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## A Comparison of Traditional Versus Nontraditional Oral Spelling Strategies in a 3rd Grade Classroom

Katelyn J. Pettijohn Ms kpettijohn@southern.edu

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A Comparison of Traditional Versus Nontraditional Oral Spelling Strategies in a 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Classroom

#### **Focus and Framing**

The term 'spelling' has been around for a very long time. Being a good speller will help one succeed in their academics and also in the work place. But where does one learn how to spell? That's an easy question: elementary school. But spelling is a subject that is often overlooked. Teachers send home a list of words at the beginning of the week, assign worksheets during the week, and test them at the end of the week. Not much lesson planning goes into spelling.

The way two researchers were taught math, reading, and language arts is not how students are being taught today. Spelling, however, is still being taught the same way. The researchers believe that there is a better way to teach spelling than worksheets and repetition writing. Spelling should be made fun for students so they will be more willing to learn the material. In goal of this research project is to prove that students will be more successful in learning their spelling words when teachers use fun and creative teaching methods rather than traditional spelling methods.

#### **Preliminary Literature Review**

In 2008 Randall Wallace did a study on effective spelling instruction. He suggests, "Viewing spelling as developmental and viewing students at different states of learning to spell is important if teachers want to strengthen the quality of their spelling program." Several researchers characterized six stages of spelling (Bear & Templeton, 198; Henderson & Templeton, 1986). These stages were created to help teachers focus on appropriate age level spelling. (Wallace, 2006)

In stage 1, prephonemic spelling is characterized by children aged 1 to 7 who listen to stories, write using scribbles, and are becoming aware of phonemes. (Wallace, 2006) This stage is extremely important. If children who are correctly taught prephonological sounds and writing, they are much more likely to succeed in spelling and reading. (Kessler, Pollo,., Treiman,& Cardoso-Martins 2013).

In stage 2, semiphonemic spelling is a characterized by children aged 4 to 7 who use invented spelling, compare and contrast initial and final consonants using pictures and word sorts, and can typically write the initial and final consonants of words. In stage 3, letter name spelling is a characterized by children aged 5 to 9 who compare and contrast short vowel word families and focus on the sound and spelling of words containing one short vowel, then compare across short vowel patterns

In stage 4, children aged 6.5 to 12 spell words with long vowel patterns and complex single syllable words characterize within-word pattern spelling. In stage 5, children aged 8 to 14 spell words using rules of syllabication, common affixes, verb tenses, and low-frequency vowel patterns characterize syllable juncture spelling.

Lastly, in stage 6, children aged 10 to 18 connect meaning to the spelling words through the use of similar bases and roots characterize derivational constancy spelling. For example, students at this stage are aided in their spelling of the word calculator by understanding the relationship between calculate, calculation, and calculus.

In spelling instruction teachers commonly organize instruction in a weekly routine that beings with a minilesson at the beginning of the week, workbook activities throughout the week and a test on Friday (Murray & Steinen, 2011). Wallace believes that spelling should be taught and learned at the correct developmental level. This means the teacher should create a list of

words specific to each student. Several researchers have developed guidelines to help teachers create appropriate lists. Morris, Blanton, Blanton, Nowacek, and Perny (1995) found that when low achieving students were taught using word lists intended for younger students, their spelling skills improved. Wallace developed a list of effective spelling techniques for teachers to follow when creating word lists and giving spelling instruction (Wallace, 2006):

- Sound out each word slowly, look for visual patterns
- Create analogy when needed
- Think about word meaning
- Examine words structurally for prefixes, suffixes, and roots; and
- Look for world families such as –ake in bake, cake, and rake

Through trial and error Wallace also created a list of ineffective spelling techniques (Wallace, 2006):

- Writing words several times each to ensure retention;
- Encouraging students to depend heavily on phonic rules;
- Having students deduct their own methods to study words; and
- Presenting words in a sentence rather than in a list to introduce the spelling words

In a study written by Wendy Donnell, the National Center for Education Statistics states, "According to the National Assessment of Education Progress, almost half of the children living in urban areas in the United States cannot read at a basic level." (Donnell, 2007) During a different study done in 2012, it was proven that children learn better while learning words in their own developmental level. In this particular study "Words Their Way" was implemented in the classroom. Words Their Way consisted of spelling pre and post tests, teacher made tests, checklists, Lickert scales, anecdotal records, writing artifacts, teacher student interviews, and a

teacher journal. Students were grouped according to their spelling developmental level and taught accordingly. It was shown that "Words Their Way" allowed each student to learn individually and succeed in spelling. (Dew, 2012) Many time students are pushed faster than they can learn, which inhibits learning. This is especially true with spelling and reading.

