# The use of a diagnostic spelling test in the analysis of spelling problems 

Geraldine L. Whitted<br>University of Nebraska at Omaha

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# THE UEE OF A DIAGMOSTYC SFELHTMG TEST 

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A Thesis presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Psychology
of the
Municipal University of Omaha
In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
by
Geraldine I. Whitted
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## INTRODUCTION

Prom the first attempt to standardize English spellIng in the eighteenth century, to the present, the problem of spelling has caused much concern, comment, eriticism, and discuseion.

The absence of any practical diagnostio tool which would enable educators and clinicians to discover the type of disabilities of those with whom they come in professional contact and the causes for the spelling disabilities prompted thin study.

## CHAPTER I

## THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SPELLING

"Nothing illuminates the present so much as an understanding of immediately preceding situations. Any interpretation of today's practices is dependent upon a comprehension of yesterday's," says Suzzallo (38).

A brief history of spelling, and of spelling practices in American schools, therefore, seems pertinent to the subject of diagnosing spelling disabilities and remedial speliing work.

When printing was first instroduced into Europe, there was no standard of spelling, and attempts at speling more or less conformed to the sound of the word. The results of this attempt to spell phonetically varied widely throughout the localities where this method was used. Because the printing press made it possible for the circulation of many books, it became imperative that a systematic standard of spelling be devised. This need arose at a time when the English language was still undergoing phonetic changes, and the standardized spelling had not allowed for any modification to meet these changes. As a result, although the standardization had merit, it also led to a great deal of confusion. This confusion has been carried to such an extent that, even today, not a eingle letter in the English
alphabet is represented by less than two or more sound values. Spelling, therefore, is no longer a phonetic matter in English, and words must be carefully taught in order to maintain a standard.

In the beginning the subjects of spelling and reading were closely associated. The reason for this was that in colonial days the first schools were reading schools, founded in order that the children might learn to read the Bible and understand the word of God. The firet primers contained the prayers and precepts, the letters of the alphabet in laree and emall type, and various combinations of vowels and consonants. Host famous of these were the Horn Books, the firet of which was made in England about 1450. They consleted of sheets of paper fastened to wooden ladies and covered by transparent horn for protection.

In Germany, in 1532, Marens ©chulte published an ABC book in which the letters of the alphabet were printed with a picture connected with each letter. Throughout the early history of New England, primers and church books followed the general plan of the ABC books. The letter method in various forms has perciated even to modern times.

The a-b-c method was a highly mechandcal one. Since the letter was assumed to be the means of recogntion, the child was required to learn the alphabet first. The second step was the learning of syllables and words by a spelling method.

This method was cummarized by Dr. Nila Banton $\operatorname{cmith}^{1}(2)$. "The techniquea used were those of leaming the alphabet, spelling syllables and words, memorizing sections of content and reading orally. AIl children were inducted into the readinc procees through the alphabetlcal method because that was the only reading approach known at that time."

During the eixteenth century the gingerbread technique wae applied to the $a-b-c$ method. Comeone conceived the Idea of making the Horn Bock of gingerbread, as gingerbread was a highly prized dainty, and thus motivate the child by permitting him to eat each letter which he had learned. "Proceeding thus with vast delight he spells and gnaws from left to right." The school employed a baker to prepare che instruetional niteriale. It took about three weeks of gingerbread diet for memorizing the alphabet.

The early association of reading and spelling had far reaching influences. It affected the content of speling. As a result, much of the materials of spelling have been drawn from reading. The early methode of using the alphabet to teach reading were also used in the teaching of spelling.

About 1700, the New England primer Piret made ite appearance in colonial schoole. It was chiefly concerned

[^0]With biblical or religlous material. Toward the close of the eighteenth century the first books were published which were in competition with the New England primer. Two of the most important books were Gilworth'e "New Guide to the Englieh Tongue," published in England in 1740 and Noah Webster's "The Blue Backed Epeller;" published in 1783. The latter book contained lists of epelling words which were interspersed with reading matter. One of its effects was a tendency to standardize and Eimplify English spelling.

With the appearance of more spelling books, epelling gained more or less of an independent existence as a formal subject. This position continued throughout the nineteenth century.

Although at this time we find the first really systematic approach to the teaching of spelilng, which involved the application of specific techniques, the selection of words which were included in the spelling books was based on the judgment of the author as to which words he felt the child should know how to spell. Many words appeared in spelling books apparently because they were extremely difficult to spell, while many other words which were important to epell were onitted.

Another effect of the publication of the Elue Backed speller was to make spelling a craze. Previously, epelling
had been ifttle taught, but now it absorbed a large share of the student interest and enthusiasm, and the pupil who could "epell down the whole school" ranked second only to the child who surpassed the rest in arithmetic.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century there was a general pedagogical movement towarde the correlation of all subjects. The opinion prevalled that, since speling had no subject of its own, it should recelve its materials from other subjecte. The vucgestions were also made that specific spelling periode be abolished and that all epelling be taught "incidentally" during other class periode.

## HEACUREMENT MOVEMENT

In 1897, J. N. Rice, a pioneer in education research, made a comparative study of the spelling abilities of children taught by methods in various cities. He drew up a common list of words which the children were asked to spell. Hice's study involved the epelling achievement of 30,000 pupils. He found that those pupils who devoted fifteen minutes a day to spelling could spell as well as those who had given Porty to fifty minutes a day to the subgect and that drill work in the direct teaching of spelling was futile. Rice's study was elenificant in that it opened the door to the measurement movement. However, the resulte of hie study met with very 1 ittle approval becauce the educators, at that time, believed that the learning of epelling was good diselpline.

As a result, spelling has become more informal. It forms have cone into relation with the situation requiring them, and spelling has been taught with greater ilgnificance.

One of the main difficulties in the teaching of spellIng was the number of words to be learned and the bacis of selection of the words to be taught. It was not unusual for the word list to encompass more than ten thousand worde. Current research has shown that this number is excessive.

During the period from 1900-1910, spelling, a subject considered of value by educators and laymen, lost its place of importance in focus of attention. It was taught in connection with the language arts-writing, composition, reading and other subjects, and not as an independent subject having a specific spelling period.

After 1910 and continuing up to the present time, there have been many investigations in the field of speling. some of the areas of concentration were methods of teaching spelling, phonetic spelling, word analysis, spelilng difficulties and their diagnosis, development of spelling scales, and standardized tests. Come of the results of these investigations were:
(1) spelling was returned to prominence as a separate subject in the curriculum of the elementary schools.
(2) word lists were developed based on word frequency studies.
(3) the level of difficulty was indicated by grade placement.
(4) the cruciality of the word was emphasazed.

The development of standardized educational tests has been gradual. The resulte of such studies have had a marked influence on educational practices. Many experimental psychologiste are responsibie for the main contributions pertaining to such methoas. In the early history of testing, many of the standardized tests appeared as a partual defense against the critheisms of certain educational and lay groups who opposed any modification in school curriculum in order to meet certain business and vocational demands outside the classrom. It is doubtful whether there would have been such rapid advancement in educational measurement if it had not been for the foresight of Professow Thorndike and his contemporartes in their recognition of the potential power of educational tests as a means of claselfying pupils and evaluating instruction.

CONCTRUCTION AND USE OF TESTS
No one test can serve all the necessary ends; therefore series of tests must be constructed and administered according to the purposes for which they are to be used. Important functions served by spelling tests include the
following: determining spelling ability of the group; discovering which words are necessary for group study and for individual atudys gulding leaming by evaluating success and faslures; measuring the growth made in a semester or a year.

STANDARD TESTS AND SCALEE
Accompanying the scientific study of writing vocabularies have been numerous attempts to develop techniques for measuring ability and achievement in speling. spellm ing tests, at present, are usually made from the standardized 1lsts of words which have been obtained through word investigations.

The most useful investigetions of word selection in spelling are those based upon written vocabularies of child and adult; however, studies of oral and reading vocabularies are helpful in evaluating words for grade placement.

Child writing investigations are divided into three parts: studies of children's themes written in school, studies of letter writing in life outside the school, and studies of spelling errore. Some of the leading investigators of children's themes are Jones, Bauer, Tidyman, Mokee, Williams and Brittain.

A pioneer study was made by Jones, who assembled information from 75,000 themen written by 1,050 children in grades two through eight from several states (Maryland,

South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois). This study yielded 4,532 different words from the $15,000,000$ running words of the themes. These words were presented in lists in grades two through eight. The chief criticism of this study was that it does not present complete data; however, its main importance was making investigators aware of the great need for further research. The following statement by Jones (24) is indicative of his judgment concerning vocabulary.

The most userul words in our language, indeed in any language, are the words early learned by children; hence the spelling vocabularies of the lower grades should receive special attention; and this means that there should be fewer words in the spelling assignment and more care in fixing their meaning and use.

