

Strategies For Spelling



Adult Learning and Literacy
310 – 800 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 0N4

Manitoba
Education,
Training and Youth



Preface

Strategies for Spelling is a core course for the Level II Literacy Certificate. It is offered here in correspondence mode and should take between six and ten hours to complete.

Course Objectives:

The objectives of this course are to:

- provide information regarding the process of learning to spell;
- examine and apply techniques for teaching and learning to spell; and,
- assist practitioners to develop individual spelling instruction and blend this into the overall literacy program.

Course Outline:

The topics that will be covered in this course include:

- history of English spelling;
- phonetic, decoded and sight words;
- assessment;
- teaching and learning strategies;
- learning styles and memory; and,
- learning difficulties.

Strategies For Spelling

Preface	1
Table of Contents	2
<u>Contents:</u>	
Administration	3
Module 1: Introduction	4
Module 2: Teaching and Learning Spelling	11
Module 3: Learning Styles and Memory	28
Module 4: Conclusion	40
References	53
Additional Resources	54

Administration

The course will be evaluated on a “Complete/Incomplete” basis.

There are assignments at the end of each module that should be completed at your own pace. Completed assignments should be forwarded as a package to Adult Learning and Literacy (AL&L) via one of the following methods:

⇒ **Mail:** **Correspondence Courses**
Adult Learning and Literacy
310 – 800 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 0N4

⇒ **E-mail:** **literacy@gov.mb.ca**

⇒ **Fax:** **(204) 948-1008**

Questions/Comments/Assistance

If you require assistance, clarification or have questions or comments about the materials, please telephone AL&L at:

**(204) 945-8247 in Winnipeg or
1-800-282-8069 ext. 8247 Toll free**

Module 1: Introduction To Spelling

Module Outline

- Introduction
- Why Learn to Spell?
- The History of English
- A Word about Physical
- Barriers
- Assignment
- Appendixes

*I take it you already know
Of tough and bough and cough and dough?
Others may stumble, but not you
On hiccough, thorough, laugh and through!
Well done! And now you wish perhaps,
To learn of less familiar traps?*

*Beware of heard, a dreadful word,
That looks like beard and sounds like bird,
And dead; it's said like bed, not bead –
For goodness sake, don't call it 'deed'!
Watch out for meat and great and threat –
(They rhyme with suite and straight and debt).*

*A moth is not a moth in mother
Nor both in bother, broth in brother.
And here is not a match for there
Nor dear and fear for bear and pear.
And then there's does and rose and lose –
Just look them up – and goose and choose,
And cork and work and card and ward,
And font and front and word and sword,
And do and go and thwart and cart –
Come, come, I've hardly made a start!*

Introduction

Let's face it, learning to read and write the English language is not an easy task in that the way some words are said does not correspond to how they are spelled. The English language is not as "phonetically regular" as other languages; that is, language symbols and spoken words don't always correspond. That's the bad news. The good news is that English is 85 percent regular (Klein & Millar, 1990, p. 4). So, while at times it may seem to our learners that there is no rhyme or reason to the English language, we can assure them otherwise and begin to work together on positive strategies for learning to spell.

Why Learn to Spell?



While this would seem obvious, unfortunately many learners feel that learning to spell is not worthwhile. Many view it as tedious and even unnecessary. As such, it is often beneficial to have some discussion with learners about the reasons spelling is important. Some of the reasons you might discuss include:

- 1) As spelling improves, so too does the learner's writing fluency and quality of writing in general.
- 2) Self-confidence improves.
- 3) The English language is demystified.
- 4) Written communication with others is improved.
- 5) Daily living skills such as employment and parenting are enhanced.

The History of English Spelling

That chunk of English that cannot be sounded out phonetically can be very frustrating for learners. Many typically want to know why some words don't sound like they're spelled, while others do. Explaining how certain words came to be

incorporated into our language over many centuries provides a reason for the oddities of our language, and this can go a long way to reducing frustration. A handout outlining the history of spelling is included as Appendix A and an activity has been included as Appendix B. Awareness can save a lot of time and frustration on the part of both the learner and practitioner/volunteer.

A Word about Physical Barriers

Before moving on, it is worthwhile to mention something that may seem obvious, but often goes unchecked; that is, vision and/or hearing problems. Occasionally, a learner will have a mild hearing or visual problem which may be hard to pick up, but will interfere with learning. For example, a mild hearing problem or even a cold may mean the learner is unable to differentiate the syllables in a particular word. This in turn may result in leaving out a syllable altogether, spelling words as they are heard, etc.

The following quote from Shaunessy (1977) emphasizes the importance of being able to hear and see words clearly:

No one speaks “spelled” English. We glide and blur and skip our way through words when we run them together in spoken sentences. Only when we must put our words down on paper, separating each one from the other by a space and getting down every letter that convention has assigned to each word, do we experience the sharp literalism of literacy, the letter-by-letter accountability that suddenly checks our pace and turns our attention to the smallest units of the language (p. 167).

A problem may even arise if instructors are not enunciating clearly enough. It's easy to overlook these types of problems, so remember to be aware that diminished hearing/vision or an instructor not speaking clearly or loudly enough, can create problems in spelling.



**Can your learners see and hear well,
and are you speaking clearly enough?**

Module 1: Assignment

Please answer the following questions on a separate page. You may send this assignment in to your coordinator when it is complete, or you may wait and send in all of your completed assignments at once.

- 1) What do we mean when we say that the English language is not as "phonetically regular" as other languages?
- 2) Approximately what percentage of the English language is not spelled the way it sounds (i.e., is not phonetically regular)?
- 3) Please give five examples each of phonetically regular and irregular words.
- 4) We said above that one of the reasons for students to learn to spell is that correct spelling enhances daily living skills such as employment and parenting. Why might this be so (please include a concrete example if you can).
- 5) Why is it important to spend a little time with learners on the history of spelling?
- 6) Why is it considered best to stick with the English language as it is rather than change the irregular words so that they are spelled the way they sound?
- 7) How might physical barriers interfere with spelling?

The History Of English Spelling

People have been writing in English for about 1500 years. The spellings we use today were only fixed about 200 years ago when the first dictionary was published.



Some English words seem difficult because they are not spelled the way they sound. The alphabet we use today came from the Middle East. Before the alphabet came to England, writers used to write in Latin. But Latin doesn't have all the same sounds as English did 1500 years ago.

Example: Latin does not have the sound "th" ("think" or "this")

When writers wanted to write these sounds they put together the letters "t" and "h" to show the sound.

Example: Latin does not have the sound "w" ("word" or "when")

So again, the writers made up a way of showing the sound. At first they put two "u"s together ("uu"). That is why the letter we now use ("w") is called "double u."

Over the centuries, other peoples invaded England and brought their languages with them. They spoke languages like French and Latin, and some of their words were taken into English.

Example: The word "government" came from the French word "gouvernement". However the "e" has disappeared and many of us do not pronounce the "n."

In addition to other people invading England and changing the language, people in different parts of England said and wrote the language differently before dictionaries were published.

Example: The word "world" was also written as "werld" and "weorld."

Some people nowadays think that we should change English spelling so that all words sounds as they are spelled. The problem with this is that English is an international language and people from different parts of the world say words in different ways. So unfortunately, a reformed spelling system wouldn't work and it's easier to spell words as they are currently spelled.

