How does explicit teaching of vocabulary support literacy learning?
Learning is fundamentally and profoundly dependent on vocabulary knowledge.
Learners . . .

“. . . need access to the meanings of words that are used by adults (particularly teachers) and other students, as well as those used in books and multimedia, if they are to participate in their community contexts and learn effectively.” (Daffern & Mackenzie, 2015)
Building strong writers: Creating a balance between the authorial and secretarial elements of writing *Literacy Learning: the Middle Years*, Volume 23(1), February 2015
The significance of vocabulary (“oral Language”). . .

. . . has often been under estimated because it is not a prerequisite for first or second grade reading success.

Equity issue

... a marked difference between the vocabulary knowledge of children from high and low socioeconomic backgrounds has been well documented (Berne & Blachowicz, 2008).

... the teaching of vocabulary is an equity issue and deserving of teachers’ time and energy.
Vocabulary development

From age three children demonstrate an ability to assimilate and comprehend a new word after hearing it only once or twice.

Hoffnung et al, 2013, p. 270
School students:

The average student learns between 5 and 10 words per day (2000 and 4000 per year) during primary and high school.
Reading

- decoding skills,
- fluency skill, and
- comprehension skills

all draw upon students’ known vocabulary.
Text participation

When students read or hear words, understand their meaning and can pick up on subtleties in text (spoken or written), they become text participants.
Writing

**Lexical sophistication** - difficulty or maturity of words used,

**Lexical density** - balance between content words (e.g., house) and grammatical function words (e.g., *the*, *is*) (Hudson, 2009).
Homographs

Students need to know multiple meanings for words and know which is appropriate within particular contexts.

We will ‘house’ the guinea pigs in their new ‘house’.
Knowing words is multi-faceted

‘knowledge of the multiple related meanings and shades of meaning for the word, knowledge of its semantic associations, knowledge of its meanings in different contexts, and knowledge of its different morphological forms’ (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2012, p. 348).
Learning new words

a learner needs to encounter a word in context and understand its meaning, how it relates to other words around it and how it may change in different contexts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Criterion</strong></th>
<th><strong>Example (for “stale”)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>No Knowledge</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate use in phrase or sentence</td>
<td>He stale on this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inappropriate definition</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Restatement</td>
<td>Stale means a hat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phonological manipulation</td>
<td>Stale is stale</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Stale bale</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Incomplete Knowledge</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Appropriate use in phrase or sentence</td>
<td>Bread is stale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vague or imprecise definition</td>
<td>Stale means yucky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imprecise synonym</td>
<td>No good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Complete Knowledge</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precise use in phrase or sentence</td>
<td>The food is old, so it’s stale now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precise definition</td>
<td>Food that’s old, it’s not fresh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Word knowledge
A= I know the word and could easily give a precise definition, precise synonyms and use the word in a sentence.
B= I have some knowledge of the word, could use in a sentence.
C= I have heard the word but don’t feel confident in providing a definition or putting into a sentence
D= I have no knowledge of the word.
1. Euphoria
2. Gentry
3. Geophyte
4. Novice
How did you go?

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The teacher impact
• teacher modelling
• teacher interest in words
• teacher awareness
• teacher word radar
• teacher responsiveness

The Weather Watcher . . . Lane & Allen
Promoting word consciousness

... through the use of puns, jokes, cross word puzzles, anagrams and word games.
Explicit instruction and modelling

... goes beyond the standard dictionary definitions to include opportunities for students to see how words can change meaning in different contexts (Hirsch, 2003).

He read his ‘home reader’ to his Mum and then his dad came over to read to him from a new chapter book.
Word Clines

Choose one and in pairs create a *word cline* for:

- Happiness
- Fear
- Temperature
- Energy levels
- Enthusiasm
How did you go?

“Clip art licensed from the Clip Art Gallery on DiscoverySchool.com”
Putting words together

e.g. gregarious and hermit
“A hermit doesn’t want to be with people; someone who is gregarious wants to be with people.”

