Chapter Five

The Recognition and Spelling of the Most Frequent Words

From what I can see up here, it looks like those things on Earth they call sight words. They're some kind of glue that makes it possible for them to communicate.

—Bogglestar

Children who arrive in first grade with more knowledge of letters, deeper phonological awareness, greater familiarity with environmental print, the ability to recognize sight words with great speed and accuracy and with larger vocabularies are more likely to learn to read without difficulty.

Fifth Objective For Your Teaching Success:
Teach a variety of ways for all students to recognize, read, and spell words.

But What Are Sight Words?

Sight words are the ones you use so much you get bored with your own voice—words like stop, help, go away, no, come back. Instant sight words are those words you recognize in one second—max. They are considered the 100 most frequently used words that we read, write, speak, and listen to.

I define instant sight words a bit more rigorously: An instant sight word is a word that can be both read and spelled within 2 seconds. Go ahead, try it. Read and spell this instant sight word silently within 2 seconds:

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come
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Now try the same word, speaking it and spelling it out loud. What happened this time? A bit more difficult? That’s to be expected. So have your students keep practicing the instant sight words with the goal of speaking and spelling them in 2 seconds. But slow down a bit at first so they won’t get discouraged.

In this chapter we’ll concentrate on teaching instant recognition of words whose meanings are usually understood and whose frequency of use is extremely high—words like is, you, that, be, or, and, them. On the other hand, if you’re traveling in Europe or Asia, there’s an even more important sight word. Take your choice: toilette, cabinet, gabinetto, tearai, damas, or caballeros. It’s amazing how quickly some words become sight words.
How Sight Words Help You Think and Read

Many of the instant sight words that we all need for reading and writing are function words like these:

- Personal pronouns—*us, they, I*
- Articles—*a, the*
- Relative pronouns—*this, those*
- Prepositions—*over, in, out, on*

Many of these instant sight words are hard to define, yet they are crucial for reading fluently—and for grasping the complete message of an author. For instance, what message do you get from this sentence?

> Quickly grabbed pair tongs threw smoldering liner sink.

All right now let's slip in those special sight words called function words and see what happens to the meaning of the message:

> Quickly *he* grabbed *a* pair of *tongs* and threw *the* smoldering liner *into the* sink.

What a difference those six little sight words make! Learning to recognize simple function words by sight can help children predict what word is coming next, enhance their reading fluency, and grasp the total message of an author.

Pressley (2000) gets straight to the heart of it: “When less effort can be put into decoding during reading, there is more short-term capacity for comprehension of text. . . . When words are recommended automatically, this maximizes the capacity available for understanding. . . .” (p. 552).

Sight Words and Vocabulary

Instant sight words also help us predict the meaning of unknown words. Watch what happens in this difficult sentence:

> His foin was wide of the mark.

What in the world is the author talking about? What's a foin? Staring at a strange word gets us nowhere, but if we study the functional sight words that surround it, we might get somewhere.
We know from the sight word his that a boy or man is involved. The sight word was tells us that we’re talking about the past, and it also connects foin to the word wide, which might be remembered as a measurement. The sight words of the relate wide to mark, meaning the foin was too far away from where he wanted it to be.

Wait a minute. By using our own past experiences, we can guess that this foin might have something to do with a game—something like golf, maybe. And on and on we go, relying on those functional sight words—bis, was, of, the.

Despite its importance vocabulary should be only one feature of your reading show. The U.S. government’s National Reading Panel (2002) rightfully insists that we include all five features in our show: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, all of which interact to make a learning program suitable for teaching children to read and write.

**Sight Words and Spelling**

A child who learns the instant sight words learns the spelling of those words in a natural way. A positive side effect of this learning is being able to spell easily while composing a written document—provided the child has largely mastered phonemic awareness. As you probably remember from chapter 3, when you and I write something, we spell the words we need by subconsciously listening to the phonemes we silently create. Steffler (2001) calls this “implicit memory and implicit learning.” The
writer is unaware of learning phonemic awareness and mastering those wonderful instant sight words.

Having children learn to recognize and spell the instant sight words is one of the very best ways to teach spelling. By having them learn to rapidly recognize and spell those high-frequency words, you will be giving them a tremendous advantage. If you also have them memorize families of onsets and rimes, you are nearly guaranteeing their success.

As Lenski and Nierstheimer (2004) have discovered, “When children are taught the spelling patterns of word families, they are empowered to read and spell many more words” (p. 186). And as Johnston (1999) said earlier, “The ability to hear, see, and use the rime as a reliable cue for reading new words and spelling words that sound alike, offers students a powerful insight into how English spelling works” (p. 64). A similar message is found in the International Reading Association’s Standard 6.5: Teach students to recognize and use various spelling patterns in the English language as an aid to word identification. (See Appendix A for further examination of the professional standards.)

Which Sight Words to Teach First

It makes sense to start with the words children really want to know by sight when they want both to express themselves in writing and the words that are both common to their speaking vocabulary and most frequently encountered in print. But how can the classroom teacher determine which words are most frequently encountered in print? Fortunately, this job has already been done by various educators, such as Dolch (1936), Johnston (1999), and Fry, Kress, and Fountoukidis (1993). Fry’s list, which seems to be the most used today, appears in Figure 5.1.

Depending on the age of your students, I recommend that you teach the first 50 to 200 instant sight words on Fry’s list (Fry et al., 1993). This list was selected through an extensive process of examining 500-word samples from 1,045 books in 12 subject areas in Grades 3 through 9. Samples were also taken from library books and magazines.

I have selected the top 240 words from Fry’s list rather than the usual top 100, in order to include more of the popular high-frequency irregular words that “God didn’t spell correctly,” as one of my second graders told me. Words such as *of, one, some, would, two, could*, and *come* can best be learned through the left side of the brain, the side that deals with words and explanations. Why? Because these word spellings don’t fit into the phonogram patterns that you and I studied in chapter 4. Irregular words require a child’s visual capacity more than an auditory capacity. Memorizing is the only way to master them.
The Recognition and Spelling of the Most Frequent Words

The top 240 instant words.

