

## **Vocabulary Instruction as a Tool for Helping Students of Diverse Backgrounds and Ability Levels to Understand Mathematical Concepts**

### **ABSTRACT**

This action research project describes a research project designed and implemented specifically with an emphasis on the instruction of mathematical vocabulary. The targeted population was my second period classroom of sixth grade students. This group of seventeen students represented diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and abilities. The school is located in a community of a population of approximately 5,000 people in the Midwest. My research investigation focused on the use of specific methods of vocabulary instruction and students' use of precise mathematical vocabulary in writing and speaking. I wanted to see what effects these strategies would have on student performance. My research suggested that students who struggle with retention of mathematical knowledge have inadequate language skills. My research also revealed that students who have a sound knowledge of vocabulary and are engaged in the specific use of content language performed more successfully. Final analysis indicated that students believed the use of specific mathematical language helped them to be more successful and they made moderate progress in their performance on assessments.