

A SPELLING-BASED PHONICS APPROACH TO WORD INSTRUCTION FOR CHILDREN
WITH DOWN SYNDROME

A Dissertation
by
AMY RENEE WILLIAMS

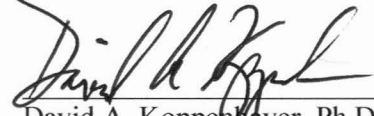
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August 2010
Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership

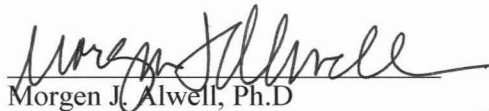
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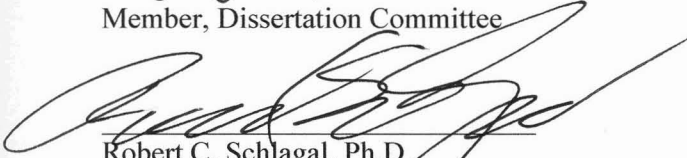
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ABSTRACT

A SPELLING-BASED PHONICS INSTRUCTION STRATEGY TO WORD INSTRUCTION IN CHILDREN WITH DOWN SYNDROME

(August 2010)

Amy Renee Williams, B.S. Appalachian State University

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Word instruction for children with Down syndrome (DS) has historically consisted of sight word approaches. While there have been several accounts of children with DS learning to read, the majority of the sight word research has lacked any sort of measure of application to the student's environment. While sight words are important, a lack of phonics instruction results in a child being unable to read and spell unfamiliar words.

This exploratory case study examined the effects of a spelling-based phonics approach to word instruction with four participants. Each high-school aged participant attended a separate school. Data were collected at pre- and posttest, at weekly periodic checks, and daily. Measures examined the ability of the participants to read and spell words with high frequency patterns, growth and development of phonemic awareness and orthographic knowledge, and understanding of the steps of the strategy itself.

With beginner level skills measured, the participants received 23-24 lessons in *Making Words*. This instruction is based on the use onsets and rimes. Each lesson consisted

of (a) the use of a limited set of letters to make words with high frequency patterns, (b) visual sorting of the words, and (c) the use of these words to spell unfamiliar words.

Results demonstrated that the participants seemed to understand the steps to Making Words. Similar to children who are typically developing, the participants seemed to make subtle advancements in their ability to read and spell words over the course of the study.