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<td>from</td>
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<td>but</td>
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<td>when</td>
<td>your</td>
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<td>use</td>
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<td>an</td>
<td>each</td>
<td>which</td>
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<td>do</td>
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<td>their</td>
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<td>will</td>
<td>up</td>
<td>other</td>
<td>about</td>
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<td>out</td>
<td>many</td>
<td>then</td>
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<td>these</td>
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<td>some</td>
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<td>like</td>
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<td>into</td>
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<td>write</td>
<td>go</td>
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<td>no</td>
<td>way</td>
<td>73–78</td>
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<td>could</td>
<td>people</td>
<td>my</td>
<td>than</td>
<td>first</td>
<td>water</td>
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<td>been</td>
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<td>find</td>
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<td>down</td>
<td>day</td>
<td>did</td>
<td>get</td>
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<td>come</td>
<td>made</td>
<td>may</td>
<td>part</td>
<td>over</td>
<td>new</td>
<td>97–102</td>
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<tr>
<td>sound</td>
<td>take</td>
<td>only</td>
<td>little</td>
<td>work</td>
<td>know</td>
<td>103–108</td>
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<td>place</td>
<td>years</td>
<td>live</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>back</td>
<td>give</td>
<td>109–114</td>
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<td>most</td>
<td>very</td>
<td>after</td>
<td>things</td>
<td>our</td>
<td>just</td>
<td>115–120</td>
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<tr>
<td>name</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>sentence</td>
<td>man</td>
<td>think</td>
<td>say</td>
<td>121–126</td>
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<td>great</td>
<td>where</td>
<td>help</td>
<td>through</td>
<td>much</td>
<td>before</td>
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<td>line</td>
<td>right</td>
<td>too</td>
<td>means</td>
<td>old</td>
<td>any</td>
<td>133–138</td>
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<tr>
<td>same</td>
<td>tell</td>
<td>boy</td>
<td>following</td>
<td>came</td>
<td>want</td>
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<td>show</td>
<td>also</td>
<td>around</td>
<td>form</td>
<td>three</td>
<td>small</td>
<td>145–150</td>
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<td>set</td>
<td>put</td>
<td>end</td>
<td>does</td>
<td>another</td>
<td>well</td>
<td>151–156</td>
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<tr>
<td>large</td>
<td>must</td>
<td>big</td>
<td>even</td>
<td>such</td>
<td>because</td>
<td>157–162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>turned</td>
<td>here</td>
<td>why</td>
<td>asked</td>
<td>went</td>
<td>men</td>
<td>163–168</td>
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<tr>
<td>read</td>
<td>need</td>
<td>land</td>
<td>different</td>
<td>home</td>
<td>us</td>
<td>169–174</td>
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<tr>
<td>move</td>
<td>try</td>
<td>kind</td>
<td>hand</td>
<td>picture</td>
<td>again</td>
<td>175–180</td>
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<tr>
<td>change</td>
<td>off</td>
<td>play</td>
<td>spell</td>
<td>air</td>
<td>away</td>
<td>181–186</td>
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<tr>
<td>animals</td>
<td>house</td>
<td>point</td>
<td>page</td>
<td>letters</td>
<td>mother</td>
<td>187–192</td>
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<tr>
<td>answer</td>
<td>found</td>
<td>study</td>
<td>still</td>
<td>learn</td>
<td>should</td>
<td>193–198</td>
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<td>American</td>
<td>world</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>every</td>
<td>near</td>
<td>add</td>
<td>199–204</td>
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<tr>
<td>food</td>
<td>between</td>
<td>own</td>
<td>below</td>
<td>country</td>
<td>plants</td>
<td>205–210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>last</td>
<td>school</td>
<td>father</td>
<td>keep</td>
<td>trees</td>
<td>never</td>
<td>211–216</td>
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<tr>
<td>started</td>
<td>city</td>
<td>earth</td>
<td>eyes</td>
<td>light</td>
<td>thought</td>
<td>217–222</td>
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<td>head</td>
<td>under</td>
<td>story</td>
<td>saw</td>
<td>left</td>
<td>don’t</td>
<td>223–228</td>
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<tr>
<td>few</td>
<td>while</td>
<td>along</td>
<td>might</td>
<td>close</td>
<td>something</td>
<td>229–234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seemed</td>
<td>next</td>
<td>hard</td>
<td>open</td>
<td>example</td>
<td>beginning</td>
<td>235–240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 5.1 The top 240 instant words.

How Important Are the Top 100 Words?

Let’s take a look at how important the 100 most frequent words can be for our students. Fry, Kress, and Fountoukidis (1993) discovered that children who have learned the top 100 instant sight words are halfway to understanding whatever they read through Grade 12. How amazing! We have well over a half-million words in English, but half of everything we write and read from age 6 to 17 depends on the 100 most frequent ones.

Take a special look at the top 10 most frequent words—they account for 24% of the words used during that same time frame. Try writing or speaking a paragraph without at least one of these 10 words:

THE OF AND A TO IN IS YOU THAT IT

How Many Instant Words Should Students Master?

**Professional Standard: Guides students to refine their spelling through reading and writing**

You and I have already talked about this a little, but based on research by Robert Leibert (1991), I would recommend that students master at least the first 80 words by the end of first grade; the first 160 by the end of second grade; and the total 240 by the end of third grade. More advanced children may master 120 by the end of first grade and the second 120 by the end of second grade. In schools that are in operation 160 or more days a year, either of those schedules would require fewer than one instant sight word per day.

Challenge your students by telling them something like this: “You can get in the Instant Sight Word Club after you have learned 10 sight words. But you must say each word first and then spell it out loud in 2 seconds.” Those who learn and retain 10 sight words that way can join the Instant Sight Word Club—and be called the Smart Beginners or whatever inspires them. Those who learn 20 instant sight words can be the Wonderful Twenties; 30 sight words, the Fabulous Thirties; 40 sight words, the Fantastic Forties. This incentive should continue throughout the first year until students have learned at least the first 80 words.

How to Help Students Master Sight Words

For many decades ‘basal readers’, or level-book stories, served as a major medium for gradually teaching new words in print. Because basal readers were designed to control the difficulty of the selections—stories, poems, and articles—the publishers introduced new words in practically every selection. So without teachers even try-
ing, many of the high-frequency instant words were gradually introduced. Alas, how-
however, the stories were not written by highly skilled authors, and they were required
to use specific new words.

