

California State University, San Bernardino

**CSUSB ScholarWorks**

---

Theses Digitization Project

John M. Pfau Library

---

2000

## **Word study: An interactive approach to word solving**

Nancy Watkins Walker

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project>



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

---

### **Recommended Citation**

Walker, Nancy Watkins, "Word study: An interactive approach to word solving" (2000). *Theses Digitization Project*. 1630.

<https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project/1630>

This Project is brought to you for free and open access by the John M. Pfau Library at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses Digitization Project by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@csusb.edu](mailto:scholarworks@csusb.edu).

WORD STUDY: AN INTERACTIVE APPROACH TO WORD SOLVING

---

A Project  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
in  
Education:  
Reading/Language Arts Option

---

by  
Nancy Watkins Walker

December 2000

WORD STUDY: AN INTERACTIVE APPROACH TO WORD SOLVING

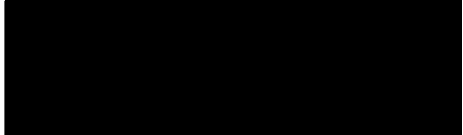
---

A Project  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

---

by  
Nancy Watkins Walker  
December 2000

Approved by:

  
M. Alayne Sullivan, Ph.D., First Reader

  
Kate Brand, MA, Second Reader

Nov 21 / 2000  
Date

© 2000 Nancy Watkins Walker

## ABSTRACT

This project addresses the problems some second grade students face when reading and writing due to decoding and encoding confusions and difficulties. A review of the literature suggests that adding a word study component to the language arts curriculum could enhance word solving skills. The literature supports developmentally appropriate, direct, explicit instruction in word study. Through assessment and observation, teachers can design a program to support students at their developmental stage of spelling and reading. As a result of the research, guidelines are included for second grade teachers. Assessments and activities in word sorting, word building, and Word Walls are included. The hands on activities, when incorporated with extensive reading and writing, provide experiences which support greater ease in decoding and encoding for second graders.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As any nontraditional student can attest to, returning to school for an additional degree encroaches on more than just the student's life. I am blessed with a supportive and understanding family who champion my ambitions. I would like to thank them for their love and encouragement, editing, and listening skills. Without them this project would have seemed unsurmountable. With them life is full, rich and invaluable.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	iv
CHAPTER ONE: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	
Introduction .....	1
Melissa .....	2
Classrooms Involved in Word Study .....	4
Reading Support Through More Efficient Decoding .....	6
Writing Conventions Supported .....	7
Spelling Skills are Strengthened .....	9
CHAPTER TWO: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	
Word Study in the Classroom .....	13
The Historical Philosophy of Word Study .....	16
Why Teach Word Study? .....	20
Word Study and the Reading/Language Arts Framework for California .....	22
How Word Study Supports Decoding .....	24
Word Study Supports Editing in Writing .....	28
How Spelling Fits With Word Study .....	29
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	
Putting It All Together in a Classroom .....	34
Assessments for a Word Study Program .....	38
Creating Word Study Activities .....	42
Word Sorts .....	43
Making-Words .....	51

Word Walls .....	54
CHAPTER FOUR: GOALS AND LIMITATIONS	
Introduction .....	60
Goals .....	60
Limitations .....	62
Conclusion .....	63
APPENDIX A: ASSESSMENTS .....	65
APPENDIX B: SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR WORD SORTING .....	78
APPENDIX C: MAKING WORDS .....	92
APPENDIX D: WORD WALL ACTIVITIES .....	94
APPENDIX E: HIGH UTILITY RIMES .....	108
REFERENCES .....	110



## CHAPTER ONE:

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

#### Introduction

Words are magic. Words are power. Words hold hidden meaning. They link us to others. They give us an avenue to communicate. Words serve as a conduit of information yet also as an escape from our world. Words bring hope as well as sorrow. They build up and tear down. They serve to bridge people. Words are filled with expectations and promises. With words we have the means to fill empty spaces as well as empty hearts and lives. We sing words of allegiance and make pledges with words of determination. Some words are private, while other words are repeated in classrooms across America. The words in books take us to places beyond. Words on signs stimulate or titillate. Words in a song connect us to others. In letters, words are a lifeline. Whether spoken, written or sung, words are magic.

While words expand the lives of many, children who struggle with words in print are left out of the magic in both writing and reading. By giving children a chance to play with, sort, and work with words, children's understanding of words will expand their connection with print. They will gain confidence in their decoding,

encoding and editing due to an increased understanding of word patterns and how words work. They will be led through the doors of literacy when given a chance to study words through various activities. When words are unmanageable for early readers, they feel frustrated and some even give up. Word study could help alleviate some of these frustrations (Bear et al., 2000; Pinnell, & Fountas, 1998).

Melissa

My interest in word study is directly tied to a frustrated reader named Melissa. Melissa is a fifth grader who struggles with reading. She is in a pull-out program at school, and is in the "low" reading group in her classroom. She was sent to me for after-school reading intervention. I felt armed and ready to "cure" Melissa's reading difficulties. We began the methodical process of assessing her reading abilities. What I found fascinated and dismayed me. She knew that what she read had to make sense. She felt that if she read really fast it would prove that she was indeed a better reader than many thought. However, as the text became more difficult, she mumbled through words and fought to maintain control of the meaning. Since she had to work so hard to decode, her comprehension tumbled. After "reading" to me, she could

not retell the story let alone discuss the richer meaning of the text.

Besides struggling with the books we read, she failed three different reading assessments, namely Jerry Johns' (1997) word lists, J. Richard Gentry and Jean Wallace's (1993) monster spelling test and Patricia M. Cunningham's (1990) names tests (for examples, see Appendix A). She had no strategies to break words down and move ahead through unknown words. I had no magic tricks in my bag to support her struggles in decoding. I believed that if she just read more, and more often, she would improve in her reading. But as we read together she was stymied over strategies to decode words she did not know. Her decoding errors were often significant to the meaning of the text. As a result, her understanding was impacted, and she could not appreciate what she was reading. To add to her feelings of frustration, when we wrote together she was embarrassed by her unconventional spelling.

Clearly Melissa needed what I could not offer her. I could read with her and write with her, but I did not know how to teach her to effectively attack words. We chunked them and that helped. We played word building games, but many frustrated her since she had so little background in letter sounds and blending. It was then that I decided

that I needed to learn more about word solving. What I have since discovered further convinced me that my curriculum needs an additional component; it needs word study.

Melissa caused me to do some reflecting on my beliefs about reading. Where did word study fit in my overall understanding of becoming literate? Reading is a complicated task people take for granted. It involves multiple operations such as decoding words, following the conventions of print, making sense out of the text and language in which it is written, as well as being able to write so others can understand what has been written (Weaver, 1994). Melissa could not do any of these things. As a literacy advocate, I needed to find out how my reading philosophy enhanced or hindered my reading instruction. Melissa caused me to do some research and some soul searching as to what I believed reading and writing looked like for learners at various developmental stages. For the purpose of this paper, "literacy" is being able to read and write.

#### Classrooms Involved in Word Study

Through my research, I realized that word study supports many aspects of literacy. Specifically, word study is setting aside time during the school day to

investigate words. Word study allows children to look at the patterns in words. They come to realize that many letter patterns carry the same sounds in many words. While children work with words, they build their own understanding and make generalizations about how letters work to form words. These generalizations transfer to more efficient decoding while reading and more conventional spelling while writing. Word study supports decoding, spelling, and editing when writing (Bear, et al., 2000; Gentry & Gillet, 1993).

Having a word study component in one's classroom is a child centered way for children to discover words since it meets children where they are and pushes them in the direction they need to go in their understanding of words (Bear et al., 2000; Pinnell & Fountas, 1998). Word study is a child centered approach to word discovery. At the second grade level it includes decoding, encoding, phonics, and letter/sound recognition. While my district mandates a phonics component, the inane repetition of sounds, letter names, and rules has never been easy for me for philosophical reasons. As a result, I include the term "word study" in my lesson plans to cover time for spelling and phonics. However, I feel I do not always fill this time with worthwhile and developmentally appropriate

activities. I am motivated to reform the word solving strategies and activities in my repertoire by the real possibility of improving my students' ability to attack words they do not know, to enhance phonemic awareness, and to help them spell and write more effectively. Could not all children benefit from learning about words?

#### Reading Support Through More Efficient Decoding

Yes, but words are tricky and many children with reading confusions get stuck on words they do not know by sight. Many children feel that if they just decode the words, they are "reading." My philosophy of reading is more closely aligned with Marie Clay (1993 b), who notes that reading is making meaning of print, not just decoding. To become a better reader one needs to do more reading. The more connections one makes when reading, the richer the reading experience becomes. Knowing letter names and sounds does not mean one can read. However, children who cannot efficiently decode become so absorbed in the letters and sounds of each word that all their focus is on decoding instead of meaning. The reading experience is diminished.

To be an effective literacy leader, I need to be able to offer my students a wider range of approaches to reading. To ignore various learning styles due to my

literacy learning biases is not supportive of those who need the extra help I cannot give. Through research, I have come to believe that word study could be the answer. Gay Su Pinnell and Irene C. Fountas (1998) state, "Word solving describes the processes readers and writers use to take words apart and to build them; word study describes the teaching and learning experiences designed to help learners build understandings about how letters, sounds and words work" (p. 24). I hope my students' reading will improve with word solving experiences since the reader will be freed up to search for meaning in what is read rather than stuck trying to "sound out" each and every letter in words they do not know.

#### Writing Conventions Supported

Besides supporting reading, word study will also support a child's writing. Writing is a part of literacy learning (Clay, 1993 b; Pinnell & Fountas, 1996). It goes hand in hand with reading. Children can read that which they can write. While many children eagerly engage in the writing process, others sit, searching for topics and words. During the editing phase of writing, children feel empowered when word solving is automatic. Word study could help generate automaticity (Bear et al., 2000; Pinnell & Fountas, 1998). I watch my struggling readers and writers,

anxious to spell words correctly. They methodically search through resources to find out how to spell what they want to say. Their time is spent searching for correct spellings rather than writing. Studying words and how they work supports a more efficient way to encode through the discovery of word patterns. As children gain command of these same patterns and are able to spell what they want to say, their time will be spent on the composition of their message (Gentry & Gillet, 1993).

Teaching children how words work supports their independence in adopting many of the conventions that will help their writing remain clear, especially when they are "publishing" a piece. Word solving skills give them the strategies to spell more accurately and to break a word down when reading. When Melissa read or wrote, she lacked a basic understanding of letter and word patterns. As a result, she would write words which later she could not "remember" due to her limited spelling skills. While reading, she had no idea how to break words into workable parts to decode them. Letter by letter word solving is inefficient and often impossible given the wide range of sounds any one letter supports. But when children learn to look at words in chunks and see the patterns, their fluency is better supported for meaning making. Pinnell



and Fountas (1998) explain, "Flexible, efficient word solving is an essential aspect of both reading and writing process" (p. 25).

#### Spelling Skills are Strengthened

Finally, word study supports spelling and spelling supports literacy. Even at its most developmental level, written text makes sense to the author. As children become more literate, they want their writing to make sense to others. Inventive spellings support them as they create, but when they publish a piece they want to know that others will be able to read their stories too. They suddenly are anxious to follow many of the conventions of print they know from reading. Short & Burke (1991) state, "When we want to share our knowledge and interests with others, we begin to see that conventions function to support our audience" (p. 43). A child who feels confident in spelling, writes with greater confidence.

From my years in teaching, I have witnessed how some children instinctively understand how to spell, while others struggle even with instruction. I spelled terribly as a child and continue to be a horrific speller. Perhaps if I had been shown the patterns in words and learned to see words differently, I would not have had as many difficulties. As a poor speller myself, I am anxious to

teach my students how words work and aid them in the "mystery" of spelling. Those who have never struggled with spelling make a wide range of claims about recognition and recall. Poor spellers usually recognize a word is misspelled, but are helpless to fix it.

According to Shane Templeton and Darrell Morris (1999), spelling, like reading, can be facilitated through strategies which children need to learn and apply in order to be more successful. They describe the process in developmental terms in which "learning to spell entails understanding increasingly abstract relationships that begin at the level of individual letters and sounds, and progressively advances through pattern and meaning" (p. 105). From their description of instructional activities used to improve spelling and "internalize foundational spelling patterns" (p. 108), I became further convinced that word study would aid my second graders, as well as other struggling readers, with reading, editing, and spelling.

I hope that not just my students will benefit. I teach second grade at a Title One school. Many of my students are second language learners with little or no English support at home. They struggle to comprehend text as well as attack the wide range of sounds our alphabetic

system supports. Many start school without even rudimentary knowledge of books, print or language. As a result, many of the skills most children gain naturally from being in a literate environment are missing. Early reading behaviors must be modeled and often supplemented with word play to enhance phonemic awareness and language development. Reforming my curriculum to include more explicit word study would help all my students greatly. As Pinnell and Fountas (1998) point out, "Children need to explore words and learn how words work so they can use this information effectively and efficiently in reading and writing" (p. 3). Word study helps children become stronger readers due to increased decoding skills, and better writers due to greater spelling confidence.

By learning more about word solving through word study, I hope to enhance my reading instruction for the students I teach. I hope to discover how Word Sorts, Making-Words and Word Walls three word study techniques, play a role in enhancing a child's understanding and use of words. This understanding will support decoding, which will hopefully strengthen reading comprehension. When writing, children who learn these techniques will spell more confidently and accurately, thus freeing them up to write more. Word study will aid the editing phase of

writing by supporting a child's early attempts to spell unknown words. In having more strategies to attack words when reading and encoding, I hope to improve the skills many of my students lack. An added bonus for them will be an appreciation for the magic of their written language, the magic of words.

## CHAPTER TWO:

### A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Word Study in the Classroom

When I was first challenged on what I believed reading was, I remember being surprised that some people confused decoding with reading. I believe that reading at its simplest is the ability to decode and understand print. Reading is about making meaning of print.

