What word identification strategies can be used to support a middle school reader who struggles with decoding?

Sarah E. Homer  
*St. John Fisher College*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/education_ETD_masters](https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/education_ETD_masters)

Part of the Education Commons

**How has open access to Fisher Digital Publications benefited you?**

**Recommended Citation**

Homer, Sarah E., "What word identification strategies can be used to support a middle school reader who struggles with decoding?" (2010). *Education Masters*. Paper 34.

Please note that the Recommended Citation provides general citation information and may not be appropriate for your discipline. To receive help in creating a citation based on your discipline, please visit [http://libguides.sjfc.edu/citations](http://libguides.sjfc.edu/citations).

This document is posted at [https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/education_ETD_masters/34](https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/education_ETD_masters/34) and is brought to you for free and open access by Fisher Digital Publications at St. John Fisher College. For more information, please contact fisherpub@sjfc.edu.
What word identification strategies can be used to support a middle school reader who struggles with decoding?

Abstract
Abstract Similar to comprehension and fluency, word identification skills are crucial in a student's acquisition of literacy skills. This research paper investigates a method used to promote word identification skills in middle school students reading at an emergent level. Existing research suggests that methods used with struggling readers must focus on filling in the gaps that have developed over the course of their emergent years. For the purpose of this study, the methods used for acquiring word identification skills were taken from Bear & Invernizzi's (2008) Words their Way. These activities were implemented over the course of seven sessions in conjunction with the direct-instruction model. My research demonstrated that struggling readers at the middle school level require the continuation of word identification strategies in order to become better readers.
What word identification strategies can be used to support a middle school reader who struggles with decoding?

By Sarah E. Homer

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
M.S. Literacy Education

Supervised by
Dr. Gloria Jacobs

School of Arts and Sciences
St. John Fisher College

May 2010
Abstract

Similar to comprehension and fluency, word identification skills are crucial in a student’s acquisition of literacy skills. This research paper investigates a method used to promote word identification skills in middle school students reading at an emergent level. Existing research suggests that methods used with struggling readers must focus on filling in the gaps that have developed over the course of their emergent years. For the purpose of this study, the methods used for acquiring word identification skills were taken from Bear & Invernizzi’s (2008) *Words their Way*. These activities were implemented over the course of seven sessions in conjunction with the direct-instruction model. My research demonstrated that struggling readers at the middle school level require the continuation of word identification strategies in order to become better readers.
Introduction

What happens to a student who does not acquire the necessary “building blocks” of literacy during his early school years? Are these “blocks” able to be inserted into the child’s education at random with little or no harm done to his overall literacy acquisition? Joey (pseudonym) is a 7th grade student who is classified as Other Health Impairment due to his diagnosis of PDD-NOS. There has been documentation of concerns and struggles that Joey was having, however, it seemed as though specific reasons for the struggle were beginning to be addressed. Joey is an introverted student in a whole group setting however when given the opportunity to interact on an individual level, Joey’s true colors shine. His sense of humor coupled with extensive background knowledge on a variety of topics makes interactions with Joey highly captivating. It can be inferred based upon informal observations and discussions that Joey’s lack of whole group participation results from his acknowledgement of his emergent literacy skills. Joey has much to offer those who take the time to listen.

Joey comes from a farming family and questions have been raised in terms of his previous schooling. Having moved to the district only four years ago, Joey has since been prematurely classified by his teachers as a “non-reader”. A variety of interventions have been put in place since Joey’s arrival at the middle school in 2009. Since December of 2009, Joey has taken part in the Wilson Reading Program. This highly structured remedial program directly teaches the structure of the language to students who are unable to learn with other teaching strategies; following a ten-part lesson plan, the instructor addresses decoding, encoding, oral fluency and comprehension (http://www.wilsonlanguage.com/FS_PROGRAM_WRS.htm). Joey attends 1:1 sessions a minimum of two times per week for a duration of 50 minutes each. Currently, Joey is still in Book 1 (GE = 1st) of the program, which implies minimal growth.
According to his IEP, Joey is in a 15:1:1 special class setting. Despite the setting, Joey still needs 1:1 support to scribe for him as well as read any text that exceeds five sentences. Being that his classroom is in a special education setting, Joey is already taking part in one of the most restrictive environments and yet he still requires additional support. Based on the interventions already in place, what more can be done? As his teacher, it is my job to provide him with the tools necessary to ensure his success. As his teacher, I need answers.

**Theoretical Framework**

Children acquire language and literacy from the moment they take in their first breath. A variety of experiences and/or events can contribute to a child’s acquisition of literacy and language. “The traditional model of literacy comes to be associated with the ‘normally developing’ child who, it is assumed, lives in a family or culture which should support the child’s development through the provision of particular resources and literacy practices” (Larson & Marsh, 2005). On the contrary, the lack of exposure to adequate literacy-based experiences for lower class families does impact the success of the children who are products of those families.

Socio-cultural learning theory defines the child as an active member of a constantly changing community of learners in which knowledge constructs and is constructed by larger cultural systems (Larson & Marsh, 2005, p. 100). In this view, literacy becomes seen as a tool for interpreting what people from different communities do, not simply what they do not do when compared to a dominant group (p. 101). With this in mind, learning can be defined as an individual process of growth through progressive stages of cognitive development (Larson & Marsh, 2005). Most notably, Vygotsky introduced this notion in what he termed “zone of proximal development”: the representation of the range of a child’s ability characterized by the
discrepancy between the child’s current level and the level of ability they reach in solving problems with assistance (p. 105). This concept can be seen in emergent literacy where it is believed that, “children develop a set of behaviors and concepts about literacy that precede the development of conventional literacy skills” (Larson & Marsh, 2005, p. 105). These practices and beliefs can be coupled with the concept of cultural variation and the impact it can have on a child’s acquisition of literacy.

Cultural variation can be seen throughout classrooms across the country and can be defined as various ways of life. In the context of literacy acquisition, cultural variation describes the differences children bring to a classroom that usually has one unified culture within itself (Mays, 2008 & Heath, 1982). The work of Mays (2008) describes this type of cultural variation and goes on to talk about the affects it has on a child’s acquisition of literacy.