For years students have been taught to memorize their spelling words. By doing this, struggling spellers get left behind. They need strategies for understanding spelling as pronunciation maps, which enables them to strategically generate most letters and minimize memorization. Spelling and word recognition are closely related. If a reader has a well-spelled representation of a word in memory, they will recognize the spelling word and automatically access the world in memory. Studying its pronunciation, syntactic usage, and meaning help this theory become successful. (Murray & Steinen, 2011)

Efficient spelling instruction beings with knowledge of correspondences learned in phonics. This includes consonant correspondences and learning vowel patterns. Learning spells patterns of a language is also powerful when learning how to spell. Murray and Steinen created a wordmapping procedure that uses a nine-steps. To understand phonological structure, the students should be directed to (Murray & Steinen, 2011):

- Pronounce the word by syllables;
- Stretch each syllable;
- Segment the phonemes in the syllable;
- Count the phonemes; and
- Draw blanks to represent each phoneme, with slashes between the syllables
- Record the graphemes of the standard spelling on the blanks, making and silent letters
- Transcribe the spelling outside the wordmap

- Study the irregular mapping elements, and
- Check his or her knowledge of the words meaning

When these wordmapping strategies were tested in a classroom they were found to be successful. Word mapping aims at teaching spelling correspondences, rules, and patterns. It can be a useful technique of directing spelling study in classrooms. Teachers can see success by continuing the use to traditional spelling methods, but should work on modifying it a bit (Murray & Steinen, 2011). Everything discussed in this literature review was taken into account when planning the methodology.

#### Methodology

The research was conducted in two third grade classrooms at an Adventist School in Southeastern TN. The two researchers split up for this research study. During week 1, researcher 1 would be conducting spelling class using traditional methods in Classroom A, and researcher 2 would be conducting spelling in classroom B using new nontraditional methods.

On Monday during week 1 in Classroom A, researcher 1 gave a pre-spelling test. The purpose of the pretest was to test the children to see if they were already familiar with the words. On this same day the students were asked to fill out a survey. On this survey there were questions asking them how they felt about spelling. On Tuesday and Wednesday the students were assigned worksheets. The worksheets involved the students answering questions using their spelling words. Some sections had students focus on the vowels and consonants, and some had them focus on splitting the word up in writing. After the students finished the worksheets, they were asked to partner up and quiz each other. This classroom does not have Spelling on Thursday, so the students did not get any review of the words unless they did so on their own. On Friday the students were tested over the spelling words they studied throughout the week.

After the spelling test was give, the students were given another survey. On this survey were questions asking if they enjoyed what they did during the week and if they thought the worksheet and quizzing activities helped them learn their spelling words.

On Monday, during week 1 in Classroom B, the researcher 2 gave a pre-spelling test.

They were also given the same survey as Classroom A. On Tuesday, researcher 2 lead out in an activity using shaving cream. The students were assigned to practice writing their spelling words in the shaving cream on their desks. On Wednesday, researcher two conducted spelling stories. The students were split up into groups, and each group was given spelling words and was assigned to create sentences using spelling words. Each group had to act out the sentences they created. This classroom does not have spelling on Thursday so the students did not review their words unless they did so on their own. On Friday, the researcher 2 led out in a spelling bee. All students were asked to take out their dry erase boards. Researcher 2 called out spelling words and the students wrote them individually on their dry erase boards. In order to move onto the next word all the students had to spell the previous correctly. After this activity the students were given the final spelling test. After the test was completed the students were given a survey asking for feedback about what they experienced during spelling class the past week.

After the first week ended, the researchers switched classrooms. The class that experienced traditional spelling methods would then experience nontraditional spelling methods, and the class that experienced nontraditional methods would then experience traditional spelling methods. By doing this, the researchers can identify how the students in each classroom learn best rather than just comparing two different classrooms together.

#### **Outcomes or Findings**

In both classrooms all of the students responded well to the traditional spelling methods that were used. Researcher 1 was able to gain some information about the students via the survey given at the beginning of the week. The survey revealed that many of the students like spelling. It was also revealed from the survey that most students believe they learn their spelling words by worksheets, spelling them aloud and practicing with their parents. The students were very used to this way of spelling class, which is why traditional methods do work. At the end of the week the every students test scores rose.

