

Professional Learning Community Facilitation Guide:

Word Study



Division of Teaching and Learning

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West Virginia Board of Education
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Introduction

As part of the One Voice. One Focus. All Students Achieving vision plan, West Virginia schools provide a statewide early childhood focus where we teach every child to read, on grade level, by third grade. The WVDE is moving forward with the West Virginia Leaders of Literacy: Campaign for Grade Level Reading through a comprehensive approach to early literacy that includes an emphasis on all content areas of development in school, as well as strengthening school readiness efforts, promoting positive attendance patterns, and providing access to high-quality, sustained extended day and extended year learning opportunities.”

Each county in West Virginia has developed a formal plan to address the underlying challenges that can keep young children, especially those from low-income families, from learning to read well:

- School readiness - too many children are entering kindergarten already behind
- School attendance - too many children are missing too many days of school
- Extended learning opportunities - too many children are losing ground academically over the summer
- High quality instruction – while schools cannot do it alone, there is an obligation to support increased teacher expertise which is the factor most closely related to student achievement

The Professional Learning Community (PLC) materials were created for counties and schools to use as part of their efforts to support teacher expertise and ultimately improve upon high quality instruction. The intent of these documents is to provide guidance for teachers seeking to learn more about instruction around foundational reading skills. The editors of these documents hope that teachers feel supported in their endeavors to improve reading instruction for West Virginia children.

Word Study PLC

The professional learning community saw the need for a more individualized, active study of words in their entirety. Word Study focuses on students' current level of understanding and interaction with words, rather than rote memorization of random spelling words. In order to effectively guide students through Word Study, teachers must first understand who their students are and what they currently know about words. Assessment within Word Study allows you to learn your students' current developmental stage of word knowledge, the orthographic features they need to study, and how to monitor their progress through each stage. Sessions will cover an overview of Word Study and how to implement Word Study using assessment.

First, it is important to know that these developmental stages are not designated to a particular age group or grade, but are developmental. The Emergent Stage is the first developmental spelling stage of Word Study. During this stage, students encounter directionality, letter-sound match, and letter-like formations. The Letter Name-Alphabetic Spelling stage is the second developmental stage in Word Study. Students in this stage focus on beginning and ending consonants, short-vowel patterns, and letter-sound correspondences. As students enter the Within Word Pattern Spelling stage, they know letter sounds and short-vowel patterns, but learn new patterns and letter chunks that have sound and meaning. By the Syllables and Affixes stage, students explore syllables, meaning of units and spelling-meaning connections. You will explore each of these stages through activities, readings, and discussions in future sessions.

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Session 1: Overview/Literacy Base

Overview: As teachers and education professionals looked at the traditional spelling practice in primary schools, the professional learning community saw the need for a more individualized, active study of words in their entirety. Word Study focuses on students' current level of understanding and interacting with words, rather than rote memorization of random spelling words. The 5 Essentials of Reading and the Braid of Literacy support the need for students to construct their own knowledge of words through hands-on activities. In this session, you will use readings, videos, and activities to fully understand how the research of the 5 Essentials of Reading and the Braid of Literacy are incorporated with the personalized instruction of Word Study.

Goals: In this session, you will...

- *learn the purpose of word study and describe how it contributes to language acquisition,*
- *recognize and correctly identify the stages of spelling development using student writing samples,*
- *and describe how the stages of reading, writing, and spelling development are connected and the order in which they occur.*

Potential PLC Activities:

- Read and discuss *Why Word Study* at http://networkedlearningcollaborative.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/bea13380_ch01.pdf
This excerpt of the book, *Words Their Way*, conveys the importance of using word study in literacy instruction. It includes a discussion of the research that provides the basis for this approach. Then it explores the developmental nature of orthographic knowledge. Read pp.1-10, and stop at the heading, *Stages of Spelling Development*.
- Read and discuss *Stages of Spelling Development* at http://networkedlearningcollaborative.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/bea13380_ch01.pdf
As the excerpt continues, the stages of spelling development are discussed. Next, descriptions are provided of students' behavior as they move through the stages. Finally, connections are made between the behaviors and the spelling strategies that students are likely to utilize during each stage. Read pp. 10-20, and stop at the heading, *The Synchrony of Literacy Development*.
- Read and discuss *The Synchrony of Literacy Development* at http://networkedlearningcollaborative.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/bea13380_ch01.pdf
The excerpt concludes with a discussion of the harmony in the timing of reading, writing, and spelling development. It also explores the similarities and connections between the stages of literacy development. Additionally, it guides teachers to recognize each stage and the order in which they occur. Read pp. 21-26
- Watch and discuss *Word Study Mix* at <https://mix.office.com/watch/1mrdka8qbs5uy>
This short interactive video provides a brief overview of the word study process. This session provides a basic understanding of the value of word study, a description of the stages of spelling development, and a review of instructional strategies. Samples of weekly schedules and assessments are offered. Focus on the video from 3:21 to 7:21 where the video examines the components of word study; Assess, Evaluate, Organize, Instruct.