Mays (2008), attests that each child comes to the classroom with his or her own primary culture where their development of oral language had occurred. It is there in that classroom that children are forced to conform to the culture of the school and classroom in order to be successful in their academic endeavors (Mays, 2008). It has been well documented and researched that there is a relationship between cultural variation and literacy acquisition. Most research points out the fact that most children whose culture, or primary discourse, differs from that of the classroom culture usually have an up-hill battle ahead of them concerning their acquisition of literacy (Mays, 2008). Mays (2008), contends that children have the right to their own language, their own culture and as such these cultural variations or differences should be embraced in the classroom in order to nurture the children’s acquisition of language.

Similar to Mays (2008), Heath (1982) argues that different communities use language and literacy differently and are based on cultural ways of knowing. She goes further in
agreement with Mays (2008) when she claims that the way we use and learn language in our home communities have implications for school success (Heath, 1982). Heath (1982) implies that cultural variation is the differences in experiences that each child brings to the classroom that teachers need to recognize the differences and build upon what students bring rather than seeing them as deficits. In her particular argument, Heath (1982) sees the bedtime story as a cultural variation between children. Her research observed the differences between what she described as “mainstream” and “non-mainstream” students (Heath, 1982). Her argument does aim to illustrate which group was better prepared for success in the classroom but rather her goal was to demonstrate the reality in the differences that each child comes to school with and how teachers can embrace these differences or variations in culture in order for each child to achieve success in their acquisition of literacy (Heath, 1982).

Coupled with the idea of students coming from different backgrounds, Kucer (2005) discusses the discrepancy not only between reader and reader but also between reader and author. “Not only do readers and writers bring their language to the printed page, conceptual knowledge is brought as well. There exists a symbiotic relationship between the knowledge conveyed through a text by the author and the knowledge conveyed through a text by the reader. In general, the more the reader’s and author’s backgrounds parallel one another, the smoother the construction of meaning is likely to be.” (Kucer, 2005, 120). If a connection is not made or is not addressed in terms of the students knowledge of what the author is writing about, meaning can be lost before the process of reading has even begun. According to Kucer (2005), our knowledge and experiences are culturally-based. This means that we cannot experience or gain knowledge that is not “culturally coded” (Kucer, 2005, 125). What students bring to reading is culturally-based and if what they bring differs from what the author or writer brings, there may
be a loss of meaning within the scope of the text. As a result, compensations need to be made in the area of schemata if the reader possesses differing or conflicting knowledge of the author or writer.

Based on the role cultural variation plays in the acquisition of literacy, one must understand that there are various foundational theories that inform this acquisition. The psycholinguistic theory bears considerable ideas and concepts on how literacy can be acquired. This research provoked the idea that literacy as not something one was taught to do but rather something one learned or acquired; individuals made sense of what they encountered based on what they already knew, by accessing prior knowledge (Pearson & Stephens, 1992, p. 28).

The psycholinguistic perspective has also affected one’s views of teaching and learning in a fundamental way. This fundamental learning theory allows one to comprehend that instead of teachers asking what they can do to teach students to read, they should be asking what they can do to help their students to read (Pearsons & Stephens, 1992, p.29). Literacy acquisition occurs with the understanding that the relationship between teacher and student is vital to that student’s literacy success; teachers are not in the classroom to simply teach but to foster an environment where not only learning but also acquisition can happen.

**Research Question**

Based on a variety of research, it can be generalized that students who are unable to acquire and utilize the literacy skills, knowledge and understanding presented to them in the early school years are going to fall behind in regards to their overall literacy acquisition. These struggling readers are thus labeled as such, beginning the game of “catch-up”. How can we continue to foster acquisition of language and skills when we are forced to march forward in accordance with a pacing chart and looming state assessments? In a middle school setting, what
does this “catch-up” time look like? What word identification strategies can be used to support a middle school reader who struggles with decoding?

**Literature Review**

“Reading is an essential component of education which has been linked to an individuals’ overall achievement and success over their lifetime. With more than half of all school-aged children in the United States reading below grade level, a national emergency has been declared to promote reading skills” (Huang, Nelson, and Nelson, 2008, 33). A considerable number of students enter the upper-elementary and middle school grades with significant deficits in their ability to read and consequently, some of these students are so delayed in reading that they not only have deficient comprehension skills, but also struggle with basic, automatic word identification, decoding and fluency (Manset-Williamson and Nelson, 2005, 59). With this in mind, there is a concern that these students have passed the age when “reading skills can most easily be gained, and that their reading deficits have become relatively resistant to remediation by the time they reach the upper grades.” (60).

Unfortunately, most children who have a poor start in reading often struggle to “catch up” because it becomes an uphill battle. “Some of the most basic skills needed to begin decoding words are [phonological awareness], phonemic awareness, [and phonics]” (208). The direct instruction of this skill is monumental in developing the proper literacy foundation for a student to be a successful reader. For most students, this occurs at the early elementary level, but for some students, the struggle with decoding continues into middle school and beyond.

“…Some form of explicit and direct instruction in phonemic awareness/analysis and decoding skills is essential for students…” (Manset-Williamson, G., and Nelson, J.M., 2005, 60). Phonemic awareness focuses on the smallest units of sound that make up speech (i.e. phonemes)
Phonics refers to the “grapho-phonemic connection” between written letters and spoken sounds. It is the understanding of this skill that contributes to a student’s ability to decode. This skill serves as pre-requisite for a student; without it, the student cannot move on to the next step in their literacy education. “Poorly developed word recognition skills are believed to be the most pervasive and debilitating source of reading challenges” (Archer, A.L., et al., 2003, 90).

As a result, developing research has suggested that some form of explicit and direct instruction in word identification skills is “essential for students at risk for reading failure and those with RD.” (60). It is with this idea that the purpose of this review is to define the characteristics of direct instruction, discuss the role of word identification skills in a student’s overall literacy education, as well as identify what teaching methods are effective to develop word identification skills.