Activity

The purpose of this activity is to help learners see the benefits of a consistent spelling system.

- 1) Make up several sentences using:
 - a) homonyms (words that sound the same, but are spelled differently). For example: The none tolled hymn two right two the buoy; and,
 - b) phonetic spellings (words spelled like they sound). For example: A bad expeereence mite coz won or to canselashuns.
- 2) Have each learner read a sentence.
- 3) Discuss whether or not it was more difficult to read the sentences and why.

Module 2: Teaching And Learning Spelling

Module Outline

- Introduction
- Breaking the English
- Language Down
- Situating Spelling
- Authentic Learning
- Analysing Spelling Errors
- Spelling Strategies
- Summary
- Assignment
- Appendixes

Introduction

Learning to spell is a fairly complicated process. Essentially, the problem lies in the fact that there different "chunks" or types of words to contend with. In this module we will look at those "chunks" and discuss how to approach spelling with learners.

Breaking the English Language Down

The first "chunk" involves words that sound like they are spelled. We will call these **phonetic words**. These are easiest for learners to deal with once they have learned the sounds that vowels and consonants make.



Phonetic Words

- hat, sat, rat
- run, bun, fun
- sin, bin, tin

The second "chunk" involves words that the learner needs to know a spelling rule/guideline in order to spell them correctly. We will call these **decoded words**. These take a little longer to learner since the student must become familiar with the guidelines for these words.



Decoded Words

- knife (silent "k" and "e")
- telephone ("ph" pronounced as "f", silent "e")
- bomb (silent "b")
- city ("c" pronounced as an "s" versus a "k", "y" pronounced as an "e")
- geography ("g" can make two sounds, "ph" pronounced as an "f", "y" makes "e" sound)

The third and final "chunk" of words are those which seem to have a logic unto themselves. In other words, they cannot be sounded out phonetically nor do they follow any spelling rule/guideline. As such, learners must simply recognize and memorize them. We will refer to these as **sight words**.



Sight Words

- one (sounds like "won")
- bough (sounds like bow)

Our goal in helping learners to spell is twofold:

- a) to assist them to develop strategies for learning the various "chunks" of the English language; and,
- b) as we will discuss in the next section, to situate learning to spell into the larger overall process of becoming text literate by incorporating spelling into reading and writing activities.

Situating Spelling

It is crucial for literacy practitioners and volunteers to understand that learning will be most effective when spelling is integrated into the overall process of learning to read and write. This is referred to as the **whole language** approach to literacy instruction. Brown, Collins and Duguid (1993) offer the following scenario of how we learn language:

Teaching from dictionaries assumes that definitions and exemplary sentences are self-contained “pieces” of knowledge. But words and sentences are not islands, entire unto themselves.... Experienced readers implicitly understand that words are situated. They, therefore, ask for the rest of the sentence or the context before committing themselves to an interpretation of a word. And then go to dictionaries with situated examples of usage in mind (p. 1).

Thus, teaching spelling from a text will not be as effective (or as interesting) as blending spelling instruction into a piece of writing that the learner is doing, or discussing spellings while reading for example. Learners must know how to apply or use spelling in their reading and writing to truly grasp this skill. Thus, one of the key points to take away from this course is:

Spelling textbooks are a useful supplement to teaching spelling, but should not be used as the primary resource for instruction.

Authentic Learning

In addition to situating spelling instruction into reading and writing (i.e., the whole language approach, research into learning and adult learning in particular indicates that in order to be effective, learning must be authentic. That is, learning will be greatly improved if students can attach personal meaning and experience to the material, as well as apply or incorporate it directly into their lives. Thus, literacy instruction in general needs to be framed around "real life" situations. Some examples of this are given below.

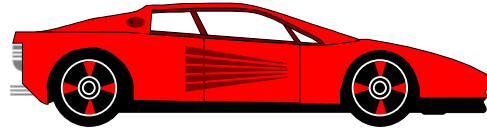


Financial

- Develop words lists of banking terms
- practise writing out cheques and recording the information in a practise bankbook
- fill out applications (e.g., for credit cards, loans, etc)
- read through brochures from a bank

Driving

- develop a word list related to driving
- read through the driving manual and have the learners write the practise tests
- have each student develop a budget for operating a car (e.g., cost of



Employment

- developing lists of common terms found on employment forms and in advertisements
- filling out actual applications forms
- developing a resume
- doing a job search

Family

- Develop a list of terms related to family (e.g., aunt, brother, daughter, sister, etc) and separate into regular and irregular lists.
- Write letters to family members who live elsewhere.
- Write a story about family using as many words from the vocabulary



Since "real life" activities are so familiar to learners, this also helps to provide context which, aids in decoding words. As the *People, Words and Change Literacy Handbook* notes:

Learning to read [spell, and write] is a highly personal activity - it is not neutral. One readily available source of material which should not be overlooked is the learner's own experience. Adult learners have a wealth of life experiences to share, they have ideas to float, they have opinions to express.

Analysing Spelling Errors

The very first place for us to start is to discover where the learner is in terms of their ability to spell. It is useful for both the practitioner and the learner to understand what kind of spelling errors are commonly being made so that learning can focus on appropriate remedial strategies. According to Klein & Millar (1990), there are five typical errors:

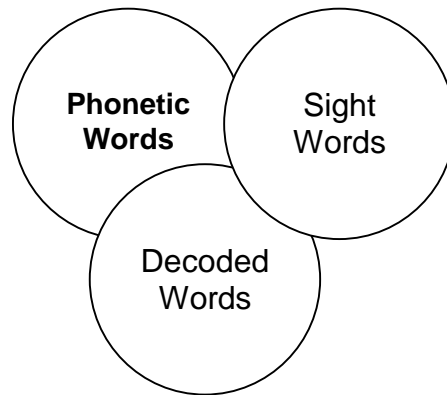
- 1) spell it like it sounds (e.g., hart for heart)
- 2) get letters out of order (e.g., dose for does)
- 3) don't know spelling rule (e.g., nife for knife)
- 4) mix up sounds (e.g., naturl for natural)
- 5) miss out or add bits (e.g., rember for remember or begining for beginning)

An "Error Analysis Chart" has been included at the end of this module to help you and your students identify spelling errors (see Appendix A).

Strategies for Spelling

Once you know where the learner is in terms of his/her ability to spell, you can begin to work together on weak areas. Rather than working sequentially through a set program from a textbook, however, as has been mentioned several times already, spelling should be incorporated into reading and writing activities. It should also be as individualized as much as possible. Understandably, when you are working with groups of learners versus one-to-one tutoring the ability to individualize activities will be harder to achieve. However, anything that you can do to engage your learners on a more personal level will go along way toward enhancing learning. One example would be to obtain some group consensus on what "real life" topics you could build spelling/reading/writing activities around.

Although we have broken the English language down into three "chunks", it must be emphasized that this has been done to simplify spelling and help in developing strategies for teaching and learning. It provides a practical way of discussing spelling, but of course, all parts are actually learned concurrently and as part of a larger literacy program of reading and writing. In the following three sections, some of the main areas you will need to cover for each "chunk" are outlined.