The most celebrated spelling scales are those designed by Ayres, Buckingham, Ashbaugh, and Bixler. According to Gray (20):

One of the earliest of these lists is the Ayres Spelling scale which was first piinted in 1915. Ayres selected, on the basis of weighted frequency, 1,000 words chosen by combining the results of four studies: those of Knowles, Eldridge, Cook and O'Shea, and a study of his own. To determine the words of equal difficulty and the relative difficulty of the words, Ayres divided the 1,000 worde into 50 11sts of 20 words each. Each list of words was spelled by the children of two consecutive grades, in a number of cities. The thousand words were then divided into another 50 liste of 20 worde each and sent out as tests, each of four in consecutive grades. These two sets of tests were continued until an aggregate of 1,400,000 spellinge had been secured from 70,000 children in 84 cities. Upon
the basle of this information, the words were claselfied into 26 groups the words within a group being of approximately equal difficulty. Standards or norms are printed at the head of each column, designated by the letters $A$ to $Z$. These norms are in terms of the per cents of correct spelling which may be expected from the children of a given grade.

This scale was used especially in school surveys for measuring spelling achievement and ability.

The following years saw many similar scales constructed. In 1919 Buckingham, in a supplementary study, extended the Ayres' list to 1,505 most commonly used words. He added 505 words next in frequency according to word counts used in spellers. These additional words, for the most part, were in the upper end of the scale. Thus thia addition extended the use of the scale in the upper rrades.

A study made by Ashbaugh on written correspondence of Iowa people, for his Iowa Spelling Scales, presents difficulty indexes of 2,977 words.

The Etandard Elementary Speliling Scale of Blxler provides difficulty data on 3,679 words applicable for grades two through elght inclusive. After the selection of these words, the percentage was computed for the pupils who spelled correctly the word for the grade in which it was commonly placed, as well as for the grade below and the grade above.

Rinsland's study of words used by ohi iren in their
everyday writing is the most comprehensive and repreaentative that has been made. Tabulations were made of all the words used by children in grades one through elght. Source of the tabulations were personal letters, compositions, original stowles, poens, examination papers, conversation pages, and others. Total tabulations 100,212. According to Rinsland (36):

It seems reasonable to conclude from the data given and the frequencies of the words that this vocabulary should furnish much more than 90 per cent of the words for Grade VIII and perhape more than 98 per cent of the words for Grade I-with the percentages for the other grades falling between these 11 mlts .

A total of 25,632 worde was found in over six million running words. The 14,571 words used more than three times by children in any one grade are included in the published list. Fitzgerald in his study "A Basic Life Spelling Vocabulary" published a list of 2,650 words selected as a core of common words. The $11 s t$ includes word frequently written by children, words important in writing by adults, and words frequently written by both children and adults.

The following word lists were used in making the final selection of these 2,650 words:

The Mckee-Fitzgerald list of words used in spontaneous writing by children

The Hom list of 10,000 words important in adult writing

The Rineland list of 14,571 words found in children's writing

The Breed list of words complled from five previous studies of theme writing

The Dolch epelling list of 2,000 words compiled from a stuay of spellers, spelling lists and child-writing studies

The Fitzgerald 3rd Grade list of 692 commonest words from children' $\operatorname{lettex}$

The Britcain 2nd Gxade Ifst of 810 words from chilaren's writing.

Fitzgerald shows that the information from such studies makes it poesible to considex words in four groups:
A. (Child-Adult) Words found highly useful for child and for adult writing
B. (Child-Emphasis) Words found frequentiy in letters written by children but found in comparatively low frequency in adult writing
C. (Adult Emphasis) Words found important in adult writing but found to be of less importance in young children's writing
D. (School Empharis) Words found valuable in school themes but less important outside of school. (15).

Fitzgerald's final selection of 2,650 words includes words from all four catagories.

Buckingham and Dolch (20) used the Pree association method for making a word-frequency count. They had children write any words that came to their minds in a fifteenminute period. Using thic technique, the authors tabulated the 9,520 words most commonly written by children in grades two to elght in both small-town and large-city schools.

These words are arranged in alphabetical order in the pub118hed Buckingham-Dolch 1ist.

WORDS USED : ADULIS IN WRITINO
In "A Basic Writing Vocabulary" by Horn many types of adult writing were studied. The principal investigations were: business correspondence; personal comespondence; letters of application and recomendation, minutes, resolutions, and conmittee reports; excuses written by parents to teachers; letters of a single individual.

These eight Investigations sampled extensively and intensively in various fields of adult writing. The results indicate what words are mose used by adulis in writing. They also euggest varlation in the use of words by different classes of writers. The final selection of 10,000 words was controlled by a specific set of mules. In the five million words in this compilation, there were 36,373 different word forms. From these were selected words which for the most part had been written fifteen times or more in the collected writings and which were otherwise indicated as important in general adult; writing.

According to Oray (20): speling scales are not spelling tests; their chief function is the basis or source from Which words may be selected for making tests. The test must be of a sufficient length to give a reliable measure of the
of the factor being measured. When measuring clase ability the general procedure is to select from a single column twenty words from the Ayres cale or the Buckingham Extension; however, when measuring the individual's ability, it is necessary to use fifty to one hundred words. When testing the spelling of more difficult words the selection is from several colums. The spelling may be presented either in colum form or dictated in sentences at approximately standard rate of handwriting for the grade in which it if used. This same procedure may be used with other speling scalee.

A general finding of word-frequency ftudies is that a few thousand common words used over and over make up the large percentage of all writing done by almost everyone.

There are many thousands of words which many people write only occasionally. And there are many thousands of words which certain limited groups of people will write very often. These words are usually considered as an advanced vocabulary. There are so many thousands of words of secondary importance that it is generally considered imprectical to attempt to include more than a mall fraction of them in a 11 st of spelling words presented in the classroom.

Inveatigators have shown that the data on adult vocabularies determine the end point of instruction, The
data on the vocabularies of children pertain either to the present vocabulary needs or to the present vocabulary status of children. No matter how extensive, valld, and reliable the data on children's vocabularies may become, they are not a valid measure of adult needs; and no matter how extensive, valld and rellable the data on adult vocabulariet may be, they are not valid measures of the present vocabulary needs or status of children. Each type of data has ite own contribution to make.

## SELECTION OF WORDE BY GRADEE

Achievement teste with one section devoted to the measurement of spelling ability are: The Metropolitan Achievement Test, The Etanford Achievement Test, the Iowa-EveryPupil Test of Basic Skilis, the Iowa Language Abilities Tests, and the California Achlevement Test. The scoxe obtained usually is expressed as grade placement, grade score, or speliling age.

The Morrison-McCall Spelling Scale includes eight forms of fifty words each, arranged progressively from easy to difficult and ubeful for testing in grades two through eight.

Attempts of large numbers of children of different grade levels to spell each word in the tests provides the data for construction of spelling scales or standard teste. Standards of accuracy for each word for each grade, beginning with grade two, and norme for various grade levels
are detemined from this data.
It is impoesible to know whether any given child has previously studied a word elther in class or in connection with other activities; thus it is impossible to know the exact degree to which its standard accuracy shows the inherent difficulty of the word and the influency of learning. For this reason, the tests are limited in their usefulness in directing and appraising instruction. speling scales do give valueble data of relative speling difficulty of the words they contain.

## TEST FORMS

Several decades ago the method of testing spelling was oral. The lesson was assigned, the pupils studied the words during a study period or at home and were tested orally over these worde. As the curriculum expanded this method was discontinued, and the teacher dictated the worde to the pupll who in turn wrote them. The method of wore presentation was either in ilst form or contextual material.

Research has shown written tests are superior to oral tests of each pupil on each word, because the written records can be more easily kept and referred to and thus used for instructional purposes. Recall tests have proved better and more difficult than recognition tests. The most valid and economical tests, according to present evidence, seems to be the modified sentence-recall where the
person giving the test pronounces each word, uses it in a sentence and pronounces it again. The students then write the word.

## MEASUREMENI OF SPELLING ABILITY

Neasurement of speling ability as contrasted with the ability to spell words that have been studied systematicaliy in the apelling class, has recently received constderable attention. The present scales and tests are means of indicating spelling ability, but it is generally conceded that the measuring of this spelling ability requires study of the basic factors which determine it. Great strides have been made in trying to pinpoint these factors, but the results as yet are inconclusive and fragmentary (40).

## DIAGNOSTIC SPELLING TESTE

To date there are relatively few standardized diagnostic spelling tests, although considerable material has been written on spelling difficulties and diagnosis of these difficulties (these will be considered in Chapter II). One of the best lnown tests is the Gates-Russell spelling Diagnosis Tests. Varieties of misspellings are classified according to types of errors and pupil dipficulties.