Direct Instruction

Teaching methods for reading instruction are ever changing and differ depending on the grade level taught. In the elementary setting, teachers are in the forefront of each of their student’s literacy education. They possess the knowledge that each student needs in order to be successful and it is only the teacher that does the “teaching”. Moving from the elementary to the middle school setting, the teacher’s role in student learning can begin to fade. Students at the middle school level are coming to a time in their literacy education that they move away from learning to reading to reading to learn. At this level, students are required to work with more “difficult, abstract, or ‘literary’ words – words that tend to be out of the vocabularies of struggling readers” (Cowan, et al., 2007, 35).
This movement away from teacher directed instruction is dependent upon student readiness and whether or not they possess the needed skills to facilitate their own learning. For some students if they do not possess these skills, it has been suggested that teachers revert back to more direct teaching methods. “For students who experience initial failure in reading or who lack sufficient background knowledge and skill, explicit instruction is particularly important to promote efficient growth” (Pullen, et al., 2005, 64). According to Rupley, et al. (2009), “Struggling readers are more likely to learn essential reading skills and strategies if the direct or explicit model of instruction is part of the teacher’s repertoire of teaching methods” (125).

Directly or explicitly teaching reading means imparting new information to students through meaningful teacher-student interactions and teacher guidance of student learning (126). The recommended steps for direct instruction are as follows:

1. Review and check previous work.
2. Present new material.
3. Provide guided practice.
4. Provide feedback and corrections.
5. Provide independent practice.
6. Provide weekly and monthly reviews.

(Rupley, et al, 2009, 126)

These components bring together the over-arching concepts of effective instruction such as schema theory, modeling, guided practice and independent practice.

The schema theory refers to relating new information to past learning (Rupley, et al, 2009, 126). Students build upon prior knowledge in order to make meaning out of the new knowledge that is being presented to them. This type of scaffolding allows students who
struggle with making connections and it allows them to take what they already know and adapt it to the newly learned information or concept. By practicing a previously learned concept prior to learning a new one, gives students the opportunity to see the connections between concepts and how the skills they previously learned with one concept can be adapted and used with other concepts. Kucer (2005) discusses this method as building background knowledge, or schemata, “the building blocks of cognition.” (p 125). By building upon a student’s background knowledge, they can apply previously learned skills or concepts to new information they are presented with and make connections between the two. This allows for a continuation of the learning process that is essentially culturally-based.

In addition to schema theory, modeling new concepts or skills is an important component of direct instruction. “Modeling is a direct/explicit strategy that effective teachers use to help students conceptualize reading skills and strategies and how to apply them.” (Rupley, et al., 2009, 127). Modeling, in a name, is exactly how it sounds. It is demonstrating for the student how to use their learning (127). Different types of modeling can be used within a direct instruction format such as think-alouds. This involves teacher discussion as well as teacher-student interaction. The key to direct instruction is the active communication and interaction between teacher and student (Rupley, et al., 2009, 127). Think-alouds are “intended to help students ‘get inside the teacher’s mind’ and begin to understand what strategies they can use when doing similar tasks” (Rupley, et al., 2009, 128). This is an important step in the direct instruction model because it lays the foundation for student guided-practice. Without modeling, students would have no frame of reference in regards to using a particular skill or learning a new concept.
Providing students with meaningful guided and independent practice helps to ensure student mastery and transfer of a skill to other meaningful reading situations. This component of direct instruction is characterized by “varying degrees of teacher-student interaction” (Rupley, et al., 2009, 128). Guided practice is most often directly controlled by the teacher until it is observed that student achievement is attainable on a more independent level. During guided practice, the teacher is providing support to the student in varying degrees depending upon student need. “During practice, the amount of guidance is great in the beginning; it then declines to little or none” (128). Once the guidance declines to little or none, students have reached the independent state of direct instruction where they are able to perform the skill with no support from the teacher. Larson and Marsh (2005), describe guided participation as coordinating the teacher’s attempt to familiarize the student to the task, to provide links between current knowledge and the knowledge to be gained. This method is coupled with Vygotsky’s concept of zone of proximal development and how guided participation is achieved through student involvement in activities that are “within reach” or within their zone of proximal development (Larson & Marsh, 2005, 108). This stage is the ultimate goal of direct instruction and consequently the final stage of the teaching method.

According to Shippen, et al. (2005), although most students acquire language in a natural, developmental manner, the ability to acquire basic reading skills is not a natural process. The direct instruction model promotes mastery of meaningful reading through explicit teaching. The method is certainly not a new teaching strategy; it has been around for years, primarily at the elementary level. However, it has been discussed by Rupley, et al. (2009) and Shippen, et al. (2005) that the best, most effective teaching methods to use with struggling readers is the direct instruction of phonemic awareness and decoding skills.
Literacy and Students with Disabilities

The ability to read efficiently and effectively has clear implications for a student’s overall academic performance. However, when a student’s intellectual make-up is diagnosed as being “disabled”, the basic skill of reading becomes not so basic after all.

According to Shippen, et al. (2005), “students at risk for learning difficulties tend to differ from their average-achieving peers in the areas of language processing, memory, learning strategies, and vocabulary.” (175). With these students at such a disadvantage, teaching them to read becomes that much more difficult because the total act of reading is affected when students are weak in just one reading skill.

Through the work of Morgan, et al. (2006), it has been identified that, “the challenge for teachers of learners with intellectual disabilities lies in integrating contemporary understandings about literacy practices into a balanced literacy program.” (53). This means that when teaching the components of literacy to students with disabilities, one must understand that these skills need to be taught across the board. There are multiple strategies to meet this challenge such as knowing the learner, motivation and using a multi-model approach (Morgan, et al., 2006, 53).

It is important for teachers to gather detailed information about their students’ abilities, needs and interests. Morgan et al. (2006), discusses the use of, “informal interviews and other informal data collection methods, undertaken within authentic literacy experiences, are useful ways of discovering the learners’ interests, prior knowledge, and past experiences…” (53). Hines (2010) illustrated her understanding of this belief by choosing to use song lyrics to help promote decoding skills with her students because she knew that music was an important part of their everyday lives (17). The simple task of asking questions, creating discussions with your
students can open a door into a realm of information for you as a teacher, and motivation for them, as a student.