Students also responded well to the nontraditional spelling methods that were used.

Many of them found it easier to learn this way because they had fun participating in the activities. At the end of the week all of their test scores rose, proving that nontraditional spelling methods can be successful.

When comparing final test scores to each other, positive results occurred. When comparing the different classrooms during week 1, the classroom being taught using nontraditional methods scored higher. The same occurred after week two. The classroom using nontraditional methods scored higher on the final test.

During the second week of the study some problems arose. Spelling unit 11, which was used the first week, was much easier than spelling unit 13. Spelling unit 13 included the words their, there, and they're. It was observed that these words caused problems for the students, even after reviewing them all week. Therefore, the final test scores aren't as good during week 2 as they were during week 1. Nevertheless, the classrooms being taught using nontraditional methods still scored higher on the final tests. Below is a table showing class preferences and test percentages. Results have been rounded to the nearest tenth:

Method Results and Comparison Table					
Traditional Nontraditional Nontraditional Traditional Spelling Results Spelling Results Spelling Results Spelling Results					
Categories:	Week 1 (Classroom A) Spelling Unit 11	Week 1 (Classroom B) Spelling Unit 11	Week 2 (Classroom A) Spelling Unit 13	Week 2 (Classroom B) Spelling Unit 13	
Pretest Average	95%	97%	68%	70%	
Final Test Average	98%	99%	94%	87%	
Worksheet Average	93%	N/A	N/A	93%	
Those who studied outside of class	73%	N/A	N/A	68%	
Students who enjoyed worksheets	50%	N/A	N/A	50%	
Favorite activity: Shaving Cream	N/A	50%	87%	N/A	
Favorite Activity: Spelling Stories	N/A	39%	13%	N/A	
Favorite Activity: Spelling Bee	N/A	11%	0%	N/A	
Students who found it easier to learn words orally:		18 Total Students	15 Total Students		
Yes		11	7		
Somewhat		4	2		
No Difference	N/A	1	2	N/A	
Not Really		1	2		
No		1	2		

#### Conclusion

All students involved in this study responded well to both the traditional and nontraditional methods that were used. Both methods were proven to raise test scores, but the nontraditional methods brought up final test scores even higher. After evaluating student feedback, the students enjoyed the nontraditional methods more. The researchers believe that if this study had continued longer, the results would have been the same if not brought stronger results confirming the positive effects of nontraditional spelling methods.

Now that nontraditional methods have been proven successful, what should teachers do now? The researchers recommend that teachers aim to create fun and interactive ways to teach spelling, such as the activities used in this study, while combining them with the successfully proven techniques outlined in the literacy review. If this topic interests current teachers, this research study has the potential to be a good basis for further studies regarding spelling methods.

#### References

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- Wallace PH.D, R. R. (2006). Characteristics of Effective Spelling Instruction. Reading Horizons, 46(4), 267-278.
- Westwood, P. S. (2008). Where is spelling on the literacy agenda? In What teachers need to know about spelling (p. 8). Camberwell, Vic: ACER Press.

# **Appendix**

# Principal Permission Letter: October 7, 2014 To Whom It May Concern: I understand that Katelyn Pettijohn and Jacquelyne Wade will be conducting a Research Study at AW Spalding and I give my permission and consent for this to occur. Principal/Vice-Principal Date

AW Spalding

Running head: NONTRADITIONAL VERSUS TRADITIONAL SPELLING METHODS

#### Parental Permission for Children Participation in Research

**Research Study Title:** "A Comparison of Traditional Versus Nontraditional Oral Spelling Strategies in 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Classroom."

#### Introduction

The purpose of this form is to provide you (as the parent/guardian of a prospective research study participant) information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to allow your child participate in this research study. Read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to give your permission for your child to take part. If you decide to let your child be involved in this study, this form will be used to record your permission.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

If you agree, your child will be asked to participate in a research study about different methods to learn spelling. The purpose of this study is to determine if learning spelling orally will help improve their spelling or if traditional ways are still the best way to learn spelling.

#### What is my child going to be asked to do?

If you allow your child to participate in this study, they will be asked to:

- Be a participant in a small research group
- Complete a survey regarding their attitude about spelling
- Be interviewed regarding their comprehension of spelling
- Mrs. Tuckers classroom will learn spelling in a new way orally
- Take a pre- and post-assessment in spelling
- Possibly be audio and/or video recorded.

