

Planning and Assessing Word Production to Support Lexical Spelling Learning in Grade1

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Abstract

Learning to spell is a major challenge for beginning writers because they have to develop a great deal of knowledge. Teachers are faced with a challenge as well in that they have to plan the words to be studied and assess the skill level of their students by analyzing the words they produce. The objectives of this study were to measure the lexical spelling success rate of French-speaking Québec students (6-7 years old) in certain spelling fragility areas, to describe the spelling variations that appeared and to discuss the relevance of planning and assessing word production. The research was conducted with 172 students. They were administered a dictation exercise using words selected with various criteria. The analysis was conducted on a corpus of 2076 words produced. The researchers then calculated the spelling success rate and the percentage of errors, in addition to doing a fine-grained analysis of the phonographic, orthographic and morphographic productions and the types of errors made (omission, substitution, addition and displacement). The results highlight changes under way. They also show that the success rate varies according to the spelling fragility areas that are being targeted and, surprisingly, that the rate fluctuates for the same fragility areas. The dictation used seems to be an “economical” tool for various reasons, among others because it is easy to administer (requires little time) and the spelling success rate is easy to determine.

Keywords: lexical spelling, word production, spelling fragility areas, grade 1