Learning Environment:
- Grade: First
- Number of Students: 21
- Male Population: 13
- Female Population: 8
- English Language Learners: 13
- Special Education: 2
- School: Title 1, Northern Virginia

The Plan:
- Three students were chosen to participate in word study (all were males).
- These students were chosen because:
  - They are ELL students
  - They were hesitant to participate in writing
  - Large part of their struggles is based on spelling issues (including sight words).
- Over three weeks students were introduced to activities to do when using Word Study (based on Words Their Way).
  - Given 2 families with the same vowel pattern
- We worked with these words every morning for 20 minutes for 10 days, when they came in each morning. Often they worked with a partner to practice saying and writing the words.

Rational:
Each day the students were given about thirty minutes to write. These three students would try to get out of writing or would depend on others to help them. Reflecting with my placement teacher we decided to try using word study, focusing on the lessons in Words Their Way.

Problems seen:
- Student A: Always ran to a buddy and would stop constantly to ask others how to spell words.
- Student C: Would try talking to others, drawing pictures or complaining of being sick.
- Student D: Could only get one or two sentences on the page, before getting frustrated.

Research Findings:

Theme 1: Lack of confidence in general translates into writing
- "The magnitude of the correlations was small, all of the second language classroom anxiety variables were significantly and negatively correlated with both English speaking and writing achievement." Cheng, Y., Horwitz, E. K., & Schallert, D.L. (1999). Language anxiety: Differentiating writing and speaking. Components Language Learning 49(3), 417.

Theme 2: The best way to learn new skills
- "Their lesson segments were typically brief and lively and often included review." Gersten R., & Geva, E. (2003). Teaching reading to early language learners. Educational Leadership, 60(7), 44.

Theme 3: Phonemic Awareness

Theme 4: Peer interactions improve the writing skills.
- "Children were free to discuss different topics and express their opinions...They could construct personal meanings from stories while working collaboratively." Araujo, L. (2002). The literacy development of kindergarten English-language learners. Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 16(2), 232-247.

Data Collection:
- Quantitative: Used two sources to collect this type of data.
  - Student Surveys: Each student was given a four-question survey at the end of the research to get their feelings on Word Study and if they felt it helped them.
  - Teacher Observations: Done during writing time to see if they were less hesitant to write (based on previous behaviors).
- Qualitative: Used two sources to collect this type of data.
  - Spelling Test: Students were given a pretest, a midway test and a final test.
  - Words in sentences: After a week of not working with the words, they were given a list of sentences to write (included the words they were working with).

Data Analysis:
- Student Surveys: Answers were coded to find common trends among the students.
- Teacher’s Observations: Looked to see if the trends during writing began to improve (if they became more willing to write).
- Spelling Tests: Scores were looked at over the three tests to see if there were improvements (also to look for trends).
- Using Words in other Contexts: Looked to see if they could remember the words
and use them correctly, outside of the word study.

**Findings:**

- **Student Surveys:**
  - All students felt that they were learning, and not just in spelling.
  - All three students enjoyed doing the word study and would like to do it next year.
  - Peer interactions were their favorite part of the word study.

- **Teacher’s Observations:**
  - Student A: his habit of needing a buddy to write did not seem to change, but the amount of help he asked for did (he also made the least amount of progress overall).
  - Student C: Stopped saying that he was sick when we were writing; by the end was willing to write.
  - Student D: Went from struggling to write two sentences, to writing a paragraph (four to five sentences).

- **Spelling Test:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student/Test</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Midway</th>
<th>Post-Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student A</td>
<td>4/12</td>
<td>7/12</td>
<td>7/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>0/12</td>
<td>7/12</td>
<td>6/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student D</td>
<td>0/12</td>
<td>12/12</td>
<td>11/12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Student A and Student C were working with the short “I” families, while Student D worked with the short “a” family.
*Student A and Student C missed all the words in the “ick” family, but they spelled all these words with the same pattern: Student A was “ike” while Student C was “ilk.”

- **Using Words in other Context:** These results were the same as the end of the spelling test.

**Implications:**

- Start students at a slightly lower level than you think. This allows them to work with getting use to the program while they also increases their schema of words (one step back for two steps forward).
- Students’ favorite part of working with the word study is being able to work with their peers.
- Helped the students with learning patterns in words. At the same time, the students became more confident in their English abilities (e.g. writing, reading and spelling).
- Through word study confidence in their spelling abilities increased; so did the amount that they wrote.

**Limitations/ Questions:**

- When collecting the data I did not use triangulation. In addition, I had very little baseline information to compare the information to.
  - Did not record my teacher’s observations daily or regularly. This could have effected this part of the results.
- The study was done for three weeks only. The first week of the study was mostly used to teach the students the way to do word study. More time would have given better results.
- Only three students were used to conduct this research, and all three were males. This will strongly influence the reliability and validity of the results.

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**Improve English Language Learner’s Confidence with Word Study!**

**Wondering:** In what ways does working with Word Study impact English Language Learners?

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