❖ Phonetic Words

In phonics, letters correspond to certain sounds and blending these sounds creates words.

e.g., sat, led, fit, van, craft, watch, open, important, understand

Naturally, this is the easiest portion of the language for students to learn once they know the sounds that each letter makes. Some areas for you and your learner(s) to work together on are outlined below.

- Phonics and Word Families - Word families have common groupings of two or three letters from which other words can be built. Functionally illiterate adults often have trouble blending sounds into whole words. Becoming familiar with word families helps the learner transition from the initial phase of sounding out single letters to blending sounds into words.

e.g, and - sand, hand, band, land
 ing - sing, ring, fling, wing
 ee - feet, meet, greet, beet
 oo - look, book, took, hook
 use - fuse, amuse, ruse

Several examples of activities for combining phonics and word families include:

- Use rhyming words and change the first consonant (e.g., cat, sat, rat, fat, etc).
- Change the last consonant (e.g., cat, can, car, cap).

- Play the Consonant-Vowel-Consonant Conga. Take a C-V-C word (e.g., "cat") and change one letter at a time to see how many different words students can come up with.

e.g., cat, cap, tap, rap, rat, bat, bit, fit, fin, pin, pen ...

- Phonics and Root Words, Prefixes and Suffixes - Prefixes are phonic units added to the beginning of words and suffixes are added to the end of root words. When added to root words, prefixes and suffixes create new words with different meanings. A list of some of the most common prefixes and suffixes has been included as Appendix B.

e.g.,	<u>Root Word</u>	<u>Prefix</u>	<u>Suffix</u>
	agree	disagree	agreement
	use	reuse	usable

❖ Decoded Words

This portion of the language includes words that can be decoded once the spelling rule or "guideline" is known. Perhaps the most difficult thing for students to accept about the English language is that the "rules" are not absolute and there are many exceptions. It is suggested that the use of the word "rules" be changed to "guidelines" as this immediately helps learners to understand this fact and move beyond the frustration of trying to deal with rules that aren't always the rule.

Some basic guidelines are outlined below. They are not intended to be taught in any particular order; rather, they are meant to help you identify areas your learner(s) may be experiencing problems in and provide remedial instruction and activities.

- Vowels make short and long sounds (See Appendix C for additional examples)

- A = cat, cake
- E = bed, feet
- I = fin, fine
- O = nod, node
- U = fun, fuse

- Silent E

e.g., fate, geese, site, cope, fuse

- Two consonants make two sounds (all the rest make one sound)

- C - makes an "s" sound (e.g., circus, cent) and a "k" sound (e.g., cut, cool)
- G - makes a "g" sound (e.g., gorilla, gas) and a "j" sound (e.g., George, geography)

➤ The letter Y can be a vowel or a consonant

- yellow, year = consonant
- tiny, try = vowel

➤ Vowel + "R" Combinations

ar - star **er** - term **ir** - girl **or** - corn

➤ Consonant Digraphs (two consonants, one sound)

th - that **ph** - phone **gh** - ghost **sh** - fish **wh** - which
ck - lick **mb** - bomb **ch** - cheat **kn** - know **qu** - quit
gn - gnome

➤ Vowel Digraphs (two vowels, one sound)

ai - fail **ay** - play **au** - laugh
aw - claw **ew** - flew **ee** - feet
oa - boat

➤ Special Endings

GHT - makes a "t" sound (e.g., light, thought)
TION - sounds like "shun" (e.g., creation, station)

➤ The letter Y and suffixes

In words that end with the letter **Y** change the **Y** to an **I** and add the suffix
(e.g., carry - carried - carrier) **except** for the suffix **ING** (e.g., carry - carrying).

➤ Tense

- The endings **ed** and **ing** are added to words to indicate or describe tense. (e.g., walk, walked, walking).
- In words that end with the letter "e" the "e" is dropped before the ending is added (e.g., love, loved, loving).

➤ Plurals

- Many words in the English language are pluralized by simply adding an **S** to the end of the word (e.g., cat - cats, shape - shapes).
- Words ending in **S, SS, CH, SH,** and **X,** however, are pluralized by adding an **ES** to the end of the word (e.g., bus - buses, loss - losses, church - churches, push - pushes, box - boxes)
- Most words that end in a **Y,** the **Y** is changed to an **I** and an **ES** is added (e.g., carry - carries) **except** for C-V-C words (e.g., boy - boys, pay - pays)

➤ General

- **I** before **E** except after **C**

❖ Sight Words

This portion of language includes words that simply must be memorized. Initially most learners have difficulty distinguishing between decoded and sight words. However, the more they work with the English language, the easier this becomes and thus, the less frustrated they generally are with the oddities of the English language. Some examples of sight words are given below.

➤ The vowels **E** and **O,** in combination with other vowels, can make several different sounds:

- **ea** - meat, dear, bear, heard, beard
- **oo:** - oom (boom) - oon (soon)
 - oop (hoop) - ook (look)
 - ood (wood) - oot (boot and foot)
- **ow:** - know, blow, flown, bowl, crow, sow, bow
 - down, flower, chowder, owl, fowl, sow, bow
- **ou:** - ouch (pouch) - out (pout)
 - ound (sound) - ouse (mouse)
- **ough** - dough, cough, bough, through

➤ The letters **GH** together can make two different sounds.

e.g., - a **W** sound (e.g., dough, bough)
- an **F** sound (e.g., cough)

Summary

We have looked at several elements that are crucial to learning to spell; that is, breaking the English language down into manageable "chunks;" analysing where learners are having problems; situating spelling instruction in the larger literacy program; and, using "real life" examples and activities to promote learning and motivation. In the next module we will look at two factors that can influence students' ability to learn to spell; that is; physical learning style and memory.

Assignment – Module 2

1. Enter the spelling mistakes from the following paragraph in the different categories on the analysis chart provided.

Leat one night my firend waok me saying would you injoy a trill run in my new hecotre? I had sarcley srambled into my trak suit before we were away. The lights of the city glowed beneath, the stars abothe. I was begening to wonder about our desdarnation when I cot site of the spinning nife ege of the surface of what must have bin a tipe of flying sawcer wisling around us. To our releaf the space craft regained hight and we sanc down to the erth and the comfable bed I never aktully left.

(Late one night my friend woke me saying would you enjoy a trial run in my new helicopter? I had scarcely scrambled into my tracksuit before we were away. The lights of the city glowed beneath, the stars above. I was beginning to wonder about our destination when I caught sight of the spinning knife-edge of the surface of what must have been a type of flying saucer whistling around us. To our relief the spacecraft regained height and we sank down to the earth and the comfortable bed I never actually left.)

Spells word like it sounds	Doesn't know spelling "rule"	Gets letters out of order	Mixes up sounds	Misses out or adds in bits

Please answer the following questions on a separate page.

2. Several examples of "real life" learning themes were given in this module (i.e., financial, driving, employment). What are 3 to 4 other themes that you might build instruction around?
3. Pick one of the "real life" themes from Question #2 and briefly outline five learning activities that you might use to teach a blend of spelling, reading, writing and numeracy.
4. Explain why it is important to frame spelling around "real life" or authentic learning?
5. Blending spelling instruction into an overall program of reading and writing is referred to as the _____ approach.
6. Give 5 examples of each of the following types of words that are different from the ones shown in this module:
 - a. phonetic words
 - b. decoding words
 - c. sight words
7. What are three typical errors that learners tend to make in spelling? Give two examples of each that are different than the ones given in this module.
8. Why is it important to use a spelling textbook as a supplement to instruction versus using it to teach directly from?