(Beck, McKeown & Kucan, 2013, p. 15)
How did you go?

"Clip art licensed from the Clip Art Gallery on DiscoverySchool.com"
‘Read Aloud’ & choosing texts

a great deal of vocabulary acquisition occurs before children . . . are reading texts that introduce unfamiliar vocabulary
Listening and Speaking

• Young children's listening and speaking competence is in advance of their reading and writing competence.

• They can understand much more sophisticated content presented in oral language than they can read independently.

N.Mackenzie, CSU, 2014
Text reading and vocabulary development

Text read:
• once *without explanation* – 4% gain in word meanings
• 3-4 times *without explanation* – 10-15% gain

• 3-4 times *with explanation* – 14-29% gain
Which words?

**Function words**: approximately 100 ‘function words’, which account for almost 50 percent of all words used in the English language.

Function words contribute to the syntax of language rather than the meaning.

Commonly used words:
“Tier one” words are basic-level words (e.g., dog, baby, happy, pretty) – rarely require instruction at school

“Tier three” words are used rarely (low frequency) and only in highly specific situations (e.g., decibel, cataclysm, atom) probably best learned in a content area.
“Tier two” words are of ‘high utility for mature language users and are found across a variety of domains’. E.g. contradict, circumstances, precede, auspicious, stale, awful, snuggle, twitch.

• Characteristic of written language
• Add power and precision to written and spoken language
• They are not topic specific

(Beck, McKeown & Kucan, 2013, p. 9)
Selecting Tier 2 words to teach

During dinner, the last Potoroo kept glancing nervously at Miss Lily’s enormous snout, at her strong, sharp teeth.

Suddenly her joy evaporated. ‘I can’t take this,’ she whispered. ‘I did something dreadful. I wanted the boa so much that I stole a bit of it.’
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Suddenly her **joy evaporated**. ‘I can’t take this,’ she whispered. ‘I did something **dreadful**. I wanted the boa so much that I stole a bit of it.’
The servants would never comment on this strange occurrence [finding the kitchen clean even though none of them were seen cleaning], each servant hoping the other had tended to the chores. Never would they mention the loud noises they’d hear emerging from the kitchen in the middle of the night.
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(Beck, McKeown & Kucan, 2013, p. 27)
Which definition is correct? Millefiori

1. *noun*, a coralline hydrozoan of the genus Millefiora, having a smooth calcareous surface with many perforations.

2. *noun*, the imitation or representation of aspects of the sensible world, especially human actions, in literature and art.

3. *noun*, glasswork made by fusing coloured glass rods in a kiln.

4. *noun*, a genus of about 400 species of herbs and shrubs, in the subfamily Millesoideae of the legume family Millesabaceae.
Which definition is correct?

3. Millefiori: *noun*, glasswork made by fusing coloured glass rods in a kiln.
Dictionary definitions – can be tricky

e.g. exotic

Adjective, 1. Of foreign origin or character; not native; introduced from abroad, but not fully naturalised or acclimatised. 2. strikingly unusual or colourful in appearance or effect; strange; exciting. 3. Physics (of an atom) with an electron or electrons replaced by other negatively charged particles, as muons, antiprotons, etc

Noun, 4. Anything exotic, as a plant
Explain in own words

**exotic**

Adjective, 1. Of foreign origin or character; not native; introduced from abroad, but not fully naturalised or acclimatised. 2. strikingly unusual or colourful in appearance or effect; strange; exciting.

The concept that needs to be captured is that when something is exotic it may be strange or unusual or special because it comes from a distant place.
Expanding a sentence

Now ask the students to create their own sentence using Figure 6.5.

Your turn

I watched the football.

Now ask the students to create their own sentence using Figure 6.5.

How did you go?

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What do you want to take from this session?

How could this impact learners at your school?

Who do you need to work with to get change at your school?

What should be your first step?
Thank you and questions

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