

# Error Correction & Word Drill Techniques

Below are several error-correction techniques and one procedure for vocabulary drill-and-practice that teachers, tutors, or parents can use with developing readers.

## Word Supply:

Before the student begins to read, tell the student, "If you come to a word that you do not know, I will help you with it. I will tell you the correct word while you listen and point to the word in the book. After that, I want you to repeat the word and continue reading. Try your best not to make mistakes." When the student commits a reading error (e.g., substitution, omission, 5-second hesitation), immediately pronounce the correct word for the student, have the student repeat the word correctly, and then direct the student to continue reading. NOTE: To avoid too many reading interruptions, do not correct minor student errors (e.g., misreading or omitting the or a, dropping suffixes such as -s, -ed, or -ing)

Word supply is the simplest error-correction to use, so it can be ideal for student tutors or parents to use. On the other hand, the approach is less powerful than others described here for building student reading vocabulary (Singh, 1990).

## Sentence Repeat:

At the start of the reading session, say to the student, "If you come to a word that you do not know, I will help you with it. I will tell you the correct word while you listen and point to the word in the book. After that, I want you to repeat the word and then read the rest of the sentence. Then I want you to read the sentence again. Try your best not to make mistakes."

When the student commits a reading error (e.g., substitution, omission, 5-second hesitation), immediately pronounce the correct word for the student and have the student repeat the word correctly. Then direct the student to reread the entire sentence in which the error occurred. The student then continues reading the passage. (If the student repeats the original reading error when rereading the sentence, you should again pronounce the word correctly and have the student repeat the word. Then continue on.) NOTE: To avoid too many reading interruptions, do not correct minor student errors (e.g., misreading or omitting the or a, dropping suffixes such as -s, -ed, or -ing) (Singh, 1990).

## 'Word Attack' Hierarchy:

In this approach, the instructor prompts the student to apply a hierarchy of word-attack skills whenever the student misreads a word. The instructor gives these cues in descending order. If the student correctly identifies the word after any cue, the instructor stops delivering cues at that point and directs the student to continue reading. NOTE: To avoid

too many reading interruptions, do not correct minor student errors (e.g., misreading or omitting the or a, dropping suffixes such as -s, -ed, or -ing).

Here are the 'Word Attack' Hierarchy instructor cues:

- 1. "Try another way." This cue is given directly after a reading error and alerts the student to the fact that she or she has misread the word.
- 2. "Finish the sentence and guess the word." The student is encouraged to make use of the sentence context to discover the correct word pronunciation.
- 3. "Break the word into parts and pronounce each one." The student is directed to sound out the segments of a word independently.
- 4. Using an index card, the tutor covers over parts of the word and each the student to sound out only the part of the word that is visible. This approach teaches the student a method for reducing the amount of visual information in each word.
- 5. "What sound does ' \_\_\_ ' make?" As the tutor covers selected parts of the word with an index card, the student is directed to use phonics information to sound out the word.
- 6. "The word is \_\_\_." If the student cannot decode the word despite instructor support, the instructor supplies the word. The student is directed to repeat the word and to continue reading.

(Haring, et al., 1978).

### **Error Word Drill:**

The Error Word Drill is an effective way to build reading vocabulary. The procedure consists of 4 steps:

When the student misreads a word during a reading session, write down the error word and date in a separate "Error Word Log".

- 1. At the end of the reading session, write out all error words from the reading session onto index cards. (If the student has misread more than 20 different words during the session, use just the first 20 words from your error-word list. If the student has misread fewer than 20 words, consult your "Error Word Log" and select enough additional error words from past sessions to build the review list to 20 words.)
- 2. Review the index cards with the student. Whenever the student pronounces a word correctly, remove that card from the deck and set it aside. (A word is considered correct if it is read correctly within 5 seconds. Self-corrected words are counted as correct if they are made within the 5-second period. Words read correctly after the 5-second period expires are counted as incorrect.)
- 3. When the student misses a word, pronounce the word for the student and have the student repeat the word. Then say, "What word?" and direct the student to repeat the word once more. Place the card with the missed word at the bottom of the deck.

- 4. Error words in deck are presented until all have been read correctly. All word cards are then gathered together, reshuffled, and presented again to the student. The drill continues until either time runs out or the student has progressed through the deck without an error on two consecutive cards.

(Jenkins & Larson, 1979)

## References

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- Jenkins, J. & Larsen, D. (1979). Evaluation of error-correction procedures for oral reading. *Journal of Special Education*, 13, 145-156.
- Singh, N.N. (1990). Effects of two error-correction procedures on oral reading errors: Word supply versus sentence repeat. *Behavior Modification*, 14, 188-199.