Coupled with the knowledge of the learner, the teacher must also find a way to motivate the learner. According to Shippen, et al. (2005), “motivation is crucial to the reading and learning process.” (181). When learners are motivated, they are more likely to attend to a task. In the case of students with disabilities, motivation can be the biggest obstacle because for most of them, their lack of success in school does not give them the positive motivation needed to create change. Morgan, et al. (2006) claims that, “the challenge for teachers working with learners with intellectual disabilities lies in including content that is relevant, interesting, meaningful and has some familiarity.” (53). This can be seen through the inclusion of “real-world” concepts and activities where students can feel connected to their world. It is with these activities that teachers must take a multi-model approach so as to reach all types of learners within their classroom.

It can be argued that accomplished teachers can integrate different teaching strategies with a variety of activities, materials and games. According to Morgan, et al. (2006) and Hines (2010), this type of multi-model approach can be a source of motivation for students with disabilities. Morgan, et al. (2006) states that these multi-model approaches allow students with disabilities to attend to activities that fit their specific learning style. “Crucial to a student’s progress has been to work developmentally with his or her strengths and interests.” (Morgan, et al., 2006, 63). In turn, when giving students the opportunity of illustrating their knowledge and skills in multiple ways, success can be achieved and motivation can be instilled.

“The ability to read efficiently and effectively has clear implications for a student’s overall academic performance. Some students acquire the necessary prerequisite skills and become proficient readers, whereas others do not. These students are commonly referred to as
“poor readers”. (Shippen, et al., 2005, 175). Students with disabilities are often put in this category of “poor readers” and are labeled as such for most of their educational careers. According to Shippen, et al. (2005), Morgan, et al. (2006) and Hines (2010), more can be done for these students in the area of literacy; success can be achieved when strategies are identified and implemented based on the knowledge of each type of learner.

Teaching Methods for Word Identification

“…More than 8 million middle and high school students are considered to be struggling readers…the reason for below-average reading achievement of several adolescents may be their limited development of word reading skills” (Joseph, L.M. & Schisler, R., 2009, 131). It is will this in mind that one must wonder: what are the most effective word study teaching methods? For the purpose of this review, “word identification skills” refer to making letter-sound correspondences, reading words as a whole and reading words fluently.

Stuart et al., (2000) stated, “theories of reading development agree that an important aspect of learning to read involves setting up word recognition procedures that enables children to access the meanings and pronunciations of printed words” (12). For readers at the emergent level, sight word recognition is a skill that is often repeatedly practiced. A variety of research supports the notion that “children must develop a sight vocabulary of known words which can be instantly recognized and understood.”(Stuart et al., 2000, 12). Studies by Stuart et al., (2000) and Nist & Joseph (2008) support that an effective strategy to increase sight word vocabulary is teaching words in isolation through repeated exposure.

This strategy can be implemented in a variety of ways such as flashcard drill (Nist, L. & Joseph, L.M., 2008). Although Nist & Joseph (2008) claimed using flashcards were effective for sight word recognition, they also suggested inserting unknown sight words along with known
sight words at varying increments (known as the “incremental rehearsal” condition) is what makes this teaching method a success. Nist & Joseph (2008) say that “incremental rehearsal may be the method of choice for those students who need to build upon foundational knowledge, who continue to have difficulty retaining skills over time, or who need to experience frequent success so they remain actively engaged in reading words” (305).

In addition to sight word recognition, research has been done to explore the importance of orthographic knowledge in regards to work study teaching and learning methods. According to Harris (2007), “orthographic knowledge, the correct sequence of letters in a writing system, is a critical component used in word identification.” It has been claimed that children advance gradually in reading and spelling as the quality of spelling patterns is better understood. “…A reader moves from sounding out words to automatically retrieving words when a high-quality pattern of spelling representation develops.” (Sharp, A.C. & Sinatra, G.M., 2008, 206). Based upon a variety of research, a claim is being made that spelling abilities and the understanding of orthographic knowledge, have a direct impact on a student’s ability to read proficiently.

For middle and high school students struggling with reading and writing, orthographic knowledge is an overlooked building block for higher achievement. According to Harris (2007), “there is a high correlation between learning to spell words and learning to read words, as the underlying processes and knowledge base used to spell are much the same as reading.” Orthographic knowledge plays a significant role in the acquisition of natural decoding skills that is so crucial for word identification and fluency in reading. There are a variety of well recognized, research based programs used with struggling adolescent readers such as The Word Identification Strategy, Corrective Reading program and Words Their Way (Invernizzi, M., Worthy, J., 2004).
Words Their Way is an alternative method of instruction, compared to the other two, which focuses on the study of words through the exploration of the orthographic knowledge of words. “Words Their Way is an explicit, inductive instructional approach to teach phonemic awareness, spelling patterns, and morphology to improve word identification.” (Harris, 2007). This program presents spelling in a sequenced format instead of a haphazard array of letters which helps students understand that words are made of sounds, patterns and meanings. Words Their Way incorporates the application of spelling patterns to both reading and writing.

The stages of orthographic knowledge, as outlined in Words Their Way, are: emergent; letter-name alphabetic; within word; syllables and affixes; and derivational relations (Harris, 2007). The implementation of this program begins with a spelling inventory. This assessment consists of up to 40 words that represent different spelling patterns from the five stages previously listed. Once the assessment is scored, the student’s spelling stage will be revealed (Harris, 2007). Once the spelling stage has been obtained, the Words Their Way program provides lessons and activities that systematically and explicitly preview, teach, and review the specified skills required to graduate from that spelling stage (Harris, 2007). Such activities include word sorts, sound sorts and extension activities (Harris, 2007). According to Harris (2007), “using Words Their Way to study orthographic patterns gives middle and high school students the opportunity to systematically gain skills in reading, writing and spelling and to advance to the next developmental level.”

