

### 3-13 Flexing Syllables for Multisyllabic Words

#### Brief Description

This technique helps students move from single to multisyllabic words.

#### Materials Needed

- Syllable boards (3x5 pieces of laminate)

#### Detailed Description

After students are comfortable spelling short CVC words, they may still be hesitant to attempt to work with multisyllabic words. One technique that may help is to use something called syllable boards and "flexing" the syllable. (Teaching technique credited to Linda Farrell of *Accent on Reading*.) For this activity, use erasable white boards cut to the size of 3x5-inch cards so you can work with students in learning to "flex" the vowel until the word is pronounced correctly.

Write a multisyllable word such as *document* on a board. First, ask the student to divide the word and pronounce it. If that doesn't sound right, then divide another way by moving a letter in question to the other syllable and try pronouncing it again. In order to determine the number of syllables in a word for spelling, here are the steps:

Teacher: How many vowels are there in the word?

Student: 3

Teacher: Are they together or apart?

Student: Apart

Teacher: Do you see a *silent e*?

Student: No

Teacher: Okay, then how many syllables are there in the word?

Student: 3

Teacher: Okay, now please write them on the syllable boards.

If the student writes *do-cu-ment*:

do

cu

ment

ask him to pronounce it. Assuming that he has been taught rules for syllable division, he would know that the *do* is pronounced with a long o because it is an open syllable. Therefore the word doesn't make sense. So let's try to "flex" the syllable by erasing the *c* from the second syllable board and writing a *c* on the first syllable board. On second reading, the first syllable would be closed, with a short vowel, and the word would be syllabicated correctly. One reason to use white boards and markers for this exercise is that often children don't like to erase word they do with pencil and paper.

doc

u

ment

This technique can be used both for reading and spelling multisyllabic words.

## 3-13 Multisyllable Strategy

### Count and Identify Syllables

#### Brief Description

Students will count the number of syllables in a spoken two or three syllable word, and they will orally isolate and say each syllable.

#### Materials Needed

\*List of two and three syllable words.

#### Detailed Description

Establish the fact that every word in the English language has a vowel sound in it. If there is just one vowel sound (like in the word *train*) the word has just one syllable. A word with more than one vowel sound has more than one syllable. We call these words multisyllable words.

Count and finger tap (in the palm of your hand) the number of syllables in several multisyllable words. Ask the students how many syllables are in each word and to orally identify the first and last syllable (and middle syllable of a three syllable word).

\*dolphin, robin, hippo, walrus, spider, sparrow

\*elephant, banana, cheerios, spaghetti, Halloween, burrito

### Open and Closed Syllables

#### Brief Description

Students will learn that a one letter vowel in a multisyllable word may have a long or short sound.

#### Materials Needed

List of two syllable words: whisper, basket, spider, open, shiny, picnic, silent, picnic

#### Detailed Description

Give the word "whisper" and discuss its meaning. Ask how many syllables in the word. Draw two syllable lines on the board and ask for the first syllable. Write "whis" on the first line. Ask for the second syllable and write "per" on the second line. Pronounce the word as a whole. Notice that the one-letter vowel in the first syllable is followed by a consonant. Tell students that it is an example of a closed syllable. The vowel is "closed up" because it's followed by the consonant. Establish that the vowel in the first syllable made the short sound.

Give the word "spider" and discuss its meaning. Ask how many syllables in the word and draw two syllable lines. Ask for the first syllable and write "spi" on the first line. Ask for the last syllable and write "der" on the second line. Pronounce the word as a whole and notice that the vowel in the first syllable sits at the end of the syllable. Tell students it is an example of an open syllable. The vowel is "open" because it does not have a consonant following it at the end of the syllable. Establish that the vowel in the first syllable made the long sound.

Continue with the remainder of the words in the list.