Naturally, both teachers and students were turned off—to put it mildly. Here’s a
sample: “Oh look, Jane, see Dick run. Oh, look. See Spot. See Spot run.” The dedi-
cated educators who created those books were doing their best to make the stories
easy for young children to read. But companies stopped publishing those basal read-
ers, now called anthologies.

Instead, the companies began publishing works by successful authors like Mar-
garet Wise Brown, Eric Carle, Beatrice de Regniers, Bill Martin, Dr. Seuss, and Judith
Viorst. Thus, control over the words in a book or anthology was no longer tight, but
children could read the books they thoroughly enjoyed.

Unfortunately, those days may be over. Books similar to basal readers are back
again, how called level books and under tighter government persuasion than ever.
Today’s anthologies include many stories written by unpublished authors who evi-
dently do what they’re told. The main goal of publishers today seems to be to in-
clude high-frequency words that are repeated.

From past experience I am sure some children can learn the instant words strictly
from the practice provided by this type of anthology, but many children need more
meaningful practice. Merely repeating a word 20 or 30 times may not work, espe-
cially if the book is too difficult or uninteresting or if the teacher does not supple-
ment the selections with interesting word activities (Rasinski & Padak, 2000). More
is needed.
Fortunately, many teachers are making sure that their “extra” books, those written by successful authors for children, are being read. My hat’s off to them. Most schools today do have silent reading time, as well as a time for reading aloud. And nothing is stopping teachers from reading really good books to their students. After all, it’s been known for a century or more that reading aloud to students is often the best way to motivate and teach, no matter what the age. In addition, we can still take our kids to the school library—even though we might not have as much time for that any more.

Research on Patterned Predictable Books

One of the best forms of additional practice can be found in predictable patterned books like *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, Who Do You See?* Researchers have found that patterned books can work even better than basal readers in teaching essential sight words.

In a study by Bridge, Winograd, and Haley (1983), experimental and control groups of first graders were taught to read the same 77 words, with the experimental group using patterned books and the control group using basal readers with very few patterned stories in them. Both the control and the experimental groups consisted of below-average learners. The teaching occurred for 25 minutes a day, 5 days a week, for 4 weeks. The results are shown here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
<th>Words Gained</th>
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<tr>
<td>Patterned books</td>
<td>15 words</td>
<td>52 words</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basal readers</td>
<td>23 words</td>
<td>35 words</td>
<td>12</td>
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Do you see what I see? The patterned-book group was hot, wouldn’t you say? The basal-reader group was just sort of tepid. What made the difference?

Many of the children who had the benefit of using patterned books changed their strategy from slowly sounding out each word to relying more on context clues as well. Furthermore, when asked how they felt about reading out loud in their reading group, these children were much more positive than the basal-reader group.

Look at the list of more than 200 predictable patterned books in Appendix M at the end of this book. And don’t forget that there are children’s book sections in every single public library in the United States, and they don’t cost a penny. Go on. Be a creative professional and enjoy what you teach. Those books are great bedtime reading for adults, they soothe you and take you away from your troubles. And they make you popular with your students.

Steps for Teaching Instant Sight Words

These are the steps followed by the teachers in the study.

1. Select an enjoyable patterned book that emphasizes the target words.
2. Read the book out loud.
3. Read the book again, with the children joining in whenever they can predict what comes next.

4. Have the children take turns with echo reading (rereading sentences after you read them) and choral reading (rereading that alternates between two groups, also called antiphonal reading).

5. Read the text from teacher-made charts (e.g., flip charts, overhead transparencies, or dry erase boards) with no picture clues. Ask the children to echo-read and/or choral-read.

6. Have the children place matching sentence strips on the charts. (Create the charts so that a sentence strip can be taped under a sentence.)

7. Have the children place matching word strips on the charts, saying the word as they match it. Ask the children to match the words in the correct order at first, then in random order.

8. Join the children in chorally rereading the entire story.

9. Finally, place word strips in random order at the bottom of the chart, and have the children come up and match the strips to words in the story, saying each word as they match it.

The only step I would add to this set of procedures is to have the children write the target words as well as read them. Experience has shown me that writing helps children remember words.

Do You Need Books Fitting the Instant Sight Words

When using patterned books in this way, it might seem a bit tricky to find books that contain the exact words you want to teach. This is less of a problem than you might imagine, because the list of instant sight words is composed of high-frequency words. You can count on most patterned books to include many of the words from the instant sight word list. To provide practice with most of the words on the list, you can gather a collection of patterned books from libraries and make them available to your students while at school.

You may also want to create your own patterned stories to emphasize particular words. You can do this by adapting a patterned story that already exists. For instance, I adapted the following story from Bill Martin’s book *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* It features a dozen words from the instant word list, as well as three repetitions of several two-word phrases. My adapted story is called “Little Bug, Little Bug, What Do You Fear?”

Little bug, little bug, what do you fear?
A hungry bird might come for me. That’s what I fear. Hungry bird, hungry bird, what do you fear?
A stalking cat might come for me. That’s what I fear.
Stalking cat, stalking cat, what do you fear?  
A barking dog might come for me. That’s what I fear.  
Barking dog, barking dog, what do you fear?  
A teasing child might come for me. That’s what I fear.  
Teasing child, teasing child, what do you fear?  
My angry brother might come for me. That’s what I fear.  
Angry brother, angry brother, what do you fear?  
A scary night might come for me. That’s what I fear.  
Scary night, scary night, what do you fear?  
A friendly sun might come for me. That’s what I fear.  
Friendly sun, friendly sun, what do you fear?  
NOTHING!

Easy Literature

The more easy books children read, the more practice they have in using words from the instant word list. Therefore, if at all possible, these books should be readily available in the classroom.

In 1975 the first “Children’s Choices” was published in *The Reading Teacher*, a journal of the International Reading Association. Since that time teachers, librarians, and parents have looked forward each fall to the appearance of a new list, both in *The Reading Teacher* and on the Web site for the International Reading Association. The idea behind the list is simple: If children are to learn about the joy of reading and become proficient lifelong readers, they need to know that books are fun (Children’s Choices, 2003). How are the Children’s Choices books selected? Each year approximately 500 new children’s books are sent to each of five test sites across the United States. At each of these sites, about 2,000 children participate in reading and evaluating the books. The votes from all five sites are tabulated, and the most popular books (usually just over 100 titles) are selected to appear as the year’s Children’s Choices.

