



# NONSENSE WORD SYLLABIFICATION

In 2009, Jennifer Diliberto and colleagues published the results of their research on the benefits of teaching students syllabification skills using nonsense words. They randomly placed 83 middle-school students with reading difficulties into either a control group or a treatment group. The treatment group received instructions in syllabification patterns, syllabification steps and rules, and accenting patterns. Students practiced these skills by decoding and encoding nonsense and low-frequency mono- and multisyllabic words. The theory behind using nonsense words during instruction was that it forces readers to rely on English spelling generalizations, rather than memorization, to read the words.

Those students in the treatment group made statistically significant greater improvements in (a) word identification, (b) word attack, and (c) reading comprehension.

Studies such as this provide valid support for the inclusion of syllabification instruction and the use of nonsense words in the *Cracking the ABC Code* ([www.crackingtheabccode.com](http://www.crackingtheabccode.com)) programs.

Jennifer A Diliberto, J., Beattie, J., Flowers, C., & Algozzine, R. (2009). Effects of Teaching Syllable Skills Instruction on Reading Achievement in Struggling Middle School Readers. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 48 (1) 14-28