

Word Sorting Procedures

Before Sorting:

- Make sure you have headers for each category.
- Model at least one or two words for each category. Use the headers as support by showing the student how s/he can compare the word against the headers.
- Do a think-aloud of what you are thinking as you model the sorting.

During Sorting:

- Make sure the student reads the words first as s/he sorts.
- If you are doing pictures and words, have the student sort the pictures first, then the words.
- If the student doesn't know what the word is, then tell him what it is to keep the ball rolling. Don't make it a guessing game.
- If the student makes a mistake with the first few words, then provide guidance and support because s/he may not understand the task or may be confused.
- If the student has sorted a number of words correctly and then makes a mistake, let him self-correct.

After Sorting:

- Make sure the student reads down each category to check her own work before the teacher does. If the student makes a mistake and does not self-correct, then provide scaffolding to help her correct her error.
- Have a student verbalize what each category has in common. When appropriate, focus on sounds, patterns, etc. Have the student reflect on what he has learned.

Word Sort References

Bear, DR., Invernizzi, M., Templeton, S., & Johnston, F. (2004). *Words their way*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

This book gives you the information you need to implement explicit, systematic word study in your classroom. The 4 edition has a DVD and CD-Rom that contain assessment planning and interactive word sorts.

Fry, ER., Kress, J.E., & Fountoukidis, D.L. (2000). *The reading teacher's book of lists* (5th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Over 200 lists on topics that include phonics, fluency, comprehension, writing, leveled book lists, teaching ideas, games and word play. This is an excellent resource book for anyone teaching reading!

Ganske, K, (2000), *Word journeys: Assessment guided phonics, spelling, and vocabulary Instruction*, New York, NY: Guilford Publications.

Beginning with descriptions of the stages of spelling, continuing with student assessment and planning for instruction, this book has what you need to teach explicit, systematic word study in the classroom. It includes a list of over 12,000 words arranged by sound, pattern and meaning related features.

Greenberg, D., Lehri, L. C., & Penn, D. (1997), *Are word-reading processes the same or different in adult literacy students and third-fifth graders matched for reading level?* *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 89 (2), 262-275.

Overall, the study found that adults and children use the same reading processes. The extensive testing in this study revealed that adult literacy students reading at the 5th grade level and below had phonics and spelling skill deficits but showed sight word reading strengths. The researchers believe that the deficits in the adult literacy students' skills result from gaps in schooling and lack of decoding skill remediation during childhood and are not a result of different reading processes in that population. Additionally, the researchers found adults did not have greater vocabulary than the children in the study who were also reading at the 5th grade level or below and suggest that vocabulary development above that level may depend on reading experiences instead of verbal experiences.

Ivey, C., & Baker, M. (2004). Phonics instruction for older students? Just say no. *Educational Leadership*, 35-39.

This article seems to be mistitled since the authors advocate the use of Word Study to aid student understanding, internalization and transfer of word structure, They believe that word books. The article stresses that good reading instruction should include high interest reading materials, comprehension strategies and word study- not just intensive phonics alone.

Lewkowicz, N. (1987). On the question of teaching decoding skills to older students. *Journal of Reading*, 50-57.

The author identifies reasons teachers and administrators give for not teaching decoding skills to older, struggling readers and provides studies and research which indicate how decoding skill instruction along with comprehension skill instruction is indicated for the learner.

Massengill Shaw, O. (2010). *Word study for adult learners full discussion*. Retrieved August 2, 2010, from LINC'S: Literacy Information and Communication System: <http://lincs.ed.gov/lincs/discussions/readwrite/IOWordstudy>

Donita Massengill Shaw moderated this discussion on the NIFL site concerning her use of Word Study with adults. She states that word study helps her students to recognize and internalize word patterns and structures, and she recommends implementing word study for 15-20 minutes of each class. Participants discussed the usefulness of this approach with both ESL students and individuals with learning disabilities.

Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center. (2004). *Adults with dyslexia can improve with phonics-based instruction*. Retrieved from Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center website: [http://www.wfubmc.edu/News-Releases/2004/Adults with Dyslexia Can Improve with Phonics-based Instruction](http://www.wfubmc.edu/News-Releases/2004/Adults%20with%20Dyslexia%20Can%20Improve%20with%20Phonics-based%20Instruction)

This WFUBMC news release cites research using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) and instruction in phonics for 19 adults with dyslexia and 19 adult readers without dyslexia. After about 112 hours of phonics instruction, the adults with dyslexia made significant gains in reading, phonetic awareness and decoding the written word.

Word Sort Reference List compiled by Jocelyn Kendall and Deborah Hill of Fairfax Co Adult Education.