



Students’ Perspectives on Vocabulary Instruction at Innovation Academy

How can we analyze students' perspectives about Innovation Academy's vocabulary learning methods to make improvements for future students?



Abstract

The general purpose of our study is to identify what changes need to be made in the current system of vocabulary lessons at IA. Our goal is to assess and improve how the students utilize the vocabulary they learn outside of class. We have decided to use surveys that will be distributed to students at Innovation Academy, who may come across new vocabulary as they advance in their classes. We hope to collect at least 50 responses from these students. With the data that we collect from the students, we will compile a report on the current system of teaching vocabulary at IA by analyzing how students feel about the current state as well as any suggestions they have for future vocabulary teaching.

Background

High school students must take standardized tests, such as the ACT or SAT, which incorporate advanced vocabulary questions into their tests. These tests require extensive knowledge about vocabulary, making it important to build a strong foundation of vocabulary. It is not only English classes that learn vocabulary; students can come across new vocabulary terms in science, math, history, art, or any other subject matter. To aid our initial understanding of vocabulary, we read and evaluated 15 sources and compiled an annotated bibliography, linked in our digital portfolio.

Methodology

Our goal was to identify what changes are needed in Innovation Academy’s vocabulary teaching methods. Our hypotheses were as follows:

Null: Innovation Academy students are satisfied with Innovation Academy’s vocabulary teaching and see little to no need for improvement.

Alternate: Innovation Academy students want changes to be made to its current vocabulary teaching system.

We used a survey to understand more about Innovation Academy's vocabulary teaching model and how students feel about its effectiveness and engagement. We wanted to assess how useful the students think these lessons and teaching methods are, and whether they see the benefits of learning vocabulary outside the classroom. We conducted the survey through Microsoft Forms, and we requested random students and requested teachers to instruct their students to fill out the form. We were able to collect 42 responses across 21 days.

Conclusions

The results of our survey suggest that our alternate hypothesis is true: that Innovation Academy students would like to see changes in the vocabulary teaching.

Students find vocabulary at IA useful and interesting—24 out of 42 respondents— 57.1% of respondents reported that the vocabulary taught is useful to them, and 24 out of 42 respondents (57.1%) reported that that it is interesting to them.

However, the most pressing problem students have with vocabulary teaching at IA seems to be with how frequently or often it is taught and reviewed. 20 out of 42 respondents (47.6%) students responded that we need more vocabulary teaching, and 20 out of 42 respondents (47.6%) responded that we need to practice more often to question 9, a multi-select question. Overall, while the content of vocabulary teaching is generally interesting and useful, it is not reviewed in class as often as students would like.

Findings – also linked in Digital Portfolio



Next steps

Our findings show that Innovation Academy students would like more opportunities to practice vocabulary in class, and there is evidence that we should investigate this issue further. Next steps for collecting more evidence to confirm or reject our findings here could be performing a survey on a larger scale with a more even distribution of responses across grades (50% of our responses came from freshmen, while only 5% came from sophomores).