Children’s literature experts at each site then place the favorites in several categories, such as beginning independent reading, younger readers, middle grades, and older readers. By selecting the categories of beginning independent reading and younger readers, you can expect the books to be at least moderately easy and contain many repetitions of instant sight words. Before you read any further, turn back to Appendix N and look at the list of 2001–2004 Children’s Choices for Beginning Readers Ages 5–8. That’s a great list, don’t you think? And it should give you plenty to choose from.

Games Versus Worksheets

Teachers often use games for teaching or practicing instant sight words, but there’s always a fear that maybe the children aren’t really learning anything important when they play games. “Aren’t they just having fun?” one teacher asked me. And another asked, “Don’t the games distract them from real learning?” I can understand fears like this, because I've had them, too.
Some Research on Using Games

Research shows that the use of games to reinforce sight vocabulary can work quite well—in fact, much better than traditional workbooks, worksheets, or activity books. One of the best-designed studies on the use of games in teaching sight words was conducted by Dolores Dickerson (1982), who compared the effectiveness of games with worksheets, using 274 first graders from 30 classrooms in a large urban school system. Those children who knew more than 25% of the words before the experiment began were eliminated from the study. The results looked like those shown in Figure 5.2.

After 6 weeks the passive-games approach brought about a 30% greater gain than the worksheet approach; the active-games approach, a 57% greater gain. Those are pretty impressive differences. What made the difference?

The worksheets involved isolated individuals completing some matching exercises and some sentence-completion exercises, whereas the games involved two or more individuals in a cooperative learning situation. Psychologists have known since the late 1950s that even monkeys can learn faster and more thoroughly when learning with a partner or two. Psychologists have also known for decades about the effect of feedback on learning: frequent and specific feedback usually results in greater learning. The games group received abundant feedback of an instantaneous and highly specific type. (Example: “No, that’s not thought; that’s through. You have to go back a step.”)

What were the active games that helped to cause that 57% greater gain? They included Word Toss, Words in a Circle, See the Same, Word Point, and Stepword from Teaching Slow Learners Through Active Games (Humphrey & Sullivan, 1970). Another active game was a variation on the commercial game Twister from Milton Bradley. The passive games, which helped to create a 30% greater gain than the worksheets, were Go Fish, Word Checkers, The Snoopy Game, Concentration, Word Rummy, and Word Dominoes (Dickerson, 1982, p. 47).

Some Advice on Using Games

Dickerson’s advice might prove valuable: “Incorporating games into regular lessons and not as adjunct activities increases the value of the game, since its objective reinforces the lesson” (1982, p. 49). Dickerson believes that using games as part of direct (i.e., teacher-directed) instruction can increase the value of the game.
That idea does not negate the value of games as an indirect form of learning, as in classroom learning centers. A balanced approach using both indirect and direct forms of gaming can have great benefits in vocabulary instruction.

If you use games indirectly (i.e., without direct supervision by an adult), I would advise you to arrange it so that each child plays a particular game only a few times before moving on to another game or activity. Some children tend to keep returning to the same game again and again because of their familiarity and success with it. You might consider having a rotating monitor for the games corner, or you might simply put a different game in your literacy center.

I would introduce each game by playing it with a child in front of the other children. Then have two children play it while the others watch and ask questions: What happens if he gets the word wrong? Is it cheating if you don’t play a card that’s in your hand?

Because games can become somewhat competitive (and even unproductive in the heat of competition), I recommend these criteria for selecting competitive games:

1. Select games with a strong chance factor so that anyone can win.
2. Offer no extrinsic rewards to the winners. Let the reward for all the children be the fun of learning new words in an enjoyable way.
3. Emphasize cooperation while playing the game. You may wish to choose, modify, or create some games so that children can work with a partner or a small group.

**Direct Teaching Of Spelling**

I recommend direct as well as indirect teaching of sight words for two reasons: (1) Some children don’t seem to learn sight words indirectly as well as others do, and (2) some teachers prefer to introduce sight words directly, saving the indirect methods for later practice. In both cases a series of spelling lessons directed by the teacher can work well.

Having children spell a word out loud helps their auditory memory of the word; they learn “in fewer sessions and with lower error percentages” (Wollery, Ault, Gast, Doyle, & Mills, 1990, p. 47). In addition, it is well known among literacy educators that having children write a word can help their visual memory of it and thus increase their ability to recognize it instantly in print. Apparently, it’s the best way to lower error percentages (Wollery et al., 1990, p. 47). And accord-
The Recognition and Spelling of the Most Frequent Words

ing to Ehrlich, Oakhill, Seigneuric, and Yuill (2000), was a good predictor of their reading comprehension. Memory, after all, is the center of our attempts to learn almost anything and will certainly it will apply to the learning of instant sight words.

A Step-by-Step Spelling Experience

For this activity you can work with either a small group of children or the entire class.

1. **Introduce new sight words in context.** Learning words in context seems to work better than learning them in isolation (Adams, 1990). Select no more than three to five words.

   A. Write sentences containing the words on the chalkboard, using only one target word in each sentence. Underline the target words: "Who has my ball?" Jim asked. "I want it back." "There it is," Janet said. "Your coat is on top of it."

   B. Read the entire story or isolated sentences to your students

   C. Have the children echo-read each sentence the second and third time through.

   D. List the target words on the board. If you do teach these words to a large group, you might want an overhead projector.

   E. Point to one of the words, pronounce it, and then ask a child to spell it out loud and pronounce it. Have a different child do the same with each word. (With a group whose native language is not English, talk about word meanings also.)

2. **Insert sight words into students' auditory and visual memory.** By having students spell a word out loud from a written prompt, you are enhancing both their auditory and their visual memory of the letters in the word.

