

“The Reading Game” Effectively Teaches Sight Words

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Successful author of “Wordly Wise”, Kenneth Hodkinson, has launched a reading game onto the educational market. His new venture “The Reading Game” offers a tactile way to teach beginning readers sight words. This game addresses one of The National Reading Panels five components of reading instruction, vocabulary, in an interactive way. A recent article on education.com entitled “Sight Words” (Fields, Groth and Spangler, 2008) addresses the importance of exposing new readers to vocabulary in a variety of ways. “The Reading Game” teaches students to read many Dolch and high frequency words and is aligned to the Common Core Standards.

Phonics skills are a vital part of learning to read. They help students break words down into small parts, find patterns and similarities, but they don’t complete the whole picture when it comes to reading. The article “Sight Words” (Fields, Groth and Spangler, 2008) states that, “...just ten words make up almost a quarter of all the words used in the English-language printed material (the, and, to, is, that, of, a, in, you, it)... almost half the top fifty words are spelled in ways that make it difficult to figure them out by matching sounds to letters.” Of those ten words, nine of them are included in “The Reading Game”. Educators need a way to teach common words, sight words, in a meaningful way. “The Reading Game” offers a multisensory way to do this. Students work with a tutor, meaning anyone who can read all 180 words contained in the set. They play a card matching game and when all words can be read easily they are given a corresponding book. Having mastered the words, the student can read

the book which contains only those words. The idea with the game is that student’s confidence is built as they measure their success by reading the book.

The article “Sight Words” (Fields, Groth and Spangler, 2008) states “once you have the list (or any list of sight words...) you have a clear plan for what to teach your students. All that’s missing now is the method.” The Reading Game provides a lengthy list of sight words, offers an engaging way to teach them, and provides students with a sense of confidence that will encourage further reading. The article goes on to state the importance of auditory learning. It offers that reading words out loud with a student, and in unison, will lead to success. To begin with the instructor’s voice will be stronger, but as confidence grows the student’s voice will gain strength and take over. This is a concept that is imbedded in “The Reading Game”. As matching cards are found the teacher says the word and the student copies. As further games are played and the student recognizes the word, his voice takes over.

In Multisensory Teaching of Basic Language Skills (Birsh, 2011) the authors write “young children who gain just enough skill early on feel drawn to reading...they love it because they can do it. In contrast, those who cannot, do not”. This passage resonated with me. It shows that the ground work that creates a love of reading, so vital to education, is built early on. “The Reading Game” offers an interactive, tactile, auditory, success driven way for students to gain that love of reading that will support them for the rest of their lives.

Reference List

Birsh, Judith R., 2011, Multisensory Teaching of Basic Language Skills, Paul H Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.

Fields, M.V., Groth, L.A., Spangler, K.L., (February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2008) “Sight Words”, Education Magazine, retrieved from [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)