

MEET THE AUTHORS

Program authors Isabel L. Beck, Ph.D., and Margaret G. McKeown, Ph.D., believe all children can become word heroes—and their success in school depends upon it! Expectations on the youngest students have never been higher, even though many students come to school unprepared to meet today's rigorous literacy standards.

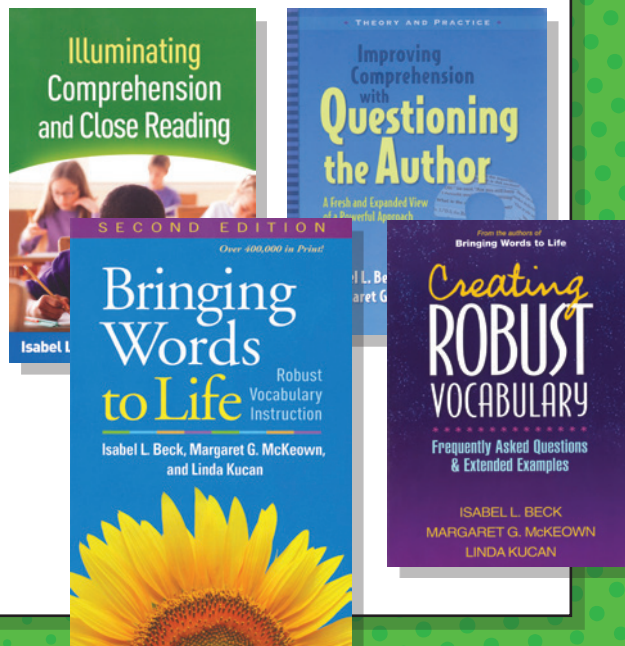


Word Heroes was created to put all students, including at-risk learners and English learners, onto a path of excellence. The secret is delivering expert instruction at the early grades in the areas that research shows will have the greatest impact on students' academic success: comprehension and vocabulary. (Vellutino *et al.*, 2007)

As Drs. Beck and McKeown state in their groundbreaking book, *Bringing Words to Life*:

"What it means to know a word is clearly a complicated, multifaceted matter, and one that has serious implications for how words are taught. Most importantly, how do you decide what kind and how much instruction is adequate for students to learn words? That depends on what kind of learning is desired. We think that most often the goals that teachers have are ... for the students to be able to use the instructed words in comprehension of text containing those words and to recall the words well enough to use them in writing. That calls for a deep kind of knowledge, which requires robust instruction." (Beck, McKeown & Kucan, 2013)

As two of the most respected educators in the field, Drs. Beck and McKeown understand what kind of instruction children need. Over the last 30 years, their model of robust instruction has been shown to effectively reduce the language gap and improve students' overall reading comprehension. They have received multiple awards for their work, including induction in the International Literacy Association's Hall of Fame! Educators around the world have been influenced by the insights found in their published works. **Word Heroes is their latest effort, and it benefits from all that has come before.**



With Word Heroes, Drs. Beck and McKeown provide research-based instruction that really works. By combining instruction in **robust, high-impact words** and **complex, authentic texts**, they are putting over 30 years of research and practical application right into teachers' hands.

- Instruction begins with read-aloud selections chosen by the authors for their engagement and age-appropriate complexity.
- The vocabulary words, selected by the authors for their usefulness across academic domains, are taught using their active and engaging instructional routines.
- As students interact with the read-alouds, they learn to examine texts closely for deep comprehension.
- Finally, students engage in discussion and writing opportunities designed to give expression to their new ideas and supercharged vocabulary.

H

High-Impact Words

Not all words are worth teaching. Many are too simple while others are too domain-specific. For that reason, Word Heroes delivers **targeted instruction in robust, high-utility words**—the kinds of words that maximize students' knowledge of language and depth of comprehension.

E

Encounters in Various Contexts

For vocabulary instruction to have an impact, students need multiple opportunities to see and interact with new words. Word Heroes' systematic and proven approach ensures that **students encounter words many times in many contexts**. The result? Deep and lasting knowledge of word meanings.

R

Reading Comprehension

While essential, vocabulary instruction alone is not enough to help students reach the ultimate goal: to grow into better readers and writers. That's why every Word Heroes lesson delivers **integrated instruction focused on the meaning of words and texts**.

O

Oral Language Instruction

Before children can understand a word in written texts, they must be able to understand and use it in their oral language. With Word Heroes, classrooms become a word conscious zone where teachers and students participate in **lively discussions and collaborative activities that build oral language**.