   A. Have them look at one of the new words in printed form and spell it to themselves.

   B. Have them close their eyes and imagine themselves writing the word on their papers.

   C. Ask them to look at the chalkboard to see if they have it correctly spelled.

3. **Ask students to write the same word from memory.**

   A. Have them look at the same word again and spell it to themselves.

   B. Cover the word on the chalkboard and ask students to write the word from memory.

   C. Uncover the word and ask them to check to see if they have it correctly spelled.

   D. Move through the group quickly to be sure each child has the word correctly spelled.

   E. Repeat Steps 2 and 3 for each underlined word.
4. **Practice the new words in isolation.**
   
   A. With the words written on flash cards (5” × 8”), reveal each one for no longer than a second and ask the group to say it out loud together.
   
   B. Reveal each one again to one child at a time. Do this two or three times.
   
   C. Repeat Step 4 with the first letter of each word capitalized.

5. **Practice the words in context.** To ensure that the words are learned, arrange for the children to practice the words in context.
   
   A. Go back to the sentences you put on the board at the beginning of the lesson, and ask the children to read them without your help—first chorally for each sentence, then solo.
   
   B. Have the children search for the words in their library books, basal anthologies, or other reading material; give them page numbers for their search. This kind of transfer from direct instruction to application is crucial.

6. **Practice using games.** Practice with games and activities over several days and weeks. There are a variety of ways to make the practice sessions different each time.
   
   A. Play the number-line game.
      
      (1) Draw a number line from 0 to 10 for each child who will be playing the game (see Figure 5.3).
      
      (2) Prepare a stack of about 30 word cards (3” × 5”) and a stack of about 30 number cards (some with +1, some with +2, and some with +3 written on them). Place both stacks face down.
      
      (3) Flash a word card for 1 second to each child in turn, who must read the word before drawing a number card off the top of the number stack. (A child who can’t say the word within 3 seconds after you’ve flashed the card misses a turn. But kids will seldom miss if you have provided massed practice during direct instruction and a quick review before the game.)
      
      (4) The child shows the number card and places an X above the appropriate number on the number line.
      
      (5) The first child to get to 10 wins.
   
   B. Before the children get to go somewhere—lunch, recess, or home—have them tell you the password, which is simply a word on one of the flash cards.

![Figure 5.3](image-url)  
*Figure 5.3* Number lists for sight-word games.
Use of Flash Cards

Connected Flash Cards

My favorite way of using flash cards is to use five or more cards, depending on the child’s age, as a connected sentence. You simply flash them one at a time in the exact order of the sentence, as shown in Figure 5.4.

There are several advantages in using connected flash cards.

1. The connected sentences can include mostly essential sight words, thus giving children more practice learning words from the instant sight word list.

2. It is easier and more like real reading to learn basic sight words in context, rather than in complete and unrelated isolation (Goodman, 1965).

3. Once the children have learned the particular words in context, you can challenge them by mixing up the cards and presenting them in an unrelated order, thus assuring yourself that they’ve learned the words and not just the sentence.

4. There are numerous opportunities during a school day to use connected sight words: as a morning greeting, as a message before they go home, as a quick reminder about a classroom procedure, as a beginning to a discussion.

5. You can adapt this procedure to any sight words you want them to learn—not just those on the instant sight word list.

Unconnected Flash Cards

Unconnected flash cards are fine, too, because you want your students to learn to recognize sight words instantly regardless of the context. Just be sure to make the
cards a pleasant experience rather than a threat. You can use them as a necessary ingredient for game; tell your students that they have to read a flash card correctly before they get their turn. You can even use them as a way of letting children get in line for a room exit; each child who reads a word correctly gets into line.

The best of all is Race the Clock, which my elementary-school children became addicted to. For this game you should hold a pack of 30 or more flash cards, all with instant sight words that are read to the children slowly the first time, and then faster and faster until they beg for a “break.”

This type of practice has been studied by Tan and Nicholson (1997), who claim that better results are obtained when the practice is run like a military drill—drilling until the words are recognized without any hesitation. Naturally, the drill works better when you have other students to compete with.

A similar practice program has been described by Hiebert and Taylor (2000). It would allow children to learn instant sight vocabulary as well as more difficult vocabulary in a 15-week program with a very specific design.

1. Children get 15 weeks of 30 minutes a day in one-on-one tutoring.
2. The time is evenly split between text reading and word-recognition activities—15 minutes each.
3. Activities include practicing sight words and working on phonemic awareness, the alphabetic principle, and decoding and writing.

From my experience, embedding sight words with other skills is best after simpler activities have served their purposes.

**Personal Key Words**

Aren’t there some other words besides the instant words that we should be encouraging children to learn by sight? Absolutely. In the early 1960s Sylvia Ashton-Warner labeled as key words those words kids really want to learn, and others have strongly advocated their importance as well, especially Jeannette Veatch (1996) and Veatch, Sawricki, Elliott, Falke, and Blakey (1979).

Ashton-Warner (1963) noticed that children find it very easy to learn some sight words of very high interest. In fact, she referred to key vocabulary words as one-look words because that seemed to be all it took for some new words to be permanently learned. The key words that were easiest to learn fell into several distinct groups: affection words (e.g., love, kiss, sing, daddy); fear words (e.g., skeleton, knife, yell, hit); locomotion words (e.g., airplane, truck, car); and miscellaneous regional words that children would immediately know (e.g., in Southern California Disneyland, taco, surf, Lakers).

The use of key words in a classroom of 30 children is somewhat complicated and needs to be more structured, so that a lot of learning can occur as a result of a moment or two of the teacher’s time. Here are the steps I recommend to use this approach—not as a substitute for learning the high-frequency instant words, but as a highly meaningful supplement.
1. Each child is given the opportunity to tell a new special word to the teacher (e.g., ghost, mama, motorcycle, dinosaur).

2. The teacher prints the word on a card, saying each letter as it is written.

3. The teacher asks the child what should be done with the new special word. The child could write it on paper or the chalkboard; could use it, along with other key-word cards, to create a sentence train with a friend; or could use it, along with a set of instant words, to create a sentence train—whatever the teacher and child agree on.

4. Every few days each child should bring a set of key words to the teacher or to another adult in the room—or even to an older buddy.

You can turn this into a game by having the children read their own special cards as quickly as they can. The ones they can decode in 1 to 3 seconds (depending on their experience), they get to keep. Those they miss are set aside. After missing a word three times on three different days, a child has to turn in the card. If children miss them three times, they’re probably not very interested in them; but do keep them just in case.

