Why Closing the Word Gap Matters

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO CLOSING THE WORD GAP

67% of primary teachers say broadening vocabulary is a high priority
80% of secondary teachers say it is at least a medium priority

Only 27% of primary teachers and 29% of secondary teachers work in schools with a dedicated, school-wide vocabulary programme

Barriers to overcoming the word gap include:

- lack of parental support
- insufficient teaching time

primary 67%
secondary 44%
primary 63%
secondary 75%

STRATEGY

Step 1: PREVENTION
- Bring vocabulary practice into mainstream class teaching

Step 2: EARLY IDENTIFICATION
- Regular assessment
- Tools and training in place to help identification

Step 3: TARGETED INTERVENTION
- Small group intervention run by trained teachers or TAs
- Targeted individual programme run by or under supervision of specialist speech and language therapists

MORE TIPS

- Encourage children to read widely and often
- Read aloud and share stories
- Draw attention to subject-specific vocabulary
- Perform poetry
- Listen to audiobooks
- Encourage word games
- Offer rewards for use of rich vocabulary

PRACTICAL STEPS TO CLOSING THE WORD GAP

- Individual support
- Whole class focus on vocabulary in primary and secondary settings
- Dedicated reading time
- Literacy help resources
- Whole school literacy policy
- Access to quality talk and texts

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27% of primary teachers and 29% of secondary teachers work in schools with a dedicated vocabulary programme


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