Discussions:

- Discuss the purpose of word study in your own words. Explain how word study contributes to language acquisition.
- Reflect on your practice. What observations have you made regarding the different stages of development in your classroom? How are the stages of reading, writing, and spelling development connected?

Session 2: Guiding Word Study using Assessment

Overview: In order to effectively guide students through Word Study, teachers must first understand who their students are and what they currently know about word parts and word patterns. This session will guide you through the formal and informal assessment process that guides Word Study instruction. It is important to remember that these developmental stages are not restricted to a particular age group or grade; the stages are developmental and are solely based on the student's orthographic knowledge. Not only will you learn your students' current developmental stage of word knowledge, but you will learn how to determine the orthographic features they need to study and how to monitor their progress through each stage.

Goals: In this session, you will...

- *understand how assessment guides instruction,*
- *understand how to give a spelling inventory assessment, and*
- *administer and analyze spelling inventories to guide classroom organization.*

Potential PLC Activities:

- Read and discuss [Words Their Way: Assessments](http://wordstheirwaybookclubreview.weebly.com/assessments.html) at <http://wordstheirwaybookclubreview.weebly.com/assessments.html>
The word study assessment explains how to determine students' spelling development. Photos and videos in this article show you how to give the assessment using the feature guide. The article explains how to take the results from the assessment and use them to organize your classroom instruction.
- Watch and discuss [Spelling Inventory Video Clip Part 1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GIGkzJPC4HY) at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GIGkzJPC4HY>
This video clip offers a guide for administering the Words Their Way spelling inventory. Carrie Jekogian will effortlessly walk you through the Words Their Way assessment process. This video allows you to observe how to give, score, and analyze an actual spelling inventory.
- Watch and discuss [Spelling Inventory Video Clip Part 2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CtfU1QsvYk0) at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CtfU1QsvYk0>
This short video clip offers a guide for grouping and analyzing a completed spelling inventory. Carrie Jekogian explains the process of interpreting data from the spelling inventory. This data is then used to better group, instruct, and meet the individualized needs of students completing the assessment.

- Watch and discuss [Spelling Inventory Video Clip Part 3](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtNn27uOgRw) at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtNn27uOgRw>

In this brief clip, Carrie Jekogian explains her process of interpreting data from a spelling inventory. After analyzing the completed inventory, she groups the student by spelling stage. This allows her to better utilize the data from the spelling inventory to shape instruction.

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Discussions:

- Use the information provided in the readings and videos from the activity to compare and contrast your current spelling practices to the use of spelling inventory assessments. How is your spelling instruction similar or different? What are the pros and cons of using these types of assessments?
- Based on what happens in your classroom, how does the Word Study assessment process support the concept of differentiation that you read and discussed in Session One? Use examples from your classes. Why would this assessment be more supportive of your students?

Session 3: Emergent Stage

Overview: The Emergent Stage is the first developmental spelling stage of Word Study. While these students put effort into communicating words, they do not yet conventionally read or write. During this stage, students encounter directionality, letter-sound match, and letter-like formations. Throughout this session, you will learn about Emergent spellers' behaviors and appropriate activities to engage these students in Word Study.

Goals: In this session you will...

- *identify characteristics of emergent readers and spellers,*
- *evaluate and use data to identify learners' needs, and*
- *create a developmentally appropriate activity catered to emergent readers and spellers.*

Potential PLC Activities:

- Read and discuss [Words Their Way: The Emergent Stage](http://wordstheirwaybookclubreview.weebly.com/the-emergent-stage.html) at <http://wordstheirwaybookclubreview.weebly.com/the-emergent-stage.html>
Knowing the characteristics of students at each spelling stage will help guide your current and future instruction. Students in the Emergent Stage are learning the foundations of speech to print concepts. Writing examples from students and detailed descriptions tell what to expect of students at this stage.
- Read and discuss [Emergent Stage](https://sites.google.com/a/apps.fluco.org/carysbrook-literacy-partners/word-study/emergent-stage) at <https://sites.google.com/a/apps.fluco.org/carysbrook-literacy-partners/word-study/emergent-stage> Emergent spellers benefit most from specific, engaging activities, such as concept sorts and word hunts. The article explains appropriate classroom activities for Emergent Spellers. By reading the article, you will acquire new ideas to take back into your classroom.
Browse, select and create a spelling and phonics activity that can be modified for your Emergent readers' and spellers' needs. If you did not have any students in this stage, browse and create a spelling and phonics activity, game, or sort for students based upon your knowledge of students in this stage.
[Words Their Way Video](#)
[Word Work Picture Sort- Lesson Part 1 Video](#)
[Picture Sort](#)
[EZread Beginning Sounds Picture Sorting Cards](#)
[Assessments for the Emergent Stages](#)

