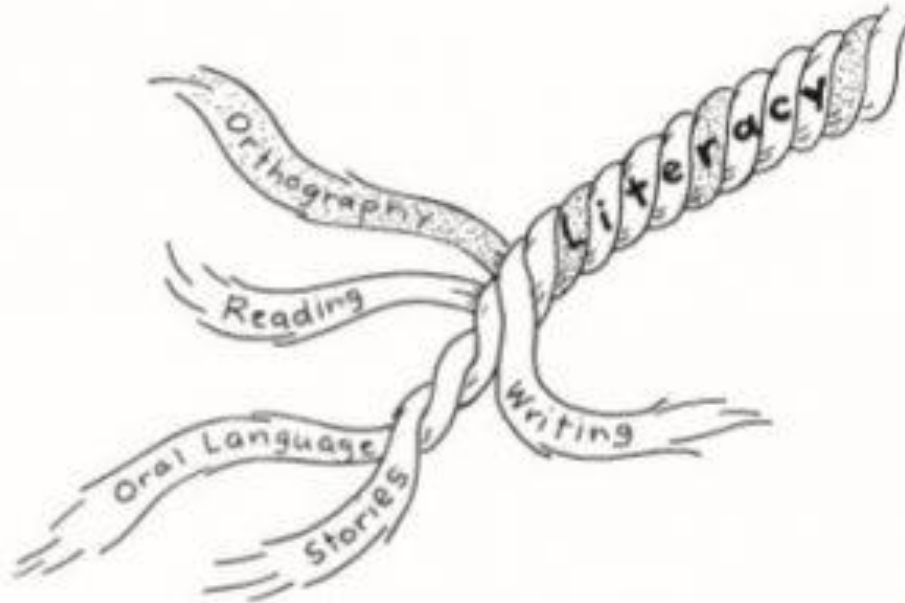


Word Study

Teton Literacy Center

Why Word Study?

Students need to know the ways in which their written language represents the language they speak. It is the “key to literacy”.



More about the “why”

Students need to become fast and accurate in their recognition of words, in order to focus their attention on making meaning. Word study helps connect reading and writing.

Hands-on opportunities to manipulate words and features, which helps create pathways in their brains.

Students learn how to look at and analyze words to deepen their understanding of how spelling works to represent sound and meaning.

It is constructivist and helps us make sense of the world through categorizing.

Predictable Spelling Confusions

When should you correct their spelling?

Influence of students' first languages... (e.g. sit for seat)

“Eyes and Ears”

Teach students to use their eyes and ears to hear and see patterns in words.

Ask, “what do you notice about the words?”

Continuum of Support

1. Teacher modeling and explicit explanations
2. Guided practice
3. Independent practice
4. Check and reflect

Let's Sort!

1. **Review the words** (Can (s)he read the words? Does (s)he know what the words mean?)
2. **Establish the categories** (e.g. “How might we sort these words?” or “What do you notice about these words?”)
3. **Model putting several words into each category and explain why you are sorting that way.**
4. Turn the task over to the **student to finish the sort.**
5. **Check and reflect.**

Check and Reflect: Things to ask students

- Why did you put that there?
- I see one word in this column that doesn't fit. Can you find it?
- Why did you sort this way?
- What did you notice about the words in each column?
- How are these words alike?
- Why is this word an oddball? (only in sorts with oddballs)

Types of Sorts/Activities

- Closed sorts (give guide words and let them sort)
- Guess the teacher's category
- Open sort (students choose how to categorize)
- Blind sort (good for those sorts in which sounds are important)
- Writing sort (write the words under the correct headers)
- Blind writing sort (students think about sounds and visual features together)
- Speed sorts
- Word Hunts
- Draw and label vocabulary
- Games
- Dictated or silly sentences/stories

General Tips

- Avoid “rules”. Try to get student to make generalizations without defining them as rules.
- Don’t hide exceptions (e.g. love or give)
- Try to make as many connections as possible in their reading and writing.
- Use analogies. For example, “you know how to spell see, and that can help you spell seeds,” or “use what you know about how to spell care to spell dare”.
- Allow invented spelling unless it is a pattern you have practiced before. In that case, hold the student accountable for transferring it to their writing.

Please contact me anytime with questions:

Buffy Allen

ballen@tcsd.org

Thank you!