Gates (19) diagnostic terte involve:

1. Giving worde with stated initial sounds
2. Giving words with stated final sounds
3. Spelling test - method records how the child attacke the words

Letter by letter
Grouping according to knowledge of phonetic elements
In longer words - inadequate syllabication or lack of it is recorded Test is done orally
4. Tests of auditory techniques

Blending letter sounds
Giving letters for sounds
Givins words--initial sounds Giving words--final sounds

The four tests in this series are designed
to evaluate the child's experience with letter sounds and his aptitude for learning by a phonetic approach.
5. Visual Perception Tests

Syllabication
Recognition of syllables
Recognition of phonograms
Blending letter sounds
Giving letter sounds
Reading capital letters
Reading small letters
According to Durrell (13) the above mentioned teats contain exhaustive analyses of phonetic and perceptual abilities. The chier criticism of the terss is the ratio of administration time to practical heip it provides.

## THE EROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between the Porrison-McCall spelling scale and the Edwards-Whitted Diagnostic spelling Test, Form A and B.

## CHA PTER II

FUNCTIONE AND GOALS OF EPELEING
Spelling is a practical tool for written communication with one's fellow man. Its function is to enable the writer to determine the correct order of letters in words so that he may commanicate values in writing. Failure to speli correctly may lead to losing reputation with the reader.

When a student spells all words correctly in written work outside his spelling class and all common words without thinking, he is a good speller. He has achieved the real goal of speling--to communicate ideas through the written word, and has achieved a twofold end: ease and accuracy in written communication and self-assurance that comes with the knowledge that one writes in conformity with accepted standards.

When formal education is completed, all children should at least be socially acceptable in speling. Experts invariably will agree that the child at this stage should be efficient to a practical degree in spelling and capable of using his skill for everyday writing purposes. These spelling habits so basic in childhood should be carried over into adult 11fe (37).

Troublesome inconsistencies found in English speling make it one of the most difficult to master. There are
elght ways to spell the long a sound as well as eight sounds for the letter A. It is easily understood that children's spelling errors are mainly in vowel use and the majority of errors occur in the middle of words where vowel sounds are least predictable. Eilent vowels and consonants, doubling of consonants in some words but not in others, and variations in word endings make spe11ing complicated (37).

In addition there is another block--speliing frequently tends to be taught in many schools as an academic discipline rather than as a necessary and practical tool of writing. This tendency is evident in teaching methods sometimes employed and in word lists assigned for study. Poorly assembled word lists contribute to the difficulty of learning to spell. Need to use the words should reflect in selected word lists (22).

General procedures for helping children who have difficulty with spelling might be said to turn on four important words: diagnose, remedy, prevent, and motivate (16). This study is concerned with a single phase-that of diagnosis of spelling difficulties and the development of a diagnostic spelling test based on phonetic analysis.

## DIAGNOSTS

Speliing diagnosis is the procedure of determining
the nature and causes of epelling difficulties. The purpose of spelling alagnosis is threefold:

1. To appraise a pupil'g general spelling and the extent of his retardation--usually obtained from a standardized seet of spelling expressed in spelling age or grade score.
2. To find a pupil's apecific strengths and wealnessen in speling-usually revealed by the analymis of reaults of hie diag nostic test performance and written worle.
3. To discover poasible caunes of the diffi-culties-these may be disclosed from results of physical examination (of hearing, viston, ete.); psychological examination (mental, motor, emotional, etc.); observation of performance in ordinary written wonk; oral exprestion, and from individual diagnostic teets.

## EPELLINO DISABILITY

Nommally each pupil should accuire in elementary school a spellins vocabulawy of approximately 4,000 worde which form about 98 per cent of ali his written work. This may be considerea basic written vocabulary. Out of
the 10,000 words $11 s t e d$ by Horn as the commonest words used in writing, 4,000 are considered of greatest permanent value to children. In addition, each child normaliy acquires special worde pecullar to his community or his incereet.

Accordznes to Gates (17), "spelifng ajsability" applies to those children who are so fncapable of haralung the cormon or spectal words used by thest peers and needed by themselves that they are definitely hindered in the fluent expression of thely ideae. "Disability" does not imply that children are incapable of leamnne to apeil so much as they are far below the noms for theim respective erader and ages.

General Immeturety is usuelly due to a combination of hereditary and environmental factors such as low mental age and leck of etimilation in the use of worde at home. BEGINNING TO EEELL

Children evidence spelling readiness through their own interest in words, the meaning of words, the use of worde in functional writing, and through their own incidental learning. Until children reach a specific level of development in visual and auditory perception, they are not ready to make the sight and cound discrimination that correct spelising requires. The achievements of concentrating attention, holding the head steady and
fixing attention on word forms are other considerations that noke for apelling readinese (22).

Considerable gelling seadiness and some spelling skill may be in evicence at the begiming of the second grate. Berore midile-vecond or beginatng thitd grade, chidren are not oxpected to arite a lerge numer of word corrcety froa metway. The developweat of a opoll-


frelung readmers se alco bured on the need for the child to spell. Berore a child whots to write a loter, for example, he mat have expertences or what that he want to convey to someone. Generally chillaren who do not read well, speak well, or get long well with other children need guidance in their social activitiee wore than they need pelline (16).

Accordins to rulluvan (16:0p133), to be meary to thell
 to une wow analyets.

Readmens may not be tater for ganted but mat be detemined from the child' mental alertnent, detho learn and awarencss of need for mplling. If the child's behavior chown he is ready to leam, there is no need to teet his readinces. If concluntve ovidence of hio neede se not clear, then the child ohould be tested at least informally (16).

Cain and Michaelis set forth characteristics for spelling readiness as follows: "A mental age of 7 , a fairly large reading vocabulary, handwriting skill adequate to form letters correctly, and ability to write words from memory." They belleve thece are necessary for optimum benefit from systematic instruction.

## DIFFICULTIEE IN EPELLING

It is not possible to pinpoint simply the causes of the wide variability which children show in spelling. These differences are due to all the diverse factors that affect children both in and out of school. No two would come up with exact duplicate causes.

Spelling instruction should aim at the development of positive attitudes and habit patterns toward speling in order to prevent deficiencies (16).

Cole (9) has stated that spelling errore "arise from three different and largely unrelated sources. Some are due to defects within the pupil, some to the difficulties inherent in English words, and some to inappropiate methods of teaching."

Diagnosis and remedial instruction are necessary when deficiencies develop in the spelling practices of a chila or a group of children because of inadequate curriculum

Cain, L. F. \& Michaelis, J. U., "Prognosis," Encyclopedia of Educational Research, Rev. Ed. New York: Macmillan Co., 1950. pp 879-880.
activities and material, becauce of ineffective methods of leaming, or because of leck of proper guldance.

The child with extreme dieability in epelling should be diagnosed thoroughly by the mont expert meane, taking into account the fact that his aifficulty may lie far deeper than mere spelling, according to Hildreth (22). Chilaren without a special disability who are eimple re. tarded and immature in language usage should have speling achievement goals reduced. Individual help should aceonpany this procedure.

The chronic bad speller, a child who felle to profit from school instruetion, who strugelee along getting more and more discouraged every year whth his fallures to learn, who may even consider himself "queer" because the methods by which others learn, casily fall with him, represents a typical case of gelizng disability. Such a etudent usually can be helped by diagnostic and remedial work (18).

Dlagnosis chould be as complete as possible. Mental ability, attitudes, Interests, achievement and environment should be taken into coneideration. Difelculties in other subjects, especially in the language arts, should be noted, and the prevalent type of ergors analyzed.

Inventories of the words the child miacpells are unnecessary as long as the typer of errors are noted and habite and tendencies in epeling are obeerved and understood.

ANALYEIE OR CAUSES OF EPELLING DIEABILITIES
Reasons for spelling failures are almost as varied as the students who manifest them, yet certain basic reasons run like a thread through all the research on the subject. Fitzgerald (16) lists the following as compiled by Davis (16:p193) as contributing factors of speling disabilities: materials, curriculum, methods of instruction, testing, degree of teacher competence, home, community, child ability, interest and aptitude all play their parts. Other even more basic causes as complled by Hollingworth include
(1) lack of systematic method in leaming to spell
$\left\{\begin{array}{l}2 \\ 3\end{array}\right\}$ poor writing $\quad$ faulty pronunciation
(4) poor attitude
sensory defects of eye or ear quality of general intelligence failure to remember lack of knowledge of meaning motor awkwardness and inco-ordination lack of independence in working out their spelling problems
(11) individual idiosyncracies
(12) study of words they do not use.

In diagnosing spelifg difficulties, a skilled teacher will consider carefully her pupil's coordination of attention, drive, work habite, attitudes towards school and spelling.

The relation of personality factors to spelling disability ie not definitely known. Nervousness and emotional stress which have proven to hinder progress in most school
subjects likewise affect the child's spelling abilities. GOOD EPELLERE VERKUG POOR SPELLERE

A factor constantly recurring in all research on the problems of poor spellere is the lack of planned attack in conquering words. They tend to spell more by chance, and often exhibit unfavorable attitudes toward the subject. Almost invariably they seem to lack adequate techniques of word study. They also sppeared to be more deficient in auditory discrimination, visual perception of errors, and orientation of letters within words than good spellers.