Reading employs many conventions such as grammar, syntax and semantics. While reading we use various strategies such as directionality of print, checking to see if the printed word makes sense and looks right, clarifying the meaning, anticipating the story's events as well as the next word (Weaver, 1994). For the literate person these strategies are automatic. We do not consider them strategies at all.

For some children, however, learning to read is hard work. They must be taught to listen for meaning as they read. They must be coached to check the picture, look at the printed word and ask themselves if what they are reading makes sense. As they read they often lose sight of one strategy to employ another. While some children smoothly move through the reading process from simple to increasingly difficult text, others need extra support as

they become confused with all that is involved in reading. As one child will quickly gain confidence as a reader, another will become stuck on the words and slowly plow through the print as if on an undesirable task.

As a teacher of reading, my job is to make reading fun, inviting, and accessible for all. My mission is to welcome children to the literacy table so they can launch into the world of print. By offering word study to my students, I hope to give them another piece of the literacy puzzle. This piece could help them decode and encode more effectively which would provide the extra support some early readers need.

With all the variables involved in reading, I often consider learning to read an amazing accomplishment. I also recognize that it requires lots of work on the part of the teacher as well as the child. Many learn to read by being read to. The print suddenly connects with the words being read and the child is off reading independently. However, not all children are read to and others need more support. Regardless, reading, like a muscle, needs to be exercised in order for it to become stronger. By reading lots of books a child will become an ever better reader (Smith, 1997).

While reading has many dimensions, so does writing. Writing progresses in stages as well. Just as children will look at pictures in a book and "read" the story, they will also scribble on a paper and "read" the story they have written. As their writing develops, they become more and more eager to have others read their stories. Suddenly the conventions of print become important. While some aspects of reading and writing develop naturally, others need explicit instruction. Seeing the patterns in words is one area where many children need extra help. They do not naturally see these patterns and would greatly benefit from opportunities to discover them (Zutell, 1998). Through word study they will have that chance.

Word study is a developmental approach to support the system of understanding the principles behind written language. When used in conjunction with meaningful reading of real text, word study can support decoding, editing, and spelling. Through word study, students can make connections to the reading and writing processes. Donald R. Bear, Marcia Invernizzi, Shane Templeton, and Francine Johnston (2000) stated, "In a sense, word study teaches students how to look at words as they read and write. This word study is well worth the 10 to 15 minutes of time daily" (p. 4).

## The Historical Philosophy of Word Study

Since the advocates of word study trumpet its benefits, I was anxious to see if there was any support for it historically. Piaget (1952) found that people categorize information, objects, events and stimuli to create a sense of order to their world. Categorizing is a metacognitive process that connects the unfamiliar with the familiar. Jean Wallace Gillet and M. Jane Kita (1979) explain, "In this way new things do not remain forever unique but can be considered in relation to everything else that is already familiar" (p. 538). This categorizing is a developmental process all children go through continually. They do not come with preset ideas about what belongs where, but through experience, discovery and exploration they sift through new ideas and concepts. During their exploration they make the connections and build categories of what they find similar. Part of word study is the categorizing and sorting of words and letters.

Children explore and deepen their understanding of words through word study. Gillet and Charles Temple (1978) explain, "... exploration and inference are perhaps the best ways for humans to learn meaningful things, including how to read" (p. 132). Many aspects of word study such as



Making-Words, word sorts and word games create an arena for children to become word detectives. Their discoveries often correlate to their understanding of the relationship of print and its meaning. The deeper a child's understanding between print and sounds, the more complicated the word study tasks can become.

In a similar fashion, just as Piaget (1952) found that children move through predictable stages in their development, the development of categories follows an orderly pattern as well. As a result, many believe children should be given opportunities to develop categorization skills, especially when they are learning to read. Advocates (e.g. Bear et al. 2000; Gillet & Kita, 1979; Morris, 1982; Pinnell & Fountas, 1998) of word study suggest that by involving children in various types of word play, these skills will be enhanced and developed.

With this exploration in mind, many (e.g., Gillet and Kita, 1979; Morris, 1982) insist that finding patterns in words is key to helping with the reading and writing process. Through word study children are given numerous opportunities to discover patterns. There are various methodologies for teaching children to learn about words and their patterns. However, direct instruction in those patterns is not the best method to use. Gillet and Temple

(1978) explain, "Categories that we would teach a child do not exist outside our minds. We constructed them as a result of our discoveries, and children must construct theirs in the same way" (p. 133). By giving children opportunities to organize and sort words, they utilize their natural categorizing tendencies. Capitalizing on this normal inclination while teaching reading actually enhances a child's understanding of the unique and similar features in words. Proponents of this methodology suggest using a form of word study which gives children opportunity to discover patterns which make sense to them individually. They call this categorizing word sorting.

Once children reach the stage in development where print has meaning and they grasp the concept of word, they are at their most active stage of categorizing. Gillet and Temple (1978) explain, "Children at this stage may be the most active users of categories, because their cognitive schemata are still being developed" (p. 134). As a result, it is crucial to support their natural curiosity to explore and make connections. By providing children with words to sort, they begin to develop rules and relationships that make sense to them. Gillet and Kita (1979) explain, "...children are led to discern for themselves the features words have in common, rather than

being told how words are similar and being expected to remember and apply preset rules" (p. 539). Gillet and Temple (1978) agree:

... our task as reading teachers must be to provide a learning environment in which the child is encouraged to actively investigate language, at the word level as well as in oral and written discourse.... A program of word exploration through word sorts can provide a vehicle for such investigation. (p. 136)

Children who are able to sort words and manipulate the sounds the letter patterns create become more literate. They benefit from being able to categorize words in a fashion that creates lasting meaning for them. Gillet and Kita (1979) state, "These categorization activities allow children to form generalizations about how words are related, using not only phonic features but the equally important relationships of structure, grammatical function, and meaning" (p. 541). Another benefit beyond categorizing words is the social learning these activities provide. Children learn through interacting with their world; by manipulating words while in the company of peers they glean additional understanding and create connections to what they have already learned (Pinnell & Fountas, 1998). This new knowledge can be transferred to reading and writing and is not just an isolated part of their literacy development.

## Why Teach Word Study?

Since the data seemed to support word study, I was anxious to see how it would best benefit struggling readers, and especially second graders. By knowing how complex the reading process is, I wondered just what aspects of reading would be supported by word study specifically? Those supporting systematic phonic instruction contend that learning letter-sound correspondence and the rules for decoding words is enough to help an emergent reader develop reading fluency. However, others (e.g. Smith, 1997; Weaver, 1994) argue that reading involves a wider range of tasks and skills. Reading strategies include finding meaning in context, understanding the structure of language to see if the text "sounds right," and the visualizing information or orthographics within words (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). To support reading development, writing must be part of the equation. Marie Clay (1993 b) states in her book, *Reading Recovery*:

The child who has failed to learn to read is often also struggling to write stories. Often remedial lessons exclude the teaching of writing as this is seen either as some extension that comes after reading or as a different subject. An alternative view sees both reading and writing in the early acquisition stage as contributing to learning about print. (p.11)

Understanding the way words work, and the patterns within words, supports aspects of both reading and writing development. Researchers note, "When children have developed a system for using print, they can apply the processing systems to the reading and writing of increasingly challenging texts" (Pinnell & Fountas, 1998, p. 16). Children make many gains when studying words. They come to see the naturally occurring patterns in words, and then make connections between the words. As a result, children are better prepared to build links between print and meaning. Bear et al. (2000) claim:

The purpose of word study is twofold. First, through active exploration, word study teaches students to examine words to discover the regularities, patterns and rules of English orthography needed to read and spell. Second, word study increases specific knowledge of words--the spelling and meaning of individual words. (p. 4)

Overall, word study strongly supports literacy in two ways. First, word study allows children to see the patterns within words, thus improving their ability to decode. This transfers to greater reading fluency, which is known to improve comprehension (Clay, 1993 b; Pinnell & Fountas, 1998). Secondly, using naturally occurring letter patterns in words assists children when they spell. As a result, children who are confident spellers are freed up

to express themselves with greater ease when writing. Since supporting an early reader involves reinforcing reading, writing and spelling, a child who has confidence with words will feel greater assurance in reading literacy. As I continued to search, my investigation turned to the standards which guide our curriculum. Word Study and the Reading/Language Arts Framework for California

Armed with evidence for why and how word study could aid my students, I was also anxious to know that it fell within the California standards. The teaching of literacy and its development is being challenged now more than ever. Standards and accountability are on the minds of all educators. Politicians screaming for tougher guidelines and greater emphasis on standardized tests seem to be driving our curriculum. The question then is, how does word study fit into the California framework?

The second grade language arts framework emphasizes the need to have a "balanced comprehensive program" (Curriculum Development, 1999, p. 4). From my reading I found that this means that all students will receive the instruction needed to read, comprehend, write and enjoy language in all its forms. The framework states that to attain this there needs to be a strong base in literature

and language. It also states that a balanced program has explicit skill instruction in decoding, encoding and phonics. Another aspect is that assessments must be ongoing and specific and early interventions must be in place for the struggling student. Word study fits all of these criteria due to its highly dynamic structure.

Children using a word study program will be involved in language, decoding, encoding and phonics learning. In order to most effectively address the individual needs of each child, assessments must be done and used to guide instruction. Word study certainly addresses the struggling reader since it meets the word solving needs children have from where they are, not at their frustration level.

Word study specifically addresses second grade standards and instruction. Second graders are working on their decoding skills, "use of larger orthographic text, ...word-analysis instruction and ...complex spelling patterns" (Curriculum Development, 1999, p. 65). Second graders are required to recognize and spell words with multi-syllables and use complex spelling patterns such as vowel diphthongs and digraphs. They must also know the meaning of simple prefixes and suffixes (Curriculum Development, 1999, p. 77). They must apply their word knowledge to their reading by decoding more sophisticated

text. Finally, the second grader is expected to write simple narratives and use correct punctuation, grammar and spellings (p. 78). Each of these standards are supported by having a word study component in the second grade classroom. The framework clearly supported word study.

#### How Word Study Supports Decoding

As I continued to research word study I found that it is very beneficial to decoding. Words are key to the literacy process as well as the "building blocks of reading and writing" (Cunningham, & Allington, 1999, p. 121). I read and write well, children need the skills and strategies necessary to recognize and write words. They do not need rules and verbiage, but strategies for decoding and finding the meaning of words they do not know. Cunningham and Allington explain, "In order to read and write, children must learn to recognize and spell the most commonly used words quickly and automatically. For many children this is not an easy task" (p. 121).

For some children, reading is hard work which is often exacerbated by systematic phonics instruction. Traditional phonics focuses on rules and letter sounds that are unreliable and difficult to remember. Often letters have multiple sounds. Consequently, learning phonic rules tends to help those who have already learned



to read, not an emergent or early reader. While many push for a phonics-based decoding program, the inefficiency of it frustrates children's efforts rather than supports them. Frank Smith (1997) explains the fallacy of learning letter by letter sound matching:

The average word has at least four sounds in it, and a one-in-four possibility of error on single sounds goes up to three-in-four over sequences of four sounds. The appropriate pronunciation will be produced only 25 percent of the time. (p. 46)

Given this range of error, children need to learn to attack words with meaning in mind. They need to consider what word would fit best in the context of what they are reading. While phonics instruction focuses on sound to letter matching, word study incorporates letters matching sounds in the context of the word. Word study is not based on rules or sound memorization, nor is it based on lists of sight words. Bear and Templeton (1998) explain, "In word study... students examine shades of sound, structure, and meaning. ... We do not just teach words--we teach students processes and strategies for words students encounter in reading" (p. 223). As a result, children are better able to judge the sounds within a word based on the letter patterns as they have become meaningful to each

child. These patterns ease decoding strategies for readers.

Good readers have multiple strategies for attacking print. They automatically incorporate these when reading. They read in a left-to-right sequence and stop at unknown words momentarily to determine pronunciation and meaning. Unknown words are studied in context and spelling patterns are searched for to determine how best to approach the word before moving on. They reread to determine if the word they eventually "read" makes sense and fits in the context of the meaning (Cunningham, 1995). This is much more efficient compared to the process that poor readers use. They often approach words letter-by-letter. Unfamiliar words are "sounded out," a process which has already been deemed unreliable and nonsupportive of making meaning.

Through word study children are better equipped to decode in chunks. Children have learned through various activities while working with words that word spellings often have predictable patterns. As a consequence, they automatically begin to anticipate words, as well as letter-sound combinations. They begin to understand how words work together to form cohesive parts which become words that form comprehensive sentences. Seldom are they

stranded mid sentence as they attempt to dissect an unknown word.

It is important to remember that word study is not done in isolation. Reading in context is the priority. Word study is merely a support for children to help them see the patterns in words. However, as Morris (1982) explained, "To rule out... all word study or word analysis activities that are not contextual in nature seems to be an example of theoretical overkill" (p.247). Children need to have lots of reading opportunities. Word study is just another aid to help them conquer words so real reading has greater meaning. Word study helps young readers decode so they are freed up to enjoy reading.

As much as reading is supported by word study, writing and spelling development are assisted as well. Children who feel confident while reading often transfer their understanding of letters and sounds to their writing. Whereas early readers may have a limited range of what they can read, if they feel confident when they write they will want to write volumes. Children who become hung up on spelling lose their focus. Rather than working towards the greater possibilities their writing has, they are stranded in the mundane letter-by-letter chore of encoding or copying words from their classroom

environment. Word study supports writing since it arms children with tools to figure out how to spell that which they want to say, especially when they are in the editing phase of the writing process.

#### Word Study Supports Editing in Writing

When children sit down to write, the task is often daunting. First they must have something to say, and then they have to figure out how to put that idea on paper. Often, children who are self-conscious about their spelling abilities will either write only that which they can successfully spell, or spend a good deal of time searching for correct spellings. Children need to be encouraged to spell the best they can. Inventive spelling actually helps the writing and spelling process. However, eventually they want to spell many words correctly. Gentry and Gillet (1993) state, "Spelling is tool for writing. The purpose of learning to spell is so that writing may become easier, more fluent, more expressive, and more easily read and understood by others" (p. 57).

