
Building with words: Engaging with vocabulary learning

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Old Problems, New Solutions. University English Centres Australia – PD Fest
July 29th, 2017

“A different language is a different vision of life.”

- Federico Fellini

“Words, mademoiselle, are only the outer clothing of ideas.”

- Hercules Poirot- The ABC Murders. Agatha Christie

“Without grammar, very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.”

- David Wilkins, 1972

“Vocabulary is a matter of word-building as well as word-using.”

- David Crystal, 2000

Outline

- ❑ Introduction – Review of conceptual aspects of vocabulary acquisition
- ❑ Discussion – Vocabulary development activities promoting engagement
- ❑ Workshop – Sharing ideas to develop student engagement in vocabulary learning
- ❑ Key messages

Brainstorm word questions



Outline

- ❑ Introduction – Review of conceptual aspects of vocabulary acquisition

Words

- ☐ Concept of word: receptive and productive knowledge of form, meaning, and use
- ☐ Vocabulary learning goals – # of words – in language, known by native speaker, needed by learner (Nation, 2001)
- ☐ 2 million English words (Crystal, 1990)
- ☐ 54,000 word families (Webster's 3rd Dictionary)
- ☐ 100,000 word families (Nation, 1990)
- ☐ Native speakers know 20,000 word families (Gouldon, Nation, & Read, 1990)

Learning words

- ❑ Vocabulary acquisition is essential – lexical errors – serious disruption to communication (Nation, 1990)
- ❑ Second language learners need:
 - 8,000 - 9,000 word families to understand texts such as newspaper or journal articles;
 - 6,000 - 7,000 word families to understand a typical movie (Nation, 2006)
 - 3,000 - 5,000 of the most frequent words to provide 95% coverage - the important comprehension threshold (Laufer, 1989; Liu and Nation, 1985)
 - 8,000 - 9,000 of the most frequent words to provide 98% coverage (Nation, 2006)

Engaging to learn words

- ❑ Reading expands language skills (Krashen, 1989)
- ❑ The two most important conditions supporting learning are spaced *repetition* and the quality of *attention* given to items (Nation, 2014)
- ❑ Attention is to focus on both the word form and contextual clues available to understand its meaning (Schmidt, 2001)
- ❑ Minimum number of contextual reading encounters for a new word/meaning to be learned is around ten (Saragi, Nation, & Meister, 1978)
- ❑ Quality of learning is increased by recalling, analyzing and elaborating on, and giving deliberate attention to language items.

Teaching through engagement

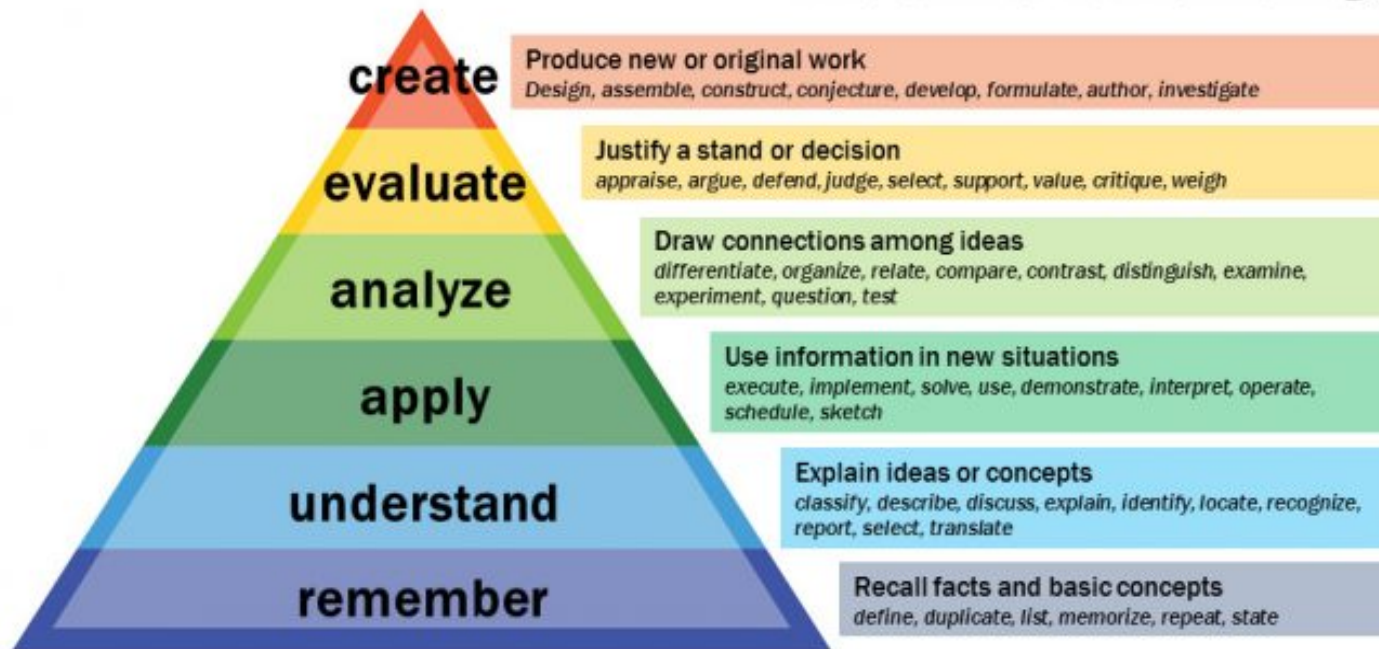
- ❑ Deeper semantic analyses lead to longer lasting memory traces (Craik & Lockhart, 1972)