In contrast the good spellers show steady control, look fixediy at words, vocalize, visualize and compare written words with original study lists. As a rule they seem fond of studying, have good work habits, concentrate well, have good handwiting, and show initiative. Generally, they are a dictionary user and seem to have a notural interest in word and word etudy. They are usually the best syllabicators as well and tend generally to pay greater attention to word parte than do the poor spellers (40).

Haphazard study of words in epelling instruction often wastes the because, left to their own devices, poor spellers tend to practice the same errors.

Diagnosis to be effective must be continuous. It may well continue throughout the chlld's remedial instruction
periods and even after improvement in his work has been observed.

The child's achievement in other areas is worthy of note. Reading, speech and written language should be carefully checked, since authorities agree that ability to spell is also affected by a child's experiences in the other language arts.

Authorities suggest that the percentage of correct spellings and types of mistakes made should be checked in the pretest and final speling tests. Not to be overlooked is an appraisal of the learning-teaching situation in which the child is placed. Dlagnostic tests are beneficial in revealing the areas in which learning breaks down and in indicating the need for an individualized remedial program.
spelling errors of bright and dull children are very different. Bright children tend to generalize more, apply previous learning to new words, spell phonetically and more rationally. Dull children tend to lack a systematic approach (7).

INDIVIDUAL NEEDS --GROUP NEEDS
Celecting spelling vocabulary is at present a problem largely of meeting individual differences. Some children who may be able to learn only 800 or 1,000 most needed words will flounder in the hopelessness of etudying 3,000.

Other children will learn 3,000 with ease and may be guided to learn additional necessary words.

Slow-learners will do well to master 500 words by the fifth grade. For average learnere 1,200 to 1,500 words are considered to be sufficient. Fernald (14) points out that formal graded lists will always fall to supply the words that a particular pupil should learn at a particular time. A given word should be taught when the pupil needs to write the word in hie daily work or when the teacher can antioipate such a need, regardless of ats placement in standard grade 1ists.

Correct guidance at the proper time can ersse most speliing difficulties. In other words, many speling fallures may be traced to the curriculum and the manner In which it is carried out in the classroom. Limitations in the school programs lie in the following areas: the words to be leamed-and the grade level at which these words are presented, the methods of word study employed, and the relationship of spelling to the total school program. Criteria for this arrangement come in the basic 1lsts of words selected as a result of a number of extensive studies of the soclal usage of words.

The diagnostic procedures herein discussed can help provide that needed $11 f t--$ the correct guidance at the needful moment.

CONETRUCTION OF THE DIAGNOSTIC SPELLING TEST
The staff at the Child Study Service, over a period of years in considering children, their successes and failures, has become increasingly aware of the discrepancies between spelling achievement and age or grade levels. Research has shown that failure in learning to write and spell correctly, in the primary grades, is not necessarily an indication of mental retardation but may be attributed to certain methods of instruction or to the child's lack of readiness for these subjects.

The clinical psychologist, analyzing academic failures often finds children of superior abilities who have failed to profit from certain methods in academic instruction. Spelling inefficiencies shown by learners, able in other fields, are worthy of special note.

Modern teaching methods should not be disapproved as they have proven successful with the major portion of the learners. Rather special consideration should be given to those pupils who do not meet with average success in the class.

Fitzgerald (16) cites an investigation by Russell of characteristics of good and poor spellers which revealed, "of 1,185 children studied, 380 or 32.1 per cent were one year or more retarded in spelling."

The rates at which children develop in spelling vary greatily even among children of similar age and background, according to Hildreth (22).

Intelligent children of eight or nine who are unsucceseful in their efforte with written assienmente deserve special consideration before progressing in their schoolwork to grade levels where such lessons are increased and become a pertinert part of their academic efficiency.

The complicated phonetic irregulamities in the spellIng of the Enclish language have long been recognized. By phonetice is meant the analysis of words into their constituent sound elemente. 1

The words in any spelling vocabulary may be divided into two types: "sight" words and phoneties. Phonetic worde contain characteristic sound letter groups. It has been found that even "sight" words contain common phonetic elemente, although the entire word may not be considered phonetic. Phonetic elements are the parts of words (single letters, letter combinations or ayllables) standing for sounds that, blended together, result in promnciation of the words.?

In considering the diagnosis of spelling difficultier from the phonetic standpoint and methods of spelling instruction as shown by modern spellers, the following facte

Cood, C. V., Dictionary of Eaucation. New York: RoarawH111 Book Co., 1945.
${ }^{2}$ Ibla.
deserve recognition.
Fernald (14) has stated, " 80 to 90 per cent of the words a child needs to know can be written phonetically." CRITERIA FOR THE SELECHION OF WORDS

The following criteria was used in the selection of spelling worde for the Edwards-Whitted Diagnostic spelling Test.

Meyer's (32) stater, "According to the new Nebster's International Dictionary the greatest number of words begin with the letter $s(37,000)$. The next greatest number begin with the letter $C$, and the $P . "$ The most infrequent letters are $X, Z$, and $X$ ( 300 words). Refer to the Appendix for the table which shows the approximate number of words beginning with each letter of the alphabet.

From the results of this dictionary word count, a more restricted spelling study was consulted. The 2,000 Commonest Words for spelling as listed by Dolch (11) were analyzed for frequency of initial letters. Table 1 showe that certain letters deaerve much attention as initial sounds in apelling instruction while others because of their infrequency in early written usage should be practically ignored during the child's early academic instruction.

TABLE 1
PERCERMAOE OF INTMTAL LETHER PEEQUENCY IN DESCENDINO ORDER-DOLCH'S 2,000 CONLONEST NORD FOR EPELLINO

| Descending Order | Setter | Percentage |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1 | e | 14.80 |
| 2 | B | 9.00 |
| 3 | C | 7.80 |
| 4 | T | 7.15 |
| 5 | P | 7.10 |
| 6 | F | 6.05 |
| 7 | W | 5.45 |
| 8 | H | 4.75 |
| 9 | D | 4.50 |
| 10 | 2 | 4.40 |
| 11 | A | 4.25 |
| 12 | 8 | 4.25 |
| 13 | H | 4.20 |
| 14 | 0 | 3.35 |
| 15 | N | 2.40 |
| 16 | 0 | 2.25 |
| 17 | E | 2.20 |
| 18 | I | 2.25 |
| 19 | $k$ | 1.10 |
| 20 | U | . 95 |
| 21 | J | . 85 |
| 22 | \% | .75 |
| 23 | V | .55 |
| 24 | 9 | . 50 |
| 25 | $z$ | .10 |
| 26 | X | . 05 |
| Total |  | 100.00 |

Total pexcentage of $\%$ through I equale 71 per cent
Thle indicates that phonetic usage in tpelling inetruc-
CIon warrante conelderation.
Coventy-one per cent of this spelling list begtne with
the flret ten most common Inltal letters.

It is assumed for the purpose of this investigation that phonetic insight and use of these ten lettere will give children in primary grades an efficient tool for all but about 25 words out of each 100 encountered in reading as well as epelifing. On the bacic of initial sound this diagnostic spelling test can easily tell which children need help with which lettere. When the initial sound of a word is recognized it may be used as a clue in helping to identify the remainder.

## fre uency

A further check was made ueing the following valld word liste.

The Thousand Commonet Vords Arranged in the Descending Order of Their Frequency-L. P. Ayres

A Teacher's Word Book of 20,000 Words-E. L. Thorndike

A Basic Vocabulary of Elementary chool Children--H. D. Rinclend

A Combined Word List--Buckingham and Dolch

Spelling Vocabulary Rtudy-E. A. Betts

## GRADE PLACEMENT

Aocording to Billington (5), the factore involved in the grade placement of a word are: (a) social utility of the word, (b) erequency of use-moth in chlidhood and
adult usage, and (c) learning difficulty of the word.
In determining the grade placement of the vocabulary several principles should be considered. McKee (29) points out that the most important words should be covered in the lower grades, and the least important or the less frequently used words should be put in the higher grades. The reason being that the child should be taught the most necessary words before the completion of his academic education. Learning difficulty plays an equally important role in determining grade placement, according to ficKee (29, 42:p252). Fernald (14) states that social utility of words is a very important factor in determining their selection.

For the purpose of this study a large percentage 62.5 of the total number of words selected were at the second and third grade levels. Authorities (42) generally agree that at the second, third, and fourth grades are found the establishment of basic spelling skills; therefore, it is assumed this should be the place where diagnosis to determine the degree of deficiency and types of errors should etart in order to develop a sound remedial program.

Two spelling vocabulary studies by Betts $(3,4)$ were used for determining the grade placement of each word in the Dolch list.

Betts: studies were based on (1) an investigation of seventeen epellers published from 1930-1938 and (2) grade
placements of eight spellers published from 1940-1945. These studies covered grades two through eight.

The tabulation was made of all basic list words yielding a combined list from the seventeen spellers of 8,645 words and the median grade placement was calculated for these words. Betts (4) states, "Those concerned with remedial activities in the language arts. . .will find the list valuable as a source for selecting those words which are believed to be most crucial and to possess the highest utility in everyday writing situations."