You can encourage the children to use their key words in a variety of ways, especially in their writing. This, of course, also provides more practice in reading the words, and their sight vocabularies continue to expand.

Environmental Print: Another Writing Experience

Have you ever noticed how readily you read signs as you wend your way home in your car or on a bus or a subway? In a boring situation your eyes and brain crave intellectual stimulation; and as inferior as advertisements are, they may be all you have. Most children have a similar experience inside the confines of the normal classroom. Whenever there’s a dull moment, their eyes roam around the room, landing on a familiar word here and there, a familiar picture—anything!

You can use the walls and objects in your classroom as a superior bus ride. Let the students help you decide what goes on the walls—involvement is the key (Strickland & Morrow, 1988, p. 156). Here are some ways to involve your students in creating environmental print.

■ Ask your students what things will be used a lot that should be labeled. Print the ideas on the chalkboard.

■ If you have students who can print reasonably well, let them create the labels and tape them up.

■ Let students label their own desks, both by name and by place—for example, “Tom Jones” and “Rocket Man Hideaway” or just “Harrison Street.” If the children also have cubbies, they might want to label those, too. All of these labels will provide endless environmental print and even conversation starters.

■ If you’re using learning centers in the classroom, many things in each center and the center itself can be labeled. Learning centers often need directions, which again provide reading practice.
Let children bring in pictures or photographs and label them. Change these at least once a month.

Gradually create lists of special words: animal words, tree words, space-travel words, words related to whatever you’re using as a topic for science or social studies or sheer enjoyment. Also consider measurement terms, computer terms, map words, dinosaurs, lists of things to take on a field trip, favorite TV shows, or worst TV shows.

Let your imagination run wild. Environmental print should express the personalities of the people living in the environment.

Creating Your Own Sight Words as You Write

The more meaningful, purposeful writing students do, the more they will have to learn how to write additional sight words—both the basic type and the more personal type. By its very nature writing causes us to pay attention to the smallest units of language sound, phonemes, and the smallest units of written language, graphemes.

Special Help for Special Students

Rivera, Koorland, and Fueyo (2002) recommend that kids with learning disabilities create a picture for each word. For the word she, for example, they can draw a picture of a girl and write the word girl underneath. They can then place the picture in their portfolio or on the word wall or on a large piece of butcher paper so that they can look at the drawing whenever they need it as a crutch. I can remember my own first-grade teacher doing something like this; she probably knew that drawing not only increases the memory, but also motivates kids to get involved.

Lenter (2003) recommends cutting up printed sentences—from newspapers, for example—and building a bank of sight words. Lenter explains that using cut-up sentences provides scaffolding for those students who try to memorize text without really focusing on it. Basically, any kind of keenly involved movement activates the brain and memories and causes us all to focus better.

Sight Words and Spanish Words in Diverse Classrooms

Professional Standard: Recognizes how learners’ differences influence their literacy development

What you’ve learned about teaching sight words in English through the use of language games and predictable books can be used in teaching your students who speak Spanish as their first language. But before we get into that kind of communication, you and I need to talk about the differences between the Spanish language.
and the English language and the reasons Spanish-speaking students often have
trouble communicating with English-speaking students and teachers. If you have al-
ready mastered Spanish, you can send me a critique every now and then, since my
Spanish has a coat of rust on it. But have no fear—each of the tables I’m giving you
is the gift of an expert, Lori Helman, from her very informative 2004 article in *The
Reading Teacher*.

**Differences That Cause Confusion**

If you have not mastered Spanish, let me share with you the differences that can
cause confusion in a diverse classroom.

- English and Spanish share many of the same phonemes (like the smallest
  language sounds in /p/ /a/ /t/, which, when decoded, become *Pat*). But
  here’s the rub: Some of the English and Spanish language sounds are not
  recognized in the other language.

- Spanish and English have many of the same consonant sounds. The English
  consonant sounds that also exist in Spanish are these: /b/, /ch/, /d/, /g/,
  /k/, /l/, /m/, /n/, /p/, /s/, /w/, /y/. That’s 14 out of the 20 consonant
  sounds that we have in the English language. What are the separate
  consonants Spanish doesn’t use? The *c* is used only with *b*. The *b* is used only
  with *c*. The *j* is used to represent the *b* sound, *qu* is spelled more intelligently
  as *kw*, and *z* is used only when *zero*, the tough guy, is around.

- Goldstein (2001) has found that the sounds shared between English and
  Spanish are sufficient for communicating between the two languages. Helman
  (2004) has found that the letters that represent the consonant sounds are
  sufficient for teaching Spanish speakers the English letter-sound
  correspondences. So there you are. Have heart, ye English-speaking teacher
  (and I’m speaking to myself as well—for a moment there I was losing hope).

- Many consonant clusters are shared between English-speaking and Spanish-
  speaking people. According to Goldstein (2000), those 10 consonant blends
  include *bl, br, cl, cr, fl, fr, gl, gr, pl*, and *pr*. . . a fact that cheers me up all the
  more. There isn’t a single one that I haven’t used dozens of times. The
  Spanish-speaking and English-speaking students are getting closer and closer
together. But stop the press, I’ve just been informed that English has many
more possibilities for consonant blends than Spanish does. Without weeping, I
will stare at Table 5.1 and observe 15 of the English consonant blends that are
*not* in the Spanish language.

- Oh my, none of those are found in the Spanish language: *st, sp, sk, sc, sm, sl,  
  sn, sw, tw, qu, scr, spl, spr, str, and squ*. Are you beginning to appreciate some
  of the difficulties that Spanish-speaking students have as they bravely and
  gradually learn this thing called English?

- It’s true that my favorite *r* sound sounds different in Spanish, but it bothers me
  not at all. I’m thoroughly heartened by the fact that I can call grass *grís* when
  I’m speaking the Spanish tongue (pardon my humor).
Seriously, we need to be very considerate when our Spanish-speaking students have trouble writing or reading what they have the right to call foreign sounds and letters.

### Spanish Speaking Errors Caused by English Sounds

Take a look at the linguistic problem in Table 5.2. Now you can understand how difficult English can be for Spanish-speaking students when it comes to pronouncing the sounds represented by the letters *d, j, r, v, z, sh, th* and the impossible word *zh*.