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Discussions:

- What are some common characteristics of your Emergent students? Refer to your assessment results.
- What strategies have you found to be most useful with these students?
- How are you differentiating your instruction based on the needs of your Emergent students?
- Reflect on this process of using the assessment to guide instruction for your specific group of Emergent students. What did you struggle with most during the process? What was easy for you during the process? Why? How did this process help you understand your students' needs?

Session 4: Letter Name-Alphabetic Spelling Stage

Overview: The Letter Name-Alphabetic Spelling stage is the second developmental stage in Word Study. Students in this stage have now received some formal reading instruction, and they use the alphabetic principle to spell. They also focus on beginning and ending consonants, short-vowel patterns, and letter-sound correspondences. This session will help you identify students in this stage and plan appropriate Word Study activities.

Goals: In this session you will...

- *identify characteristics of students in the Letter Name-Alphabetic Spelling stage,*
- *evaluate and use data to identify learners' needs at this stage, and*
- *create a developmentally appropriate activity catered to students in the Letter Name-Alphabetic Spelling stage.*

Potential PLC Activities:

- Read and discuss [Word Study for Beginners in the Letter Name-Alphabetic Stage](http://ptgmedia.pearsoncmg.com/images/0131113380/samplechapter/0131113380_ch05.pdf) at http://ptgmedia.pearsoncmg.com/images/0131113380/samplechapter/0131113380_ch05.pdf After the Emergent Stage, students begin to actually learn words and read text. Page number 138 through 161 gives a detailed overview of the Letter Name-Alphabetic Spelling Stage and what to expect of those students. While you will find many sorts through those pages, the rest of the document offers developmentally appropriate resources and activities for your students in the Letter Name-Alphabetic Spelling stage.
- Read and discuss [Words Their Way: The Letter Name-Alphabetic Stage](http://wordstheirwaybookclubreview.weebly.com/the-letter-name-and-alphabetic-stage.html) at <http://wordstheirwaybookclubreview.weebly.com/the-letter-name-and-alphabetic-stage.html> Learn how to best support your students in the Letter Name-Alphabetic Spelling stage by exploring these practices. While this article gives an introduction to the spelling stage, it also discusses expectations of students' reading and writing skills. It also gives guidance to create developmentally appropriate reading and spelling activities for students in this stage. Read and discuss [Letter Name Stage](https://sites.google.com/a/apps.fluco.org/carysbrook-literacy-partners/word-study/letter-name-stage) at <https://sites.google.com/a/apps.fluco.org/carysbrook-literacy-partners/word-study/letter-name-stage> Students in the Letter Name-Alphabetic Spelling stage begin using phonics generalizations for creative spelling and reading. This article explains the phonics features that students will encounter during the stage. As always, activities and sorts appropriate for this stage are also included for you to use in your classroom.
- Browse activities that are appropriate for Letter Name-Alphabetic stage readers and spellers in the link below. Select three that you find would support these students. Create a spelling and phonics activity for your students in the Letter Name-Alphabetic stage. If you did not have any

- students in this stage, browse and create a spelling and phonics activity, game, or sort based upon your knowledge of students in this stage.

Words Their Way: Word Sorts for Letter Naming - Alphabetic Spellers

Discussions:

- What characteristics do your students show in this stage? Refer to your assessment results.
- How would you implement the activities you discovered in this session?
- Reflect on your knowledge of the Emergent and Letter Name-Alphabetic Spelling stage. What are some differences you would see with implementation in your classroom between the Emergent stage and the Letter Name-Alphabetic Spelling stage? What are the similarities in these stages?
- How are you differentiating your instruction based on the needs of your students in the Letter Name-Alphabetic Spelling stage?

Session 5: Within Word Pattern

Overview: As students enter the Within Word Pattern Spelling stage, they know letter sounds and short-vowel patterns which they use automatically. Students learn new patterns and letter chunks that have sound and meaning. Although they have acquired knowledge of multiple patterns and rules, they still have not encountered double consonants or unaccented vowel syllables. By completing this session, you will learn the needs and characteristics of students in the Within Word Pattern Spelling stage and will explore hands-on activities to implement with your students.

