

# Functional List of Survival Words for Students with Severe Disabilities in South Korea

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## 1. Necessity of Research and Purpose

The abilities to communicate effectively, read and write allow a certain degree of independent performance that would not be possible without these skills. However many children with severe disabilities cannot read. Although the poor readers with severe disabilities have a problems to read, they develop sight words as visual after they have seen the same words repeated many times in different contexts. They would notices enough detail in sight words to distinguish it from other words and is able to store the words in memory for later use. As Combs(1996) notes, meaningful words are easier for readers to remember. But the students with severe disabilities need to repeat exposure the familiar words in their times. A key goals in teaching reading to students with severe disabilities is to help them develop a functional vocabulary so they are able to read for survival and independent living. Particularly, for the individuals with severe disabilities, the ability to function independently is influenced significantly by the survival words and phrases the individual know.

We were challenged to develop a functional list of survival words to help identify students with independent living. Such a list of survival words would meet for a simple, informal assessment instrument that is culturally and ecologically appropriate for independent living including directories, guides, consumer words, fill out forms, occupation words, personal care words and so on.

## 2. Research Method and Data Analysis

The research method combines the survey for the professional steps and the experimental research to read at an glance and to know the meaning of the words for the elementary school students. A 100 survival words and phrases were selected among 200 words and phrases of initial list through 45 special educators on special school, special classroom and 25 practitioners on rehabilitation institutes and 30 parents with children, adolescents with disabilities. And 30 children on 1-3 grade in elementary school attend to confirm the frequent sight words on daily living.

At first, Initial list, 200 words were developed including 50 words and 50 phrases from a survival vocabulary list by Polloway and Polloway. Owing to develop the final 100 words and phrases, first in this survey, the teachers and practitioners working with severe disabilities were asked to rate from 1(limited value) to 5(essential) the importance of each words and phrases.

And then 30 children on 1-3 grade at elementary school let the words read by visual at a time. Because the high-frequency words can recognize them quickly without extensive deliberation, young children can read correctly to a high rate of accuracy. The students should be able to recognize these words in list within 1 second to a rate of 60 words per minutes, understand the meaning of the word if it is a sight word(O'Connor & Bell, 2004). For the purpose for this study, especially in korean situation, a time limit was changed from 1 second to 2 second. And the words are understood the

meaning of the words by a majority of two-thirds or more, the over 20 students on elementary school in this study.

The questionnaires to investigate importance by the teachers and practitioners included 200 words and phrases, the importance was asked with 5 likurt scale of scores in teaching words recognition. All the words in a list that were seen by 30 children were made the flash cards in a 15×10 size.

## 3. Research Result

The first part is to select the important words and phrases which were scored more than mean 3 point by the teachers and practitioners working with severe disabilities. 109 words and phrases above 3 point mean among the 200 words and phrases were scored above 3 point mean for being worth the teaching. And then those words and phrases were excluded when the students read slowly enough to rate of more than 2 second.

The figures from the column on the right signified the number of students knowing the words' meaning among the 30 elementary school students. 103 words and phrases were selected by elementary students through so reading within 2 seconds and understanding the meaning of the words and phrases. Lastly 4 researcher and 2 professors excluded 3 words and by making a decision as the less important words phrased to be the final 100 words and phrase on functional list of the survival words in this study.

## 4. Discussion

Many students with severe disabilities cannot read the meaningful words that might seen in neighborhood until they grew up to be adult. Accordingly if the results of this study would apply to reading lesson for the students with severe disabilities, the students participate in community activities. The discussion of this study is as follows.

First, we cannot develop enough words as many as they pull out the enough words in this list for the individuals. Therefore the teachers and practitioners working in different setting should recognize the importance of functional words.

Second, the essential words must be transfer to same words once and again in the different contexts(O'Connor, 2006). In order to that, the list should be utilized with various teaching materials. To maximize the utility of a survival vocabulary, teachers should view the current and subsequent ecology of the individual students with severe disabilities, and need to repeat exposure the familiar words in their meaningful environment more times.

Third, so this study will be a feasibility study, a large number of the service provider for severe disabilities should participant in developing functional words that be read by sight words.

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