#### TABLE 5.1  English consonant blends that are not in Spanish.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English consonant blend</th>
<th>Sample word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>st</td>
<td>star</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sp</td>
<td>spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sk/sc</td>
<td>scar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sm</td>
<td>small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sl</td>
<td>sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sn</td>
<td>snack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sw</td>
<td>swim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tw</td>
<td>twice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qu (kw)</td>
<td>quick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scr</td>
<td>scrap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spl</td>
<td>splash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spr</td>
<td>spray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>str</td>
<td>straight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>squ (sqw)</td>
<td>square</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


#### TABLE 5.2  Possible errors caused by distinct English sounds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distinct English sound</th>
<th>May be pronounced</th>
<th>Example of a spelling error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/d/ as in <em>den</em></td>
<td>then</td>
<td>dem (for them)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/j/ as in <em>joke</em></td>
<td>choke</td>
<td>gob (job)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/r/ as in <em>rope</em></td>
<td>(rolled r) rope, wope</td>
<td>waipen (ripen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/v/ as in <em>van</em></td>
<td>ban</td>
<td>surbing (serving)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/z/ as in <em>zipper</em></td>
<td>sipper</td>
<td>sivalais (civilize)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/sh/ as in <em>shell</em></td>
<td>chell</td>
<td>ched (shed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/th/ as in <em>thick</em></td>
<td>tick</td>
<td>tenk (think)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/zh/ as in <em>treasure</em></td>
<td>treachure</td>
<td>chesher (treasure)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Recognition and Spelling of the Most Frequent Words

The Spanish language simply does not have the sound of the English j or the sounds of the v, z, sh, and th (as in thick). And notice what can happen when it comes to spelling. The Spanish-speaking student is likely to spell the word them as dem, job as gob, ripen as waipen, serving as surbing, civilize as sivalais, sbed as ched, think as tenk, and treasure as chesher. All in all, Spanish and English each contain several consonant sounds that do not occur in the other language (Dalbor, 1997; Goldstein, 2001).

I’m sure you can see that Spanish-speaking students will need to learn many words through visual memory instead of auditory memory. Not that those of us who are English speaking don’t have the same problems with words like knight, people, heard, brought, and should staring us in the face, which incidentally will be passed on to our Spanish-speaking students. How brave our students of both linguistic forms! But do not despair. Spanish-speaking students in the United States are getting degrees by the thousands every year—thanks to good teachers like you.

Now Let’s Look At Vowel Sounds

The Spanish system of vowel sounds is much simpler than that of English (Foster, Altamiranda, & Urioste, 1999), but this couldn’t possibly be comforting to our Spanish-speaking students. Once again, visual learning of words is their best hope for a good spelling record. Let’s start, though, with the common vowel sounds between the two languages (see Table 5.3). As you can see in the table, the first line demonstrates our similar long a sound. The second line demonstrates our similar long e sound, the third, our similar long i sound; the fourth, our similar long o sound; the fifth, our similar short o sound; and the sixth, our similar long u sound.

Let’s look now at the problems your Spanish-speaking students may have by substituting Spanish vowels for English vowels (see Table 5.4). To make it even more difficult for our Spanish-speaking students, Spanish does not contain four of the short-vowel sounds in English (man, pen, tip, up) and also r-controlled vowels such as ber.

TABLE 5.3  Vowel sounds common to English and Spanish.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English vowels</th>
<th>Similar vowel sounds used in a Spanish word</th>
<th>Example of a spelling error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a as in cake</td>
<td>e as in hecho</td>
<td>shek (shake)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e as in bean</td>
<td>i as in ido</td>
<td>spic (speak)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i as in like</td>
<td>ai as in aire</td>
<td>nait (night)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o as in hope</td>
<td>o as in ocho</td>
<td>flout (float)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o as in top</td>
<td>a as in ajo</td>
<td>jab (job)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u as in June</td>
<td>u as in Usted</td>
<td>flut (flute)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teaching Spanish- and English-Speaking Students at the Same Time

Professional Standard: Respects and values cultural and linguistic diversity

1. Rely on the commonalities between Spanish and English that we recently talked about: the common consonant sounds—/b/, /ch/, /d/, /f/, /g/, /k/, /l/, /m/, /n/, /p/, /s/, /t/, /w/, /y/—realizing that c, h, j, q, r, v, z are either not used or used in a different way from English.

2. Rely on the commonalities of the consonant blends—bl, br, cl, cr, dr, fl, fr, gl, gr, pl, pr, although the r will be pronounced differently in English.

3. Realize that there are many consonant blends in English that are not used in Spanish: st, sp, sk/sc, sm, sl, sn, sw, tw, scr, spl, spr, str, sku. You will need to help your Spanish-speaking students learn these blends, using some of the games and activities discussed earlier.

4. The vowels are similar in both languages, but they are spelled differently (see Table 5.3 for a reminder). Make a game of spelling both in Spanish and English.

5. Use sight word games and exercises similar to those you learned in this chapter. For instance, try the number-line game referenced in Figure 5.3.

6. Create either student-made bilingual dictionaries or classroom word walls. Color code them for easy recognition. In this way you can provide vivid demonstrations of the similarities and differences between the two languages. Choose your words from the 100 most frequent words, since they will be largely meaningful in both cultures.

### Table 5.4: Spanish speakers' possible vowel substitutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vowel sound as in the following</th>
<th>Closest Spanish vowel sound</th>
<th>May be pronounced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>man</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>“mahn” for man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pen</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>“pain” for pen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tip</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>“teep” for tip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>up</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>“op” for up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>her</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>“who” for her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>could</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>“cooed” for could</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>away</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>“ahway” for away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>caught</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>“cot” for caught</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Focus on Students with Special Needs: Comments by Louise Fulton

Help Students Make Successful Transitions

As you learned in chapter 1, when children play the role of readers and writers, they are continually making transitions from one level of knowledge to the next. More specifically, they are making growth transitions from one concept, skill, or attitude to the next. And in the case of students with special needs, they may be transitioning from special education programs to regular education programs.