When given opportunities to participate in word study activities, children they become familiar with the way words work. They learn that many words have a certain spelling pattern which they then generalize to other

words. Spelling by analogy is supported by word walls and other word study activities (Wagstaff, 1994).

When writing is tied to literature and meaningful reading, children have an opportunity to express themselves. They can apply what they know about words to their writing. Linda Allen suggests, "Writing in response to literature is a purposeful way for children to apply their word identification knowledge" (p. 263). When children use this word knowledge along with invented spellings they will write more and in greater depth. Pinnell and Fountas (1998) remind us that when writing is tied to reading, children make connections which extend their knowledge about words.

One of the small victories very early learners have is discovering that words are consistently written the same way. Children make connections with reading while they write. Forming words, then moving into sentence construction, helps focus children to sounds, meaning and the details of print. As part of a balanced literacy program, children need to do lots of reading while being encouraged to tie their reading to their writing.

#### How Spelling Fits With Word Study

Tying reading to writing is an important part of word study; however, there is a large contingency that believes

the most important benefit of word study is spelling improvement. By teaching word study children are better able to spell conventionally. Sandra Wilde (1992) explains, "...we realize that children's spelling is not only a reflection of their exposure to and knowledge of specific words but an indication of their understanding of spelling as a system made up of complex and varied patterns" (p. 9). Even emergent readers know that print carries meaning. As stated earlier, as they become more prolific writers, the conventions of spelling become more important to them. Just as in learning to talk, children develop their own strategies for attacking words when writing.

Children generally move through stages in their spelling development while writing. By studying the spelling of each child, a teacher can determine each child's stage of spelling development. Spelling stages vary in names but generally follow the same order. Children begin by scribbling. They move to using only the initial or dominant consonants. They then incorporate final consonants, blends, and finally vowels. They tend to overgeneralize rules and patterns and are inconsistent in their spelling success (Forester & Reinard, 1989). Gentry and Gillet (1993) use the following labels:

Precommunicative Stage for the early scribbles and writing young children do; the Semiphonetic Stage when words are represented by a letter or two; the Phonetic Stage when vowels appear; the Transitional Stage when all sounds are represented, and finally the Conventional Stage when most words are spelled correctly.

Bear and Templeton (1998) have identified six different spelling stages in their research of word study. They have matched spelling stages to reading development. Prephonemic spelling is a characteristic of emergent literacy, which lasts generally through kindergarten. Semiphonemic or early letter name spelling covers early beginning reading and letter name spelling. Letter name spelling is associated with beginning reading and writing. With reference to the next stage, With-In Word Pattern Spelling, Bear and Templeton say, "Children in this stage of spelling analyze the spelling of single-syllable words more abstractly. They have moved away from a strict one letter/one sound expectation and can now manipulate more complex letter patterns" (p. 227). Syllable Juncture spelling is the next stage. This is when students begin to notice what goes on within a word with more than one syllable. Children in this stage are more interested in word meaning and how suffixes and prefixes impact the

meaning. The final stage is Derivational Constancy Spelling. Vocabularies and word roots override word families and at this phase meaning drives the spelling rather than the sounds.

Regardless of the titles, researchers have found that children do not randomly spell words. They have a system that is based on their understanding of how words work. Marcia Invernizzi, Mary Abouzeid and J. Thomas Gill (1994) explain the results of their studies, "Children's mistakes were not random errors made in wanton ignorance; they were, rather, rule-governed attempts to apply the alphabetic principle to the sounds of English language" (p. 157). This rule applies to all learners, with the only difference being the rate in which they move through the various stages. Many researchers believe that by giving children hands-on opportunities to learn about word features and patterns, they will have a deeper understanding and foundation on which to support literacy (Bear et al. 2000).

Summing up, word study supports reading by helping children decode more efficiently. As a result, they are better prepared to comprehend text. This ease in decoding often will transfer into better editing when writing. Reading and writing are mutually supported in a



well-rounded literacy program. Through greater confidence in spelling, encoding improves as well. Children who feel confident in spelling often have greater ease in expressing themselves in writing. Word study touches various aspects of reading development for children. When added to a curriculum, word study could support greater ease in decoding and encoding by giving children additional word solving strategies.

## CHAPTER THREE:

### METHODOLOGY

#### Putting It All Together in a Classroom

Adding a word study component to a curriculum could mean changes only in the semantics of what is already going on in one's classroom. However, for many it means adding spelling assessments and forming groups for developmentally appropriate instruction. Bear, Templeton, and Shane (1998) explain:

Students should be grouped appropriately for spelling and word study....In general, for each student we examine correct and invented spellings from both informal assessment and writing....Invented spellings are particularly interesting because they reveal the edges of a student's learning....Determining a stage of spelling for a student is not for creating a label but serves as a starting point for planning instruction. (pp. 229-230)

Once the spelling stage is determined, activities are created to address the learning needs of each group.

Janet Bloodgood (1991) suggests that for classroom management purposes there should be no more than three groups for instruction. Since spelling and reading levels often correlate, she notes that reading groups can be extended to include word study. Bloodgood, Mary Jo Fresch and Aileen Wheaton (1997) also strongly advocate the use of separate weekly spelling lists for each group.

Initially this could be tricky, but the authors claim children will adjust as they become more skilled. All word study advocates insist it is important to continue to monitor growth. Bloodgood (1991) states, "Readministration of the appropriate levels every 6 weeks or once each marking period allows teachers to track orthographic progress and to continue monitoring the features of words each student is investigating" (p. 205). Finally, it is imperative that instruction matches students' abilities in all areas of language arts. This will support greater meaning and general reading fluency.

Another suggestion for using word study comes from Fresch and Wheaton (1997). They have a "5-day spelling instructional plan" which they call "Sort, Search and Discover." They believe the teacher ought to choose the spelling pattern for the entire class, and then have children's spelling lists individualized based on need. If all the children have the same spelling pattern, whole group instruction is possible. However, by having individual word lists, children can still work at what is respectively appropriate. For management purposes children buddy up for spelling tests on Friday. For ease in teaching, the week's spelling pattern gives everyone in the class the same focus.

Obviously, management of one's word study program can vary, as do methodologies. Word sorts, word walls, mini-lessons and Making-Words are popular forms word study can take. Due to the diverse instructional approaches, and often to the hands on learning provided, these activities are appropriate for the second grade learner. Results are positive. All require time for preparation and follow-through. These methods are mindful of the young reader who is just learning to read and write independently (Cunningham & Allington, 1999).

At this stage of development most second graders are emergent readers and in what Bear et al. (2000) refer to as the within word pattern of learning words. The authors believe that at this point word study ought to progress as follows, "long vowel patterns, consonant-influenced vowels, diphthongs and other vowel digraphs" (p. 187). Also needing to be addressed are the complex consonants and vowel patterns created by hard and soft c's and g's. Syllable patterns during this stage become more complicated as well. Students will start at the CVC and CVCe stage and move through CVC CVCC CVVC during word sorting and other word study activities (Bear et al., 2000). At this point, teachers need to decide the

direction they plan to take with implementing a course of study.

Experts in the field of reading advocate various word study approaches. Cunningham and Allington (1999) feel very strongly that Making-Words should be included in daily word study lessons. They favor integrating word study throughout the curriculum to provide word learning in all aspects of the child's learning. Cunningham (1995) and Wagstaff (1994) suggest having a word wall to read, review and learn words that children frequently use in their writing.

Pinnell and Fountas (1998) believe that mini-lessons and practice with words during language arts lessons support word solving. They state, "Teachers not only demonstrate specific word-solving principles in explicit mini lessons, they point them out again and again across the reading and writing tasks of language arts block" (p. 129). These mini-lessons fit in well with writing instruction. Mini-lessons can fit into whole class instruction and during individual conferencing.

Bear et al. (2000) suggest a wide range of games that help kids focus on the patterns and system of words. These activities are developmentally-based to ensure they fall within the instructional level of each child. Many (e.g.

Bear et al. 2000; Fresch and Wheaton, 1997; Morris, 1982) advocate using word sorts. Word sorts provide children with opportunity to categorize words based on sound, and letter patterns.

Regardless of the approach, word study has been found by many (e.g. Bear et al., 2000; Morris, 1982; Pinnell & Fountas, 1998) to support a stronger orthographic base. This foundation promotes greater fluency in reading, writing and spelling. As children actively approach words and find the patterns and nuances within words, they will be more confident spellers and editors and have stronger word attack skills. This firm knowledge and understanding broadens reading abilities. When met at developmentally appropriate stages, all children can find success in mastering print with word study as part of their language arts lessons. However, in order to determine the developmental level of each child, assessments need to be done.

#### Assessments for a Word Study Program

To be developmentally viable, a word study program for students should be preceded by assessments. This will help in determining the type of program that would best suit the needs of each child. Assessments should be made in reading, writing and spelling.

Using a Running Record as a benchmark would address the reading level and reading group in which each child belongs. By analyzing the errors, a teacher gains important knowledge of where a child needs extra reading instruction. Johns (1997) has an entire book of reading inventories. However, the reading samples poorly support early and emergent readers due to a lack of pictures within the text. Since the reading assessment is merely an aid for planning word study, a less formal Running Record could be used. For word study purposes, a thorough analysis of miscues needs to be included to determine the word solving strategies already in place.

Another assessment is needed in the area of spelling. To determine each child's spelling stage, the teacher should assess several writing samples as well as administer a spelling inventory. According to Bear et al., it is crucial to use both an inventory and writing samples. They explain, "Compare the spellings from the inventories to spellings from students' writing to make sure students are performing at a similar level in both types of writing" (p. 32).

Often when children know they are being assessed, they do not perform as they would when just writing for pleasure, as in journal writing. Bear et al. suggest

collecting data from various writing experiences besides doing an inventory. Using Bonnie Campbell Hill, Lisa Norwick and Cynthia Ruptic's (1998) Inventory of Control is supportive of students by showing what they can do and aiding teachers in seeing where confusions still remain (See Appendix A). Another spelling assessment was created by Gentry and Gillet (1993). They suggest using a test consisting of ten words that require various word attack skills. Unlike Bear et al. (2000), they do not have a scoring sheet, but suggest analyzing the spellings based on their stage descriptions (See Appendix A).

Pinnell and Fountas (1998) suggest using two types of assessments. One is ongoing, such as anecdotal notes from observations, and the other is more formal and standardized. They caution that in order to insure valid results, assessments should be in both reading and writing. Both areas need to be included to truly analyze word solving strategies. Assessments can be conducted during typical reading and writing activities such as shared or guided reading and interactive or independent writing. They also caution that accurate record keeping is necessary to keep abreast of all students and their abilities.



Clay's (1993 a) reading inventories in the Observation Survey, provide an excellent channel for assessment. These assessments analyze the reading process from all angles and help delineate the needs of each child. However, they are time consuming and can only be done on a one-to-one basis, which makes them difficult to manage for an entire classroom. The spelling inventories that Bear et al. (2000) suggest take no more than 15 minutes to complete. However, these tests do not include a reading component, so the amount of usable data is limited.

Finally, Cunningham (1990) developed "The Names Test" to assess decoding skills in children (See Appendix A). She felt that children with more sophisticated reading strategies could easily mask their decoding difficulties. She was also uncomfortable with the idea of having children decode nonsense words. She explains, "My goal was to create a list of 25 first and last names which, when paired would look like a classroom list and would validly measure children's ability to decode unfamiliar words" (p. 125). By using this list and analyzing the errors, a teacher has a firm grasp on each child's decoding confusions.

Regardless of which assessments are chosen, each child should be assessed before being placed in a word study group (Bear et al., 2000). Once these determinations have been made, groups can be formed and activities developed. These activities come in the form of games, word sorting exercises, manipulation and building of words, and word wall lessons.

#### Creating Word Study Activities

There are a multitude of games that can be created which focus on words and identifying patterns in words. Second graders often vary in their reading and writing abilities but generally most are in the "within word pattern" stage of orthographic awareness. Bear et al. (2000) have descriptions, word lists, and game patterns for many. These games have titles such as, "Train Station Game, Turkey Feathers, Racetrack, Sheep in a Jeep, Letter Spin, Jeopardy, and Green Light! Red Light!" (pp. 199-219). Every game has particular rules and instructional focus. The purpose of each game is to give children very specific opportunities to review letter patterns, examine word sounds, and see similarities within words.

The difficulty of the task is determined by a child's orthographic development. Many tasks can be used

independently in a literacy center once it has been modeled and used during word study instruction. Other word study advocates indicate that the most effective word study lies in using three activities: word sorts, Making-Words and word walls.

#### Word Sorts

Word sorts are a popular form of word study. Jerry Zutell (1998) describes the process as, "... an activity in which students organize words printed on cards into columns on the basis of particular shared conceptual, phonological orthographic and meaning-related features" (pg. 31). Generally, word sorts involve sorting words which are written on small cards according to similarities. There are two types of sorts: picture cards or cards with words. Each serves a different purpose and reading ability.

Zutell studied word sorting specifically for developmentally delayed readers. He found that regardless of the speed in which readers developed, they move through similar stages of spelling development. Zutell concluded that in order for children to become fluent readers and competent spellers they must have a firm base in the understanding of words. This study concluded that word

sorting made the highest gains in spelling strategy acquisition.

Word sorts are based on a wide range of principles that support the highly complex nature of English (Gillett & Temple, 1978). There are various types of word sorts for the level of instruction needed. For the Prephonemic Stage children use picture cards. They pronounce the word of the picture on the card, then sort the cards based on beginning, medial, or ending sounds. As children become more skilled in reading, words replace the pictures. Categories for word sorting include closed sorts, where the teacher dictates the criteria for sorting, or open sorts, which allow the child to determine the categories. Multiple sorts, in which the same words are sorted in different ways, are also used. However, these sorts are far more advanced and support a much more fluent reader (Bear et al, 2000).