#### What are the possible benefits of this study?

Your child may learn new strategies that could benefit them in the way they learn spelling or realize that the way spelling has always been taught is the most effective method.

#### Does my child have to participate?

No, your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may decline to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal or refusing to participate will not affect your child's standing in class. You can agree to allow your child to be in the study now and change your mind later.

Additionally, your child must agree to participate in the study. Your child may change their mind later if they no longer wish to be in the study.

How will your child's privacy and confidentiality be protected if s/he participates in this research study?

Your child's name will be changed in the research and your child's privacy and the confidentiality of his/her data will be protected. If audio/video recorded all data will be erased following the completion of the study. Any written data will be shredded after the completion of the study.

#### Whom to contact with questions about the study?

Prior, during, or after your participation you can contact the researchers, Katelyn Pettijohn and Jacquelyne Wade, by sending an email to <a href="mailto:kpettijohn@southern.edu">kpettijohn@southern.edu</a> or <a href="mailto:jacquelynewade@southern.edu">jacquelynewade@southern.edu</a> for any questions.

#### **Signature**

You are making a decision about allowing your child to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to allow them to participate in the study. If you later decide that you wish to withdraw your permission for your child to participate in the study you may discontinue his or her participation at any time. You will be given a copy of this document.

My child <b>MAY</b> be <b>audio and/or video</b> record My child <b>MAY NOT</b> be <b>audio and/or video</b> re		
Printed Name of Child		
Signature of Parent(s) or Legal Guardian	Date	
Signature of Researcher	 Date	

#### **Child Assent Form**

We are senior Elementary Education majors at Southern Adventist University. We are currently taking Education Research and Statistics. Mrs. Tucker and Ms. Klein have agreed to let us conduct a study in their classrooms. We are conducting a study in your child's classroom entitled "A Comparison of Traditional Versus Nontraditional Oral Spelling Strategies in 3rd Grade Classroom".

For the study I may ask you some questions about how you feel about spelling, and I may record your answers. After the study in done, I will destroy the recordings and no one will be able to see them. Only people working on the study will see them. I will not tell anyone about your answers to those questions. I will not show them to your teacher, your parents/guardians, or anyone else.

#### You should know that:

- You do not have to be in the study
- If you decide not to be in the study you will not be in any trouble with AW Spalding, the principal, your teacher, your parents, or anyone else.
- You can stop being in the study at any time.
- Your parents have been asked if you can be in this study. Even if they say it is okay for you to be in the study you do not have to be in it.
- You can ask us questions now and if you have questions later your parents can contact us at <a href="mailto:kpettijohn@southern.edu">kpettijohn@southern.edu</a> & <a href="mailto:jacquelynewade@southern.edu">jacquelynewade@southern.edu</a>

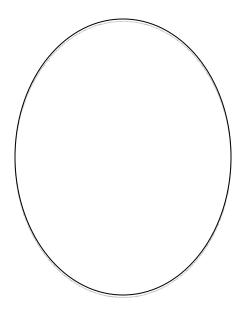
#### Sign this form if:

- You understand what you will be doing in this study.
- Agree to be in the study.

Your Signature		Date
Researcher Signature	Printed Name	Date

My Name is \_\_\_\_\_

1. Draw a face describing how you feel about spelling:



# 2. How do you memorize your spelling words each week? (Circle all that apply)

- By using words I already know
- Writing them out multiple times
  - Spelling them out loud
    - Spelling worksheets

- Practicing with mom and dad
- Practicing with another student
  - Other: (tell us below!)

# How well do you know your words? © Unit 11 Pre-Test

1	11	
2	12	
3	13	
A	1.4	
4	14	
5	15	
6	16	
_		
7	17	
8	18	
9	19	
10	20	

Unit 11 Spelling Test Name	
1	11
2	12
3	13
4	14
5	15
6	16
7	17
8	18
9	19

10. \_\_\_\_\_\_ 20. \_\_\_\_\_

End of Week One Spelling Survey  Did you enjoy spelling this week?
Did you like doing the worksheets?
Did you feel like they helped you learn your spelling words?
Did you like quizzing your friends?
Did you feel like quizzing your friends helped you learn your spelling words?

What is something that we didn't do this week that would help you learn your spelling words?