- ❑ Need of a systematic and principled approach to teaching and learning vocabulary (Nation, 1990, 2001) with a wide variety of methods:
 - elaboration, distinctiveness, difficulty (Schouten-Van-Parrenen, 1995)
 - noticing (Schmidt, 1994)
 - quality of mental processing (Ellis, 1997)
 - planned lexical instruction (Laufer, 2006; Hulstijn, 1992; Paribakht & Wesche, 1993; Hulstijn & Laufer, 1998; Rott, 2005)
 - Involvement Load Hypothesis – need, search, evaluation (Hulstijn & Laufer, 2001)



Bloom's cognitive hierarchy (1956, revision 2001)

Bloom's Taxonomy

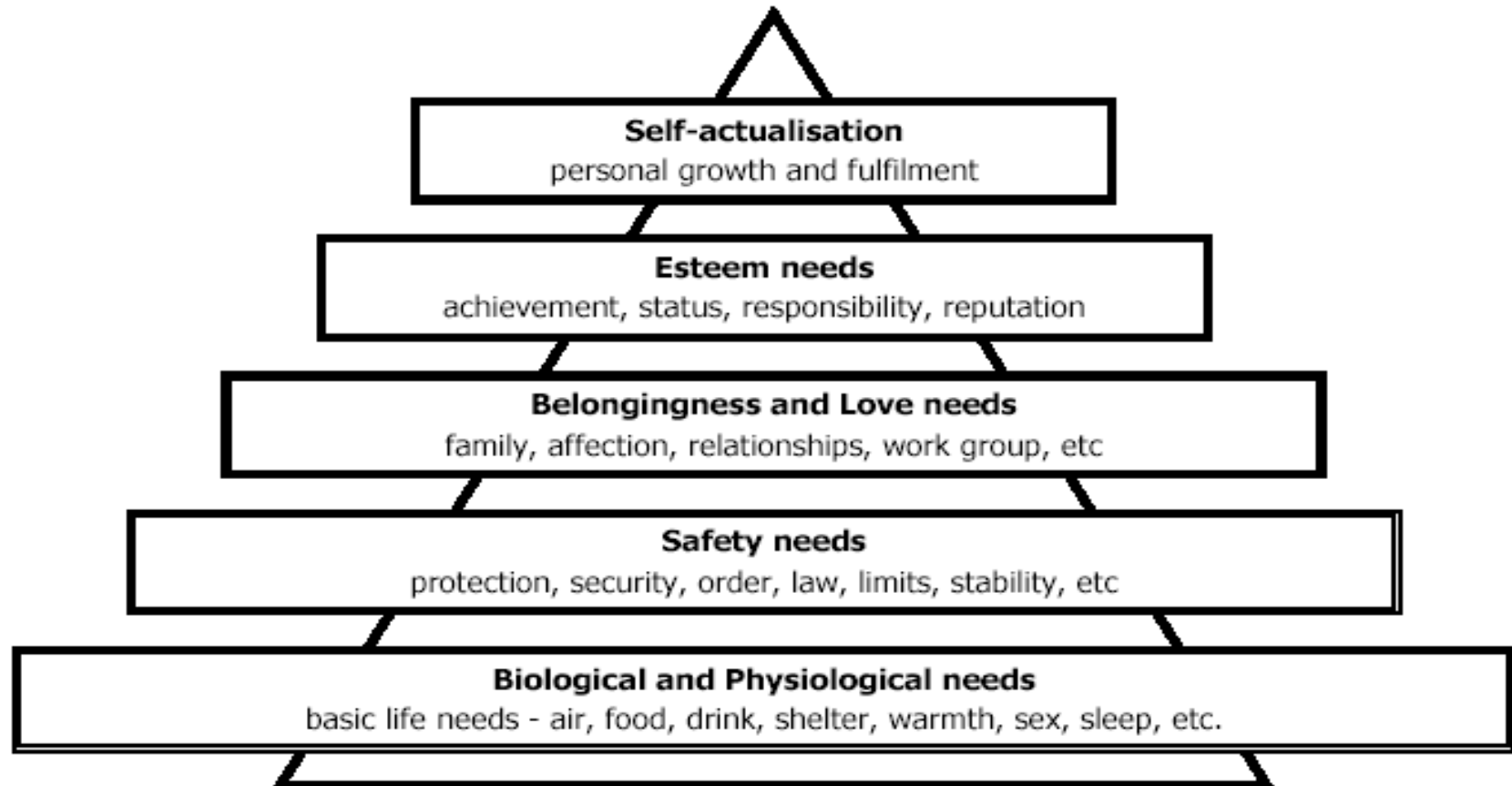


A hierarchy of engagement

❑ Bloom's taxonomy & vocabulary:

- LOTS (defining and memorising) to HOTS (evaluate & create)
- Vocabulary - discrete items to collocations, connotations, explanation & argument
- Receptive to productive
- Concrete to abstract (connections, connotations)
- Breadth & depth