Error Analysis Chart

Dictate a paragraph to your learner, then use the following chart to analyze where they are having the most difficulties in spelling. Klein & Millar (1990) recommend that a minimum of 20-25 errors be analyzed to reliably identify a pattern of errors.

Spells word like it sounds	Doesn't know spelling "rule"	Gets letters out of order	Mixes up sounds	Misses out or adds in bits

- 1) Spells word like it sounds (e.g., hart for heart)
- 2) Get letters out of order (e.g., dose for does)
- 3) Doesn't know spelling rule (e.g., nife for knife)
- 4) Mixes up sounds (e.g., naturl for natural)
- 5) Misses out or adds bits (e.g., rember for remember or beginining for beginning)

Once errors have been identified:

- a) Explain why the spelling is incorrect.
- b) Explain why certain words are harder to learn. This builds confidence and reduces frustration by assuring learners that a portion of the English language is tough for most people to learn because it doesn't "follow the rules."
- c) Explore ways of learning the correct spelling of the word (i.e., learn the "rule," work on memorizing through the use of mnemonics or rhyming, and so on).

Common Prefixes And Suffixes

1) Prefixes:

ab - from, away

anti - against

auto - self

de - down, from away

ex - out of

mis - wrong, bad

post - after

sub - under

ad - to, toward

pro, pre, ante - before

com - with, together

dis - apart

inter, enter - between

ob - against

re - back

super - above, more than

2) Suffixes:

graph - to write

pathy - feeling

ess - feminine ending

able, ble, ible - capable of being

er - one who does

ful - full of

ward -
direction

Vowels And Consonant Sounds

Vowels - Short Sounds

1. Short "a"

ab - cab	ad - bad	ag - bag	am - ham	an - can
ap - tap	at - cat	and - sand	ank - tank	ash - lash
ass - mass				

2. Short "e"

eb - web	eck - deck	ed - wed	eg - leg	ell - tell
en - hen	end - send	ent - went	ess - mess	est - west
et - wet				

3. Short "i"

ib - rib	id - kid	ig - big	ick - sick	ill - pill
in - pin	ip - lip	it - hit	in - win	

4. Short "u"

ub - rub	uck - duck	ud - mud	ug - bug	ull - dull
um - sum	ut - but	un - run	ung - hung	unk - bunk
ush - hush	ump - bump			

5. Short "o"

ob - slob	ock - clock	od - pod	og - hog	ong - long
ot - cot				

Vowels - Long Sounds

1. Long "a"

ace - pace	ade - fade	age - rage	aid - maid	ail - pail
ain - pain	ale - pale	ame - name	ane - pane	ape - cape
ate - hate	ave - cave	ay - day	aze - daze	

2. Long "e"

e - be **ea** - tea **eak** - peak **EEK** - peek **each** - peach
eal - seal **eam** - team **ean** - bean **eat** - meat **eed** - seed
ee - bee **eep** - beep **een** - been **eet** - beet

3. Long "i"

ice - **mice** ide - **wide** ight - **fight** ike - **like**
ile - **file**
ime - **dime** ind - **find** ine - **pine** ire - **wire**
ite - **kite**

4. Long "o"

oad - toad **oal** - goal **oam** - foam **oan** - loan **oat** - boat
ode - code **oe** - hoe **oke** - yoke **old** - told **ole** - hole
olt - colt **one** - bone **ope** - rope **ose** - rose **ote** - note

5. Long "u"

use - **fuse** ute - **cute** uel - **fuel**

Module 3: Learning Styles And Memory

Module Outline

- Introduction
- Physical Learning Styles
 - Visual Style
 - Auditory Style
 - Motor Style
- Physical Style and
- Instruction
- Memory
- Summary
- Assignment
- Appendixes

Introduction

Before moving on to the specifics of spelling, it is useful to spend some time on two factors that may affect your student's ability to learn to spell; that is, physical learning style and memory. It is important for us to help learners to understand that one very important first goal in learning to spell is identifying a strategy that works for them. One of the ways of doing this is by helping the learner to identify his/her physical learning style. Another skill that will help students with spelling is their ability to memorize, especially those words that we refer to as sight words. Both of these factors are discussed in the following module.

Physical Learning Styles

Unfortunately many learners believe that there is one way to learn to spell, and that if they just work hard at it they'll be able to spell. They often don't realize that there is no one right method of learning to spell and that different strategies work for different individuals. Most of us have a preferred physical style when it comes to learning; that is, we have one sense we tend to use over others when taking in and processing information. There are other types of learning styles such as cognitive and affective (see Adult Literacy correspondence course, *Learning Styles and Strategies*), but physical learning styles are particularly relevant as learners need to be tuned into the **sound** and **look** and **feel** of words. As Shaunessy (1977) writes:

The ability to spell grows slowly out of a number of different kinds of encounters with words – with the sounds of words (phonological encounters), the looks of words (visual encounters), the feel of words as the hand moves to form them in writing (kinaesthetic encounters), and the

meanings of words as they take their places in the context of sentences (semantic encounters) (p.161).

The three main styles – visual, auditory and motor – are described below. It is important to address each style in your instruction so that learning is effective for the greatest number of learners. A Physical Learning Styles Questionnaire has been included at the end of this module (See Appendix A).

➤ **Visual Style**

- Learners with a visual style prefer to ***use their eyes to learn***; that is, see something in writing, watch a demonstration or video, and so on. In order to learn most effectively, these learners need to “see” the information or material in one form or another. This, writing out the different syllables of words, using color or different letter size to highlight a tough part of a word, etc., will enhance learning for these individuals.



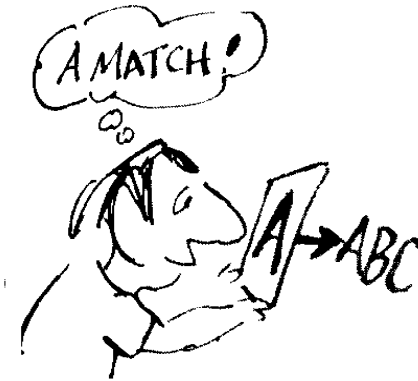
➤ **Auditory Style**

- Learners with an auditory style will prefer to ***use their hearing to learn***; that is, they need to hear and speak words out loud to learn most effectively. Thus, sounding out words, beating out the syllables in words, saying a word in a "funny" way, will all be effective techniques for helping these students learn to spell.



➤ **Motor Style**

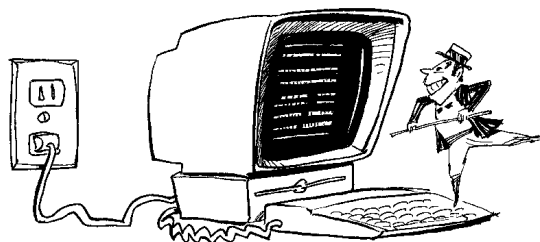
- This style is also referred to as a kinesthetic or physical style. Learners who prefer this style can be thought of as “**hands on**” learners. That is, they need to do an activity, practice a skill or manipulate material physically in order to learn most effectively. When learning to spell these learners are likely to prefer writing out words since muscle movement assists in their learning process.



