



## Triple R Teaching

Students typically learn 3,000-4,000 new vocabulary words each year. We can't possibly directly teach the meanings of that many words in a school year, so is there a point to direct vocabulary instruction? Can it even make a difference? Coming up, we'll look at what the National Reading Panel had to say about teaching vocabulary.

Everyone agrees vocabulary is crucial for comprehension. After all, if we don't understand the words we read, we're not going to understand the overall text as well. The question then isn't whether vocabulary is important, but does direct vocabulary teaching lead to a worthwhile benefit? Could teaching a few thousand words throughout a child's school career have any noticeable effect on comprehension?

This was the question that the National Reading Panel resolved to answer. The panel concluded that yes, explicit instruction and vocabulary does result in improved reading achievement. Explicit vocabulary instruction includes directly teaching word meanings, teaching techniques to read words from context, and using roots and affixes to determine word meanings.

These kinds of instruction clearly had a positive effect on reading comprehension in addition to more indirect methods of teaching vocabulary, such as reading aloud to children or encouraging them to do wide reading.

The National Reading Panel offered multiple implications based on their research, including the following: Vocabulary should be taught both directly and indirectly.

Repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary are important.

Vocabulary learning should entail active engagement in learning tasks.

Vocabulary can be acquired through incidental learning.

Dependence on a single vocabulary instruction method will not result in optimal learning.

I'd like to take a moment to plug "Bringing Words to Life" by Isabelle Beck and her colleagues. Not only does this book help you understand the research surrounding the teaching of vocabulary in much more detail than I've done here, but it also has a menu of activities in the back of the book that will really help your students master their new vocabulary words. For a link to that book and other references, head to the show notes at [themeasuredmom.com/episode6](http://themeasuredmom.com/episode6).

I'll see you here next week for our final episode about the National Reading Panel's report!