**Methods**

**Context**

This study took place in a rural middle school in Western New York. The area is a well-rounded mixture of rural and suburban living with a population of approximately 14,000. As of
2007, there are 629 students enrolled and attending school with an average of 12 students per classroom. 95.9% of the school’s population is Caucasian, 1.8% are African American, 1.6% are Hispanic or Latino, 0.6% are Asian or Pacific Islander and 0.2% are American Indian or Alaska Native. Twenty percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-priced lunch.

Participants

I worked with one seventh grade student for this research project. Joey is a 13 years and 2 months old Caucasian male. He is an intelligent and creative young boy. Having worked with Joey since September 2010, I had seen firsthand the extent of his background knowledge and the range of his creativity that he had illustrated in various classroom activities. He loves animals and enjoys taking care of them on his family farm. Joey has been in the district since fourth grade. His reading level from the Fountas & Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention testing as of September was a level E. Joey also participates in the Wilson Reading Program and just recently completed Book 1 in December. Joey continues to struggle with decoding strategies and sight word recognition. Joey’s outlook on reading is less than positive; his self-confidence often plays a role in his progress over the course of the school year. Although he works hard, he often gets distracted and frustrated when he can’t decode words while reading. Joey benefits from positive reinforcement, repetition, and practice of newly introduced skills and strategies.

Researcher Stance

As a researcher, I worked one on one with Joey during normal school hours. Currently I am a graduate student at St. John Fisher College as well as a seventh grade, special education teacher. I am working on obtaining my Masters Degree in Childhood Literacy and presently have a Bachelor’s degree in English Literature with a quad-certification in both general and special education (grades 1-6 and 5-9). At this time, I am finishing my second year as a special
education teacher. I have been working as Joey’s special education teacher since September 2010. Based on my time spent with Joey, I have firsthand knowledge of Joey’s self-awareness as a reader. The first day he walked into my ELA classroom and I asked him to read with me he said, “Miss Homer, I don’t know if my 6th grade teacher told you this or not, but I am not a reader.” This statement set the tone for the rest of the school year and reinforced my ultimate goal to become a Literacy Specialist at the elementary or middle school level.

I chose to research emergent literacy practices used in middle school classrooms because I have come across students at the middle school level, like Joey, who are struggling to meet the literacy expectations put on them in their content area classes. This is primarily due to the students’ lack of basic literacy skills such as word identification and decoding. Joey cannot participate in class activities without the support of an aide to read and write for him. Cognitively, he is able to understand the content being presented to him and make connections, however any task or activity that requires reading a passage/worksheet or writing, Joey becomes completely dependent on others to get information. In order to move these children forward successfully, it is important for them to have the necessary skill set that will help them comprehend the information presented to them in those content-driven classes. I want to investigate different methods or strategies that might support students’ acquisition and mastery of these skills.

Method

For this action research project, I implemented one word identification method with Joey and determined the benefits and shortcomings of the method. The study focused on the student’s ability to identify words and how this ability affected his spelling and reading fluency. While implementing this method, I first gave baseline assessments of both a spelling inventory and a
running reading record. This was used in comparison with post-assessment results. I then interviewed Joey and identified his attitudes towards reading and spelling using a rating scale as well as if, he believed, the activities he was participating in from *Words their Way* were beneficial for him or whether he felt they were too elementary. This allowed me to see how Joey saw himself as a learner and it gave him an opportunity to acknowledge what type of learner he was.

Joey worked with me for three weeks, roughly seven sessions lasting approximately 20 to 30 minutes. During each session, I used lesson and activity ideas derived from *Words Their Way* and implemented them with Joey. Such activities included word sorts, build a word and board games. The lessons and activities were based on Joey’s pre-assessment spelling inventory score which told me what word identification stage he was currently at. This information informed my instruction in the one-on-one sessions.

During each session, the direct instruction model was implemented and maintained. I started off by modeling the skill set that was focused on and then I gave Joey the opportunity to practice the skill and finally I tested him to see if that skill set had been acquired or if additional time needed to be given to the task. During the independent work time, I observed Joey’s interaction with the activity, his body language, gestures, movements and conversations. I took notes of Joey’s motivation with the activity and asked him questions about the tasks.

After the final session with Joey, I conducted post-assessments of both a spelling inventory and a running reading record. These results were compared to Joey’s pre-assessment results to show whether or not the implementation of direct word identification instruction produced growth, regression or simply maintained Joey’s previous abilities. After the
comparison, I determined the benefits and short-comings of the methods based on my observations and collection of data.

**Quality and Credibility of Research**

In doing this research it was important to ensure the quality and credibility of the study. According to Mills (2007), Guba argued that the “trustworthiness of qualitative inquiry could be established by addressing the following characteristics of a study: credibility, transferability, confirmability.” (103). I applied a variety of strategies to ensure the trustworthiness of my qualitative inquiry.

To begin, credibility can be defined as “the researcher’s ability to take into account the complexities that present themselves in a study and to deal with patterns that are not easily explained.” (Mills, 2007, 105). To help assure my credibility, I applied the strategy of peer debriefing. At least once a week, during the course of my study, I met with a collegial colleague to discuss and dissect my findings. This interaction allowed me to reflect on my own situation through the guidance of another person’s insights (Mills, 2007, 104). I also practiced triangulation with this study by using multiple sources of data (Mills, 2007, 92). My data collection consisted of a student interview, observations and a compellation of student work over the course of the study. I will be sure to collect pre and post assessment data as well.

I also ensured transferability with my research. According to Mills (2007), transferability refers to, “qualitative researchers’ beliefs that everything they study is context bound and that the goal of their work is not to develop ‘truth’ statements that can be generalized to larger groups of people.” (104). Within this study, I will be collecting very detailed data that is only identifiable to the participant in the study. Although certain conclusions can be made based on the data, it is by no means a generalization to larger groups of people. This study is specific in a variety of
ways including methods used and the uniqueness of the participant. Multiple conditions make this study that much more specific which leads into the dependability of the data. This refers to the “stability” of the data (Mills, 2007, 104). I am able to ensure dependability of the data by using the strategy of overlapping methods such as interviews, student artifacts and observations.

