

GRADES 1–6

A STUDY GUIDE FOR LEARNING WORDS

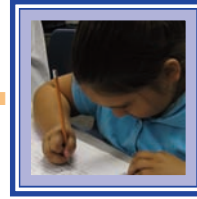


Vocabulary Instruction That Boosts Achievement
in All Subject Areas

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A Study Guide for ***Learning Words Inside*** ***and Out***

This study guide is intended to support your understanding of the concepts presented in *Learning Words Inside and Out, Grades 1–6: Vocabulary Instruction That Boosts Achievement in All Subject Areas*, by Nancy Frey and Douglas Fisher.

You can use this study guide as you finish each chapter or after you complete the whole book. Prompts and questions are intended to promote personal reflection but could also be used to foster small-group discussions between colleagues.

Why Teaching Subject Area Words Can Make or Break Achievement

1. Frey and Fisher talk about the unmet vocabulary needs of elementary students. Discuss several of the reasons for these unmet needs within the context of your own school.
2. Consider your own experiences with learning new words. How do you typically learn them? What are the implications for your classroom instruction?
3. Discuss the role word knowledge plays in writing.
4. Word knowledge is often described on a continuum of shallow to deep. Discuss the degrees of understanding that researchers like Dale, O'Rourke, and Bamman (1971) have described.
5. Discuss the differences between general, specialized, and technical words. Is it important to teach words from each of these categories? Why?
6. Frey and Fisher have developed an academic vocabulary model that consists of five big ideas. Following is a rubric that educators can use to evaluate how they are integrating these big ideas across the school day as part of a schoolwide initiative. Using the rubric, how might you describe the vocabulary efforts at your school?

The attached rubric can be used in a number of ways. One of the most common ways to use this is as a needs assessment. As the facilitator, you might copy the rubric and ask each teacher to complete it anonymously. By compiling the scores, you will easily identify areas of need and can thus target professional development, coaching, demonstration lessons, and feedback accordingly. For example, if teacher modeling is reportedly occurring less frequently than is necessary for student learning, you might use the corresponding PowerPoint presentation with teachers, show videos of teachers modeling, and demonstrate modeling for your colleagues.

You can also use each component of the rubric to gauge success. For example, if you targeted teacher modeling, you might periodically ask teachers to complete that section of the rubric after reading the chapter in *Learning Words Inside and Out*, observing videos of other teachers, participating in demonstration lessons, and receiving peer coaching. If the professional development plan is working, the average self-assessment score should be increasing. As it does, you can recognize—effort and celebrate success.

■ Fostering a Schoolwide Vocabulary Initiative

How do students acquire and extend their academic vocabulary across the school day?					
	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Intentional Instruction:</i> Words are identified by subject and/or grade level.	Words are identified using a framework for selection. Word lists include general, specialized, and technical vocabulary and are shared across grade levels.	All grade levels select a range of general, specialized, and technical vocabulary by subject, but these are only shared within the grade level.	Some words have been selected by grade level and subject, although these are driven by textbook lists (primarily technical vocabulary).	Individual teachers are applying a framework for selecting vocabulary, although these are not being shared outside of the grade level.	Individual teachers have identified words using the text-book (technical vocabulary), and these are not known to others in the grade level and school.
<i>Transparent Instruction:</i> Teacher modeling and think alouds	All teachers have received professional development in modeling and use it daily in their instruction. They share their practices with one another.	Some grade levels have received professional development in modeling and are using it daily.	All teachers have received professional development, but it is not yet being regularly implemented.	Individual teachers are sharing their modeling practices with one another through peer visits.	There are individual experts using teacher modeling, but there is no opportunity to share practices with others.
<i>Useable Instruction:</i> Peer talk and small group collaboration	Oral language practices are schoolwide and all teachers integrate peer talk and/or small group collaboration daily.	Some grade levels use oral language daily and are emerging as skilled practitioners.	Some grade levels are planning ways to integrate peer talk and small group collaboration into daily practice.	There are individual teachers who use peer talk and small group collaboration but there has not been an opportunity to work with others.	Instruction is dominated by whole group lectures followed by silent, independent work.
<i>Personalize Instruction:</i> Independent and individual learning	Students schoolwide consolidate their understanding through activities that promote spiral review and metacognition.	Grade levels are collaborating to build professional knowledge with colleagues.	Some grade levels have developed a plan for how students increase vocabulary metacognition and spiral review.	Individual teachers are becoming skilled at personalizing instruction, although there is no mechanism for sharing practice.	Independent work emphasizes isolated skills and memorization.
<i>Prioritizing Vocabulary:</i> Words of the Week and Wide Reading	The school has implemented the plan and teachers receive regular professional development to refine practice.	The school has created a plan for schoolwide vocabulary and wide reading (SSR and independent reading)	The school has created a plan for either schoolwide vocabulary OR wide reading.	The school is studying schoolwide vocabulary and wide reading for future planning.	There is no plan, and no current initiative to examine these schoolwide practices.