PHONETIC SELECTION OF WORDS
The next basis of selection considered was from a phonetic standpoint. This was divided into two parts: selection by initial letter (sound); selection by phonetic elements--medial and final sounds.

A study by Gates (22:29) revealed that the errors made in many words tend to be concentrated in certain parts, more commonly in the middle and end syllables than in the initial letters. Gates believes that pupils will make the most progress in spelling when they give particular attention to those hard spots.

Each form of the Edwards-Whitted Diagnostic Test contains 100 words divided into 10 subtests of 10 words each.

The words were matched so that each initial letter is Printed USA copyright 1954 by Edwardswhitted
repeated with a different phonetic elemont, and oach phonetic element $i s$ repeated but matched with a affer* ent indtial letter. Each $118 t$ of 10 vorde 13 so constructed that it can diagnose 20 types of errors and also has the alternate fom for reteeting purposes.

METHOD OF WORD PRESENTATION
The nodified sentence-recall method was used for presentation of the words, as research has shown this to be the most valld and economical method.

In Forms $A$ and $B$ each word wac checked and rechecked against several word lists for grade level and frequency.

A prellninary test helped to locate sections requirIng further revision of test content, of organization, or of manner of presentation, thut trying to eliminate undesirm able features through careful construction and revision.

Each text has been so constructed that it becomes progressively more difficult-mgraduated difficulty. This necessitated the selection of words at the upper levele from grades six, seven and eight. The word "loose" was considered to be in an advanced vocabulary and not banic vocabulaxy.

## EDNARDE - VHITTIED

## DIAGNOETIC EPELLING TEET

PORM A
Liet A

1. sun The sun shines. . . . . sun
2. ball The ball is red... . . ball
3. cake The cake is good. . . . . cake
4. try try this game . . . . . . try
5. pat Pathishand . . . . . pat
6. dog The dog is black. . . . . dog
7. look Look at this pieture. . . look
8. toy The toy is for me . . . . toy
9. sled The sled is new . . . . sled
10. come Come with the boy . . . Come

List B

1. sleep You sleep at nicht. . . sleep
2. bad Thie apple ie bad . . . bad
3. car Hie car is new...... car
4. hard The candy is hard . . . hard
5. 1s She is here ....... is
6. play Play with baby. . . . . play
7. biz

The bie ball 15 lost. . . bic
8. show show me your paper. . . show
9. fell The baby fell . . . . . fell
10. Will He w111 come. . . . . . will

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# EDWARDE - WHYTMED <br> DIAGNOETIC EPERENWC TENT <br> FORM B 

inst C

1. Tun This is fun fun
2. call Call his name ..... call
3. take Take plece of candy ..... take
4. by Fhe girl stood by her mother. ..... by
5. hat Her hat is now ..... hat
6. log Put the log in the ifre ..... 108
7. took He took hie son to school ..... took
8. boy The boy is playing. ..... boy
9. red The cover of the book is red. ..... red
10. some come children came. ..... some
List D
11. cheep The sheep are bla sheep
12. had He had an apple ..... had
13. far The school is far away. far
14. card Write on the card ..... card
15. his Hepencil is sharp ..... his
16. Etay Etay with me. ..... stay
17. pig The pie is fat ..... plg
18. now The snow 4 falling ..... snow
19. tell Tell me your name ..... tel1
20. Pill P111 the Dasket ..... 1111

PORM A
Lute $E$

| 1. but | Play, but be careful | but |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 2. W10h | Do you whish to go? | wish |
| 3. an | An orange 15 good. | an |
| 4. hen | The hen in brown | hen |
| 5. tree | The tree is big | tree |
| 6. 80 | Go to your clase | go |
| 7. For | The book is for rather | for |
| 8. chair | The chaix 15 old | chair |
| 9. thank | Thank you. | thank |
| 10. dear | You are a dear | dear |

List $F$

1. as You play as we vielt...... Es
2. fix Fix the game.......... Itx
3. there There is no rain..... . . there
4. never He never caw the bat. . . . . . never
5. white The now is white. . . . . . . white
6. Ilve The live fish jumped from the water inve
7. off He feil gif the chair. . . . . ofir
8. hold Hold the baby's hand . . . . . . hold
9. moon The mon is beatiful. . . . . moon
10. get Get the banana ......... get

FORM B
List G

1. cut Cut the apple cut
2. Pish The fish swims ..... fish
3. and He and his sister ren away and
4. men Men work men
5. three Three children ..... three
6. no No package was delivered ..... no
7. or Take the red or the green one ..... or
8. halr Her hair ss long ..... nair
9. drank He drenk his milk ..... drank
10. year A year ago she was here. ..... year
List H
11. has The giri has her hat ..... hes
12. mix Mix the flour and sugar. ..... mix
13. where where is the baby. ..... where
14. ever Did you ever cee him ..... ever
15. bite The ifsh will bite ..... bite
16. five Here are five pencils ..... Inve
17. offer offer him some ..... offer
18. told He told it to me ..... told
19. noon Come at noon ..... noon
20. yet I am not ready yet ..... yet

FORM A

## List I

1. much That is too much . . . . . . . much
2. place Place the book here. . . . . place
3. bag The bag is big . . . . . . . bag
4. cent A penny is one cent. . . . . cent
5. pain He has no pain . . . . . . . pain
6. Just Just one more . . . . . . . Just
7. eleven He is eleven years old . . . . eleven
8. rest Rest on the bed. . . . . . . . rest
9. pile The pile of leaves is high . . pile
10. kind

Be kind to animale . . . . . kind

## List J

1. line The line is tight. . . . . . . line
2. thing Thie thing is new to me . . . thing
3. block He aropped the block . . . . blccie
4. smoke The shoke is black . . . . . . smoke
5. along Come along with me...... along
6. phone The phone is ringing . . . . . phone
7. nose His nose was cold. . . . . . nose
8. most He gave me most the candy. . . most
9. turn Turn on the light. . . . . . turn
10. circus The circus is coming . . . . eircus

Eist K


## FORM A

## Liet M

1. south Point to the couth . . . . . . south
2. guess Can you quess the answer. . . . guees
3. cherries the cheriles are rive. . . . . . cherries
4. borrow May I borrow thie pencil?. . . borrow
5. feather The feather flew in the breeze. feather
6. Erase The grase 18 growing. . . . . grase
7. neither Neither eister was present. . . neither
8. think He will think about it . . . . . think
9. zero It was zero this moming . . . zero
10. use I can use one. . . . . . . . . une

List N

1. handful have a handful of marbles. . . . handful
2. clown Fhe clown wat funny. . . . . . . clown
3. IIttle The little baby smiled . . . . ilttie
4. Jaw His jaw was swollen. . . . . . Jaw
5. table The table is high. . . . . . . table
6. caught He caught the rabbit . . . . . . caught
7. age He is flve yeare af age. . . . age
8. ditch The ditch ie deep. . . . . . . . ditch
9. choose You choose one . . . . . . . . . choose
10. zip You can $31 p$ your jacket. . . . zip

FORM B


| 1. ciaxm | The chara la mude of silver. . . chasm |
| :---: | :---: |
| 2. queer | The Iittle dog 1 gueer. . . . ${ }^{\text {gueer }}$ |
| 3. foolish | Such play is very tooligh . . . foollsh |
| 4. motion | Tila moticn moans to stop. . . . motion |
| 5. prayer | The read a beautiful preyer. * * prayer |
| 6. tablet | The tablet in for hor cold . . . tablet |
| 7. nirge | The door swung on the hinge. . . hinge |
| - steer | The stogr man away . . . . . stecr |
| 9. prochat | The prochut is mede of come . . . product |
| 10. stitch | Sue will stitoh it on the machine. stitoh |
| List R |  |
| 1. position | Place the books in tho right position position |
| 2. deserme | You degarve a reward . . . . . deserve |
| 3. hevilino | Handline the flovers is hun. . . handing |
| 4. tirsber | tinber crows in amada . . . . . tinlour |
| 5. sitpoery | Ioe makes the walk elippory. . . sxippery |
| 6. entertainment | The entextaingent will be Saturday. crtartainmant |
| 7. prevarina | 1. is preparing to co on a trip. preparing |
| 3. tartle | The turtle can swan. . . . . turtle |
| 9. pormer | The peppes 4 s croen. . . . . . peppen |
| 10. separate | Soparata tre papers pleade . . . soparato |

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## FORM B

## List S

| 1. gem | A diamond is a precious gem . . . . gem |
| :---: | :---: |
| 2. queen | The queen is beautiful. . . . . . queen |
| 3. radish | The redish is hot . . . . . . . . radish |
| 4. notion | Get the thread at the notion counter. notion |
| 5. further | It is not much further. . . . . . . further |
| 6. bullet | A bullet was shot . . . . . . . . bullet |
| 7. pledge | Pledge allegiance to the flag . . . pledge |
| 8. steel | Steel is a strong metal . . . . . . . steel |
| 9. Iettuce | The lettuce is good . . . . . . . lettuce |
| 10. switch | The switch for the light is near the door. switch |

## List T

1. million
2. remove
3. becoming
4. scatter
5. scissors
6. accident
7. changing
8. puzzle
9. mirror
10. lemonade

A million dollars is a great deal of money. million
To remove the mark will not be easy . remove
Her new dress is very becoming. . . . becoming
Scatter the seeds for the birds . . . scatter
The scissors are sharp. . . . . . . scissors
The accident was not serious. . . . . accident
The weather is changing very rapidly. changing
The puzzle is easy. . . . . . . . . puzzle
Polish the mirror . . . . . . . . . mirror
The lemonade is sweet . . . . . . . . Iemonade

## CHAPTER IV

## GATHERIMC OF DASA

The present study was initiated in the spring of 1952. The pupils tested were third, fourth and fifth grade school children from elementary schools in Nebraska and Iowa. The majority of these children were from English speaking hones. Middle grade pupils were selected because the greategt concentration of writing and spelling of new words in general vocabulary is here concentrated.