Transition skills are those that are needed for living, playing, and working in current and future environments. They are skills that allow students to move successfully from elementary school to middle school, from inside school life to outside social life, from childhood to adolescence, from formal to informal behavior, and from purely self-centered objectives to a mixture of self- and group-centered objectives.

Students learn and desire transition skills when they've had an abundance of functional teaching and learning experiences. Functional and other motivational experiences propel a learner forward. As the famous educator John Dewey said many decades ago, children should be taught those skills that drive them to want to learn more and more at a higher and higher level.

Summary of Main Ideas

- Vocabulary development is probably most assured in a classroom environment that is balanced between learner-centered and teacher-centered experiences.
- Teachers must help children recognize words in print that they already understand from their listening and speaking experiences. For instructional purposes these are usually referred to as sight words, or sight vocabulary.
- Instant sight words are those that are high in frequency and are often used in children's writing, reading, and speech.
- Key words are personal sight words that children ask to learn because they are important to them and/or carry intense meaning (i.e., they are captions for powerful events in children's lives).
- Sight vocabulary can be enhanced through a variety of learning experiences: word walls, word activities, direct spelling lessons, games, writing, patterned books, connected flashcards, and more.
- There are commonalities between Spanish and English, but many consonant blends in English are not used in Spanish.
- Students can bilingual dictionaries and classroom word walls that compare English and Spanish words.
Literacy Through Technology

A. With one or more partners, learn about educational resources found on the Internet. Begin your own annotated bibliography of the Web sites you find useful and add them to your computer’s Favorites list. Because Web sites appear and disappear frequently, you’ll want to update your list regularly. Start with one or more of the following:

http://wordsmith.org/awad/
Introduction to a new word each day, with interesting information on its derivation

http://www.vocabulary.com
Vocabulary University—word puzzles galore

http://www.virtualflashcards.com/
An easy way to print creative flash cards

http://www.manythings.org
Vocabulary quizzes with pictures for English-language learners

http://www.vocabulary.co.il
Word-search game for students

http://www.funbrain.com/vocab/
Reading and vocabulary game—matching words to pictures

http://www.eduplace.com/fakeout/
Word game for learning definitions (K–2)

B. Go to one of the following Web sites to examine materials for word walls. Think about how you can use this resource for your classroom.

http://teacher.scholastic.com/teachingstrategies

http://www.theschoolbell.com/Links/word_walls/

http://www.teachnet.com/lesson/langarts/index.html

C. Your television set has built-in circuits that decode and display closed-captioned programming, programs that can be read with subtitles. (Just push the button that accesses the closed captions, but be sure to use programs in a local television guide that have a cc next to them.) View a cc child’s program, and take some notes on its potential for teaching sight words and other vocabulary. Share your thoughts with the class.

Application Experiences for Your Course

A. Literacy Teacher Vocabulary: A List of Terms. Help yourself and others master these terms:

- instant sight words
- high-frequency words
- sight words
- personal pronouns
- functional words
- anthology
- top 10 words
- patterned books
- predictable books
The Recognition and Spelling of the Most Frequent Words

B. *What's Your Opinion?* Discuss why you agree or disagree with the following statements. Use both the textbook and your own experiences to justify your opinions.

1. To teach essential sight vocabulary, worksheets and basal readers are the most effective.
2. Games are too distracting for learning sight words. They teach the wrong thing.
3. Sight word instruction should be direct rather than indirect.
4. Key words are more important to learn than the so-called instant sight words.

C. *Creative Problem Solving*: Creative thinking is the most important ability for success. Think creatively about this problem: By edict, boys over 14 must be initiated into society by having their right little finger cut off. List 10 things that might happen—serious or funny. When you finish, try this one: What are all the things that might happen if school boards all over the country decided to save money by eliminating the principal? Exercises like this enable students to loosen up their minds and think without fear. Bored students are usually turned on by these kinds of challenges. Feel free to create your own—or let the students create them.

D. *Miscue Analysis*: In the following dialogue, study Matt’s miscues, and decide how his essential sight vocabulary helped him use the four interacting cues to comprehend the author’s message. Also, decide whether his miscues are caused by a lack of knowledge of certain essential sight words or by the failure to follow the normal process of predicting and checking or by both.

**Text**: The man and woman went out to the country and dug up edible plants. Then they went back home and cooked them.

**Jamie**: The man and wuh-woman went to the city—country and dug up some eatable plants. The-they-then— they went home and ate—cooked them.

E. *Instant Words*: With a partner or small group, make a list of the nouns from the instant words in Figure 5.1. Why are these nouns of such high frequency in our language? How might they be important to children in their writing?

**Creativity Training Session**

A. Since the Spanish language does not use the short sounds of *a* (*man*), *e* (*pen*), *i* (*tip*), and *u* (*cup*), create a spelling test of 10 words that do not use these vowel sounds. How can you use this experience to be more aware of spelling errors made by English-language learners?

B. Each group of three is given five items. The assignment is for each group to use all five items and no others to create a new object. The product must be original, and the group must describe its use, after asking others to guess. Enough items can usually be gathered from the people present. Examples of
items to use include a pencil, paper clip, hair clip, pen, stapler, rubberband, eraser, stick, balloon, notebook, book, hat, and whatever other interesting things are offered from class members’ pockets, backpacks, purses, hair, and so on. Discuss the process used in the groups as well as the creativity of the products.

Field Experiences

A. Direct Teaching of Sight Words: With two or more children, try out the direct spelling approach to teaching three or four sight words from the instant word list in Figure 5.1.

B. Teaching Sight Words Through Patterned Books: Use a patterned book to teach one or more children several sight words from the instant word list in Figure 5.1. Be sure to bring an extra patterned book or two in case the children don’t care for the one you have chosen.

C. Teaching Sight Words Through Other Means: Help children learn new sight words through one of these methods:
   1. Word walls
   2. Creating words
   3. Key words
   4. Connected flash cards
   5. Environmental print

D. Learning Words on the Internet: Teach a group of students (Grade 3 or above) to use one of the Internet resources you located in the technology activity in this chapter. Later have them locate their own Web sites for word learning. Help students create a classroom wall chart of their different Web sites.

References


National Reading Panel. (2002). *Scientific research base: Put reading first*. (ERIC No. ED468696)


**Other Suggested Readings**