Lastly, I ensured confirmability during my research. According to Mills (2007), confirmability is the “neutrality or objectivity of the data that has been collected”. (105). One way in which I have ensured this is by performing triangulation (105). I have overlapping methods of data collection that spans from student interviews to observations to artifacts. I also plan on practicing reflexivity. This is where I will go back to my findings and reflect on my previous theories and questions (Mills, 2007, 105).

**Informed Consent and Protecting the Rights of the Participants**

Before beginning my research process, I needed to collect informed consent and protect the rights of the participants. This is a qualitative study where I will be working one on one with Joey. I have given a consent form to both him and his parents that discuss the study and asks for their permission and signature to confirm authorization to perform the research. It is important to note that the parents knew that, for this study, I would be using a pseudonym for Joey and that I would be removing his name from all the artifacts used during the study. All participants’ names were replaced with pseudonyms and confidentiality was guaranteed.

**Data Collection**

As discussed earlier, multiple forms of data was collected for this study. To begin, I gave Joey a pre-assessment of a spelling inventory and a running reading record. Also, I conducted an interview with Joey to collect information about his motivation as well as his knowledge of his learning style. During each session, I conducted active observations of Joey and saw how he
interacted with the activities presented to him and noted his level of participation with each activity. After each session I collected any student artifacts that illustrated a skill set being acquired and/or mastered. Finally, I conducted a post assessment of a spelling inventory as well as a running reading record. This data was compared to Joey’s pre-assessments to illustrate any growth that may or may not have taken place during the course of the study.

**Data Analysis**

This analysis is based on active observations, field notes, surveys and pre/post assessments collected during seven sessions of working one-on-one with Joey. After examining these sources, I looked for connections or commonalities amongst them. I found that the most useful source in developing my findings was my the field notes based on active observations I made with Joey’s behaviors and conversations he would have with me during each session. The pre/post assessments were also valuable because they showed signs of improvement in word recognition.

After analyzing all the data collected through this project, three themes came to the forefront that helps to put the data in perspective. The three themes identified were vowel knowledge, transferability and reflection. These reoccurring themes were interconnected and consistent and proved to be important in determining how this middle school student learned and applied word identification skills.

**Findings and Discussions**

Looking at the pre-assessment data from *Words their Way*, Joey spelled 6 out of 26 words correctly on the Primary Spelling Inventory. In addition, the running reading record conducted in conjunction with the spelling assessment showed Joey reading at a Fountas & Pinnell Level E with a fluency rate of 15 words per minute. In the beginning of the spelling assessment, Joey
would take his time, make connections with the words he was expected to spell (i.e. recognize that he heard the word before) and check over his work. However as the assessment progressed and got more difficult, Joey became quick to respond to the spelling prompts and did not appear to check over his work. During the running reading record, Joey was initially hesitant to read out loud and asked if he could be read to instead. When he finally began to read, he took his time, often pausing at awkward points in the story to make text to self connections. These breaks often caused confusion for Joey on where he left off in the story thus affecting his overall words per minute rate.

As a result of the initial testing, I found that Joey had strategies in place such as chunking, context clues, and picture clues, to conquer unknown words but chose not to utilize these strategies. In addition I found that during the running reading record assessment, Joey still struggled with basic words that should be known with automaticity such as sight words.

In reviewing the data collected from various sources, the themes of vowel knowledge, transferability and reflection emerged and provided me with sufficient evidence as to what word identification methods work best with Joey and may work for other struggling middle school students.

*Vowel Knowledge*

For the purpose of this project, vowel knowledge can be characterized as the knowledge of vowel sounds and vowel patterns. The knowledge of these sounds and patterns is crucial for any reader to understand because such sounds and patterns are present in every word that is spelled or read. Struggling readers tend to not develop this knowledge completely and thus struggle with word identification, fluency and consequently comprehension (Hines, 2010 & Morgan, et al., 2006 & Shippen, et al., 2005).
In Joey’s case, his lack of vowel knowledge has resulted in his inability to graduate from invented spelling. When asked to spell a word, he first listens to the word, segment the sounds of the word and finally try to match the sounds with known letters. This strategy often results in him being able to identify the beginning and ending consonants of a word. For example when asked to spell *third*, Joey spells it t-h-r-d, completely leaving out any vowel presence. When prompted with, “every word has at least one vowel,” Joey responded with, “I didn’t hear one”. When I repeated the word one more time, emphasizing the different segments, *th-ir-d*, Joey re-wrote his answer as t-h-e-r-d. Although he chose an incorrect vowel, he was able to hear where it was placed within the word which stems from his knowledge of phonemic awareness but illustrates his lack of specific vowel knowledge.

It was later in the sessions, that I realized Joey’s lack of vowel knowledge. He required reviewing of basic vowel sounds (long and short) and what it meant when a word had an *e* on the end. During our first three sessions (3/7/2011-3/9/2011), Joey completed tasks and activities relating to vowel knowledge (i.e. sorting long and short vowel sounds, long vowel patterns, etc.). According to his pre-assessment for the primary spelling inventory, Joey score fell inside the “Early within Word Pattern Stage”. Within this stage, it is typical for a student to use but confuse vowel patterns such as they ignore silent letters in long vowel patterns and they use short vowels in substitution for ambiguous vowels (i.e. *cot* for *caught*). After a session working with long vowel patterns such as *oi*, Joey told me that he understood vowels better when he said, “I don’t know why, but every since you said a vowel is found in every word, I try harder to hear the vowels in the words you tell me.” This prompted me to test his method with asking him to spell *boil*. He was able to spell this word correctly on the first try and responded with, “I used to spend so much time on the first sound of words and I sometimes get lost about the other ones.”
When asked how he knew the correct vowel combination, he said, “Well, the word sort that we did helped me remember what vowels went together.”

Comparing the pre and post assessments for the spelling inventory, with a focus on vowel knowledge, data shows that he was able to acquire the vowel knowledge to spell some of the words on the inventory correctly:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-assessment</th>
<th>Post-assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short Vowels</td>
<td>6/7</td>
<td>6/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Vowel Patterns</td>
<td>0/7</td>
<td>1/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Vowel Patterns</td>
<td>2/7</td>
<td>3/7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Transferability**

Transferability refers to a student’s ability to transfer information or skills from one task to another (i.e. from a lesson/activity to an assessment). It signifies that the student is making connections with the material and identifying its purpose in multiple ways. Struggling readers tend to not make these connections and can only perform a skill in isolation rather than in context. When students are not able to transfer skills, their learning can become stagnant due to the need to consistently review and reinforce previously learned skills.