Physical Style and Instruction

Of the different types of learning styles discussed in this course, physical style is perhaps the simplest and most straightforward to identify and incorporate into instruction. Once you have identified your learners' preferred physical learning style, learning sessions can be easily structured to specifically address each or all of the styles. Listed below are some instructional techniques and learning aids for each style. Some techniques and aids can be used effectively for more than one style.

- Visual Style - Maximum use of visual aids will greatly enhance learning for individuals with a visual style. Some examples of visual aids include videos and films, written materials with lots of graphics (i.e., charts, tables, pictures/clip art, photographs, etc.), overhead projectors, computers, and so on. In general, any technique that allows these learners to use their eyes will be effective.



- Auditory Style - Providing maximum opportunities to “hear” the material to be learned will prove most useful for individuals with an auditory style. In general, any technique that involves listening and/or talking will be effective. Some examples include: group discussions, lectures, guest speakers, reading out loud, listening to cassettes/videos/films, and so on. Contrary to the approach used with the visual learner above when looking at pronouns, auditory learners need to hear the material. Thus, one approach might be to read a story and have the learner stop you whenever he/she hears a pronoun.



- Motor Style - Individuals with a motor style need to be physically involved in their learning, thus the key to enhancing their learning is lots of “hands on” activities. Some effective approaches include: field trips, experiments, role playing, puzzles and games, three dimensional learning aids, or more generally, writing things out and reading out loud.



Memory

Information on memory has been included under this module because students must rely heavily on memory to learn the spellings of phonetically irregular words. We have two types of memory: short term and long term. In order to learn both decoded and sight words, it is important to help learners transfer information short term to long term memory.

Don't Forget

But first, a little information about what research by psychologists has shown about how our memory works:

- 1) We remember things more easily if we organize them into groups, patterns, categories.
- 2) We remember unusual things.
- 3) We remember things that interest us most.
- 4) We can only remember a few things at a time (7 plus or minus 2 'chunks').
- 5) It is difficult to remember things we don't understand.
- 6) Our memory works by building links.
- 7) We remember things better if we already know something about them.
- 8) Learning is an active task -- we have to think about *how* we can remember something.

After learning something, people are generally able to recall the information quite well for about 10 minutes. If, however, the material is not reviewed within 24 hours and again within a week, approximately 80% of the information will be forgotten. Thus, in order for learners to commit information to long term memory, ***the material must be reviewed and practised.***

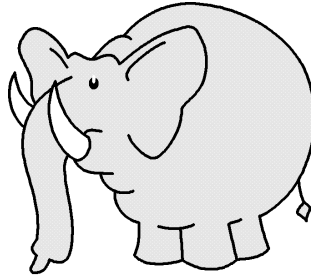


Some aids to helping learners to memorize spellings include:

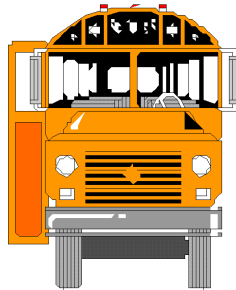
- 1) **Rhyming** - An activity has been included at Appendix B.

- 2) **First letter mnemonics** - using the first letter of the words in a sentence to remember a spelling.

e.g., **B**ig **E**lephants **A**ren't **U**gly, they are **BEAU**tiful.



- 3) **Image associations** - When there is confusion about which homonym to use, associate the words with an image (e.g., Which was is the head of the school? The "principle" or the "principal"? The principal is my pal")
- 4) **Find words within words** - For example, the learner wants to spell "business" as "bizness." Point out the "bus" in the correct spelling and have him/her imagine a bright yellow school bus.



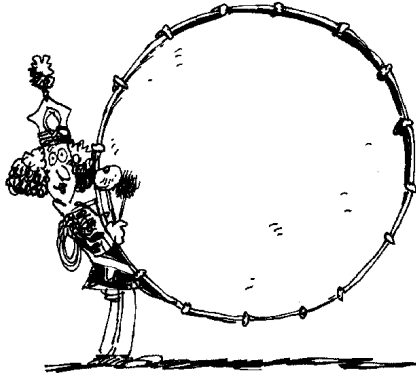
BUS-iness

- 5) **Say the word in a 'funny' way** - (e.g., the student keeps leaving the "h" out of "when" so together you say the word as "w" "hen")
- 6) **Use different sizes or colors** - write the part the learner is having difficulty remembering in a different size or color

e.g., **BUS** iness

- 7) **Link word to known words** - for example, site, bite, kite

- 8) **Beat out the syllables** of a word and write out each part of the word as it's said (e.g., "leg-is-la-ture")



- 9) **Use rhythm** say the names of the letters in a rhythm (e.g., p-e o-p l-e)
- 10) **Trace** the word several times with a finger.
- 11) **Break words into chunks** (See Appendix C).
- 12) **Play memory games** - some examples have been given at the end of this module (see Appendix C).

Summary

In this module we have looked at the importance of both physical style and memorization skills in learning to spell. In the final module we will "put it all together" so to speak and look at integrating the information from the first three modules into an overall strategy for instructing spelling.

Assignment - Module 3

Please answer the following questions on a separate page.

7. What are the three types of physical learning styles?
8. Why are physical learning styles particularly important to spelling?
9. Give one example of an activity that you might use to teach homonyms (words that sound alike but are spelled differently) for each of the three physical learning styles.
10. What are the two types of memory?
11. What are two types of things we tend to be able to remember? Give one example of each.
12. What are two things that are crucial for learners to do in order for them to transfer material from short to long term memory?
13. Describe how you might help the following students who are having difficulty spelling words with a silent "K" at the beginning of the word
8. What would be a "mnemonic" (a saying or rhyme to remember a spelling "guideline") for the words:
 - a. piece
 - b. boat

**Appendix A
to Module 3**

Physical Learning Styles Questionnaire

Below are a number of incomplete sentences. Next to each sentence are three possible ways to end each sentence. For each sentence select ONE ending that best reflects how you normally do things. The column with the largest number of ticks indicates your *preferred* physical learning style.

