



Chapter 9

Word Study and Fluency: The Dictado and Other Authentic Methods

Key Points

- Students learn discrete skills best by using words, sentences, and paragraphs they already understand.
- The explicit teaching of discrete word-study skills should come only after comprehension has been established.
- Student writing provides one of the best sources to determine what word-study skills to teach to two-language learners.
- The strategies used to teach word study and fluency should match how the language works. Fluency reflects comprehension.

Book Study Activity Objectives: Participants will:

- Activity 1: Compare and contrast word study and initial literacy skill instruction in Spanish and English.
- Activity 2: Suggest ways to contextualize word study and fluency skills

Instruction for activities, and notes for book study leader

Activity 1: Compare and contrast word study and initial literacy

Notes for book study leader:

- Copy word sort on card stock and cut out the separate parts.
- Make sure there is one word sort for every two participants.
- Ask partnerships to sort the explanations according to title (Syllables, Vowels and Consonants, etc.) and according to language (Spanish or English).
- As a culminating activity, reflect on the instructional implication of the differences between Spanish and English initial literacy skills.

Activity 2: Suggest ways to contextualize word study and fluency skills

Notes for book study leader:

- Complete the graph with possible ways of contextualizing word study and fluency
- This is a good way of evaluating the current practices around word study and fluency, to establish if the current practices contextualize the words, sentences, and paragraphs first.

Word Sort – Chapter 9, Activity #1

ENGLISH		SPANISH
Syllable awareness emerges before phoneme awareness and is a stronger predictor of reading success. Understanding how to break words into syllable helps students learn to decode.	Syllables	Because it is not a syllabic language, learning to break words into syllables plays a smaller role in learning to decode.
Vowels, because they are regular, are learned before consonants. The 5 vowels make 5 sounds. Beginning in Kindergarten, students can learn to differentiate between strong (a-e-o) and weak (i-u) vowels.	Vowels and Consonants	The building blocks of literacy are the names and sounds of each letter, which are taught very systematically. Consonants, because they are more regular, are learned before vowels. The 5 vowels make up to 15 sounds.
Learning letter names can interfere with initial literacy, because letter names do not directly match letter sounds. Names of letters are learned formally after letter sounds and syllables.	Alphabet and Initial Sound	Knowing initial letter names and sounds are predictors of reading success. This is such an important skill that students are taught and tested over time to see if they have mastered letter names.

Spelling is transparent and regular, and words are highly decodable. High frequency word lists are organized by those specific elements of spelling that are challenging for emergent writers.	Sight Words and Spelling	Spelling is challenging and the spelling of many high frequency words needs to be memorized. High frequency word lists are organized by initial letter (alphabetical order) or by spelling pattern.
Phonological awareness occurs through writing, not through oral language development. If you can say it, you can write it, because of the tight relationship between sound and symbol. The importance of rhyming occurs at the end of the word when studying word families not at the beginning of the word. Word families include words that share a common root.	Rhyming and Word Families	Understanding and developing onset and rime is fundamental in order to be able to decode and to understand the relationship between sound and symbol as it appears at the beginning of the words, and this skill is learned and taught orally. Word families include words with the same endings.
The concept of the accent is very important as it determines word meaning, not only as it relates to writing and spelling (the orthographic accent as in <i>papá</i>) but also the diacritic accent (<i>mí</i> vs. <i>mí</i>). Understanding how vowels and syllables are formed is fundamental to being able to use accents correctly.	Accent and Accent Marks	The accent is pronounced by placing oral emphasis on a sound but is not captured in writing.

Chapter 9 Activity #2

Words or phrases used to	Skills taught	<i>Students learn discrete skills best by using words, sentences, and paragraphs they already understand</i>
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teach word study and fluency skills		What is the comprehensible context that makes these words, sentences, or paragraphs meaningful to the students?	How has understanding of these words, sentences or paragraphs been previously established?	How has oracy (listening and speaking) been previously developed with these words, sentences, or paragraphs?
Students' names	Syllabification of words; strong and weak vowels	The context is the classroom community. The names of their peers represent meaningful words that are needed in order to carry out classroom activities.	Through interactive "getting to know you activities" in the beginning of the year.	Students have spent several weeks introducing themselves and other students, identifying students, and playing oral name games.