



## Claydon High School: Short case study in Developing Tier Two Vocabulary in Humanities

### 1. Background

Claydon High School is a small, rurally located school. The Humanities Faculty is a large curriculum area comprising History, Geography, RE and PSHE at KS3 and KS4 and Leisure and Tourism and Business Studies at KS4. All year groups are taught in mixed ability groups. Results are consistently above national for Business, RE and L&T. History results are consistently strong. Geography results have been variable.

### 2. Issue(s) being addressed

We focused on developing tier two vocabulary across all subjects including exam command words and connectives. The use of specialist terminology is a big focus of all GCSE subjects and carries significant marks in RE, L&T and Geography.

### 3. What happened/what you did

We introduced a number of initiatives that helped us improve the **teaching** of the vocabulary we wanted to focus on. These included:

- *Organising felt and Velcro noticeboards to enable quick changing of specialist vocabulary and to make these more interactive to support learning*
- *Use of glossary books to record definitions*
- *Definitions/match up cards*
- *Taboo cards*
- *Exam command word dominoes*

We also introduced a number of more general classroom strategies which supported students' written work such as:

- *Prompt sheets to remind how to explain rather than describe and how to evaluate rather than explain*
- *Learning mats*
- *Peer assessment and highlighting of exemplar answers to recognise where connectives, use of source, judgment and explanation can be found*
- *Group essay planning*

We reviewed the impact on our practice in a number of ways which included:

- *Reviewing Controlled Assessment – looking specifically for clear definitions and accurate use of key terms in Geography and L&T Controlled Assessment*
- *Conducting a student perception questionnaire for Year 10 students across the faculty (Year 10 chosen due to range of new vocabulary and emphasis on command words)*
- *Lesson observations*
- *Staff personal reflections*

### 4. What was the impact? What difference did it make?

- *100% of Year 10 Geography students were able to define and use specialist key terms in their Controlled Assessment*
- *80% of Year 10 L&T controlled assessment scored in the top mark bracket (5-6 marks) for the evaluation question*
- *80% of students reported in the perception survey that they are encouraged to record and define keywords in Humanities subjects*
- *89% of students reported in the perception survey that they have been able to use key words in their exams (100% of History students)*
- *85% of students reported in the perception survey that they are encouraged to discuss meanings of words*

## **5. Next steps**

In the knowledge that our focus on vocabulary has contributed to achievement in Humanities, we plan to develop students' language and communication skills further by

- *Further embedding opportunities for developing tier two vocabulary into SoW*
- *Continuing to share and refresh varying ways to teach and learn new vocabulary*
- *Continuing to ask students for feedback about learning and developing new vocabulary*