In order to make word sorts instructionally effective, they must be rule governed. Zutell (1998) focuses on eight important aspects for using word sorts in a classroom. First, there must be a contrast which the children can make between the words being sorted. There must also be room for exceptions for those words that do not fit any of the categories. Bear et al. (2000) call

these "oddball" words. Children should be working at their stage of spelling development and at least half of the words must be within their spelling range. Being able to manipulate the words allows the students to be more engaged. A connection to real reading materials such as books, environmental print and their writing helps children internalize the patterns and features of words. Finally, Zutell (1998) explains, that after the child has sorted words and defended the process, teachers need to test students to see if the task has boosted reading and writing performance before moving onto a more difficult task.

Picture sorts are for the prephonemic or emergent reader (Bear et al., 2000). Children are able to sort words based on differences in the sounds of words rather than their spellings. One of the benefits for this is building on phonemic awareness. Pictures can be sorted in a variety of ways including sounds: beginning, middle, end, and rhyming patterns. One way is for a child to select a picture and pronounce the word. The word is then sorted based on teacher direction. Another way allows for the child to determine the sound pattern and sort it accordingly. Sorting by concept offers another approach to picture sorts. The child sorts all the words that are

people, versus animals, etc. into various columns. Through concept sorts, vocabulary is expanded and word knowledge broadened. Most second graders have moved beyond the need for picture sorts and are ready for word sorts.

Word sorts have printed words on each card. According to Cunningham (1995) children must sort words based on two principles, "They must sound the same and they must look the same" (p. 62). She further explains, "It is important that children develop speed and automaticity as they sort" (p. 63). According to Invernizzi, Abouzeid, and Gill (1994), there are other guidelines to consider before using word sorts. First the teacher should initially model the activity to insure students understand the concept of the word or picture sort. Secondly, students must be able to read and pronounce all the words they have been asked to sort. This insures that the word sorting is not a misguided exercise in decoding. These researchers often have children work in pairs rather than independently in order to support one another and encourage social learning. Grouping students with similar learning needs also assists teacher instruction. Finally, they recommend the teacher guides any needed corrections.

Different approaches are used to arrange a sort; there are closed, open, or blind sorts. A closed sort is

when the teacher determines the categories for the sort and then gives them to the child. Zutell (1998) explains:

In closed sorts the teacher decides the categories by selecting key words to head each of the columns (possibly with the relevant part of the word highlighted in some way; e.g., make vs. rain). Closed sorts are used to focus student attention on particular word features and aid word recognition and production.  
(pg. 39)

On the other hand, an open sort allows the child to determine the categories. Zutell states, "Open sorts are particularly useful as diagnostic tools because they provide insights into how students are thinking about word forms" (pg. 38). Zutell also suggests using multiple sorts to further stretch a child's flexibility with words. Students sort the same words in a variety of ways such as sound, concept and spelling patterns.

Finally, there is the blind sort. Cunningham (1995) explains that blind sorts use words which have been sorted at a previous time. The teacher calls out the words and the children determine the category in which the words belong before seeing the printed word. The word is then placed in the category in which it belongs to confirm or correct the students' sort. Written sorts and/or word hunts can be a natural follow up to this activity.

Fresch and Wheaton (1997) use word sorts as part of their spelling instruction. The acronym they use to remind the class how to correctly sort words is "BEE (Brains, Ears, Eyes)" (pg.18). They coach the class to first use their ears to hear the pronunciation of the word, and their eyes to see what letter pattern makes that sound. Finally, when they write the word, they must use their brains to remember how it sounded and looked so they can explain how they sorted the words. This activity supports word sorts and word hunts.

As children complete a word sorting activity, a word hunt is a good extension activity. Children hunt through their reading materials searching for words that are similar to the words they have just sorted. Teachers lead this activity initially to model the search. Once several words have been found, students search for and call out words from their text. These words can be added to their word study notebooks in their respective categories or just written on chart paper for the whole class to reference (Bear et al, 2000).

Bear and Templeton (1998) explain the use of word study notebooks, "Word study notebooks are notebooks, or a section of a larger notebook, in which students collect words and occasionally record word sorts that they've



completed" (p. 231). Children have a notebook in which to copy words from stories and resources in the room which they can read independently. These books serve as the resource a teacher can use to collect words for word sorting. Having children periodically review and read their notebooks insures that the words are indeed readable. Those that are not should be tossed aside. Word sorting should not be confused with a decoding activity. All words used in a word sort must be quickly read.

Buddy sorts are another extension of word sorts. Students work in pairs with words that have been sorted at an earlier time. One student calls out a word without showing it to the other child. That child must decide to which category the word belongs. Bear et al. (2000) explains the purpose, "Buddy sorts are particularly useful for students who could use some time attending less to the visual patterns and more to the sounds because they do not see the word they are asked to sort" (p. 66).

Writing sorts link word sorting and writing. Initially a key word is written down for each category. Then words are called out similar to those categories. Next, students must write the words based on the key words' spelling patterns. Bear et al. emphasizes the value of this, "Writing sorts provide an important link to

writing and reading, especially when combined with word hunts. Writing sorts are also an instructionally sound way to construct spelling tests for the early grades" (p. 67).

A final sorting activity suggested by Bearz et al. is speed sorting. This requires students to develop accurate and automatic word recognition skills. Students should be given an opportunity to complete a word sort several times. The authors explain, "Just as repeated reading of familiar text builds fluency, repeated individual sorts provide a student with the necessary practice to build automaticity" (p. 67).

Bear et al. have a list of ten principles to keep in mind when planning and using word sorts. They are:

1. Look for what students use but confuse. Students cannot learn things they do not already know something about... Using but confusing is a signal that students are close to learning something new about the orthography.
2. A step backward is a step forward. Once you have identified students' stages of developmental word knowledge...take a step backward and build a firm foundation....It is important to begin word study activities where the students will experience success.
3. Use words students can read.
4. Compare words "that do" with words "that don't." What something is also defined by what it is not; contrasts are essential to students building categories.
5. Sort by sound and sight.
6. Begin with obvious contrasts first.
7. Don't hide exceptions.

8. Avoid rules. Students discover consistencies and make generalizations for themselves.
9. Work for automaticity.
10. Return to meaningful texts. After sorting, students need to return to meaningful texts to hunt for other examples to add to the sorts. (pp. 69-70)

Besides using word cards for sorting, many authors (e.g., Bear et al., 2000; Gillet and Kita, 1979; and Kaye, 1984) have created word study activities to extend word solving strategies and word learning. These activities can be used in centers or as reinforcement for the whole class. (See Appendix B for additional activities.) Second graders delight in games and competition with classmates.

#### Making-Words

Another word study activity is called Making-Words. It includes word building not just sorting. Students are given printed letters to make the words. They make many small words and eventually the letters spell one big word. Cunningham (1995) explains, "Making-Words is an active, hands-on, manipulative activity in which children learn how to look for patterns in words and how changing just one letter or where you put a letter changes the whole word" (p. 65).

To create a Making-Words lesson, letters need to be reproduced and lessons planned. Many commercially-made kits are now available, or teachers can make letter cards

of their own. The consonant letters are usually black, and the vowels are colored. In this way, the children see the value of the vowels in words. Capital and lower case letters are on opposite sides of each card.

Cunningham suggests that teachers plan lessons by starting with a big word which will be made at the end of a lesson with all the letters the children will be given. Next, teachers make a list of smaller words that can be made with those same letters. Patterns of words are emphasized. Words that use exactly the same letters, just in different order such as team and tame, need to be used. This helps children realize letter order is paramount when spelling a certain word. Next, all the words should be written on vocabulary cards so they can be used by the teacher during the activity. Having the words written on cards confirms correct letter order for spelling. Words are used at the end of the lesson during a word sort. Once the creation of the lesson is complete, Cunningham suggests storing the word cards in an envelope with the word list on the front. (See Appendix C for a Making-Words lesson plan sheet.)

Teaching the lesson follows a structured format as well. Students are asked to make a word with their letters. Usually the word is a short word and, as letters

are manipulated and reworked, longer more complicated words are made. After the children make the stated word with their own letters, the teacher models this with enlarged letters in a pocket chart. The letters are then separated and the sounds are segmented so individual letter sounds can be emphasized. The next step is to push the cards together and blend the sounds. The onset or rime is often separated out as well. Again, the sound of these are segmented and blended chorally. New words are made with the teacher saying things such as, "Change only the first letter to make the word \_\_\_\_." Finally, as each new word is made and the word card is added to the pocket chart, the children see the patterns of the words and how manipulating the same group of letters can create many words.

Ultimately, the words grow in length until the teacher asks the children what they believe is the last word, or as Cunningham calls it, the "secret" word which all the words budded from that day. Before the lesson ends, the children, with the teacher's guidance, sort the word cards by similar spelling and sound patterns. To extend the lesson, the teacher can have the children write some words with the same patterns. Another extension is to have them come up with rhyming words for some of the words

they have made. Cunningham and Hall (1994) describe the success of this activity:

If you ask the children what they think of Making Words, they will probably answer, "It's fun!" From the moment they get their letters, they begin moving them around and making whatever words they can. They are particularly eager to figure out the word that can be made with all the letters. Once the children begin making the words the teacher asks them to make, the activity is fast-paced and keeps the children involved. They also enjoy the sorting. Finding words that rhyme, words that begin alike, words which can all be changed into other words by just moving around the letter, and other patterns is like solving a riddle or a puzzle. (p.2)

As an extension to classroom Making-Words, teachers can prepare a homework page. (See Appendix C) At the top of the page letters are written in boxes. These can be cut apart and sorted into words the child creates. The words are then written down and shared with the class the following day. This serves to reinforce Making-Words, involves the parents in word study and gives the child an opportunity to use word building knowledge at home.

#### Word Walls

Another interactive activity is using Word Walls. Cunningham and Allington (1999), as well as Wagstaff (1994) suggest having a word wall in each classroom and referencing it throughout the day. Word walls are a posted collection of frequently used words which children are

easily able to reference and read from their seats. The words that are chosen to be part of the wall vary in use. Some are words children frequently use in their writing as well as words that the teacher wants children to spell correctly each time they are used.

Wagstaff suggests a wide variety of word walls including a "Chunking Wall", "Words-We-Know-Wall", "Help Wall" and others. Each wall serves a special purpose, and by "using" the wall throughout the day, children become familiar with the words that are on the wall. One of the great benefits of the Chunking and Help Wall is that children begin to generalize and use the information contained there in their daily writing.

"Using" the wall while teaching has many possibilities such as reviewing, reading, chanting and rhyming the words. For a second grade classroom, adding five words to the wall each week is suggested. Also, the words ought to be in a variety of colors to help alleviate confusion between words. Some teachers cut the words into the shape of the words to aid visual memory. However, studies do not support this theory.

Cunningham (2000) suggests choosing new words from those words that are often misspelled in children's writing, or, as Wagstaff (1994) supports, words that

follow a certain rime so they can act as key words for generalizing the spelling of words with a similar pattern. Discussing the meaning of each word during instruction builds vocabulary. This is especially true in a class with second language learners.

Word walls are usually in alphabetical order for ease of use. Some teachers create a wall with vowel sounds instead of letter names to aid reading and pronunciation. Regardless of the organization, Cunningham and Allington (1999) observe, "Teachers who 'DO' word walls (rather than just have word walls) report that ALL of their children can learn these critical words" (p. 136).

Unlike in word sorts, working with the word wall is generally a whole group activity. As another variance in approach, when using a word wall, part of the teacher's responsibility is to point out how the different words are confused. The authors contend that word meaning needs to be stressed. Another suggestion is to point out each word's unique features from other words they are frequently confused with. As opposed with word sorting, children are encouraged to find the patterns and differences on their own to insure that they internalize what they have discovered. Cunningham and Allington explain the benefits of word walls:



Word walls provide children with an immediately accessible dictionary for the most troublesome words...Because the words you selected are words they need constantly in their reading and writing, their recognition of these words becomes automatic and their attention can be devoted to the less frequent words and to construction meaning as they read and write. (p. 140)

Daily lessons should be included to encourage use of the wall and learning the words that are on it. One activity is to ask for a word that rhymes with a word from the word wall. Activities promote reading the wall and aid phonemic awareness. Among other activities suggested by Cunningham and Allington is for the teacher to write a letter on the board as a visual hint for the children. The teacher then asks them to fill in the blank of a sentence using a word from the wall that starts with that letter. The children must find the word which makes the sentence make sense and starts with the letter on the board. (For additional activities see Appendix D)

Janiel Wagstaff (1994) advocates using a word wall to help children see and use patterns in words. However, her approach is different than Cunningham and Allington's, (1999) especially for children who are past the emergent reading stage in their development. Wagstaff (1994) introduces a poem at the beginning of the week and the children help to choose five words from it for the word

wall. These word choices are based on familiar spelling patterns within the words. They underline the target rime and then call out as many other words that they can think of with a similar rime pattern. Wagstaff explains, "I underline the pattern of interest. If we can derive only a few words from the pattern(s) in a selected word, we set it aside as uncommon, and do not add it to the Wall" (p. 21). The selected words are added to the wall on Friday, Wagstaff notes, "We add words to the Wall in alphabetical order, according to the first letter of the targeted rime. This letter will always be a vowel" (p. 23).

She has found this is more effective than just putting the words up in alphabetical order for a variety of reasons. One of her reasons is that if children are taught to look at words in chunks, based on syllables, then they can search the wall for the chunk that has them stumped during their writing. She insists that, "Arranging the Wall according to vowels also promotes ease of reference during reading" (p. 24). By advocating the "chunking wall", Wagstaff believes that children are more efficient word solvers, not just word memorizers. The "chunking wall" supports decoding as well as encoding by

helping children spell by analogy. (For a list of High Utility Rimes see Appendix E.)

Adding a word study component to a curriculum will enhance learning. With appropriate assessment and group placement, children have the opportunity to work at a developmentally appropriate level. By incorporating word games, word sorts, making-words and by using a word wall, students begin to find patterns in words (Bear et al., 2000, Cunningham & Allington, 1999; Wagstaff, 1994). They will see the unique features in words, manipulate the spelling and gain strategies to attack words when reading and writing. Keeping word sorts and word making at a developmentally appropriate level will insure growth and stimulate learning (Morris, 1982; Pinnel & Fountas, 1998). Adding other word building and word study activities will enhance the spelling and encoding skills of even the most reluctant second grade reader.