The Morrison-Hichall Epelling ccale was selected as the standardized tect used to measure the individual student's spelifng ability--number correct yields a speling grade and a spelling age. This scale includes eight fome of 50 words each, arranged progrecsively from easy to difficult, and useful for testing in grades two through eight. List 8 was administered as all of the eight lists from thie scale are of equal difficulty.

Data for this study was obtained through the assistance of elementary school teachers who were taking advanced psychology courses at the Univereity of Onaha.

All teachere involved in this tudy were indoctrinated in the generally accepted procedures of test administration
which included the following:

1. Becone familiar with the teste and their directions prior to administration
2. Insure sood working conditions-i.e. proper IIghting, proper ventilation, adequate working space prefexably in a familias enviromment
3. Anticipate and avoid as much as possible distractions while test 4 in progrees
4. Have all necessary materialt ready before the teat beginc-instructions, test, papers, penc11e, cha1k, ete.
5. Secure attention before ntarting
6. Gain fuli cooperation of pupils in order to obtain the $1 x$ best performance-develop rapport in testing
7. Explain test procedure in eeneral
8. Distribute teet supplies
9. Obtain necessary identifying information ae insted in the instructions
10. Read directions verbatin to the pupile in a clear, well modulated volee
11. Permit no question after test hag begun
12. Give no assistance on test 1tems proper, however, if pupll misunderstood directione aid in mechanies of teet procedure
13. Allow sufficient time for pupile to write words
14. Solve individually probleme which arise due to student's difficulties or deficiencies
15. Check papers for completion of identifying information before they are completed

TEST INSTRUCTIONS
Pirst test period:
Administer the Morrison-McCall spelling Scale -
Iist 8. Have pupils use graded lined paper.
second test period:
Fold paper for class into four columne-mid and half again.

Qive each child the folded pencil-paper used for
spelling tests (described above). Have each child
print or write on one side of the paper the following:
a. Child's name
b. Date
c. Date of birth (check for accuracy)
d. Addrese
e. Name of school
f. Teacher's name
g. Grade

Turn paper over.
NOW SAY
This morning we are going to have a gpelling tegt.

Will you please try every word. I shall give you the number - the word to spell - then the word in a sentence - and again repeat the word you are to spell.

If you cannot understand, or forget the word before you have it written, raise your hand and I ghail be happy to say it again for you.

Then we are spelling, we have to hear the word. Cometimes we can say the letters that spell the word. If you do not know them, sounding will help you.

For example, you know how to spell the word 'so'. Throw the ball so Mary can catch it. Think of the first sound. What is thet firet sound? 'ses'. What is the name of that letter? (Children will say 's') That's right (Demonstrate 'g') So I ghall write " E " on the board. Now think of the second letter (teacher saye 's-o') - you know that when you cay the name of the letter " 0 " it also sounds 'o' So we shall write it this way, (cound) 's- o'. Now I shall show you another word - 'Bat' - The boy will bat the ball. 'Bat'. What is the first sound in the word bat? (Feacher or children sound) 'bbb'. The letter is? (Children will say B - then teacher writed B on board).

Now what coner after 'b'? (Teacher sounds B-A-T) The sound '总' What letter should I put? (If children do not respond teacher is to give correct anewer) '肙' is correct. (Write as you sound).

Now what comes after 'a'? Say bat - sound 't'. That's correct 't'. Now see I have written it - 'bat'.

As the children pronounce the letters print or write them on the blachboard in usual form for your classec - large and plain. Nake it possible for the children to realize that you are showing them the process that you want them to use in the epelling test.

Now take your pencils and paper and place on your paper - Column 1 - LIst A. (Label each list).

$$
\begin{array}{rrc}
\text { Sheet } 1-\text { Column } 1-\text { Liet } & A-B \\
2 & H-D \\
3 & " & E-F \\
4 & " & Q-H
\end{array}
$$

$$
\begin{array}{rrrr}
\text { Sheet } 2-\text { Colum } 1 & \text { Ligt } & I-J \\
2 & K & =I \\
3 & " & M=N
\end{array}
$$

$$
\text { Cheet } 3-\text { Column } \frac{1}{2}-\text { List } \quad G-R
$$

The Morrison-freCall Ppelline Scale - List 8 was continued until six consecutive words were miesed, which is standard procedure on vocabulary and spelling testr of graduate dffficulty.

The teete were administered ever several days. Each of the three teste were administered at the same period (time of dey) in place of the dally spelling lesson. As each column was completed the paper was folded under.

PROCEDURE POR CCORIMO
The diagnostic selling test was folded along a word 11st colum and placed beside the pupil's answers, thus allowing a quick comparison of answers.

A11 correct annwers were marked with a "C" to the right of the word. Wrong answers were marked with a dash $(-)$ to the right of the word.

The total number correct was entered at the right of each subtest heading.

In case of doubt, the intent of the pupil was concidered. If no evidence of comect intent, word wae scored as wrong.

All papers were rechecked for scoring, subtect totals and total score obtained on the tebt.

EELECTION OP CACES
Only those casen who had taken all three testr-i.e. Morrison-McCall Spelling Scale-List 8, Edwards-Mhitted Diagnostic spelling Teet, Form $A$ and $E$ were included in this study. The total number of casee for grades three, four, and five was 550.

The following information was recorded on individual cards for each case included in this etuay.
(1) Name of the child (used only in case further dats wae necessary)
(2) School attended
(3) Grade placement
(4) Chronological Age (Birth date was verified from school census cards and CA computed according to date of birth and administration date)
(5) Number words correct on Morrison-McCall Epelling Scale - List 8
(6) Number words correct on Form A - EdwardsWhitted Diagnostic Spelling Test
(7) Number words correct on Form B - Edwards Whitted Diagnostic spelling Test

## Chapter V

## STATIETICAL PROCEDURES USED

Total number of cases recorded were 550. of these students 219 or 39.8 per cent were in the third grade; 188 or 34.2 per cent were in the fourth grade; and 143 or 26.0 per cent were in the fifth grade.

METHOD OF COMPARISON
Before making an estimate of reliability of Form A and Form $B$ of the Edwards-Whitted Diagnostic Spelling Test, by measuring the degree of relationship that existe between the two sets of values, it was necessary to find if any degree of relationship existed between the diagnostic tests and the Morrison-McCall spelling scale.

For resulte of all coefficient of correlations calculated refer to Table 2.

By using the Otis Correlation method a correlation was calculated between the number of words correctly spelled on Liet 8 of the Morrison-MeCall spelling scale and the number correctly spelled on Form A of the EdwardsWhitted Diagnostic spelilng Test for grades three, four, and five.

COMPARISON OF SPELLING CCORE - LIST 8 AND FORN A
The correlation found between the Morrison-MeCall,

List 8 and Form $A$ of the diagnostic spelling test, for third grade was .918. Refer to Chart 1 in the Appendix for an example of procedure of calculation of coefficient of correlation.

TABIE 2. CORRELATION OF IIST 8-FORM A, IIST 8 FORM B, FORM A - FORM B, FOR GRADES THREE, FOUR, FIVE, AND TOTAL GROUP

| Grade | Number | Morrison- <br> McCall <br> List 8 <br> -- <br> Form A $r_{x y}$ | Morrison- <br> McCall <br> List 8 <br> -- <br> Form B <br> rxy | E-W <br> Epelling <br> Test <br> Form A <br> Form B <br> $r_{x y}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Three | 219 | . 918 | . 915 | . 986 |
| Four | 188 | . 922 | . 921 | . 981 |
| Five | 143 | . 874 | . 868 | . 906 |
| Total | 550 | .908 | . 909 | . 994 |

The correlation found between the Morrison-McCall, List 8, and Form $A$ of the diagnostic spelling test for fourth grade was .922.

The correlation found between the Morrison-McCall, Iist 8 , and Form $A$ of the diagnostic spelling test was .874 for fifth grade.

These three correlations are considered as highly significant.

COMPARIEON OF spELEmG SCORE - LIct 8 and porm B
Of the following: grade three and grade four show a very high correlation; grade five shows a marked relationship.

