Primary: Year 2 (KS1) 5.4 months
Early Years: 4.3 months

Disadvantaged

Non-disadvantaged

‘The Attainment Gap – 2017’

Katje had an easy life. She lived with Nico the miller in a Dutch village by the sea. While Nico ground grain in his windmill, Katje chased mice. Up and down the ladders she prowled, searching behind sacks of grain and along beams dusty with flour. “Every miller needs a cat like Katje,” Nico told the villagers who came to buy his flour.

At night Katje slept on a soft pillow beside Nico in the house by the mill. On Sundays they walked along the dike that protected the village from the sea. Katje chased seagulls. Nico watched for storms.
Chemical change: Supercooled water

In order to freeze, most liquids require impurities or the addition of a single crystal for the molecules which make up the liquid to start to form a solid around. These are known as condensation nuclei, and if they are missing (the liquid is really pure) then the liquid will not freeze. In theory, ultra-pure water can be cooled to -48 °C before it will spontaneously turn into a solid; however this is very difficult to achieve.
What is the % of words known in a text to ensure reading comprehension?

60%  65%  75%  80%  85%  90%  95%

‘The Percentage of Words Known in a Text and Reading Comprehension’, NORBERT SCHMITT, XIANGYING JIANG & WILLIAM GRABE (2011)
In an ionic bond, the atoms first transfer electrons between each other, change into ions that then are bound by the attraction between the oppositely-charged ions. For example, sodium and chlorine form an ionic bond, to make NaCl, or table salt. Chlorine (Cl) has seven valence electrons in its outer orbit, but to be in a more stable condition, it needs eight in its outer orbit. On the other hand, Sodium has one valence electron and it would need eight to fill up its outer electron level.
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‘The Percentage of Words Known in a Text and Reading Comprehension’, NORBERT SCHMITT, XIANGYING JIANG & WILLIAM GRABE (2011)
“Students reading a text in which they do not know 15 words on a 300-word page (95 percent coverage) will need some instructional support to comprehend the text well, especially considering that the unknown words may carry most of the new information in the text.”

‘Reading in a second language’, WILLIAM GRABE (2009)
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<td><strong>STEP 3</strong></td>
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Available at [www.theconfidentteacher.com](http://www.theconfidentteacher.com)
Talk and Vocabulary
“The relationship between expressive vocabulary breadth and reading comprehension is particularly strong for EAL children.”

Victoria Murphy, Oxford University

(Beech & Keys, 1997; Burgoyne et al., 2009, 2011a, 2011b; Cameron, 2002; Hutchinson et al., 2003; Stuart, 2004)
Talk and vocabulary development

“Day in and day out, conversations about eating breakfast or getting dressed may present little diversity in the words directed to the child while a new event, such as a trip to a zoo or museum, may provide an influx of new words. Indeed, research studying how parents talk in different contexts supports this conclusion and as young children often show gains in vocabulary immediately following novel experiences such as trips to zoos.”

‘Quantity and diversity: Simulating early word learning environments’ by Jessica L. Montag et al.
Breaking the Code

CLOSING THE [VOCABULARY] GAP  ALEX QUIGLEY
Everyday talk: “It hadn’t rained for months. The farmers used new ways of watering the crops to deal with the lack of rain.”

Academic talk: “Hydration technology was utilised to ease drought.”

(This example was adapted from Hickey, P. J., & Lewis, T. (2015) ‘To Win the game, know the rules and legitimise the players: Disciplinary literacy and multilingual learners’. The Language and Literacy Spectrum, 25.)
Modelling the ’Academic Code'

• **Turn-taking.** The quality of our talk is obviously crucial and balanced turn-taking is vital.

• **Expanding and recasting.** When a student gives a response in History, “The soldier isn’t right”, it is recast and expanded upon, “Yes – it is unreliable source isn’t it. What evidence made you think that and why?”

• **Extending and explaining.** Explaining at length is the essential stuff of developing knowledge and understanding. Students seldom explain at length using the academic code in any circumstances beyond school. We need students to have lots of opportunities for extended talk e.g. ‘Just a Minute’.
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Figure 1. The four essential components of vocabulary instruction. Adapted from Graves, 2006.
SELECT EXPLAIN EXPLORE CONSOLIDATE

CLOSING THE [VOCABULARY] GAP  ALEX QUIGLEY
Robust Vocabulary Instruction – BECK and McKEOWN, 2013

Tier 1
Words of Everyday Speech

Tier 2
General Academic Words

Tier 3:
Domain Specific Words

Academic Vocabulary
Chemical change: Supercooled water

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Slippery language changes between Tiers

‘Prime’ Definition

- For Maths lessons;
- For most other lessons e.g. the prime conditions for the growth of mould.
Layers of meaning e.g. Frayer model
Meaning Lines

Using the language of a historian:

certain
perhaps
without doubt
possibly
maybe
doubtful
on balance
unclear
‘Word consciousness’

- Students reading more actively;
- Students (and teachers) being more aware about words and how they are used for communication in subject disciplines;
- Recognising cognates and connections across languages/cultures;
- Recognising parts of words: root words; prefixes, suffixes; word families;
- Etymology;
- Unlocking and discussing layers of meaning and asking questions;
- Strategies to work out the words you don’t know.
‘Word Consciousness’ and Evoking Curiosity

Spinster

‘Left on the shelf’ (common idiom)

Depression

Devolution

‘Down in the dumps’ (common idiom)
“What works is not the right question. Everything works somewhere. Nothing works everywhere. What is interesting is ‘under what conditions’ does this work?”

Dylan Wiliam
How far is the ‘vocabulary gap’ an issue in my school/classroom?

What is already working in our school/trust?

How can we further enhance our practice to address the ‘vocabulary gap’?

How can research evidence help to steer what will continue to work here in future?
Contact

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