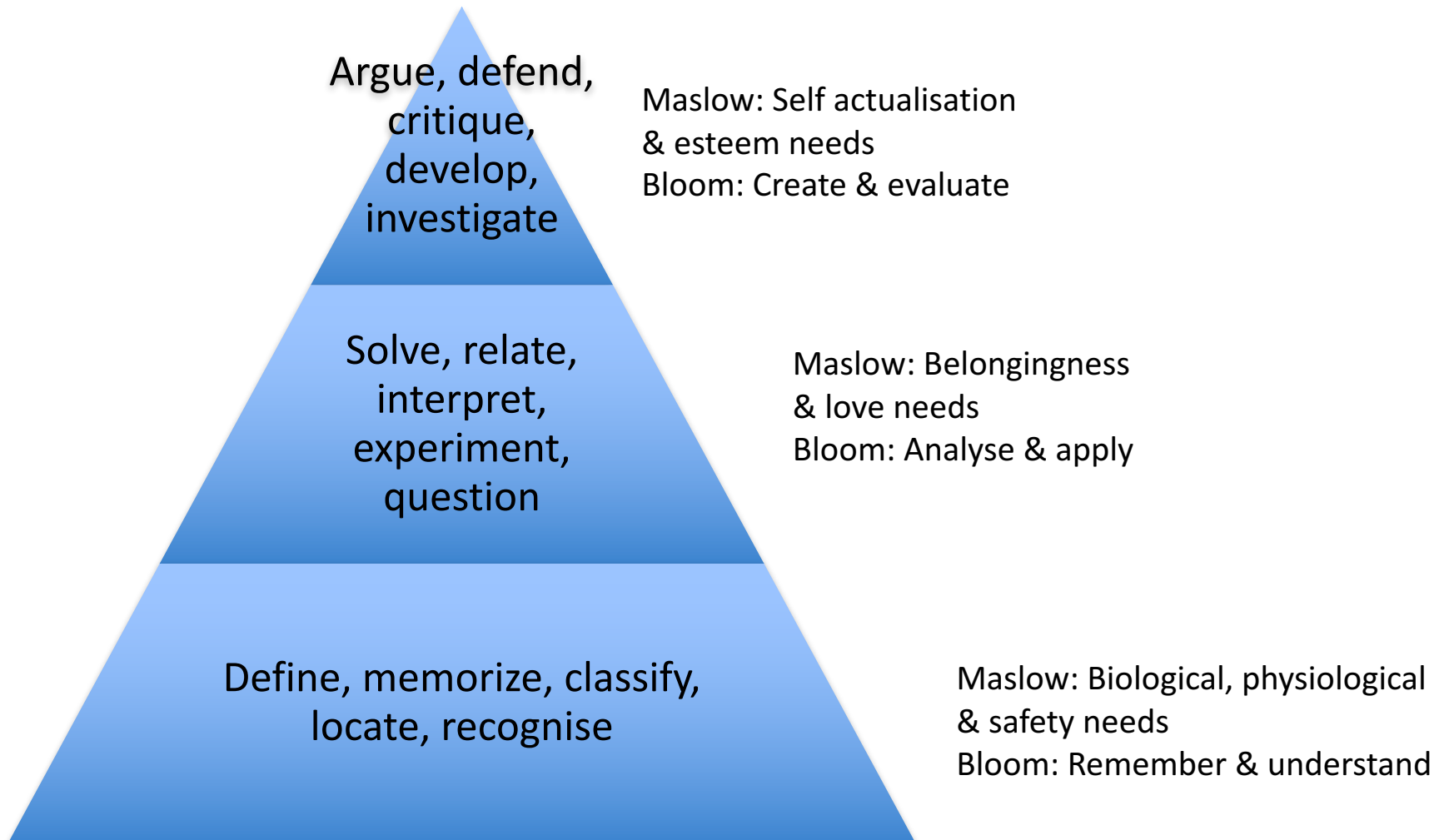
Maslow's hierarchy of needs



An engaged learner

- ☐ Focused mindful process
- ☐ Building new mind maps / networks = confidence & sense of progress
- ☐ Depth of cognitive involvement = retention
- ☐ Critical thinking – new language – new education style – new identity