The coefficient of correlation for grade three when comparing Litet 8 and Form $B$ was .915.

On List 8 and Form B for erade four the coerricient of correlation was 921.

When comparing List 8 and Form B for grade five the coefficient of correlation was .868.

COMPARIFON OF DIAGNOCTIC FPELLING TEST - FORM A AND FORM B
To further check the contention that a very dependable relationship existe between Form $A$ and Form B, coefficient of correlations were calculated to determine the degree of relationchip between these two forms.

In erade three a coefficient of correlation of .986 wae found. For the number of studente involved, 219, this would indicate very dependable relationship between Form A and Form B.

This conclucion would aleo hold for grade four, as a coefficient of correlation of .981 wae computed.

Alco a very dependable relationship between Form A and Form B exists as a coefficient of correlation . 906
was calculated for grade five.

COMPARISON OF ALL CASES
All of the 550 cases were compared by the otis correlation method with the following resulte.

Morrison-McCa11, List 8 - Diagnostic epeliing Teet, Form A, a high correlation of .908 which indicatez marked relationship.

Morrison-McCall, List 8 - Diagnostic epelifg Test, Form B, a high correlation of .909 which also indicates marked relationship.

Edwarde-Whitted Diagnostic Spelling Test - Form A and Form B ylelded a very high correlation of .994 which shows very dependable relationship.

COMPUTATION OF THE COEPFICIENT ALIENATION
As racthematicians usually call the coefficient of correlation and its sampling errors pure numbers, another method of explaining $x$ is by the coefficient of alienation (k). A straight line may represent the range of correlation from - -1.00 through 0 to 1.00 . Correlation involves a concept of prediction. Thus with a coefficient of correlation of one, one can predict perfectiy one score from another. However, with a coefficient of correlation of zero the prediction would be no better than pure guess.

One way of explaining the meaning of $r$ is that a given $p$ W111 predict a certain percentage better than the average or mean. According to Rinsland (35), "The avernge is usually considered the best guess, as there are more cases clozer to the average than to any other score." To calculate this prediction it was neceseary to calculate the coefficient of alienation and then subtract this from one. As the coefficient of correlation expresses the degree of arreement, coefficient of alienation expresses the degree of disagreement. Thus the coefficient of alienation is the opposite of the coefficient of correlation. Therefore, an $x$ of 1.00 or -1.00 would be equal to $k$ of 0 , and an $r$ of 0 would be equal to $k$ of 1.00. An example of this is given below:

Coefficient of Correlation ( $x$ )


Thus ak of 50 falls halfway from the ende of the line to the midale, and that $r$ is .866 .

The formula for computing le is:

$$
k=\sqrt{1-r^{2}}
$$

Substituting the r . 994 calculated for all grades with variable $X$, Form $A$, and variable $Y$, Form B, the coefficient of alienation is as follows.

$$
\begin{aligned}
k= & \sqrt{1-(.994)^{2}} \\
& \sqrt{1-.988036} \\
& \sqrt{.011964} \\
k= & .1094
\end{aligned}
$$

In order to predict $k$ as per cent the following procedure was used.

$$
\begin{aligned}
100\left(1-\mathrm{k}_{\mathrm{xy}}\right)= & \begin{array}{r}
1.0000 \\
-.1094
\end{array} \\
& \frac{\mathrm{x} \quad 100}{89.06 \text { per cent }}
\end{aligned}
$$

Thus one may predict one variable from the other 89.06 per cent better than guessing. With a high coefficient of correlation .994 there is a high degree of accuracy in predicting one variable from the other.

The formula $100 r^{2} x y$ was used to express $r$ as a per cent.

Accordingly $\quad x \quad .994$

$$
r_{x y}^{2}=\frac{.988036}{98.803600} \text { or } 98.80 \text { per cent }
$$

since $\quad k^{2}=1-r^{2}$

$$
\begin{aligned}
k^{2} \nLeftarrow r^{2} & =1 \\
.01196 \nLeftarrow .98804 & =1.00000
\end{aligned}
$$

Fefer to Table 3 which gives the following informe tion for eredes three, four, five, and total group.

> Column 1 - Coefficient of correlation
> Column 2 - Coefficient of alienation
> Column 3 - Percentage reduction in errors of prediction of $y$ from $X$
> Column 4 - Percentage of variance accounted for.

TABLE 3. COEFFICIENT OF ALIENATION OF LIST 8 FORM A, LIST 8 - FORM B, FORM A - FORM B, FOR GRADES THREE, FOUR, FIVE, AND TOTAL GROUP

|  | $r_{x y}$ Coefficient of correlation | $k_{x y}$ Coefficient of alienation | 100(1-k $\mathrm{k}_{\mathrm{xy}}$ ) Percentage reduction in errors of prediction of $\bar{Y}$ from $X$ | $\begin{aligned} & 100 r^{2} \text { xy } \\ & \text { Percentage } \\ & \text { of varim. } \\ & \text { ance ac-- } \\ & \text { counted } \\ & \text { for } \end{aligned}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Grade - Three |  |  |  |  |
| Form A - List 8 | . 918 | . 3965 | 60.35 | 84.27 |
| Form B - List 8 | . 915 | . 4034 | 59.66 | 83.72 |
| Form A - Form B | . 986 | . 1.667 | 83.33 | 97.22 |
| Grade - Four |  |  |  |  |
| Form A - List 8 | . 922 | . 3871 | 61.29 | 85.01 |
| Form B - List 8 | . 921 | . 3895 | 61.05 | 84.82 |
| Form A - Form B | . 981 | . 1940 | 80.60 | 96.24 |
| Grade - Five |  |  |  |  |
| Form A - List 8 | . 874 | . 4859 | 51.41 | 76.39 |
| Form B - List 8 | . 868 | . 4955 | 50.45 | 75.34 |
| Form A - Form B | . 906 | . 4233 | 57.67 | 82.08 |
| Total Group |  |  |  |  |
| Form A - List 8 | . 908 | . 4189 | 58.11 | 82.45 |
| Form B - List 8 | . 909 | . 4168 | 58.32 | 82.63 |
| Form A - Form B | . 994 | . 1094 | 89.06 | 98.80 |

## CHAPTER VI

## SUMMARY AND CONGLUEIONE

RESUME OF CPELLING
Invention and development of the printing press gave rise to a need for standardization of spelling. This occurred at a time when the English language still was undergoing phonetic changes, but the standardization neverthelese took place. This in turn netted a spelled language in which not a single letter of the English alphabet was represented by less than two sound values.

At first spelling and reading were closely related with prayers and precepts as the principle learning keys. By the late eighteenth century formal spelling lists were published. Thus apeared the firct formal approach to spelilng. Nords tended to be included mainly because they were difficult, and important words in dally usage were often omitted.

Epell downs came into prominence and the best spellers ranked with the best arithmeticians in import. The trend began to swing to the other side with correlation of all subjects coming to the fore. Studies in the late nineteenth century proved 15 minutes study of spelling was as effective as 50 minutes per day. Because epelling still was considered "good discipline," many educatore ignored these findinge.

## NEACUREMENT MOVEMENT

In the early twentioth century, spelling lost its place of importance and was taught incidentally with other language arts. Eince 1910 apelling studies have been fairly numerous. They have concentrated in the investigations of methode of teaching, phonetic spelling, word analysis, speling difficulties and their diagnosis, development of spelling scales, and standardized spelling teste.

The first problem tackled in connection with the informal teaching of spelling was the conetruction of word lists. From "must" licte of eome 10,000 basic words the numbers have been greatly reduced.

As a result speliing has returned to prominence in the curriculum, word lists have been based on frequency of use, social utility, cruciality of words was emphasized, and the level of difficulty was indicated by grade placement.
rtandardized educational teste have been gradually developed but have had a marked influence on educational practices. The potential power of educational tests has become increasingly recognized as a means of claesifyine pupile and evaluating instruction. Tests have proven most valuable in determining spelling abilities of individuals and eroups, in diecovering words important for group study, in evaluatines cuccess and fallures, and in measuring growth.

Sone of the best known and most widely used scales have been developed from vocabulariee both of children and adults as found in their school writinge, original stories, poems, examinstion papers, projects, letter writings compositions, etc. The nost frequently used words became paramount in the scales developed, with frequency determining the choice of words. Free atsociation methods of word selection were also employed with success in compiling word scales. General findinge of word frequency studies indicate that a few thousand words reiterated compose the large part of all writing done by almost everyone.

Attempte of large numbers of children of different grade levels to epell each word in spelling tests providee the data for spelling scale construction. The resulting ecales give valuable data of relative spelling difficulty of the words they contain.

Teet forms have changed from the all-oral type to the written method. Precentation originally was either In list form or contextual material. It has been found that the best method is to give a modified-sentence recall approach where the tester pronounces each word, uses it in a sentence, then pronounces it again.

To date, relatively few diagnostic epeliling tests exist, although considerable research has been done on speling difficulties and diagnosis of these.