		A	B	C
1.	When you want to know the day's news do you...	read the newspaper thoroughly?	listen to the radio or TV?	Watch TV and/or quickly scan the newspaper?
2.	When you read a novel do you ...	like descriptive scenes and imagine them?	enjoy reading dialogues and "hear" the characters voices?	Prefer action stories?
3.	When you need to spell a difficult word do you...	try to "see" the word in your head first?	sound it out and then write it?	Write the word a number of ways until it "feels" right?
4.	In your spare time would you rather ...	watch TV, go to the show, read?	listen to music, attend a concert or play an instrument?	Do something physical (e.g., sports, crafts)?
5.	When you forget something do you ...	forget names but not faces?	forget faces but not names?	Remember best what you did?
6.	When you have to do business with someone do you ...	prefer a face-to-face meeting or writing letters?	prefer to discuss things on the telephone?	Prefer to discuss things while doing another activity (e.g. playing sports)?
7.	In terms of the arts do you prefer...	paintings?	music?	Dance?
8.	When you are talking do you...	talk sparingly, but dislike listening?	enjoy listening, but are impatient to talk?	Gesture a lot and are quite expressive?
9.	When you attend a meeting do you ...	come prepared with notes?	enjoy discussing issues and hearing other points of view?	Want to be somewhere else and spend the time doodling?
10.	People can best interpret your emotions by...	your facial expressions	by the tone of your voice	By your body language
11.	When you visualize something do you ...	see vivid, detailed pictures?	think in sounds?	See images that involve lots of movement?
12.	When concentrating are you ...	distracted by untidiness or movement?	distracted by sounds or noise?	Distracted by movement?
13.	When you are praised do you ...	like written comments?	like oral comments?	Like a physical action such as a pat on the back or hug?
14.	When you try to interpret someone's mood do you ...	primarily look at their facial expression?	listen to the tone of their voice?	Watch their body language?
15.	When you are inactive do you ...	look around, doodle, watch something?	talk to yourself or others?	Doodle, draw, fiddle with something?
16.	When you are learning do you ...	like to see diagrams, slides, or demonstrations	prefer verbal instructions, lectures, group discussions?	Prefer direct involvement such as role playing?
	Total ticks for each column (A, B and C)			
		(Visual style)	(Auditory style)	(Motor style)

Activity: Rhyming And Word Play

Rationale:

This activity encourages learners to recognise visual patterns in words and to process the words when they look for similar sounds.

Method:

1. Beginners - Give learners a list of words of 5 to 10 words and ask learners to come up with rhyming words from the same word family (freeze, sneeze, breeze; crack, smack, lack, back, hack, track; cut, hut, nut, but, gut, rut).
2. Intermediate - Move on to words that sound the same but are spelled differently (freeze, please, peas, leaves)
3. Advanced - Move to homonyms (words that sound the same but are spelled differently) (e.g., red, read; to, too, two; won, one), and then to words that are spelled the same, but said differently (cut, put; cough, dough)

Helping Memory

A Class Exercise

Select 24 commonly recognizable items and cover them. Tell students they will have 2 minutes to memorize as many items as possible. Mention that they may use any memorizing technique that will help them.

Display the items one at a time, saying the name of item as you uncover it. After the two minutes is up ask the students to write down as many items as they can remember.

When they have had sufficient time to write down as many items as they can remember, have a group discussion about how each person tried to remember the items. Write the methods on a flip chart or the board.

Divide the class into smaller groups and have the groups try to devise other methods of memorizing words.

Chunking

This literally means separating the word into smaller parts so that its more easily remembered. Normally you would divide the word into syllable chunks. (e.g., fantastic - fan / tas / tic)

You can start with one syllable words though, and divide them into two or three letter chunks. (e.g., great - gr / ea / t)

Then you can go on to bigger words, and sound out the syllables or letter blends. (e.g., terrific - ter / rif / ic)

When you're chunking, you can also focus on the letter blends. (e.g., great - gr / ea / t - that's an 'ea' word, and a 'gr' word)

Develop a list of words together that have meaning for your learner. Work on about ten words at a time.

Spelling Bee's

Remember when you were in school and you had to memorize lists of words each week, then participate in a spelling bee at the end of the week? Adults also find this a lot of fun too and it's good way to help them visualize how words are spelled in their heads, a particularly effective technique for becoming proficient at spelling.

Board Games

Games such as "Boggle" (beginner to intermediate level), and "Scrabble" (intermediate to advanced) are lots of fun and stimulate the learner's ability to visualize word spellings.

Computers

For intermediate to advanced learners, *if used correctly* computers can greatly enhance the process of learning to spell because of the automatic spell check feature of most word processing programs (the word is underlined or highlighted if spelled incorrectly). Be cautious, however, about which students you use this tool with. Computers are very intimidating for many people. Conversely, it can be a very exciting tool for others.

Module 4: Conclusion

Module Outline

- Introduction
- Whole Language Instruction
- Review and Practise
- Techniques used by Successful Spellers
- Why Isn't My Student Learning?
- Learning Disabilities and Spelling
- Conclusion
- Assignment
- Appendixes

Introduction

As mentioned throughout this course, adult students tend to learn best when what they are learning is tied to **real life**. Thus, learning to spell is best accomplished by basing tasks, materials and activities on subjects and/or experiences that are meaningful, useful, familiar or in some way relevant to the learner. As was also mentioned in the introduction to this course, spelling cannot effectively be taught in isolation from other components of literacy such as reading, writing. This last module will discuss how to approach spelling instruction generally, as well as what to do if a student is not learning.

Whole Language Instruction

For the purposes of learning to spell, we broke the English language down into three chunks or types of words: 1) phonic words; 2) decoding words; and, 3) sight words.

The purpose of this was twofold:

- 1) to provide tutors/learners with a visual image or structure against which to frame the English language; and,
- 2) to help learners understand and accept that while a certain portion of the language is somewhat difficult to learn, a substantial portion is not. This will go a very long way toward decreasing frustration and increasing confidence.

As was also mentioned throughout this course, these chunks need to be taught concurrently versus consecutively, and as part of a **whole language** spelling program (i.e., integrated into the learners' reading and writing). Dividing the language is simply a strategy for helping students to manage their learning better.

Spelling perfectly or according to "the rules" should be de-emphasized in favour of something we will call **invented spellings**. This involves having learners guess at spellings they are having difficulty with (although the former term is generally used since "guessing" often has negative connotations for many learners). This helps learners to relax and adopt a more "playful" attitude toward spelling. See Appendix A for an invented spelling activity.



Klein & Millar (1990) suggest several good points to keep in mind with regard to spelling teaching and learning:

- 1) **The program must be meaningful** - It should be related to the students' need to spell and be based on words they use or want to use in their own writing.
- 2) **The program must be individualized** - It is essential that not only the particular words but also the strategies for learning the words are selected and adapted to fit the students' own spelling style. This may be somewhat harder to achieve when teaching groups of learners; however, as much as possible it is recommended that you try to address individual needs.
- 3) **The program must be multi-sensory** - Students must be encouraged to use all their senses - visual, auditory and kinaesthetic/motor - to

reinforce one another and to enable them to discover and emphasize their strongest mode of learning. Three examples of learning activities of this type may be found in Appendixes B and C of this module.

- 4) **The program must be structured** - Regularity and consistency help students to develop an awareness of word patterns over time and to build a spelling vocabulary that they can use in their writing.
- 5) **The program must be limited** - Students need time to absorb letter groupings and to make links between similar words. Therefore, not too many letter patterns should be taught in any one lesson.

Review and Practise

As we discussed in the section on memory in Module #3, it is critical for students, especially for those with learning difficulties, to review and practise spelling in order to move the information from short term to long term memory.