My pre-assessment findings indicated that Joey was not able to transfer skills that were taught to him both in his ELA class as well as during his sessions with a Wilson reading coach. At no time, did he attempt to make connections with what he was being asked to do (spell, read) with similar activities that he has done prior to the assessment. Nevertheless, Joey began to transfer skills during the tasks or activities that he was asked to complete such as word sorts, build a word and board games. I was able to prompt this transfer by first reviewing the skill
taught in the previous section and then modeling the new skill shortly after so that Joey could see the connection between skills and ultimately make the transfer. This suggests that perhaps Joey was more attentive to isolated tasks or activities rather than assessments; he was able to make connections and build upon his prior knowledge within each isolated task but not when it came to a cumulative assessment. For example during the pre-assessment, Joey spelt the word *shine* as s-h-i-n without hesitation however during a one-on-one session, he was asked to spell the same word and spelled it correctly, making a point to tell me why this word should have an *e* on the end of it, he said, “because the *i* says its name” (observations, 3/11/2011). This leads one to believe that there is not transfer of knowledge from one type of activity to another; from lesson to assessment. Being a part of Joey’s program, this inability to transfer skills is evident throughout his academic program; he requires constant reviewing of materials before being given new information. He requires hurdle help to make these connections rather than doing so independently.

Lack of transferability can also be seen when Joey reads aloud words. During a session on March 14, 2011, Joey was working with word families such as –*at* and –*an*. He completed a “brain dump” where he compiled a list of words that met the criteria of the word families. He then completed an independent picture sort where he was able to sort pictures of words that were within the word families indicated previously. At the end of the lesson, Joey was asked to read a short paragraph that integrated the word families that he had been practicing. Joey completed this activity with 60% accuracy, having only identified 6 out of 10 words correctly. When we reviewed the paragraph together and I prompted him on the words he didn’t know by saying, “what *family* sound does that make?” he was able to achieve 100% accuracy.
When working with Joey during these sessions, I initially devoted each session to one specific skill (i.e. vowel sounds, word families, blends, etc.) due to his lack of transferability. Towards the end of our sessions, I began to combine skills within one session to help strengthen his transferability. This was successful due to the fact that I was combining skills that were previously taught; they were familiar to him and he was able to make the connections. As seen in his post-assessment data, Joey was able to transfer skills he reviewed or acquired during our sessions to help him spell or read words he previously was not able to.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Assessment</th>
<th>Post Assessment</th>
<th>Activity used to Transfer Skill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>stik</td>
<td>stick</td>
<td>Combined short vowel sounds with blended endings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shin</td>
<td>shine</td>
<td>Combined long vowel combinations with silent e</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reflection

Reflection is an important process for readers of any level or ability. Eventually students need to set goals for themselves that they are responsible for working towards. Especially in the middle school years, a transfer of ownership is done between teacher and student; where the responsibility for learning is no longer the sole responsibility of the teacher but rather the student as well. In Joey’s case, he had a difficult time taking over this ownership and required a great deal of reinforcement in the area of self-confidence and self-motivation.

After each session, Joey and I sat down so he could reflect on the lesson/activity that was presented to him that day. During these reflections, Joey and I had conversations about the work he was being asked to complete and how he felt completing it. In the beginning of this project, there was a reoccurring statement that Joey made after each session: “Miss Homer, why do I need to learn this stuff, you know I can’t read.” When given the response of, “You need to learn these things because they will help you with your reading.” Joey began to meltdown. He could
not see the transferability of the skills he was learning to being able to read, despite the fact that
reading was part of each activity. This unwillingness to take ownership of his learning and
allowance of self-doubt to overcome his thoughts went on for almost half of the project despite
evident growth on his part. It was during a session on March 11, 2011 that Joey finally began to
reflect on what he had learned and how it will help him in school.

The session began the same way as previous sessions: review of skills previously
learned. Joey’s lack of self-confidence was still illustrated through his various remarks such as,
“I can’t do this.” or “Why are we doing this again? You know I can’t read.” During this
particular session on March 11, 2011, we were working on transferring the skills we learned
when practicing with long vowel sounds and applying them to learn words with a silent e. In the
previous session, Joey did a vowel sort with long vowels and there were some words in the sort
that had the silent e. For the purpose of that activity, those words went under the “oddball”
column because it didn’t fit in the vowel categories that we had originally set up. Joey did not
like the “oddball” title because he felt that the words belonged in the vowel sort and should have
a better title than that (observations 03/10/2011). So we decided to extend the activity by finding
a common theme in the words under the “oddball” category. Joey quickly identified that each
word ended in an e (observations 03/10/2011). This sparked a conversation that served as a
preview for our silent e session.

During this session, Joey made a connection between what we were learning with what
he previously learned on the March 10th session. He remembered our conversation about silent e
and that when you see a word ending with an e the first vowel says its name. This transferability
was evident in Joey’s body language and expression (observations 03/11/2011). He was asked to
spell the word shine, a word that he has previously spelled incorrectly in his pre-assessment, and
this time around he spelled it correctly. When asked how he knew to spell the word he made a
to tell me why this word should have an e on the end of it, he said, “because the i says its
name”.

After completing this session, Joey was physically livelier; he was moving around during
the lesson, smiling, using hand motions when he knew the answer to a question and was keeping
his head up off of the table (observations, 3/11/2011). During our reflection time, I asked why
he was so happy he responded, “I don’t know. I just think I am getting better at this.” I asked
him, “Better at what?” He replied, “Reading”. This session marked one of the first times that
Joey talked about his reading abilities in a positive light. He the previous sessions, he often
ended each reflection either making a negative comment or having a complete meltdown
(observations, 3/7/2011-3/10/2011). The process of reflecting not only on his abilities but on the
emotions that his inabilities created, allowed Joey to come to this conclusion.