Goals: In this session you will...

- *identify characteristics of students in the Within-Word Pattern stage,*
- *evaluate and use data to identify learners' needs at this stage, and*
- *create a developmentally appropriate activity for students in the Within-Word Pattern stage.*

Potential PLC Activities:

- Read and discuss [Within Word Pattern Stage](https://sites.google.com/a/apps.fluco.org/carysbrook-literacy-partners/word-study/within-wordpattern-stage) at <https://sites.google.com/a/apps.fluco.org/carysbrook-literacy-partners/word-study/within-wordpattern-stage>

Students in this stage begin focusing on vowel patterns. This article will show you the vowel patterns that students understand in the Within Word Pattern stage. You will also have the chance to explore appropriate activities for your students who are struggling to comprehend spelling rules and generalizations.

Read and discuss [Words Their Way: The Letter Name-Alphabetic Stage](http://wordstheirwaybookclubreview.weebly.com/the-word-pattern-stage.html) at <http://wordstheirwaybookclubreview.weebly.com/the-word-pattern-stage.html>

By this stage, students have a good understanding of letter-sounds and spelling strategies. This document explains typical reading and spelling skills of students in this stage, which you will apply to your activities in this session. You will also learn about effective word study instruction for the Within Word Pattern stage, while also addressing accommodations for English Language Learners.

- Browse the activities in the link below that are appropriate for readers and spellers in the Within Word Pattern stage. Select 3 activities that would support these students. Select and create a

- spelling and phonics activity for your students in the Within Word Pattern stage. If you did not have any students in this stage, create a spelling and phonics activity based upon your knowledge of students in this stage.

Words Their Way: Word Sorts for Within Word Pattern Spellers

Discussions:

- What characteristics do your students show in this stage? Refer to your assessment results.
- How would you implement the activities you discovered in this session?
- Reflect on your knowledge of the Within Word Pattern and Letter Name-Alphabetic Spelling stage. What are some differences you would see with implementation in your classroom between the Within Word Pattern stage and the Letter Name-Alphabetic Spelling stage? What are the similarities in these stages?
- How are you differentiating your instruction based on the needs of your students in the Within Word Pattern stage?

Session 6: Syllables and Affixes Stage

Overview: By the Syllables and Affixes stage, students are already comfortable with one-syllable words with long and short vowels. Therefore, the stage involves exploring syllables, meaning of units, and spelling-meaning connections. This session provides readings, videos, and the chance to create hands-on activities to understand the behaviors and content covered in this stage.

Goals: In this session you will...

- *evaluate and use data to identify learners' needs at this stage,*
- *create a developmentally appropriate activity for students in the Within-Word Pattern stage*

Potential PLC Activities:

- Read and discuss [Syllables and Affixes Stage](https://sites.google.com/a/apps.fluco.org/carysbrook-literacy-partners/word-study/syllablesand-affixes-stage) at <https://sites.google.com/a/apps.fluco.org/carysbrook-literacy-partners/word-study/syllablesand-affixes-stage>
Once students enter the Syllables and Affixes stage, they begin focusing on the meaning and manipulation of words. The document explains the features that students will encounter during the stage, such as stressed and unstressed syllable patterns. The activities listed are also helpful for your students in this stage and will be useful to you in this session's activities.
- Read and discuss [Words Their Way: The Syllables and Affixes Stage](http://wordstheirwaybookclubreview.weebly.com/the-syllables-and-affixes-stage.html) at <http://wordstheirwaybookclubreview.weebly.com/the-syllables-and-affixes-stage.html> Students' reading, writing, and vocabulary skills are more advanced within this stage. These students are now manipulating affixes to change the spelling and meaning of base words. After reading this article, you will know how to guide students' explorations of words through various activities and tips.
- Browse the activities in the link below that are appropriate for readers and spellers in the Syllables and Affixes stage. Select three activities that would support students in the Syllables and Affixes stage. Select and create a spelling and phonics activity for your students in the Syllables and Affixes stage. If you did not have any students in this stage, create a spelling and phonics activity based upon your knowledge of students in this stage.
[Words Their Way: Syllables and Affixes Sort](#)
[Word Sorts and Activities](#)

Discussions:

- What characteristics do your students show in this stage? Refer to your assessment results.
- How would you implement the activities you discovered in this session?
- How are you differentiating your instruction based on the needs of your students in the Within-Word Pattern stage?


NOTES

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NOTES

ONE VOICE
ONE FOCUS
All Students Achieving

 West Virginia Department of
EDUCATION
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