One method is the **Look, Cover, Write, Check** method (Klein & Millar, 1990). A double page of an exercise book is divided into four columns. The columns are numbered. A list of words the student has trouble remembering how to spell is made up by the learner and the practitioner and entered in Column 1. (The practitioner should check to see that the words are each spelled correctly). Each word is discussed as to how best to memorize the word (e.g., using a mnemonic, rhyming, etc). One word at a time each word is practised in the following manner:

- 1) **LOOK** at the word, noting which parts are especially difficult and say the word aloud. Close your eyes and try to visualize the word in your head.
- 2) **COVER** the word and think about how you will remember it.
- 3) **WRITE** the word in Column 2. Say it as you write it. If you have learned it in bits, say the bits as you write it.
- 4) **CHECK** the word, letter for letter to see if it is written correctly. If not, put an "X" beside the word and copy the spelling a few times on the page below or another piece of paper. Pay attention to the mistake. Don't just stick in a missing letter if that was your error, write out the whole word a few times to help you remember it.
- 5) One day later, repeat the process and write the words in Column 3.
- 6) Two or three days later, repeat the process and write the word in Column 4.

Techniques used by Successful Spellers

One way of assessing a particular learner's progress in learning to spell is to look for the presence of techniques that successful spellers often use. These are outlined in the following (adapted from Bernstein, 1987):

- 1) The learner notes that the word is similar to one he already knows and substitutes a letter (e.g., needs to spell "mast", knows the word "fast" and substitutes the "m" for the "f").
- 2) She divides the word into larger or smaller parts she already knows (e.g., candidate = can - did - ate, rainfall = rain - fall)
- 3) He divides words into syllables and sounds out them out phonically (e.g., permitting = per - mit - ting, unfortunate = un - for - tun - ate)
- 4) She applies spelling "guidelines" (e.g., knows the effect of the silent "e" on the preceding vowel)
- 5) He sounds out the word letter by letter or groups of letters.
- 6) She analyzes the word structurally (e.g., root, prefix, suffix - disagreement)
- 7) He is comfortable with "inventing" spellings of words.



What if My Student Isn't Learning?

There may be several reasons why a student may not be learning including:

- 1) **Specific learning difficulties** - it may be that the student has a learning difficulty that has not been identified yet or identified properly.

- 2) **Instructional** - the instructional sequencing or workload may need to be examined for overload, lack of continuity, no opportunity for review and practise, etc.
- 3) **Retention** - Students may need more time to practise and review spellings and/or may need to try alternate methods of memorizing words.
- 4) **Personal reasons** - It may simply be the case that the student is either too busy or is unmotivated to focus on their learning at that particular moment in time. Discussing this in a frank, yet positive and non-judgemental manner with the student and identifying options avoids frustration on the part of the student and the practitioner.

Learning Disabilities and Spelling

Often students with a learning disability will have a good "general" memory. That is, they can remember past events and experiences quite clearly, but have trouble with rote memorizing. This is not to say they cannot memorize, but that they require more time, energy and concentration. Thus, a common problem for students lies in **memorizing difficulties**.

Because of these innate memorizing problems, these learners must understand the nature of their spelling difficulties, how this impacts on learning particular words, and why certain learning strategies will aid them better than others. Once these students have this understanding, they are less likely to be as frustrated and are usually willing to invest the extra time needed to make progress in spelling.

Another area of difficulty that presents problems for students in learning to spell is **perceptual processing difficulties**. Two common ones are visual and auditory processing. This does not mean that there is something physically wrong with a learner's sight or hearing. Their eyes/ears may be working adequately, however, the difficulty comes in the processing of information in the brain.

A student with visual processing difficulties would tend to have problems:

- visualizing words
- recalling letter sequence properly
- reversing or rotating letters (most commonly "b" and "d" but also p/g/q/ and w/m, n/u)



A student with auditory processing difficulties would experience problems:

- segmenting or sequencing words
- "holding" the sound in his/her head while writing it out
- checking a spelling phonetically



Since many students believe to greater or lesser degrees that they must be stupid not to be able to spell, it may be helpful to discuss the fact that it may be memorizing and/or perceptual problems that are inhibiting success. However, memory and perceptual processing difficulties are but three of many areas that learning disabilities can affect. A "Checklist for Identifying Learning Difficulties" has been included at the end of this module (see Appendix C) to help practitioners identify potential problems of this nature. (It must be emphasized that the checklist is not a diagnostic tool since that is the job of a trained learning disabilities specialist. Rather, it is a tool to identify possible reasons a learner may be experiencing difficulties in spelling.)

Once it has been established that the student may have a learning difficulty (or difficulties), the suggested process for correcting spelling errors is outlined below:

- 1) Explain why the spelling is incorrect. This is especially important for students with learning difficulties because more often than students without learning difficulties they will not know why they spelled a word incorrectly.
- 2) Discuss the relationship of the error to the student's particular learning difficulty.
- 3) Explain why certain words are harder to learn. This builds confidence and reduces frustration by assuring learners that a portion of the English language is tougher to learn than the rest and it is that way for most people.

- 4) Explore ways of learning the correct spelling of the word (i.e., learn the "rule," work on memorizing through the use of mnemonics or rhyming, and so on).

It is also strongly recommended that if a student is suspected of having a learning disability, further screening be conducted by a program member who has successfully completed the *Learning Disabilities* course.

Conclusion

This course has examined strategies for instructing spelling. It was strongly emphasized throughout this course that spelling must be blended in to a larger overall literacy program and framed around "real life" topics and activities in order for students to learn most effectively. The sole use of textbooks to teach spelling is not recommended since this tends to isolate spelling rather than blending spelling into reading and writing activities.

Assignment- Module 4

Please answer the following questions on a separate page.

1. The three different "chunks" of the English language (i.e., phonic words, decoding words, and sight words), should be taught consecutively or concurrently? (Circle one) Why?
2. How does breaking the language into these "chunks" help learners with spelling?
3. What is one type of processing difficulty that a student may have and give two examples of how you might help him/her compensate for that difficulty.
4. What are three techniques commonly used by successful spellers? Give one example of each technique that has not already been used in this module.
5. What are two reasons a student might continue to have difficulty spelling? What can you use to assist them to overcome these difficulties?
6. What is meant by "invented spellings"?
7. Why is it important to blend spelling into an overall literacy program of reading and writing?
8. Why is it important for spelling to be framed around "real life" activities of interest to our learners?

Activity: Invented Spellings In Writing

Rationale:

This spelling activity should be incorporated into writing activities in learners' larger program. It is designed to help learners feel comfortable with that words don't have to be spelt right the first time. In addition, it helps learners to actively seek correct spellings for themselves.

Materials:

Invented Spellings worksheet. Any writing activity.

Step 1

Make up an "Invented Spellings" sheet for each learner (Example below) to use when learners are writing.

Step 2

Whenever the learner has trouble spelling a word give them the "Invented Spellings" sheet and have them try to spell the word first without your help.

Step 3

Once they have made their attempt tick the correct letters – even if they aren't in the correct order – to build confidence. Talk about the word and the letters in it "Hmm, how did you know that it started with a 'W'?" Get them thinking about how they came to use the letters they did – did they remember it from somewhere or did they sound it out phonetically?

Step 4

Have them try to spell the word a second time, then tick off the correct letters. Talk again about how they came to their conclusions and then write the correct version in the last column.

1st Attempt	2nd Attempt	Correct Spelling
chldrin	Childran	Children

Activity: Letter And Sound Structure
(Adapted from Fagan, 1992)

This method is similar to the “Look, Cover, Write, Check” method suggested by Klein & Millar (1990), with the exception that this method stresses using auditory versus visual skills.

Objective:

To improve word identification and spelling skills.