- ☐ Explicit structured – cognitive & affective involvement
- ☐ Language – communication – human connection

Integrating perspectives



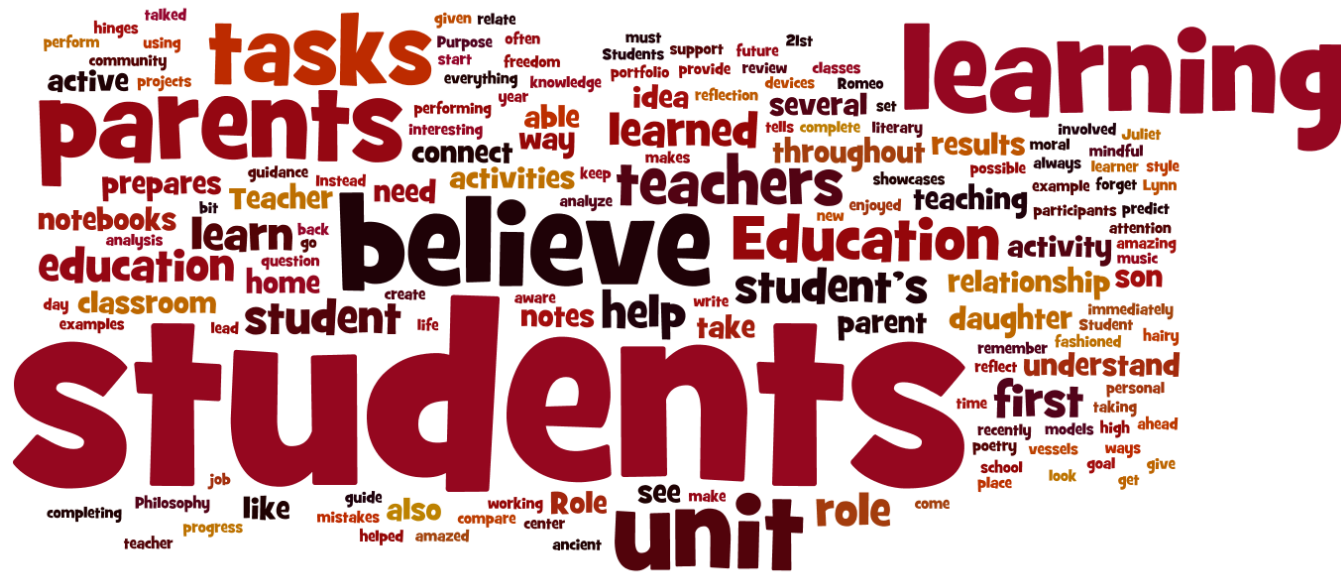
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Activity 1. Awareness

