

Pedagogy Newsletter #13

Friday 7th December 2018

Dear colleagues,

This week I wanted to write about the 'vocabulary gap' and what we can do in our classrooms to narrow it. Daniel Willingham has shown just how crucial word knowledge is to accessing the school curriculum:

“Studies have measured readers’ tolerance of unfamiliar vocabulary, and have estimated that readers need to know about 96% of words for comfortable comprehension.” ([more here](#))

The first [Oxford Language Report](#) found evidence of a significant word gap in UK schools. Its findings demonstrate how language underpins progress, impacts on attainment throughout primary and secondary years, affects self-esteem and behaviour and plays a huge role in a child's future life chances. So what can we do about it?

In his book *Closing the Vocabulary Gap*, Alex Quigley provides practical knowledge and resources for teachers to help them develop pupils vocabulary. He argues that one simple way of tackling the problem is through explicit vocabulary instruction. He has developed a model for teachers, which follows a systematic approach to teaching vocabulary: [select, explain, explore and consolidate](#). I find his new model very useful as it can be applied to every subject we teach. The [resources on his website](#) are also worth checking out.

Regards,

Fran Goodship

Solebay Primary Academy