## CHAPTER FOUR: GOALS AND LIMITATIONS

### Introduction

This project grows out of my frustration over the limited strategies many of my students seem to have when decoding and encoding. As a result they often become so caught up in "getting it right" that they lose comprehension during reading and are limited in what they feel they can write well.

### Goals

One of my goals is to present some background and show support as to how word study fits into a language arts curriculum. By presenting a summary of the literature and research on word study I hope to give teachers and parents alternative approaches to letter-by-letter decoding. They will see that by incorporating a more developmental approach to the study of words, students will see the patterns within words and decode more efficiently. With greater reading fluency, students will be freed up to gain greater appreciation of the meaning behind the words.

Another goal of this project is to provide activities that will support deeper understanding of the letter patterns within words. In so doing, children will have

additional strategies when editing their writing. While they often rely on teacher feedback, ultimately the hope is they will recognize their own misspellings and have means to correct them.

In connection with this, another goal is to offer students an alternative to rote memorization of spelling words. By using the naturally occurring patterns in words, children will have a greater understanding of encoding and thus improve their spelling. By so doing they will not only have more strategies during spelling tests, but more importantly, they will feel greater confidence in their writing.

As a final goal my hope is that teachers will recognize the benefits of adding a word study component to their classrooms. This enlightenment could act as an impetus to implement word study activities within their teaching day. If they use the assessments and establish the use of word sorts, Making-Words and word walls, they will find the addition worth the effort. A word study program is a fun, active way for children to learn about words. In providing opportunities to work with words during their reading and writing block, students will gain strategies and confidence in word solving to use during meaningful reading and writing.

## Limitations

What this program does not do is offer teachers a day-by-day guide to their instruction. It does not systematically go through the spelling stages with word bank, and daily lesson plans. While it offers suggestions for helping students become more aware of letter patterns and their sounds, it does not offer letter-by-letter sound learning activities. Nor does it support pre-emergent readers and writers.

All these activities are dependent on lists of words. This project does not offer expansive word lists. Nor does it present a systematic approach for using word lists. In connection with that, it does not dictate which lists would best serve as support for each learning situation. There are no universal lists of words in this project.

While many word study assessments and activities have been suggested, the possibilities are as endless as a teacher's imagination and resources. This project provides many choices but does not attempt to include all options available in the literature at this time.

Effectiveness of these activities is limited to the acceptance and application of each one. Much of the literature supports daily use, yet that may not be feasible. As a result it is not the intention of this

paper to presume to state its usefulness in each situation. If after using the suggested word study activities a teacher wishes to assess its usefulness, it should be evaluated on the following: (1) students' developmental spelling growth; (2) evidence of more decoding strategies when reading; and (3) keener spelling insights during the editing phase of writing. To assess the program, multiple samples need to be taken during writing, spelling and reading instruction.

#### Conclusion

The power of words is within all children. However, some children struggle with the complexities of word solving. As each child gains strategies to assist in encoding and decoding, some confusions remain. Many students rely on ineffective letter-by-letter strategies which do not support fluent reading and writing. By offering students alternative ways to look at words and use them during meaningful language arts instruction, students will have more word decoding and encoding skills when reading and writing independently. They must be given opportunities to see the patterns in words, to see their similarities and recognize their differences. Word study offers children a fun and active way to discover words. This project seeks to offer teachers and children some

alternative approaches which will make words more accessible. It seeks to give alternatives to teachers anxious to expand the possible ways children look at and work with words.



APPENDIX A:  
ASSESSMENTS

## **Gentry and Gillet's Developmental Spelling Test**

Gentry and Gillet's Developmental Spelling Test taken in its entirety from Teaching Kids to Spell (1993).

1. monster The boy was eaten by a monster.
2. united You live in the United States.
3. dress The girl wore a new dress.
4. bottom A big fish lives at the bottom of the lake.
5. hiked We hiked to the top of the mountain.
6. human Miss Piggy is not a human.
7. eagle An eagle is a powerful bird.
8. closed The little girl closed the door.
9. bumped The car bumped into the bus.
10. type Type the letter on the typewriter.

Gentry and Gillet suggest analyzing a child's spelling based on their spelling stages:

1. *Precommunicative spelling* is the babbling stage of spelling. Children use letters for writing words, but the letters are strung together randomly. The letters in precommunicative spelling do not correspond to sounds. Look for spellings such as OPSPS for *eagle* or RTES for *monster*.
2. *Semiphonetic spellers* know that letters represent sounds. They perceive and reliably represent

sounds with letters in a type of telegraphic writing. Spellings are often abbreviated, representing initial and/or final sounds. For example, E for eagle and M for monster are semiphonetic spellings.

3. *Phonetic spellers* spell words like they sound. the speller perceives and represents all of the phonemes in a word, though spellings may be unconventional. EGL for *eagle* and BOTM for *bottom* are good examples of phonetic spelling.
4. *Transitional spellers* think about how words appear visually; a visual memory of spelling patterns is apparent. Spellings exhibit conventions of English orthography, such as vowels in every syllable, e-marker and vowel digraph patterns, correctly spelled inflectional endings, and frequent English letter sequences. Transitional examples include EGUL for *eagle* and Bottum for *bottom*. To distinguish between phonetic spellings (influenced by sound) and transitional spellings (influenced by visual conventions), ask the question: Was this word spelled like it sounds (phonetic), or is its

spelling analogous to a visually recalled spelling (transitional)?

5. *Conventional spellers* develop over years of word study and writing. Conventional spelling can be categorized by instructional levels; for example, correct spelling of a general corpus of commonly used words that can be spelled by the average fourth grader would be fourth-grade-level conventional spelling. Place a given test response in this category if the word is spelled correctly. In words of more than one syllable, if one syllable is spelled at one level and another syllable at a different level, classify the word at the lower developmental level. (pp. 43-44)

### Names Test

Jay Conway

Kimberly Blake

Cindy Sampson

Stanley Shaw

Flo Thornton

Ton Smitherman

Bernard Pendergraph

Austin Shepherd

Joan Brooks

Tim Cornell

Roberta Slade

Chester Wright

Wendy Swain

Dee Skidmore

Troy Whitlock

Shane Fletcher

Bertha Dale

Gene Loomis

Chuck Hoke

Homer Preston

Ginger Yale

Glen Spencer

Grace Brewster

Vance Middleton

Floyd Sheldon

Neal Wade

Thelma Rinehart

Yolanda Clark

Gus Quincy

Patrick Tweed

Fred Sherwood

Ned Westmoreland

Zane Anderson

Dean Bateman

Jake Murphy

Using Pat Cunningham's Names Test taken in its entirety from: Cunningham, P. (1990). The Names Test: A quick assessment of decoding ability. The Reading Teacher, 44 p.127)

### **Preparing the Instrument**

1. Type or print the 35 names on a sheet of paper or card stock. Make sure the print size is appropriate for the age of the students being tested.
2. For students who might perceive reading an entire list of names as too formidable, type or print the names on index cards so they can be read individually.
3. Prepare a protocol (scoring) sheet. Do this by typing the list of names in a column and following each name with a blank line to be used for recording a student's responses.

### **Administering the Names Test**

1. Administer the Names Test individually in a quiet, distraction-free location.
2. Explain to the student that she or he is to pretend to be a teacher who must read a list of names of students in the class. Direct the student to read the names as if taking attendance.
3. Have the student read the entire list. Inform the student that you will not be able to help with

difficult names, and encourage him or her to make a guess if you are not sure.

4. Write a check on the protocol sheet for each name read correctly. Write phonetic spellings for names that are mispronounced.

### **Scoring and Interpreting the Names Test**

1. Count a word correct if all syllables are pronounced correctly regardless of where the student places the accent. For example, either Yò/ lan/ da or Yo / làn/ da would be acceptable.
2. For words in which the vowel pronunciation depends on which syllable the consonant is placed with, count them correct for either pronunciation. For example, either Ho / mer or Hom / er would be acceptable.
3. Count the number of names read correctly, and analyze those mispronounced, looking for patterns indicative of decoding strengths and weaknesses.

(pp. 137-138)

# Inventory of Control

## Spelling Analysis

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

	Misspellings	Total
<b>Phonetic</b> (pronunciation)		
<b>Phonic</b> (sound symbol) consonants/blends		
short vowel clusters ( <i>an, ish, and ent</i> )		
long vowels ( <i>ee, oa, ei, and y</i> )		
vowel clusters ( <i>oi, aw, ou, and or</i> )		
complex clusters ( <i>tion, ough, and ight</i> )		
<b>Semantic</b> (meaning) prefixes/suffixes		
punctuation/capitals		
homonyms		
contractions		
origins/derivatives (French and Greek) ( <i>ness, ly, and tion</i> )		
<b>Omissions</b>		
<b>Reversals</b>		
<b>Standard Spellings Noted</b>		

Total # of words \_\_\_\_\_ percentage accuracy \_\_\_\_\_



## INDEX OF CONTROL

Name:

Date:

Conventional Spelling	Constructed Spelling

A = # of total words

B = # of different words

C = # different word spelled conventionally

D = # constructed spellings

Index of Control = C divided by B x 100

Index of Control = \_\_\_\_\_

(from Spelling in Use by Laminack & Kaue Wood, 1996)

# Elementary Spelling Inventory 1

This is a short spelling inventory to help you learn about your students' orthographic knowledge. The results of the spelling inventories will have implications for reading, writing, vocabulary, and spelling instruction.

Instructions: Let the students know that you are administering this inventory to learn about how they spell. Let them know that this is not a test, but that they will be helping you be a better teacher by doing their best.

Possible script: "I am going to ask you to spell some words. Try to spell them the best you can. Some of the words will be easy to spell; some will be more difficult. When you do not know how to spell a word, spell it the best you can; write down all the sounds you feel and hear."

Say the word once, read the sentence, and then say the word again. Work with groups of five words. You may want to stop testing when students miss three out of five words. See Chapter 3 for further instructions on administration and interpretation.

Have students check their papers for their names and the date.

## Set One

1. bed I hopped out of bed this morning. *bed*
2. ship The ship sailed around the island. *ship*
3. when When will you comeback? *when*
4. lump He had a lump on his head after he fell. *lump*
5. float I can float on the water with my new raft. *float*

## Set Two

6. train I rode the train to the next town. *train*
7. place I found a new place to put my books. *place*
8. drive I learned to drive a car. *drive*
9. bright The light is very bright. *bright*
10. shopping Mother went shopping at the grocery store. *shopping*

## Set Three

11. spoil The food will spoil if it is not kept cool. *spoil*
12. serving The restaurant is serving dinner tonight. *serving*
13. chewed The dog chewed up my favorite sweater yesterday. *chewed*
14. carries She carries apples in her basket. *carries*
15. marched We marched in the parade. *marched*

## Set Four

16. shower The shower in the bathroom was very hot. *shower*
17. cattle The cowboy rounded up the cattle. *cattle*
18. favor He did his brother a favor by taking out the trash. *favor*
19. ripen The fruit will ripen over the next few days. *ripen*
20. cellar I went down to the cellar for the can of paint. *cellar*

## Set Five

21. pleasure It was a pleasure to listen to the choir sing. *pleasure*
22. fortunate It was fortunate that the driver had snow tires during the snowstorm. *fortunate*
23. confident I am confident that we can win the game. *confident*
24. civilize They had the idea that they could civilize the forest people. *civilize*
25. opposition The coach said the opposition would give us a tough game. *opposition*

words *Their Way* Appendix © 2000 by Prentice-Hall, Inc.  
(Bear et al. ,2000, pp. 288-291)

## Qualitative Spelling Checklist

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Observer \_\_\_\_\_

Use this checklist to help you find what stages of spelling development your students are in. There are three gradations within each stage—early, middle, and last. The words in parentheses refer to spelling words on the first Qualitative Spelling Inventory.

This form can be used to follow students' progress. Check when certain features are observed in students' spelling. When a feature is always present check "Yes." The last place where you check "Often" corresponds to the student's stage of spelling development.

Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

### Emergent Stage

#### Early

- Does the child scribble on the page? Yes \_\_\_ Often \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- Do the scribbles follow the conventional, direction? (left to right in English) Yes \_\_\_ Often \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

#### Middle

- Are there letters and numbers used in pretend writing? (4BT for ship) Yes \_\_\_ Often \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

#### Late

- Are key sounds used in syllabic writing? (P for ship) Yes \_\_\_ Often \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

### Letter Name-Alphabetic

#### Early

- Are beginning consonants included? (B for bed, S for ship) Yes \_\_\_ Often \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- Is there a vowel in each word? Yes \_\_\_ Often \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

#### Middle

- Are some consonant blends and digraphs spelled correctly? (ship, when, float) Yes \_\_\_ Often \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

#### Late

- Are short vowels spelled correctly? (bed, ship, when, lump) Yes \_\_\_ Often \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- Is the m included in front of other consonants? (lump) Yes \_\_\_ Often \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

### Within Word Pattern

#### Early

- Are long vowels in single-syllable words "used but confused"? (FLOAT for float, TRANE far train) Yes \_\_\_ Often \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

#### Middle

- Are most long vowels in single-syllable words spelled correctly but some long vowel spelling and other vowel patterns "used but confused"? (SPOLE for spoil) Yes \_\_\_ Often \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- Are most consonant blends and digraphs spelled correctly? Yes \_\_\_ Often \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- Are most other vowel patterns spelled correctly? (spoil, chewed, serving) Yes \_\_\_ Often \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

### Syllables and Affixes

#### Early

- Are inflectional endings added correctly to base vowel patterns with short vowel patterns? (shopping, carries) Yes \_\_\_ Often \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- Are consonant doublets spelled correctly? (can/a, cellar) Yes \_\_\_ Often \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

#### Middle

- Are inflectional endings added correctly to base words? (chewed, marched, shower) Yes \_\_\_ Often \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

#### Late

- Are less frequent prefixes and suffixes spelled correctly? (confident, favor ripen, cellar, pleasure) Yes \_\_\_ Often \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

### Derivational Relations

#### Early

- Are most polysyllabic words spelled correctly? (fortunate, confident) Yes \_\_\_ Often \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

#### Middle

- Are unaccented vowels in derived words spelled correctly? (confident, civilize, opposition) Yes \_\_\_ Often \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

#### Late

- Are words from derived forms spelled correctly? (pleasure, civilize) Yes \_\_\_ Often \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

### Feature Guide for Elementary Spelling Inventory 1

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Total Points \_\_\_\_\_

	EMERGENT		LETTER NAME-ALPHABETIC			WITHIN WORD PATTERN			SYLLABLES & AFFIXES			DERIVATIONAL RELATIONS		/	Points
	LATE		EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY			
	Consonants		Short	Digraphs	Long Vowel	Other Vowel	Syllable Junctures,			Bases and Roots	Word	Points			
	Initial	Final	Vowels	and Blends	Patterns	Patterns	Consonant Doubling,	Prefixes	Suffixes	5		/66			
	2	6	5	13	5	6	24								
1 bed	b	d	e									bed			
2 ship		p	i	sh								ship			
3 when		n	e	wh								when			
4 lump	l		u	mp								lump			
5 float		l		ll	oa							float			
6 train		n		tr	ai							train			
7 place				pl	a-e							place			
8 drive		v		dr	i-e							drive			
9 bright				br	igh							bright			
10 shopping			o	sh			pp	ing				shopping			
11 spoil				sp		oi						spoil			
12 serving						er		ing				serving			
13 chewed				ch		ew		ed				chewed			
14 carries							rr	ies				carries			
15 marched				ch		ar		ed				marched			
16 shower				sh		ow		er				shower			
17 cattle							tt	le				cattle			
18 favor							av	or				favor			
19 ripen							ip	en				ripen			
20 cellar							ll	ar				cellar			
21 pleasure								ure		pleas		pleasure			
22 fortunate						or		ate		fortun		fortunate			
23 confident								con	ent	fid		confident			
24 civilize									ize	civil		civilize			
25 opposition								op	pp	lion	pos	opposition			
feature totals															

### Error Guide for Elementary Spelling Inventory 1

*Directions: Circle student's spelling attempts below. If a spelling is not listed, write it in where it belongs on the developmental continuum. Circle the spelling stage that summarizes the student's development.*

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Number spelled correctly: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of words attempted: \_\_\_\_\_

Features	Consonants		Short Vowels	Digraphs and Blends	Long Vowel Patterns	Other Vowel Patterns	Syllable Junctures, Consonant Doubling, Inflected Endings, Prefixes Suffixes			Bases and Roots				
	Initial	Final					EMERGENT	LETTER NAME-ALPHABETIC		WITHIN WORD PATTERN			SYLLABLES & AFFIXES	
SPELLING STAGES	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE
1 bed	b	bd		bad	<u>bed</u>									
2 ship	s	sp shp		sap shep	<u>ship</u>									
3 when	w	yn wn		wan whan	<u>when</u>									
4 lump	l	lp lmp		lop lomp	<u>lump</u>									
5 float	f	ft vt fit		fot fiot fiott		flowt floaut fiote	<u>float</u>							
6 train	j	t trn		jan chran tan tran		teran traen trane	<u>train</u>							
7 place	p	ps pls		pas pas palac plas plac		pasa plais plase	<u>place</u>							
8 drive	d	j jrv drf		drv griv jriv driv		jrive drieve draive	<u>drive</u>							
9 bright	b	bt brt		bit brit		bite brite briete	<u>bright</u>							
10 shopping	s	sp spg shp		sapg sopn shapng		shopn sopen sopin shopen shopn shopin	<u>shopping</u>							
11 spoil						spol sole sool spoyte spole spoal	<u>spoil</u>							
12 serving						sefng srving srbving sering serfing surving serveing	<u>servng</u>							
13 chewed						cud coed cued coyed chued chood								
						cuwed chud chowd choud chewd	<u>chewed</u>							
14 carries						keres cares carres carise carys cairries carrys	<u>carries</u>							
15 marched						much march marchet marchd marcht	<u>marched</u>							
16 shower						shewr showr shour shawer shoer shuor shouer	<u>shower</u>							
17 cattle						catl cadol								
18 favor						catel catie cattel	<u>cattle</u>							
19 ripen						favr faver	<u>favor</u>							
20 cellar						favir								
21 pleasure						ribn ripn ripun ripan ripon	<u>ripen</u>							
22 fortunate						sair selr celr salar seler								
23 confident						plasn plager plejer pleser plesher								
						plasn plager plejer pleser plesher								
24 civilize						plasn plager plejer pleser plesher								
25 opposition						plasn plager plejer pleser plesher								

Adapted from Bear & Barone (1989).

Words Their Way Appendix © 2000 by Prentice-Hall, Inc.

APPENDIX B:

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR WORD SORTING

## **Word Sorting**

### **Teacher Directed Word Sorts for Long Vowels**

Bear et al. (2000) suggest selecting 20 short and long vowel words that are spelled with the CVVC and CVCe pattern, as well as a couple of odd words that follow the pattern but not the sound. All the words should have the same dominate vowel in them. The words should be those the students can already read well. Write these words on cards or use the template which the children will cut apart prior to the lesson.

The teacher introduces the lesson by reading the words with the children. Initially, the children will sort the words first by the sound of the middle vowel and then explain why they sorted the words as they did. Next, class discussion is generated to explore how the words are similar and different. Finally, the words are scrambled and sorted again based on the categories designated during the discussion. During the second sort, the children should work independently. An "oddball" column needs to be included for those words that do not belong in either the long or short vowel group.

### **Open Sorts with R-Controlled Vowels**

Bear et al. (2000) suggest using a similar lesson for r-controlled vowels. However, the 20 words would include

words that are spelled with CVC, CVCe, CVVC patterns such as "ar (bark), are (bare or air (chair))" (p. 200). Instead of the teacher directing the sorting, students are encouraged to sort words based on their own method of categorizing. However, children will need to justify their sorts. An important follow up to this lesson is to identify homophones. After sorting the words twice, the children need to pair up the homophones and explain their differences. An obvious extension to this would be to use them in sentences.

Train Station Game (Janet Bloodgood creation, cited by Bear et al., 2000)

This game is for practicing long vowel sounds within words. To create the game the teacher makes two copies of the track on pages 82-83 and glues it to a manila folder. Inside the track, word sort words are written that all the player are familiar with. In four spaces include ways that add suspense:

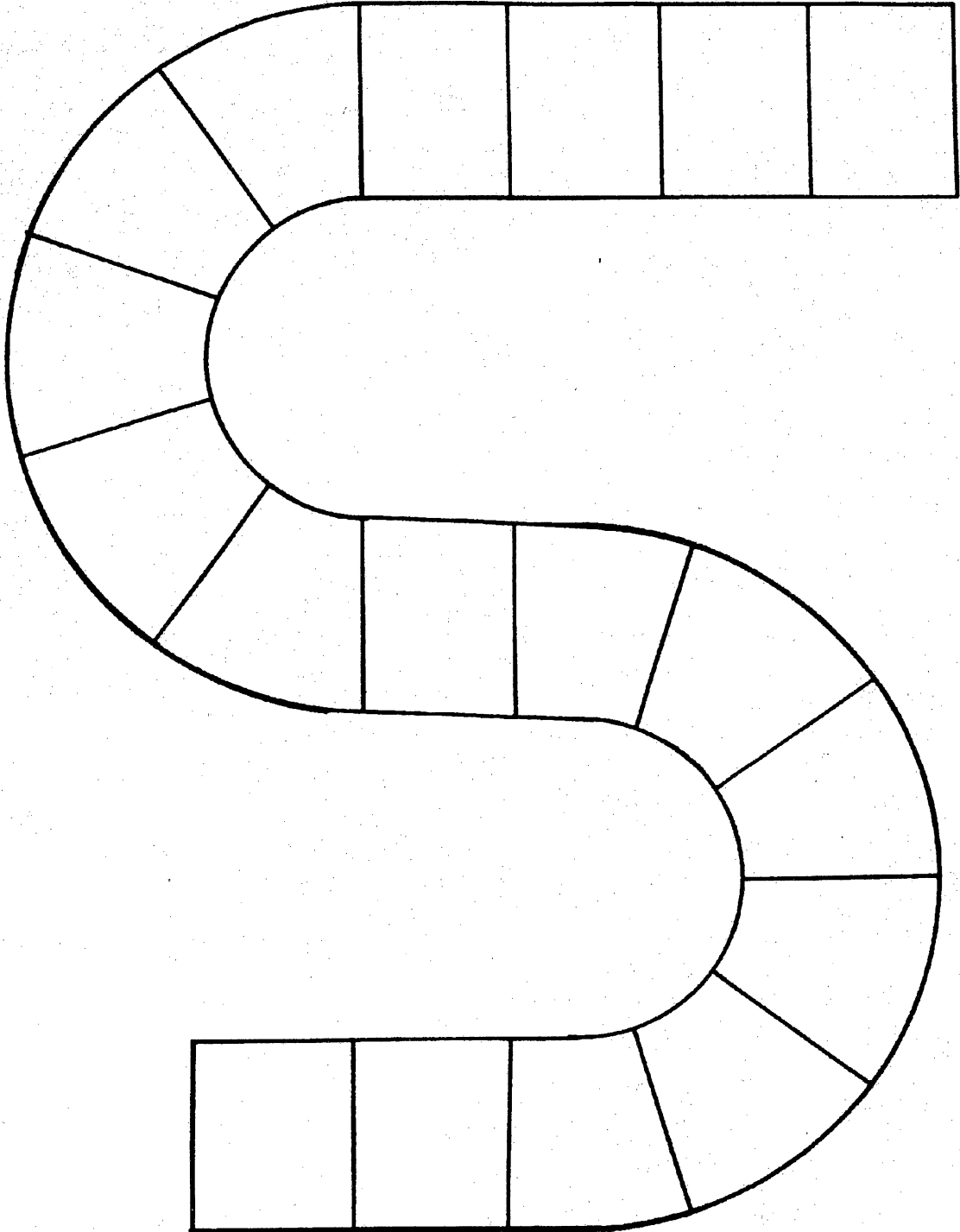
1. Cow on the track. Lose 1 turn.
2. You pass a freight train. Move ahead 2 spaces.
3. Tunnel blocked. Go back 1 space.
4. You lost your ticket. Go back 2 spaces.

Each child uses a game piece to move around the board based on the roll of a die. The child must pronounce the



word from the space he or she lands on and also identify the vowel sound. The child must also come up with another word with the same vowel sound to remain on that space. The first one to reach the end of the track is the winner.

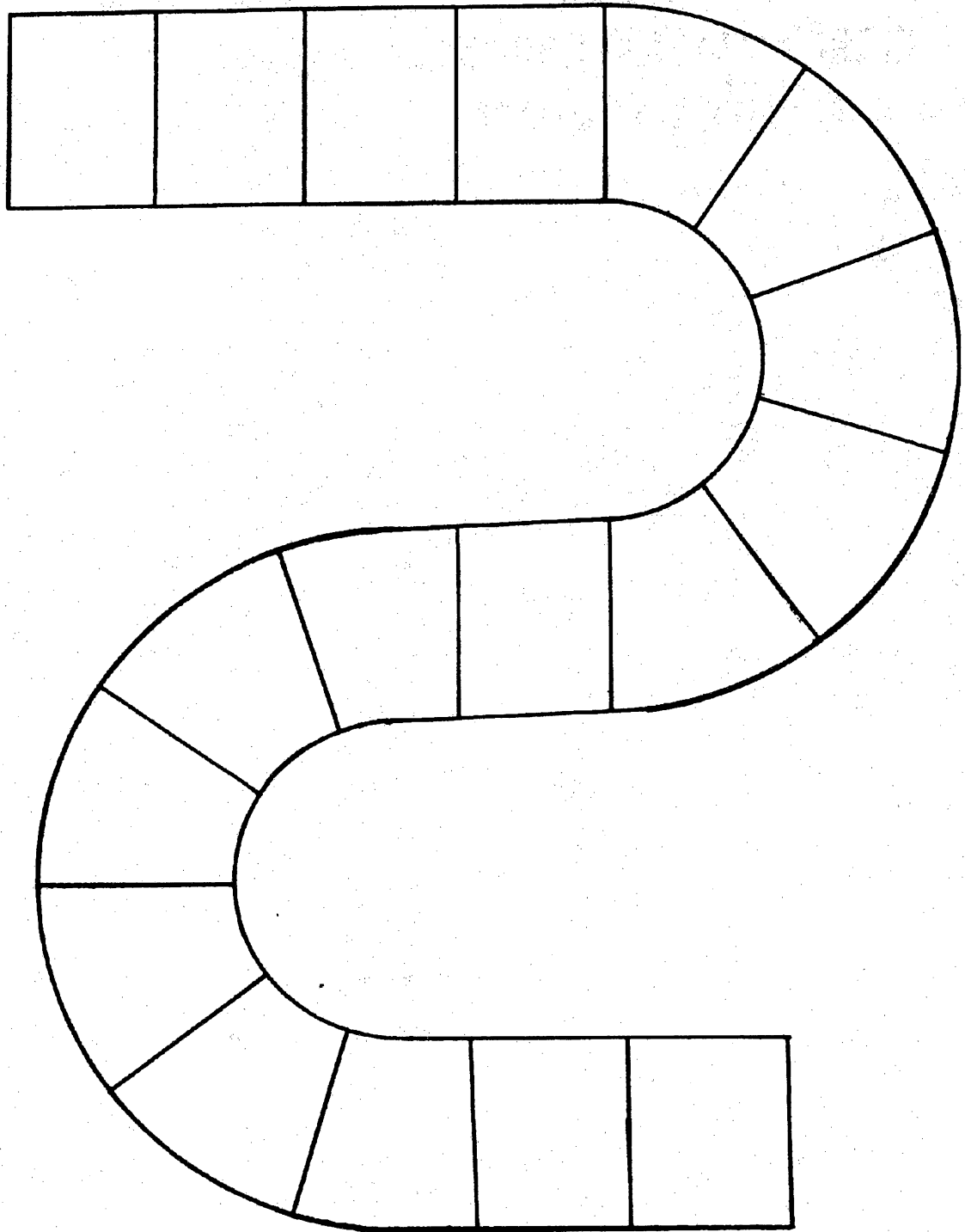
Train Station Game S-game board (left)