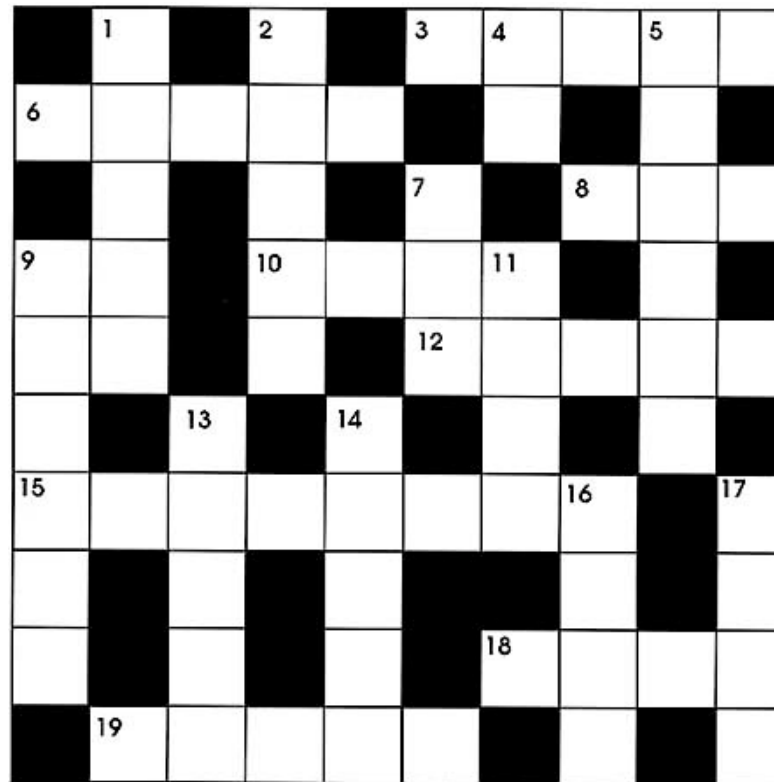
- ☐ Vocabulary levels tests – <http://www.lex tutor.ca/vp/eng/> ; word frequency, word families & affixation
- ☐ Online dictionaries – <http://www.merriam-webster.com/word-of-the-day/>;
<http://lingro.com/>; <http://www.textfixer.com/tools/alphabetize-text-words.php>
- ☐ Academic Word List – <http://www.englishvocabularyexercises.com/AWL/>
- ☐ Word clouds – <http://www.wordle.net/>
- ☐ Word mind maps – <http://www.visuwords.com/>
- ☐ Word games – <http://freerice.com/> ; <http://www.puzzle-maker.com/>

- ❑ Wordle.net – icebreaker, vocabulary development, personality





Activity 2. Form & meaning



Crosswords

❑ www.puzzlemaker.com

1. Students work with partners to make crosswords using the vocabulary lists & class readings; exchange puzzle with another team
2. Students submit lists of vocabulary & definitions; teacher makes crossword for the class
3. Students submit lists of vocabulary, definitions & sample sentences; teacher makes crossword using fill in the blank sentences & meaning clues

Activity 3. Read & argue

☐ Vocabulary focused project:

1. In teams of 3-4, students brainstorm controversial topics & search words
(*e.g. Vaccinations*)
2. Search for online articles on the chosen topic
3. Each student selects a different article
4. Reads and highlights hard (long) words
5. Uses tools to focus on vocabulary development

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The [debates over vaccinations](#) are often cast as arguments over the [integrity of science](#). But they can just as easily be understood as conversations about power, writes Eula Biss, a senior lecturer at Northwestern University, in her book, *[On Immunity: An Inoculation](#)*. As it stands, all 50 states require specific vaccines for school-aged children, although each grants exemptions for students unable to be vaccinated for medical reasons. The power struggle—pitting [parents against parents](#)—arises in the [19 states](#) that allow families to opt out of vaccination requirements by claiming a "philosophical exemption," whether based on personal, moral, or religious beliefs.

