Research Base

The developmental model of word study is grounded in investigations of the spelling system of English and of learners’ developing knowledge of this system. English spelling is more logical than traditionally believed (Henderson & Templeton, 1986; Johnston, 2001; Templeton, 2011; Venezky, 1999). Over time, learners develop understanding of this logic through the examination of sound, pattern, and meaning in spelling. Insight into the developmental nature of spelling development began with the landmark work of Charles Read and Edmund Henderson and his students at the University of Virginia (Read, 1971, 1975; Henderson, 1981; Henderson & Beers, 1980). These early studies, together with the continuing work of Henderson’s students and of other researchers, provide the foundation for an approach to word study that is developmentally grounded and pedagogically solid (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2012; Templeton & Bear, 1992; Invernizzi & Hayes, 2004). In English as well as in a number of other languages, learners follow a developmental progression that builds on the progressive understanding of letter-sound relationships, within-word and between-syllable patterns, and meaning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Put into Action with Words Their Way</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berninger, Abbott, Nagy, &amp; Carlisle, 2009; Ehri, 2005; Henderson &amp; Templeton, 1986; Hughes &amp; Searle, 1997; Invernizzi &amp; Hayes, 2004, 2010; Leong, 2000; Schlagal, 1992; Seymour, 1992; Taft, 2003; Templeton &amp; Bear, 1992; Templeton &amp; Morris, 1999, 2000</td>
<td>Most learners acquire knowledge of orthography following a predictable progression from sound or alphabetic structure through pattern and meaning.</td>
<td>At each level of Words Their Way in Action – The Developmental Model, the spelling patterns and the words selected to represent them correspond to students’ level of understanding. In addition to pattern, word selection is based on frequency of occurrence and degree of word familiarity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarke, 1988; Beers &amp; Henderson, 1977; Ehri &amp; Roberts, 2006; Flanigan, 2007; Henderson, 1981; Invernizzi, Justice, Landrum, &amp; Booker, 2005; Oulette &amp; Sénéchal, 2008; Read, 1971, 1977</td>
<td>Emergent and Beginning Readers’ learning of letters and use of that knowledge through spelling reflects a systematic logic and should be encouraged by teachers. These early spelling efforts are powerful contributors to the development of phonemic awareness.</td>
<td>Emergent and Early Letter Name sorts and activities support and extend children’s dawning understanding of beginning and ending consonants as well as a concept of word in text, a critical benchmark in the development of full phonemic awareness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bear, Templeton, &amp; Warner, 1991; Morris, Nelson, &amp; Perney, 1986; Morris, Blanton, Blanton, Nowacek, &amp; Perney, 1995; Sterbinsky, 2007; Townsend, Bear, &amp; Templeton, 2009; Townsend, Bear, &amp; Templeton, 2010; Townsend, Burton, Bear, &amp; Templeton, 2010</td>
<td>Well-constructed qualitative spelling inventories are good predictors of students’ reading proficiency and vocabulary knowledge.</td>
<td>Initial and ongoing assessments in Words Their Way determine the most appropriate patterns and words each student should examine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berninger, Vaughan, Abbott, Brooks, Begay, Curtin, Byrd, &amp; Graham, 2000; Bourassa &amp; Treiman, 2008; Ehri &amp; McCormick, 1998; Graham, Harris, &amp; Chorozempa, 2002; Hayes, 2004; Invernizzi, Rosemary, Juel, &amp; Richards, 1997; Iversen &amp; Tunmer, 1993; Joseph &amp; McCachran, 2003; Kirk &amp; Gillon, 2009; McCandliss, Beck, Sandak, &amp; Perfetti, 2003; Morris, Blanton, Blanton, Nowacek, &amp; Perney, 1995; Santa &amp; Hoien, 1999; Santoro, Cogne, &amp; Simmons, 2006; Scott, 2000; Templeton, 2004; Worthy &amp; Invernizzi, 1989; Zutell, 1998</td>
<td>Providing word study for below-level students that is matched to their developmental level is significantly more effective than attempting to support those students’ learning of on-level words and patterns. This holds for learning disabled students as well.</td>
<td>Initial and ongoing progress monitoring provides support for appropriate and effective differentiation of word study for students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>Put Into Action With Words Their Way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbott, 2001; Joseph, 2000, 2002; Juel &amp; Minden-Cupp, 2000; Weber &amp; Henderson, 1989; Santa &amp; Hoen, 1999; White, 2005</td>
<td>Word sorting activities provide more engaging as well as long-lasting learning than traditional approaches to spelling. Comparing and contrasting single-syllable words according to letter/spelling patterns strongly supports the connections among sound and spelling. These connections in turn support more automatic application to spelling and reading words.</td>
<td>Beginning with Emergent learners and continuing through the Letter Name-Alphabetic and Within Word Pattern developmental levels, word sort or categorization activities each week provide hands-on and minds-on opportunities to examine words and word patterns from a variety of perspectives, leading to the necessary breadth and depth of orthographic understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlo, August, McLaughlin, Snow, Dressler, Lippman, Lively, &amp; White, 2004</td>
<td>Comparing and contrasting two-syllable and multisyllabic words according to syllable patterns or meaning-based units strongly supports connections among sound, spelling, and meaning. These connections support more automatic reading and spelling, as well as the learning of the meaning of unfamiliar words encountered in print.</td>
<td>For students at the Syllables and Affixes or Derivational Relations developmental levels, examining words from a variety of perspectives over one or two weeks develops understanding of more advanced orthographic patterns as well as morphological analysis strategies. These understandings in turn support the development of vocabulary knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bear, 1989, 1991, 1992; Berninger, Vaughan, Abbott, Brooks, Begay, Curtin, Byrd, &amp; Graham, 2000; Carlisle &amp; Stone, 2005; Conrad, 2008; Ehri, 1997, 2005; Ehri &amp; Wilce, 1987; Gill, 1992; Johnston, 1998; Nunes &amp; Bryant, 2009; Zutell, 1992; Zutell &amp; Rasinski, 1989</td>
<td>There is a reciprocal relationship between reading or decoding words—identifying them in print—and spelling or encoding words in writing. Orthographic knowledge significantly predicts beginning readers’ acquisition of sight words and the development of fluency.</td>
<td>At each level, words that represent appropriate developmental features support the growth of students’ underlying orthographic knowledge, which in turn is applied in the decoding of unfamiliar words. Activities will engage students in applying this knowledge in context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bear &amp; Shen, 2000; Bear, Templeton, Helman, &amp; Baren, 2003; Carlo, August, McLaughlin, Snow, Dressler, Lippman, Lively, &amp; White, 2004; Helman, 2004</td>
<td>In developing understanding of the relationship between print and spoken language, learners in most languages follow the same progression: sound to pattern to meaning. With appropriate support, guidance, and pacing, English learners are able to apply their knowledge of word structure in their home language to the understanding of word structure in English.</td>
<td>Alternate or additional sorting activities and vocabulary development, together with teacher tips, are provided.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Base References