(Bear et al. ,2000, p. 292)

**Words Their Way Appendix © 2000 by Prentice-Hall, Inc.**

Train Station Game S-game board (right)



(Bear et al. ,2000, pp. 288-291)

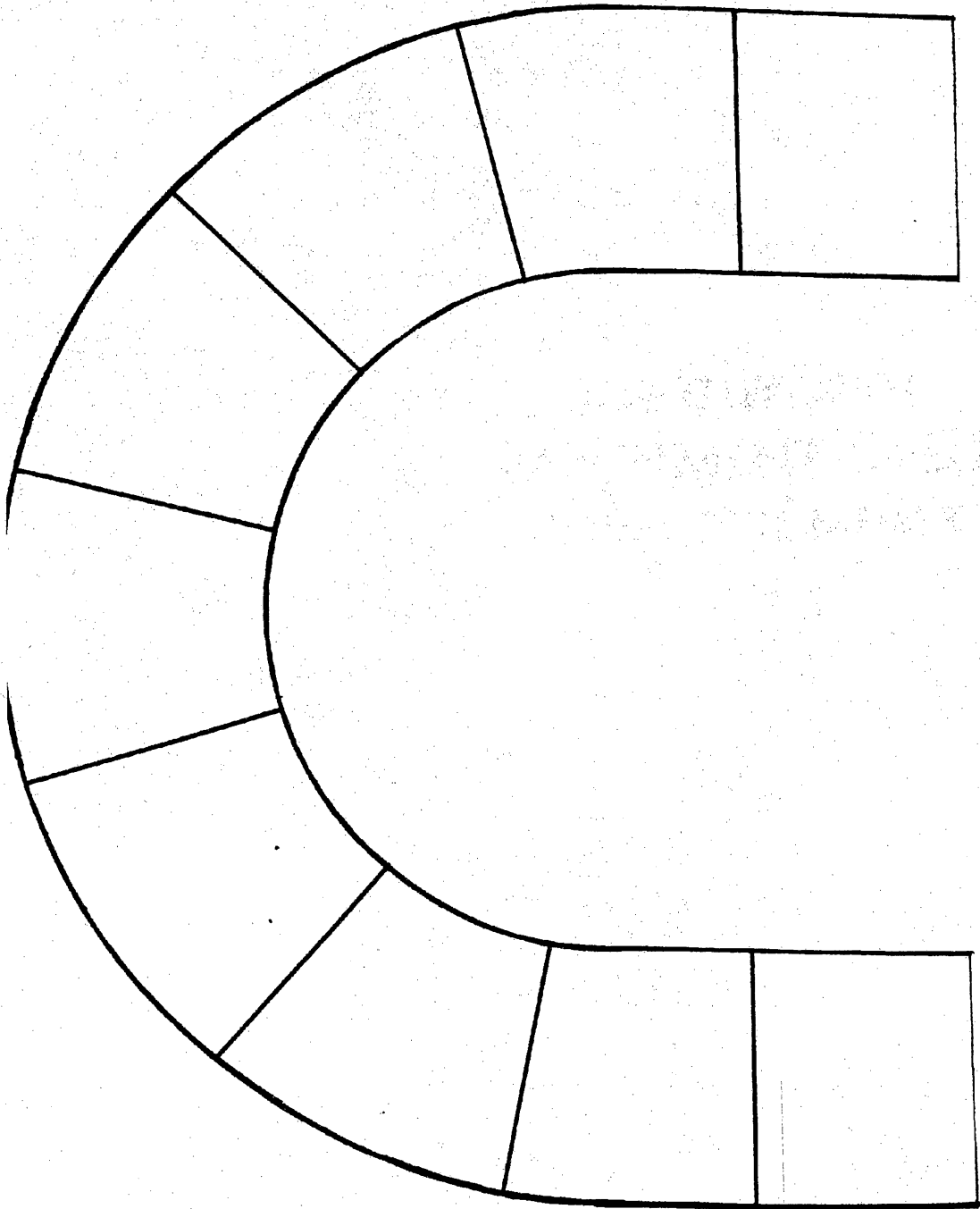
**Words Their Way Appendix © 2000 by Prentice-Hall, Inc.**

Racetrack Game (adapted from Bear et al., 2000, and Morris, 1982)

Players race around a track matching the words in their hands with those on the board. To play, copy the race track on page 85. Choose a vowel and write words following certain patterns on the board squares with the exception of two squares, which get a star instead. Using 40 or 50 cards, write words with the same vowel pattern on them. Deal six cards to each of two to four players. Place the remaining cards face down on the board. To move around the track use a numbered spinner or die.

Each player moves around the board after rolling the die. Upon landing on a word space, that player reads that word aloud. Players search among the cards in their hand for words with a similar pattern. If a matched pattern is found, two cards that have that pattern are placed in a discard pile and that same number of cards is drawn. This player rolls again and continues play. If no match is found the player loses the chance to move along the track but can still draw two new cards. When landing on a star, any oddball words can be dumped from that player's hand, and that number of cards is drawn from the play pile. The game continues until all 50 cards have been used, or until someone has gone all the way around the track.

Racetrack Game board (left and right)



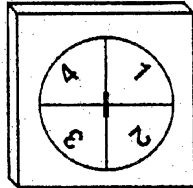
(Bear et al. ,2000, p. 292)

**Words Their Way Appendix © 2000 by Prentice-Hall, Inc.**

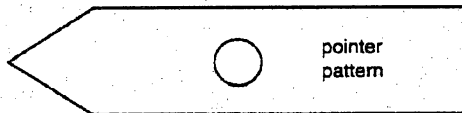
## Spinners

### Spinners

Many of the word study games described in this book use a game spinner. Figure A-14 provides simple directions for making a spinner.



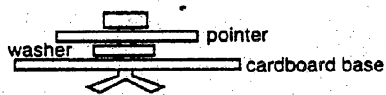
1. Glue a circle (patterns or cutouts below) onto heavy cardboard that is no smaller than 4" x 4".
2. Cut a narrow slot in the center with the point of a sharp pair of scissors or a razor blade.



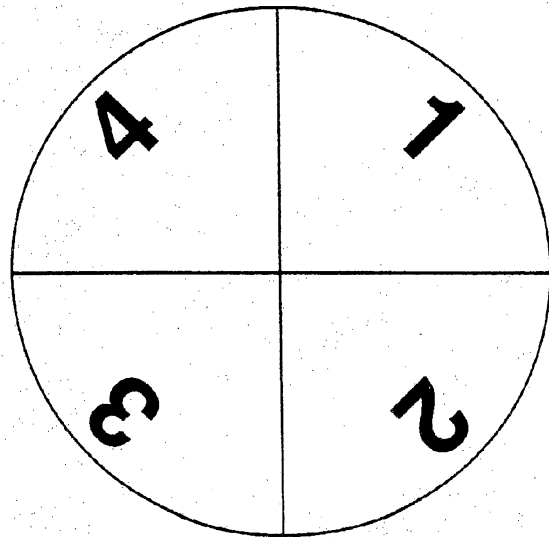
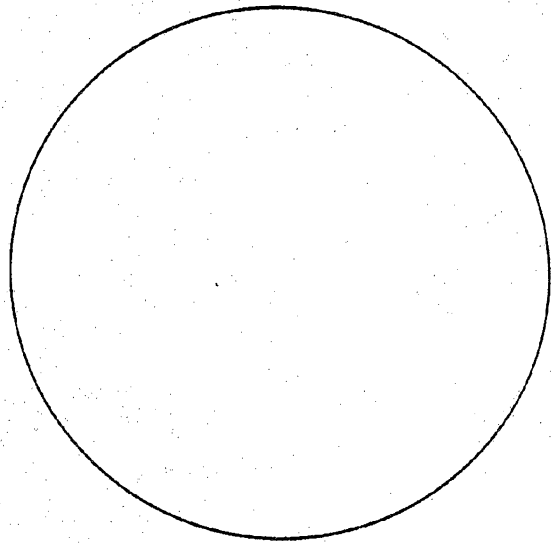
3. Cut the pointer from soft plastic (such as a milk jug) and make a clean round hole with a hole punch.



4. A washer, either a metal one from the hardware store or one cut from cardboard, helps the pointer move freely.



5. Push a paper fastener through the pointer hole, the washer, and the slot in the spinner base. Flatten the legs, leaving space for the pointer to spin easily.



**FIGURE A-14** Directions for Making a Game Spinner

(Bear et al., 2000, p. 292)

**Words Their Way Appendix © 2000 by Prentice-Hall, Inc.**

Pick a Blend (adapted from Peggy Kaye, 1984)

This game gives children a chance to create words using chunks and blends. They must determine if they can make a real word by matching a blend to the rime choices on their board. Use the rimes on page 109, and the game board on page 88. Make several sets of the board using various rime combinations and glue them on card stock. On mini-index cards, write the following consonant blends: bl, br, cr, cl, dr, cw, fl, fr, gr, gl, pr, pl, sc, sk, sl, sm, sn, sp, st, sw, tr, tw. For more advanced readers add three-letter blends: shr, scr, spl, spr, squ, str, thr.

Each child gets a game board. Before beginning the game children should read aloud their rimes to insure they are pronouncing them correctly. Place the onset blend cards face down on the table. Children take turns picking a card, then match it to each space on the game board to see if the onset and rime make a word. When a word has been made, place the card on top of that space. The first player to make words out of all his or her rimes wins the game.

Directions: Pick a blend card and try to make a word with the rimes in the boxes. When a real word is made, place the onset on top of the rime. The first person to make a word for each blend is the winner

### Pick a Blend

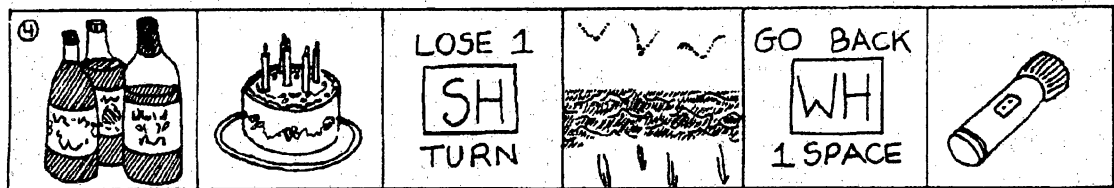
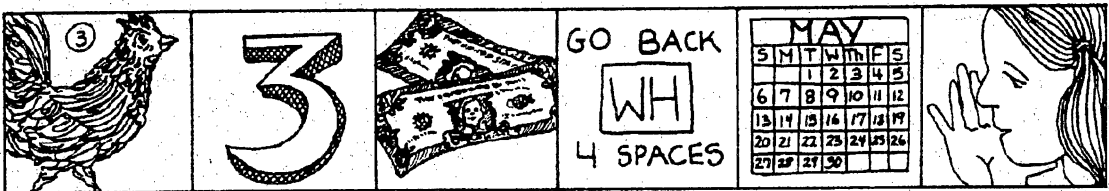
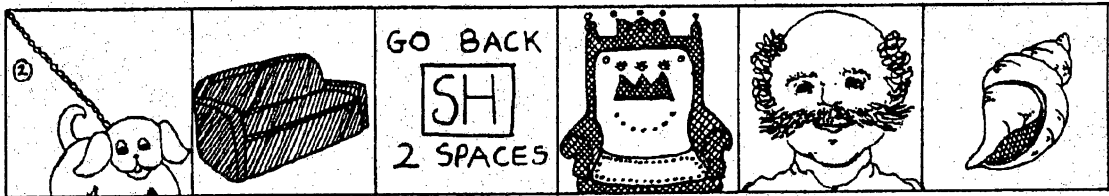
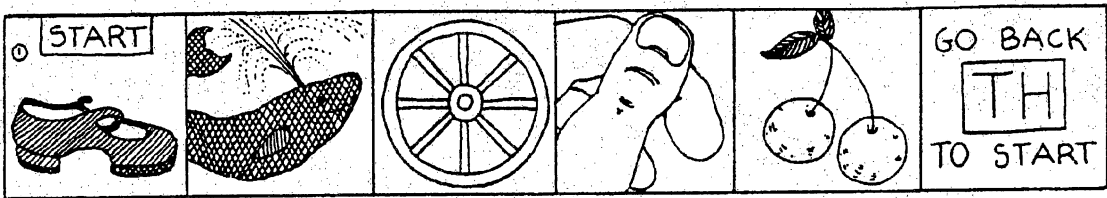


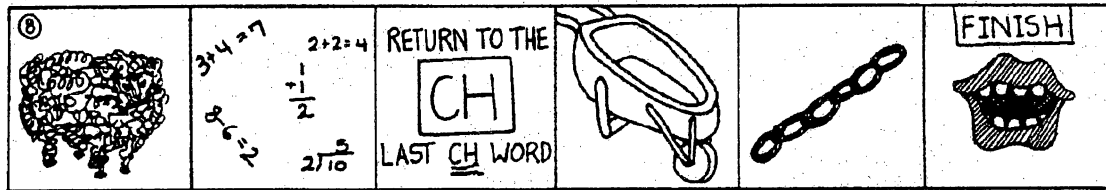
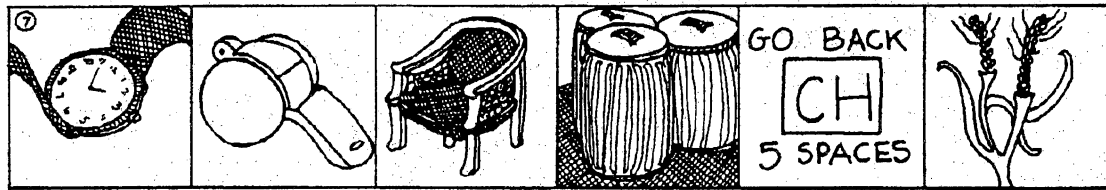
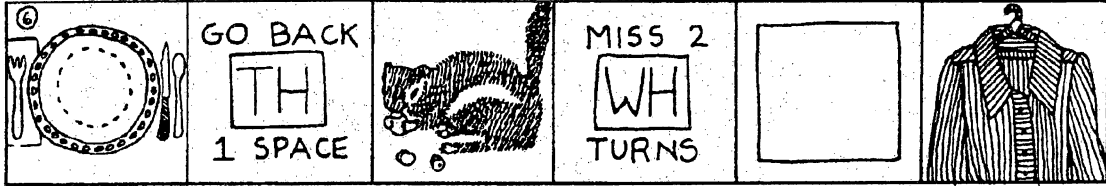
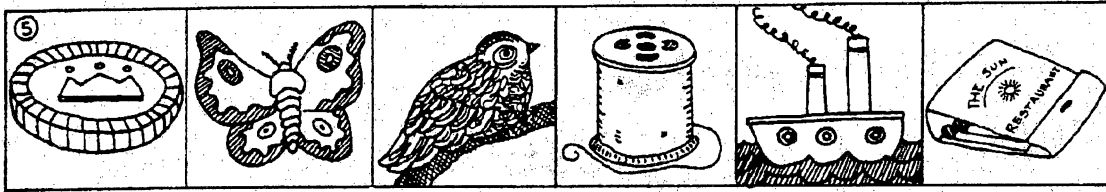

Chickens and Whales (adapted from a game created by Peggy Kaye, 1984, pp. 103-108.)