Last month, however, one private Montessori school in Traverse City, Michigan—[The Children's House](#), which serves infants through children in the eighth grade—changed the power dynamic. As one parent there described it, the school wrested control from a vocal minority of people in their community who don't believe in vaccinating their children and gave the majority who do their voice back. By revising its admissions policy and refusing to accept new students whose parents opt them out for personal beliefs, The Children's House illustrates how schools are becoming ground zero for the anti-vaccine dispute. It also serves as an example of how educators—not state legislators or health officials—may be the

[EDIT-TO-A-PROFILE SPACE](#)

WEB VP OUTPUT FOR FILE: Vaccination

Words recategorized by user as 1k items (proper nouns etc): NONE (total 1 tokens)

	<u>Families</u>	<u>Types</u>	<u>Tokens</u>	<u>Percent</u>
K1 Words (1-1000):	185	218	559	70.14%
Function:	...	...	(339)	(42.53%)
Content:	...	...	(220)	(27.60%)
> Anglo-Sax	...	...	(107)	(13.43%)
=Not Greco-Lat/Fr Cog:	...	...
K2 Words (1001-2000):	31	32	42	5.27%
> Anglo-Sax:	...	...	(13)	(1.63%)
1k+2k			...	(75.41%)
AWL Words (academic):	31	36	55	6.90%
> Anglo-Sax:	...	...	()	(0.00%)
Off-List Words:	<u>?</u>	<u>93</u>	<u>141</u>	<u>17.69%</u>
	247+?	379	797	100%

Words in text (tokens):	797
Different words (types):	379
Type-token ratio:	0.48
Tokens per type:	2.10
Lex density (content words/total)	0.57

Pertaining to onlist only

Tokens:	656
Types:	286
Families:	247
Tokens per family:	2.66
Types per family:	1.16
Anglo-Sax Index:	69.97%
(A-Sax tokens + functors / onlist tokens)	
Greco-Lat/Fr-Cognate Index: (Inverse of above)	30.03%

For easy editing as MS Word table - [Edit/print-friendly table](#)

concerns concerns currently declared due duties experimental failed failed first first five former free free
gain honorary indeed independent newspaper notably outbreak outbreak page protecting protects
recent relatively rest roughly round roundly royal safe separate serious signs south south south spread
story strongly struck summer sunday thursday true two whole widely

1001-2000 [31:32:42] advice argument behavioural behavioural blame brains combined damaged defend disease
disease disease entire entirely exactly fault flat government health health health health holidays hospital
immediate inquiry inward lot meanwhile medicine medicine mysterious original parents parents pause practising
responsible risk risk risk solution

AWL [31:36:55] area authors consequences consistently consultant consultant contracted controversy culture
decade despite estimated eventually exposed focus generation generation generation generation identified
issued journal lecturer link link link link link link link linked linked maintained major media media medical medical
medical medical portion promote promoted promoting published published region register research research
researcher researchers theory theory theory

Sublist 1

area consistently contracted estimated identified issued major research research researcher
researchers theory theory theory

Sublist 2

consequences culture focus journal maintained region

Sublist 3

link link link link link link link linked linked published published register

Sublist 4

Activity 3. Read & argue (cont.)

6. Read, take notes, retell & write individual summaries of articles
 7. Lexicons of 5 - 8 words for the other team members
 8. Presentations of individual work (summary & lexicon) to team; discussion
 9. Write team opinion essay / prepare presentation: understanding – applying – evaluating – creating
-
- ☐ Repetition, recycle, peer review, revise
 - ☐ LOTS (define, remember) → HOTS (synthesise, create) thinking skills → higher vocabulary retention
 - ☐ Awareness of process → learner confidence

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1. Expand



"Your vocabulary is enlarged."

New Yorker, 1994

2. Depth



“Nobody ever asks How’s Waldo?”

New Yorker, 2013

Workshop

1. What are your students' strengths and weaknesses in vocabulary?
2. How important do you think vocabulary is in the whole process of language learning?
3. What skills and strategies do you offer your students for vocabulary learning?
4. What activities do you typically include in courses to develop vocabulary knowledge (form, meaning, use)?

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Key messages

- ❑ Extensive & intensive reading – planned, explicit instruction (need – search – evaluation)
- ❑ Engage students in communication journey – process of navigating a new world, new language, and new identity
- ❑ Study groups – build security – share experiences – promote belonging – negotiations – creating – thus leading to fulfillment of “higher level” academic goals
- ❑ Cognitive & affective engagement

**Building with words:
Engaging with vocabulary learning**

Thank you