The function of spelling is to enable the writer to determine the correct order of letters in words so that he may commanicate values in writing. The goal of spelling 16 to communicate ideas through the written word. Ability to spell correctiy gives the writer freedom to concentrate on expressing his thoughte and attaining good form in composition. A formal education should make children at least ocially acceptable in spelling. Basic spellIng habits are formed in childhood and should be carried over into adulthood.

FACTORE INVOLVED IN SPELIING DICABILITIES
English spelling includes troublesome inconsistencies making it one of the most difficult to master. A further block comes in the anachronistic tendency in many schools to teach spelling as an academic discipline rather than as a necessary and practical tool of writing. This is evident In teaching methods and in word lists. Need to use words should determine their placement in spelling liste.

Dlagnose, Remedy, Prevent and Hotivate represent the key procedures in helping children with spelilng difficulties.

The purpoce of spelling diagnosis is to appraise a pupil's general spelling and deficiencies; to find his specific strengths and weaknesses; and to discover porsible causes of difficulties.
"epelling disability" appliee to childien who are derinitely hindered in fluent expression by their inability to handle basic and special words.
spelling readiness is evidenced through children's interest in words, word meanings and word uses in their functional wilting. A certain level of visual and auditory perception is nececsary for spelilng readinece. A mental age of 7 is usually considered the general developmental level for epelling readinese. Spelling readineso is determined by the child'g alertness, desire to learn and awarenees of a need for speling. If such conclucive evidence is lackine a child should be tested at least informally.

Difficulties in apeliing vary widely. Instmuction should aim at development of positive attitudes and habst patterns to prevent deliciencies.

Three different and largely uncelated sourcen of spelling exrors have been found to be defecte within the pupti, inherent difficultiee in some Englieh worde, and inappropriate methode of teaching.

When ineffective methods of leamins, lack of proper guidance, or inadequate curriculum reeult in apelifng deficiencien, diagnosis and remedial instruction become necessary. Extreme dirability mey be attributed to factore other than apelling and mut be considered in diagnosis. Retarded on imature children in language usage should have
epeliling achievement goals reduced.
Dlagnosis should consider the individual's mental ability, attitudes, interest, achievement and environment. Difficulties in other areas of the language arts should be noted and prevalent errors analyzed.

Inadequate techniques of word etudy are chamacteristic of most poor spellert. The good spellers tend to have a natural intereet in words and word study, and evidence good attack in approaching spelling problems.

Dlagnosis must be continuous to be effective and may continue well after improvement in the child'e work as a result of remedial instruction.

## DEVELOPMENT OF DIAGNOCTIC EPELLING TEET

The development of Edwards-ithitted speling Diagnostic
Teet involved the following procedures:

1. Dolch 2,000 Commonet Vords for Spelling was checked against severai reliable word frequency lists.
2. Median gracie placement as listed by Betts was recorded for these 2,000 zords.
3. Vorde for the test were selected on the bacis of
a. word frequency
b. grade placement
c. phonetic analysis--initial, medial and final sounds
4. Test composed of 100 words each divided Into 10 subtests of 10 words each.
5. Words in Form A are crosematched with Form B.

Each initial sound is repeated in both Eorms.

Initial sound is combined with different phonetic element.

Each phonetic element is matched with different initial sound.
6. Words presented in modified-sentence recali.
7. Nord difficulties can be retested in a few minutes time. Can be used to discover benefite of remedial instruction and check types of errors.
8. A liet of 10 words may reveal up to 20 types of errors.

SOURCE OF DATA FOR STUDY
Spelling teats were administered to Nebraska and Iowa elementary school children by teachers who were taking advanced psychology courses at the University of Omaha. All received an indoctrination in test procedure in general and specific inetructions for adminietration of the diagnostic epelling test.
 Dlagnoctic pelling Mest, Fome A and B, were administered In third, fouxth and firth graded.

Papere were marked "C" for corxect and dash (--) for wrong. A11 papere wexe rechecked for tcoring and addetion on subteste and totale.

Oniy those cases were included in thie study who had taken all three teste. Pupil's scores for these three teste were entered on individual carde.

The coeffictent of corvelation wae calculated to determine if any relationship existed between Litt 8 and Fomm A, LAEt 8 and Fom B, Form A and Fom B. AE the coefficient of correlation yielded the degree of agreement the coefficient of allenation was calculated to determine the lack of apreenent. The meculte of all coefficient of correlations were hichly significant.

## CONCLUETON:

The findinge of this gtudy would seem to indleate the rollowine:
A. A diagnostic speling test can be built on thes phonetic acsumption.
B. The Edwards-Whitted Diagnoctic polifng Test ie a measure of zpelling ability.
C. Form A and Fomm $B$ of the dlagnostic spelling teet are comparable.
D. The diagnostic spelling test correlaten highly with accepted standards of measurement.
E. The test is easily administered under standardized procedures and easily and objectively zcored.
F. It 1 poseible by inepection to locate areas of speling difficulties.
G. Test can be readily and easily used for retesting after a period of remedial instruction.

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## APREDXX

According to the new Webster's International Dictionary the greatest number of words begin with the letter . The next greatest number begin with the letter $C$, and the $P$. Here is a table showing the approximate number of words beginning wh each letter of the alphabet. Note that 37,000 words (approximately) begin with and only 300 begin with $x$ (32).

TABLE 4. ATPHABETIC INITIAL LETTER FREQUENCIES


MORRISON MC CALL SPLLLING SGALE

## LIST 8

| 1. up | Put up the uindow .. . . . . . . . . . up |
| :---: | :---: |
| 2. my | Iy head aches . . . . . . . . . yry |
| 3. go | You may go hone . . . . . . . . . . go |
| 4. time | What time is it? . . . . . . . . . . time |
| 5. street | What street is this? . . . . . . . . . street |
| 6. live | Where do you live? . . . . . . . . . live |
| 7. sive | I have five cents . . . . . . . . five |
| 3. soft | The ice cream is soft. . . . . . . . soft |
| 9. spent | I spent all my money . . . . . . . . . spent |
| 10. river | This river is small . . . . . . . . river |
| 11. deep | The river is deep. . . . . . . . . . deep |
| 12. stay | Stay in the house. . . . . . . . . . . stay |
| 13. upon | The Indians were upon them . . . . . . upon |
| 14. could | Could you mend the toy?. . . . . . . . could |
| 15. track | The track is six miles long. . . . . . . track |
| 16. buy | Please buy me some candy . . . . . . . . buy |
| 17. provide | I will provide for the future. . . . . . provide |
| 13. goes | He goes away today . . . . . . . . . goes |
| 19. center | Point to the center of the circle. . . . center |
| 20. death | His death was very sad . . . . . . . death |
| 21. retire | It is time to retire. . . . . . . . retire |
| 22. objection | Have you any objection?. . . . . . . . objection |
| 23. proper | Is this the prooer heading?. . . . . . proper |
| 24. rapid | His work was yapid . . . . . . . . . rapid |
| 25. carried | I carried the banner . . . . . . . . carried |


| 26. property | The property is mine . . . . . . . property |
| :---: | :---: |
| 27. convict | The convict has escaped. . . . . . . . convict |
| 28. visitor | We have a visitor. . . . . . . . . . visitor |
| 29. drown | Do not drown the kittens . . . . . . . drown |
| 30. wreck | There was a sad wreck today. . . . . . . wreck |
| 31. supoly | The supply is exhausted . . . . . . supply |
| 32. affair | It was a gala affair . . . . . . . affair |
| 33. accident | It was an accident . . . . . . . . . accident |
| 34. associate | I will not associate with them . . . . . associate |
| 35. political | There is a political meeting tonisht . . political |
| 36. probably | Probably we shall be late. . . . . . . probably |
| 37. application | You must file your ayolication . . . apolication |
| 38. ascending | I was ascendini the stairs . . . . . . ascending |
| 39. extremely | We are extremely thankful to you . . . . extremely |
| 40. Ieisure | We spont our leisure tine fishing. . . . leisure |
| 41. emergency | I reached for the emergency brake. . . emergency |
| 42. Poreigners | They are all foreigners. . . . . . . foreigners |
| 43. development | The develoment was perfect. . . . . . develoment |
| W. intelligent | She is an intelligent child. . . . . . intelligent |
| 45. seized | The man seized the falling child . . . seized |
| 46. orchestra | The orchestra played well. . . . . . . orchestra |
| 47. syllables | Pronounce the syllables distinctly . . Syllables |
| 43. mortgage | The mortgage is due. . . . . . . . . mortgage |
| 49. persistence | Her persistence. . . . . . . . . . . persistence |
| 50. incessant | The talking was incessant. . . . . . . incessant |

OTIS CORRELATION CHART
By efrthur S. Otis, Ph.D.
Aurthor of the Otis Group Intelligence Scale



[^0]:    ${ }^{\text {I mith, Mia B., Anerican Readine Inetruction, Chicaeo: }}$ Cllver Burdett Company, 1934.