In addition to reflecting on his abilities, Joey was asked to reflect on the effectiveness of
the activities he completed during this project. For this reflection, he filled out a half slip of
paper and rated each session using a scale 0-5 (0 being “never do these lessons again” and 5
being “this would be a good lesson to do with other students”). The purpose of this reflection
was for Joey to tell me what kind of learner he was and what kind of activities he enjoyed doing.
The first three sessions I created three different types of activities (word/picture sorts, worksheet,
flashcards) and had Joey reflect on each activity using the rating scale. This was how I found out
that he preferred using picture/word sorts to practice skills (Appendix C). This allowed me to
tailor each lesson to activities that Joey preferred to do rather than ones he was forced to do.

Implications

Based on the findings from my sessions with Joey, there were several implications that could
impact the instructional environment for students in the classroom. These implications can offer
suggestions and ideas for teachers as they develop strategies or methods for strengthening word identification skills.

Based on the results of Joey’s pre/post assessments (Appendix A and B) and the growth that was made, it is evident that there is a need for word identification strategies, specifically spelling, to be taught at the middle school level. In the literature reviewed, Harris (2007) stated, “there is a high correlation between learning to spell words and learning to read words, as the underlying processes and knowledge base used to spell are much the same as reading.” As shown in Joey’s pre/post assessment data for both the spelling inventories as well as the running reading records, growth was achieved in both areas. This suggests that implementing a spelling program in correlation with guided reading is an effective method for promoting word identification skills.

After completing the project, reviewing the data, and reflecting on the research as a whole, there were limitations and things I would have done differently. For one, I only tested one method for word identification and that was using Words their Way. It is difficult to determine whether this program alone was the reason for the growth or if other methods are just as successful. Since there were a limited number of sessions, there was not enough time to implement two methods accurately enough to receive sufficient data. I believe the time constraint was a nuisance that not only impacted the project but also the overall learning for Joey. I felt that the data collection was rushed and had I more time to collect data, I would have a better idea of the implications of my data rather than just a basic assumption.

In addition to time constraints, I also thought that the month I collected the data was a factor. March is the only month of the school year that students attend school for a full month - there are not breaks or holidays. Traditionally, this month has always been difficult because it comes between two long breaks (winter and spring break). Students are often less attentive, more irritated and less willing to put forth his or her best efforts. In addition, Joey received reading services every day for
approximately 40-45 minutes. By the time it came for him to work with me, it was a struggle for him to maintain his focus and motivation to complete the lessons.

During this project it came to my attention that student perceptions of lessons and their understanding of their abilities play a major factor in their acquisition of skills. Coming from a middle school perspective, students are coming to an age where they are formulating their own opinions and coming to their own conclusions about their education. By having Joey reflect on each lesson, simply stating whether it was “good” or “bad”, gave him a voice in the classroom that not many students are given the opportunity to share. In addition, Joey was reflecting on his own thoughts and feelings about himself as a learner. This creates a discussion about student perspective and how students can come into a classroom with a predetermined outcome in his or her mind. It is up to us as teachers to give students the opportunity to erase this self doubt by providing opportunities for them to be successful with his or her own abilities.

Conclusion

“Reading is an essential component of education which has been linked to an individual’s overall achievement and success over their lifetime. With more than half of all school-aged children in the United States reading below grade level, a national emergency has been declared to promote reading skills” (Huang, Nelson, and Nelson, 2008, 33). Based on literature gathered, it came be suggested that the reason for this deficit in reading skills is largely due to lack of word identification skills. If students are unable to read words in isolation, how can they be expected to a sentence, paragraph or even a book? This project examined one method used in promoting word identification skills, specifically for those at the middle school level.

As a classroom teacher and future literacy specialist, teaching word identification skills has been a topic of interest for me, especially working with Joey this year. The program Words their Way that I selected from literature I had read, was helpful for Joey in learning word identification
strategies and applying them to both spelling and reading. In the long term, however, more investigation needs to occur in selecting other methods for acquiring word identification skills. Perhaps this project will serve as a catalyst for research into other successful methods or programs used to promote effective word identification skills.
References


Appendix A

Pre-Assessment Spelling Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words Their Way Primary Spelling Inventory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. fan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. pet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. big</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. rob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. hop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. what</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. gom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. sied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. stik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. shin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. brem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. blad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. cock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Trit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. chood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. chall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. wish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. thorn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. shouldid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. spoil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. joy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. third</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. camd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. tris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. claping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. riding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vowels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consonants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words Their Way Primary Spelling Inventory Feature Guide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joey 1:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Appendix B

Post Assessment Spelling Inventory

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>fan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>pet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>dip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>rob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>hop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>wat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>gom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>sed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>stick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>shine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>dream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>glad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>cock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>forte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>chod</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>wish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>horn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>should</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>spoil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>soul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>third</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>camd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>these</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>clapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>riding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Name: JOEY</td>
<td>Words Spelled Correctly: 28/38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature to Feature Pattern Recognition</td>
<td><strong>LETTER-NONLETTER FEATURES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter Initial</td>
<td>Letter Final</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w</td>
<td>w</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sh</td>
<td>sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ch</td>
<td>ch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>th</td>
<td>th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Words Within Word Pattern**
- hot
- got
-them
- each
- chalk
- wash
- cloth
- church
- chimp
- chime
- chart
- caught
- chased
- chink
- climb
- chair

**Words Spelling Strategies**
- Initial: **Sh**
- Terminal: **Sh**
- Medial: **Sh**
- Initial: **Ch**
- Terminal: **Ch**
- Medial: **Ch**
- Initial: **Th**
- Terminal: **Th**
- Medial: **Th**
- Initial: **Ch**
- Terminal: **Ch**
- Medial: **Ch**

**Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling Instruction © 2008 by Pearson Education, Inc.**

Page 267
Example of Activity Rating Scale

Activity Rating for 5/9/2011

Today we completed Picture/Word Sort

How would you rate this activity? 0 1 2 3 4 5

Why did you like this activity?
Cause we got to move around and stuff we didn't just just there and write on paper

Scriber: Stoner 5/9/11