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## A Teacher's Guide to Vocabulary Development Across the Day

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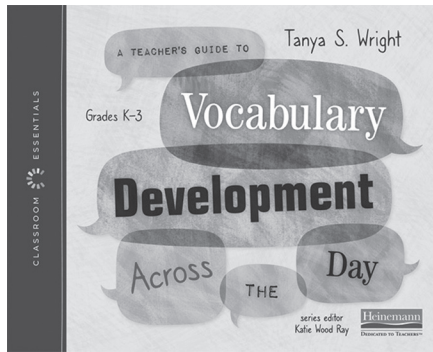
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# Review of *A Teacher's Guide to Vocabulary Development Across the Day*

by Annie P. Spear

Wright, Tanya.  
(2020)  
*A Teacher's Guide to Vocabulary Development Across the Day*  
Wood Ray, K.  
(Series Ed).  
Portsmouth,



NH: Heinemann Publishers. ISBN 978-0-325-11277-0 / 0-325-11277-0 / SKU E112772020 / 136pp

Dr. Tanya Wright opened the vocabulary floodgates with her newly-released book, *A Teacher's Guide to Vocabulary Development Across the Day*. She has been a leading researcher in Michigan over the past several years for the *Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: Grades K to 3*, with frequent presentations around the topic of vocabulary. She has shared about vocabulary development, the research that supports it, and the findings of instructional practices educators can implement to support students. Regardless of whether you have seen Dr. Wright present at a training or conference, her latest book provides a relevant, engaging, and enticing text that will hook early literacy educators. Moreover, her call to educators to consider the ways in which we weave vocabulary instruction throughout the day within and across disciplines will appeal to content area educators, as well. Wright's book offers an important and engaging opportunity for cross-content book studies, discussions, and planning.

Throughout the text, Dr. Wright uses the metaphor of a gate; she demonstrates how we must keep that gate open for students, never letting it close. Through her well-crafted language, she relays the message to educators that we need to make vocabulary learning



**Annie P. Spear**

authentic and uses the text to explain why and how to provide this. Wright not only explains the importance of vocabulary instruction, she also demonstrates its importance to readers. At one point in the book, readers encounter sophisticated science passages. She invites readers to attempt to read the passage and asks them to reflect upon whether or not they can comprehend the text despite being able to decode all of the words within it. This activity provides an illustrative situation that underscores the importance of vocabulary knowledge in comprehending a text and the impact that a lack of vocabulary knowledge and/or the inability to decode words in a text has on readers.

Throughout the pages of her text, Dr. Wright provides relatable examples, even sharing her own children's vocabulary stories. By doing this, she creates rapport and trust with the audience. Readers will easily identify with her and her experiences. In fact, I laughed out loud and smiled several times as I interacted with the text. In addition to inspiring anecdotes, Dr. Wright provides research to support her recommendations. The balance of her research expertise with accessible language builds readers' confidence in her recommendations. Throughout the text, she continues to advocate on students' behalf as she urges educators to consider the importance of implementing explicit vocabulary instruction that is relevant and appropriate for children

and their needs. Educators will find this book useful because Dr. Wright also provides very specific examples of what they can do to support children’s vocabulary throughout the day, across disciplines, and in a variety of contexts (whole group, small group, and individual). Examples from her own research and of other highly-esteemed researchers in the field of vocabulary are provided through samples, charts, graphs, student examples, and sample dialogues. These create ways for educators to envision the application of the research practices and help educators recognize that such instruction is reasonable and urgent.

Beyond the content itself, the supportive layout of the text invites readers in and keeps their attention. Beginning with a table of contents that is detailed and educative, readers know they will experience a fact-filled learning journey in each section. Throughout the text, a variety of design choices give readers opportunities to stop and reflect. Sections such as “You May Be Wondering” pose a question connected to what we might call an “intractable practice” and provide the research to guide readers as they are invited to consider such questions. “Tip” sections are sprinkled throughout and offer instructional tips linked to research, often including suggestions for language that educators could use to prompt and support students. In addition, a “What We Know” section provides snapshots of research with authors cited. Another useful feature of the book is the incorporation of student work samples. The student work represents authentic writing and uncovers the range of possibilities that shows readers Dr. Wright’s suggestions can, in fact, be accomplished in real classrooms.

Another highly appealing feature of this particular series is the video sets that show teachers implementing practices that Dr. Wright presents. In total, there are seven videos aligned to particular areas within chapters. Colorful picture boxes with a freeze-frame of each specific video and its title are placed directly on the page. Accessing the videos is fairly simple, and a QR code is listed to give immediate access.

We know that effective instruction is grounded in

research-supported practices. When educators have access to texts that bring research and practice together, enhanced by insights directly from a leading researcher in the field, the resource is appealing and useful. *A Teacher’s Guide to Vocabulary Development Across the Day* does exactly that and adds a literary blockbuster to Heinemann’s Classroom Essential Series. Dr. Wright deserves applause, cheers, accolades, and praise for highlighting the importance of vocabulary learning in a relevant and engaging way. This book is a must read for all educators.

## Author Biography

**Annie Petrozzelli Spear** has been in the field of education for over 20 years and holds a Master of Education in Reading and a Master of Arts in Elementary Education. She has taught in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Michigan. She is an Early Literacy Coach at C.O.O.R. Intermediate School District, consultant, and co-author of *Let’s Talk: Getting Your Baby Ready to Read*. Annie was a Principal Investigator and Reading Clinic Coordinator for The Literacy Center at Central Michigan University where she remains an adjunct faculty member. Annie aims to facilitate learning around literacy development and to provide actionable ways for educators to meet children’s needs through research-supported practices. She has a passion for engaging and collaborating with families in authentic ways linked to literacy research. She lives with her family in Northern Michigan and can be reached at [anniespear@gmail.com](mailto:anniespear@gmail.com).

