



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative

2007 Volume VI: Keeping the Meaning in Mathematics: The Craft of Word Problems

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## **Teaching Addition and Subtraction Word Problems to Children**

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Many students have difficulties when attempting to solve word problems. Many reasons are given for the students' lack of success in word problems. These reasons include students' lack of exposure to life outside of television and their neighborhoods, minimal reading skills, and difficulty in comprehension skills. I do not dispute these reasons for students' failure, but I propose that there is a way to ensure that problem solving permeates the mathematics classroom while simultaneously maintaining student interest. This unit will help teachers that are looking to implement strategies that will change the way that students read and understand addition and subtraction word problems. Additionally, it will help teachers to learn the various methods that they can use in order to develop meaningful word problems for all of their students. Although it was written for second grade, these strategies and accompanying appendix of word problems are adaptable for grades one through four.

(Developed for Mathematics, grade 2; recommended for Mathematics, grade 2)

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