This game is to help children with digraphs. Make a copy of the game board on pages 90-91 and glue it on card stock for durability. On small index cards (make at least eight cards of each) write the digraphs ch, sh, th, wh, place them face down. Each child uses a game piece and moves around the board based on the digraph card chosen. As each child draws a card, he or she must say the sound, then move his or her game piece to the closest picture with that digraph. The first child to reach the end of the board wins the game.

Concentration (adapted from Gillet and Kita, 1979)

Word cards from previous sorts can be used. Two children choose 16 cards and place them face down on the table. They take turns choosing and turning two cards face up, trying to make a match based on some attribute of the word, whether it is the middle, beginning, or ending sound. If that cannot be done, the cards are turned face down again, and the other player has a chance. If a match is made the pair is removed from the game board. The winner is the player who makes the most matches.





APPENDIX C:  
MAKING WORDS

Planning Sheet

Making Words Planning Sheet

Final Word:

Letters (abc order):

---

Words that can be made with the letters of the final word.  
(Lesson progresses from smallest to largest words.)

- |    |     |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 9.  |
| 2. | 10. |
| 3. | 11. |
| 4. | 12. |
| 5. | 13. |
| 6. | 14. |
| 7. | 15. |
| 8. |     |

---

**Cueing strategies:** example- "The next word has 4 letters."

---

Words with same letters but in different places:

---

Letter patterns to emphasize for sorting:

---

**Sorting patterns:** example- rhyming sounds, vowel sounds

APPENDIX D:  
WORD WALL ACTIVITIES

### **Clap, Chant, and Write**

Clap, Chant, and Write (Cunningham and Allington, 1999, p. 137).

The teacher chooses five words from the wall (often words that need extra practice for children to learn), and calls each one out individually. A child points out the word on the wall, while the other children clap and chant its spelling. They then write the word on their papers.

Be a Mind Reader (Cunningham and Allington, 1999, p.138)

The teacher thinks of a word from the wall, writes it down on a piece of paper and then gives five clues about that word. The teacher starts with the first clue, "It is on the word wall." This focuses the children's attention. The students then write down the word they believe it may be. Other clues are given which include such features as sound and letter patterns. After the fifth clue, the teacher shows the class the word and asks who had it before the fifth clue. Those who successfully "read the teacher's mind" are delighted.

Chant and Check (Downer & Gaskins, 1986, as cited by Wagstaff, 1999)

The teacher holds up a word from the Chunking Wall and calls it out. Students then come up with other words

with the same chunk and write them on their papers. Attempted words are then written on the board or overhead so the class can check the spelling. The teacher then confirms the spelling by comparing the word wall chunked word with the new words. A verbal connection is made to compare them saying, "Yes, if this is loud, l-o-u-d, with the *oud* chunk, then proud is spelled p-r-o-u-d.

### **Word Ladders**

Word Ladders (Pinnell and Fountas, 1996)

On a sheet of paper or individual white board, students write a word from the Chunking Wall. From this word students generate a list of related words by changing one letter at a time. For instance they choose the word star and make it car then change that to cart and then change it to cat and finally at. This can be done as a whole group activity with the teacher leading the changes, or done individually or in pairs.

### **Word Hunts**

Word Hunts (Wagstaff, 1999)

By using the words of the week, children hunt their literature and the classroom for words with a similar pattern or chunk. It can be made into a contest to see who



can find the most words. This is a good activity for those children who finish their work early.

### **Word Sorts**

#### Word Sorts (Wagstaff, 1999)

As an extension of the Chunking Wall, this can be used for a center activity. Using the week's key words and any words generated by the class which use the same chunk, the teacher places these words on cards and puts them in a sorting center. The sorting would be open-ended to allow the children to use their own method for sorting. The options include sorting by the chunk, beginning, middle or ending sound. As an extension the children could generate more words with the same chunk to add to the sort for another group of children.

### **Practice Pages**

#### Practice Pages (Wagstaff 1994)

When given a sheet of paper, children fold the paper lengthwise and list the week's words down the left side. The chunks are underlined as well as written underneath the word. As a class, a list of words using the same chunks is generated and written under the appropriate word. Finally, a sentence is written using the key word,

which provides a context clue for using the word in writing.

By reading the list of words daily, children get practice reading by analogy and review the pattern of the chunk. The sentences can be used as a reference for pronunciation or usage. These sheets are kept throughout the year to show progress, to review, or use as a reference during writer's workshop.

### **Have-a-Go**

Have-a-Go (Routman, 1991, as cited by Wagstaff 1999)

Twice a week for about ten minutes, children look at the words in their writing that do not look quite right. They write them in the left hand column of the "Have a Go" sheet (see page 99). They then try to correct the spelling in the second and third column. The final column is used for the conventional spelling of the word that has them stumped. During this time, the teacher circulates and asks about the strategies the children are using to spell and offers suggestions or makes clarifications. The word wall can be used during this time to verify chunks that may be in the word and to write by analogy while attempting to correct the spelling.

## Have A Go

Try #1	Try #2	Try #3	Correct Spelling

Adapted from Wagstaff, 1999

### A Wall of My Own

Often students are in classrooms which lack space or share the space with other classes. Generating a word wall may not be difficult, but finding a permanent place for it could prove tricky. Pinnell and Fountas (1998) suggest that children be encouraged keep a personal word wall (see pages 101-102). These can be glued inside a manila folder and kept in each child's desk for easy referencing. Since they are portable, they can easily be used during centers or small group instruction.

### An Interactive Word Wall

Pinnell and Fountas (1998) suggest using library card pockets at the base of the word wall. One pocket should designate each letter from the word wall. The words from the wall are written down on cards placed in the appropriate pocket. These can then be retrieved by students wishing to use the wall, but who struggle with using the words from a distance. This also aids the teacher when trying to review words and needing to isolate one word from the others on the wall.

# Words I'm Learning

Aa	Bb	Cc	Dd
Ii	Jj	Kk	Ll
Qq	Rr	Ss	Tt
Yy	Zz	___ed	___ing

**Appendix 50 Words I'm Learning How to Write (A Personal Word Wall)**

©1998 by G. S. Pinnell and I. C. Fountas from *Word Matters: Teaching Phonics and Spelling in the Reading/Writing Classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

## How to Write

Ee	Ff	Gg	Hh
Mm	Nn	Oo	Pp
Uu	Vv	Ww	Xx

### Take Home Making-Words from the Chunking Wall

Wagstaff (1999) suggests using a modified version of Cunningham's (1995) Making-Words homework sheet (see page 105) as enrichment to the Chunking Wall. In the top boxes, place the chunks from the key words of the week. Students cut the chunks away from the paper and use them by adding letters at the beginning, middle or end to create new words. As long as the chunk is in the word and it is spelled correctly, the word is acceptable. Not only does this reinforce the letter pattern at home, but it also involves parents in the word study process.

### Wordo

Each child has the opportunity to practice writing words from the word wall and then reading the words. The teacher chooses the words used in Wordo, and runs off copies of the Wordo game mat (see page 106). As the teacher calls out the word, children decide in which square the words will be written. The words are then shuffled and the teacher calls out the word. Students chorally chant the spelling of the word while covering the word on their board with a counting chip. The first child to cover an entire row of words calls out "Wordo" and wins

that game. This is similar to Bingo, but all the children have the same words, just in different order.



Dear Family,

Making Words is an important activity we work on in our class. Making Words is an active, hands-on activity that children learn by doing. Each day as we "make words" your child learns more about letters and letter sounds (phonics). As children manipulate the letters they are given, they have an opportunity to discover more about letter-sound relationships, and as they look for patterns in words, they have an opportunity to see how these letter-sound relationships work in words. These two activities help children both to read and spell even more words! The children enjoy these lessons, but more importantly, these skills increase their word knowledge.

Please work with the letters your child will be bringing home. Let them cut the letter strips apart into the individual letters. Then work together and see how many words you can make. As you make the words write them in the blanks. Finally, cut the words apart and group them (your child knows what to do). Have fun working together and good luck!

Sincerely,

Your child's teacher

### Take-Home Sheet for Making Words


The letters you need to "Make Words" tonight are at the top of the page. First, cut the letters apart; then work together to see how many words you can make. Next, let your child write the words in the blanks. Finally, cut the words apart and sort or group them by beginning (ending) sounds or spelling patterns.

**WORDO**


**Template for Word Sorts**

*Words Their Way Appendix © 2000 by Prentice-Hall, Inc.*


APPENDIX E:

HIGH UTILITY RIMES

### High Utility Rimes

Wylie and Durrell (1970) identified 37 rimes which can be found in nearly 500 primary-aged words. These rimes can be used for Making-Words, word sorting and other word study activities.

-ack	-ail	-ain	-ake
-ale	-ame	-an-	-ank
-ap	-ash	-at	-ate
-aw	-ay	-eat	-ell
-est	-ice	-ick	-ide
-ight	-ukk	-in	-ine
-ing	-ink	-ip	-it
-ock	-oke	-op	-ore
-ot	-uck	-ug	-ump
-unk			

From:

Wylie, R. & Durrell, D. (1970). Teaching vowels through phonograms. Elementary English, 47, 787-791.

## REFERENCES

- Allen, L. (1998). An integrated strategies approach: Making word identification instruction work for beginning reader. The Reading Teacher, 52, 254-268.
- Bear, D., & Templeton, S. (1998). Explorations in developmental spelling: Foundations for learning and teaching phonics, spelling, and vocabulary. The Reading Teacher, 52, 222-241.
- Bear, D., Invernizzi, M., Templeton, S., & Johnston, F. Inc. (2000). Words their way. Columbus, OH: Printice-Hall
- Bloodgood, J. (1991). A new approach to spelling instruction in language arts programs. The Elementary School Journal, 92, 203-211.
- Clay, M. (1993 a). The observation survey. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Clay, M. (1993 b). Reading recovery. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Cunningham P. & Allington, R. (1999). Classrooms that work. New York: Addison-Wesley Educational.
- Cunningham, P. & Hall, D. (1994). Making words. Torrance, CA: Good Apple.
- Cunningham, P. (1990). The Names Test: A quick assessment of decoding ability. The Reading Teacher, 44, 124-129.
- Cunningham, P. (1995). Phonics they use. New York, NY: Harper Collins College.
- Curriculum Development and Supplemental Materials Commission. (1999). Reading/Language Arts Framework for California public schools. California Department of Education.
- Forester, A. & Reinard, M. (1989). The learners' way. Winnipeg MB Canada: Peguis.

- French, M. & Wheaton, A. (1997). Sort, search, and discover: Spelling in the child-centered classroom. The reading Teacher. [On-line] 51. Available: Academic Search Elite.
- Gentry, J. & Gillet, J. (1993). Teaching kids to spell. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Gillet, J. & Kita, M. (1979). Words, kids and categories. The Reading Teacher, 32, 152-159.
- Gillet, J. & Temple, C. (1978). Developing word knowledge: A cognitive view. Reading World, 132-141.
- Hill, B., Ruptic, C. & Norwick L. (1998). Classroom Based Assessments. Norwood, MA: Christopher Gordon Inc.
- Invernizzi, M., Abouzeid, M., & Gill, J. (1994). Using students' invented spellings as a guide for spelling instruction that emphasizes word study. The Elementary School Journal, 95, 155-167.
- Johns, J. (1997). Basic reading inventory. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.
- Kaye, P. (1984). Games for reading. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Morris, D. (1982). "Word sort": A categorization strategy for improving word recognition ability. Reading Psychology, 3, 247-259.
- Piaget, J. (1952). The origin of intelligence in children. New York: International Universities Press.
- Pinnell, G. & Fountas, I. (1996). Guided reading. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Pinnell, G. & Fountas, I. (1998). Word matters. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Rosencrans, G. (1998) The spelling book. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Short, K. & Burke, C. (1991). Creating curriculum. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

- Smith, F. (1997). Reading without nonsense. New York, NY: Teachers College.
- Templeton, S., & Morris, D. (1999). Questions teachers ask about spelling. Reading Research Quarterly, 34, 102-112.
- Wagstaff, J. (1994). Phonics that work! New York: Scholastic.
- Wagstaff, J. (1999). Teaching reading and writing with word walls. New York: Scholastic.
- Weaver, C. (1994). Reading process and practice. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Wilde, S. (1992). You can read this! Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Wylie, R. & Durrell, D. (1970). Teaching vowels through phonograms. Elementary English, 47, 787-791.
- Zutell, J. (1998). Word sorting: A developmental spelling approach to word study for delayed readers. Reading & Writing Quarterly, [On-line] 14, Available: Academic Search Elite.