Rationale:

Word identification and spelling both depend on a knowledge of letter-sound structure of words. When possible, it makes sense to develop both skills simultaneously.

Suggested Materials:

A set of ten words on a particular topic of interest to the learner, some of which should be one syllable.

Step 1:

Choose a topic of interest to the learner (e.g., cooking, sports, driving, etc), and develop a list of related words. Using one-syllable words, explain that you are going to show a word for 5 seconds, then cover it and they will write it.

Step 2:

Arrange what the learner has written so that any correct letters are placed in the correct sequence and place holders are provided for missing letters.

Word is: ***shout***

Learner wrote: ***stnu***

You write: **S _ _ ut** while saying, “OK, the **s** goes here, the **U** here and the **t** here. Now, we still have 2 missing letters.

Step 3:

Have the learner say the word and see if s/he can fill in the missing letters. If the response is incorrect, show the word again and have the learner complete the spaces. Turn over what was written, show the word, and have the learner try again.

Step 4:

Move to words with two and three syllables once the learner has gained some control over the one-syllable words. If the word is too difficult and a learner cannot seem to remember any letters, it may be necessary to expose just one syllable at a time. However, after the complete word has been written and the paper is turned over, expose the whole word again.

Activity: Using Sound And Visual Clues
(Adapted from Fagan, 1992)

Objective:

This activity blend both the sound of words (phonetics) and how words look (visualizing and memory).

Rationale:

In that the English language as a whole and the individual parts of words are both phonetically regular and irregular, this activity assists learners to develop both skills to decode individual words.

Suggested Materials:

A variety of green and red geometric shapes (e.g., green squares and red circles), and a list of ten words on a topic mutually agreed to by the learner and yourself. The different colours and shapes are used to assist learners' visual memory.

Step 1:

Tell the learner the goal of the exercise is to help them see what parts of words can be sounded out and which must be remembered. As an example, begin by asking the learner to think what letter the word **measles** starts with. (If the learner has trouble, give other words beginning with an **m**.) Write the letter **m** and say "I can sound it." Next ask the learner what the word **knife** starts with. Write the letter **k** and say "I must remember it."

Step 2:

One word at a time from the list you developed earlier, have the learner break the word down into parts that can be sounded out, and parts that must be remembered. The parts that can be sounded out go on the green squares, and the parts that must be remembered go on the red circles. (Green = go ahead and spell it like it sounds; red = stop and try to visualize the letters).

Step 3:

Repeat Step 2 until the learner is comfortable with each word on the list.

Checklist For Identifying Specific Learning Difficulties

Klein & Millar (1990) offer the following checklist to aid practitioners to identify learning difficulties.

- 1) Does your student show significant discrepancy between verbal and written performance?
- 2) Does your student experience persistent or severe problems with spelling, even with easier or more common words?
- 3) Does your student:
 - a) easily lose his/her place when reading?
 - b) commonly misread or miscopy words?
 - c) experience left/right confusions?
 - d) have trouble identifying his/her errors, even when they are pointed out?
- 4) Does your student exhibit memorizing difficulties in other learning tasks (e.g., lists, telephone numbers, names, dates, etc)?
- 5) Does your student have persistent problems with sentence structure, punctuation, and organization of written work that is not due to lack of experience?
- 6) Does your student have trouble ordering things sequentially?
- 7) Does your student have trouble generalizing, or acquiring and applying rules (although he/she may understand the principles of the rules)?
- 8) Does your student have handwriting difficulties (i.e., "messy," poorly constructed)?
- 9) Does your student have 'bad' days when he/she seems unable to remember words known on a previous day?

References

- Bernstein, J. (1987). *People, Words and Change: Literacy Volunteer Handbook*. Ottawa: People, Words and Change.
- Brown, J., Collins, A. & Duguid, P. (1993). *Situated Cognition and the Culture of Learning*.
<http://www.ilt.columbia.edu/ilt/papers/JohnBrown.html>
- Fagan, W. (1992). *A Framework for Literacy Development*. Montreal: Cheneliere.
- Klein, C. & Millar, R. (1990) *Unscrambling Spelling*. Toronto: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Shaunessy, M. P. (1977). *Errors & Expectations: A Guide for the Teacher Of Basic Writing*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Tarasoff, M. (1990). *Spelling Strategies You Can Teach*. Victoria: Active Learning Institute.
- Tarasoff, M. (1993). *Reading Instruction that Makes Sense*. Victoria: Active Learning Institute.

Additional Resources

The following list of resources have been used and are recommended by various literacy programs and practitioners. A short description of each book is included to help you find appropriate resources for your program. This list is not meant to be exhaustive and practitioners/volunteers are encouraged to continually research additional resources.

Print Resources

Barron, M. (1995). *Ready, Set, Read and Write*. Toronto: Skylight Press.

Although this book is designed for younger learners, many of the games and activities can be adapted for adult learners. The activities are all easy, simple and engaging, and blend everyday activities into the process of learning to read and write. Particularly useful is that the author notes which skills each activity is designed to promote.

Phenix, J. & Scott-Dunne, D. (1994). *Spelling for Parents*. Markham: Pembroke Publishers.

Although this book is designed for parents, it is wonderfully appropriate for programs because it is so clearly and simply written while at the same time, giving lots of information about spelling (e.g., history of spelling, why learn to spell, origins and derivations of words, etc).

Internet Resources

1. Learning Resource - Information for Parents and Teachers

This site offers ideas for activities for spelling, reading and writing. Although the activities are designed for younger learners they can be adapted to adults. The site adds activity suggestions on an ongoing basis so it is best to keep checking back.

Internet address: <http://www.edbydesign.com/parentres.html>

2. Zaner-Bloser, Inc.

Although this is a commercial site, there are several valuable features for programs: free activity downloads (geared to younger learners, but adaptable), e-mail notification when new activities are added, a chat room for educators to discuss spelling, and research papers about spelling.

Internet address: http://www.zaner-bloser.com/html/sp_free_ab.html

3. The Alphabet Superhighway - Wild World of Words Challenges

Here's a fun site of online learning spelling activities including: word endings, decoding, silent letters, sound sort, syllables, word building, scrambles, word forming, compound words, word meanings, blends, rhyming, and prefix/suffixes. The activities are designed for younger learners, but would be fun and stimulating for adults as well.

Internet address:

<http://www.ash.udel.edu/ash/challenge/challengeframe.html>

4. Vocabulary University

At this site intermediate and advanced learners can participate in online vocabulary activities for three levels. Answers use words in context and are provided immediately along with helpful hints. Students who participate for 12 different sessions at any level (learning 12 words per session, or a total of 144 words) earn a diploma at Vocabulary University.

Internet address: <http://www.vocabulary.com/>

5. The Internet TESL Journal's Scrambled Word Quizzes

This is a wonderful site for easy to hard online word scrambles for adult learners. The site also offers quizzes/activities for vocabulary building, grammar, reading and writing, etc.

Internet Address: <http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj/quizzes/sw.html>

6. Funbrain's Spell Check

This site offers easy to hard online spelling game in which four words are offered, the learner checks the incorrectly spelled word, then types in the correct spelling. This type of activity is very helpful for promoting visual discrimination abilities in spelling.

<http://www.funbrain.com/spell/index.html>