

RESEARCH AND STANDARDS

Teaching vocabulary skills to students with reading difficulties can greatly enhance students' reading abilities, according to recent research. Vocabulary plays an important role in learning to read. Students who have a greater verbal vocabulary usually have better reading comprehension skills because they use the words they have heard to make sense of the words they see in print (Armbruster, Lehr, Osborn, 2001).

Students learn vocabulary two ways: directly and indirectly. Indirect learning happens when students hear and see words used in many different contexts (Armbruster et al., 2001), and students learn vocabulary directly when they are explicitly taught both individual words and word-learning strategies (Armbruster, Lehr, Osborn, 2001). *Basic Vocabulary Series 1* and *2* focuses on teaching vocabulary directly by covering a variety of word-learning strategies.

According to research, "specific word instruction, or teaching individual words, can deepen students' knowledge of word meanings. In-depth knowledge of word meanings can help students understand what they are hearing or reading" (Armbruster et al., 2001). *Basic Vocabulary* was created to provide multiple opportunities for students to read, acquire, and apply common and familiar vocabulary words. This supports the research suggesting that the more students "... see, hear, and work with specific words, the better they seem to learn them" (Armbruster et al., 2001).

Research suggests that "the primary instructional procedure for facilitating strong vocabulary development is to ensure that students develop independent strategies for learning the meaning of words as they occur in context" (Baker, Kameenui, Simmons, 1995). Fountas and Pinnell (1996, p. 166) suggest that "Vocabulary acquisition is fostered not by one approach, but by a combination of approaches." *Basic Vocabulary* addresses a variety of approaches to teaching vocabulary, including context clues to determine word meanings, word relationships with one another, and word parts to understand the words in text.

The studies reviewed by the National Reading Panel suggest that vocabulary instruction leads to gains in comprehension, but the methods must be appropriate to the age and ability of the reader (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). *Basic Vocabulary* utilizes a variety of methods to teach vocabulary skills while doing so on a low readability. Multiple activities address each skill to ensure an adequate amount of practice to help students succeed with the strategies and words.

RESEARCH AND STANDARDS (continued)

Basic Vocabulary meets both state and national standards for vocabulary, including the Standards for the English Language Arts, sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association. As students complete the activities in this book, they will:

- use pictures to associate words and their meanings.
- use context clues to determine appropriate word, word meanings, and word forms.
- identify compound words, antonyms, synonyms, and homophones.
- analyze words for the appropriate meaning of a multi-meaning word.
- analyze word parts to determine base words.
- improve word awareness and improve vocabulary skills.

Armbruster, B. B., Lehr, F., & Osborn, J. H. (2001). *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read: Kindergarten Through Grade 3*. The Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA) for The Partnership for Reading: National Institute for Literacy, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and U.S. Department of Education.

Baker, S. K., Simmons, D. C., & Kameenui, E. J. (1995). *Vocabulary Acquisition: Synthesis of the Research*. Eugene: University of Oregon, National Center to Improve the Tools of Educators.

Fountas, Irene C. and Pinnell, Gay Su. (1996) *Guided Reading: Good First Teaching for All*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000) *National Reading Panel Report: Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction*. Retrieved June 24, 2004, from www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/nrp/findings.htm.