Do you think you did well on your test today?

Did you study outside of class?

## Spelling Unit 13 Pre-Test $\odot$

NAME		
1	11	
2	12	
3	13	
4	14	
5	15	
6	16	
7	17	
8	18	
9	19	
10	20	

Unit 13 Spelling Test Name	
1	11
2	12
3	13
4	14

5. \_\_\_\_\_\_ 15. \_\_\_\_

7.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 17.\_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_\_ 19. \_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

16. \_\_\_\_\_

18. \_\_\_\_\_

20. \_\_\_\_\_

End of Week Two Spelling Survey  Did you enjoy spelling this week?
Did you like doing the worksheets?
Did you feel like they helped you learn your spelling words?
Did you like quizzing your friends?
Did you feel like quizzing your friends helped you learn your spelling words?

What is something that we didn't do this week that would help you learn your spelling words?

Do you think you did well on your test today?

Did you study outside of class?

## I want your opinion!

What activity was your favorite this week?

Shaving cream activity

Making stories from spelling words

Spelling Bee

Was it easier to learn spelling words orally rather than doing written work?

Yes Somewhat No Difference Not really No

Did you make a 100% on your spelling test?



Yes or No

If no, what was your score?

What could I have done to make spelling even better?

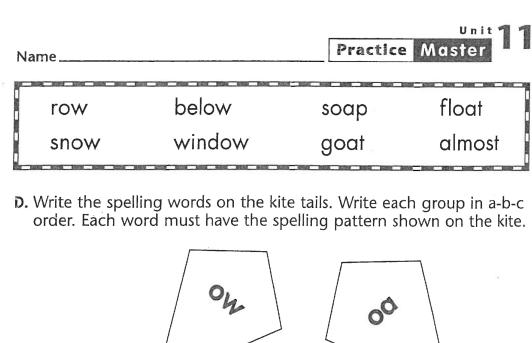


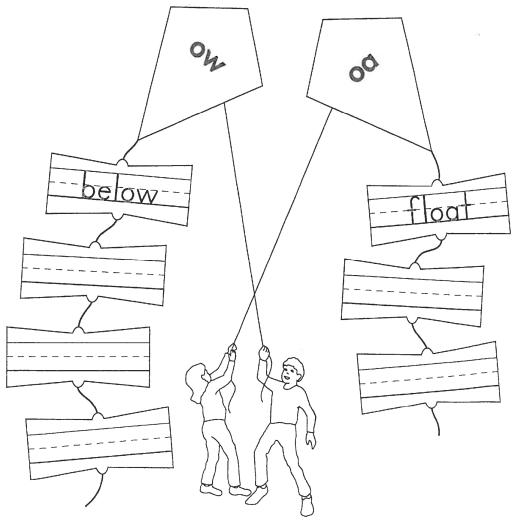
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Name	<u> </u>	Practic	e Master
I. row	3. below	5. soap	7. float
2. snow	4. window	6. goat	8. almost
<b>A.</b> Write the spel	ling word in each	group that has the	e long o sound.
I. soup soap still		3. run rock row	
2. goat give got		4. sniff snow snap	
	ne letters to make s of each word is in		
I. don <b>w</b> iw		<b>3. b</b> oelw	
2. lamsot		4. taflo	
C. Replace the ur	nderlined part of ea	ach sentence with	a spelling word.
I. We are just ab	out ready to start.		
2. Please put the	se desks in a		

Spelling Connections Grade 3

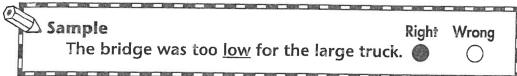
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	EL_62			
		ght V		Name and the
	A	32.8h 3 25.4%	er Box	
		Right	Wrong	
	I.	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	
	2.	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	
	3.	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	
	Ч.	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	
	5.	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	
	6.	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	
	7.	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	
	8.	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	
	9.	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	
	0.	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	
	II.	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	,
1	2.	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	·
	3.	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	
ı	4.	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	
1	5.	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	

Read each sentence. Look at the underlined spelling word. Fill in a circle. Show if the word is spelled **Right** or **Wrong**.



- I. By noon, Phil was allmost done with his work.
- 2. He planted flowers beelow his window.
- 3. The wind began to blow very hard.
- 4. It is easy to flot in the pool.
- **5.** Honey will <u>flow</u> slowly if it is cold.
- 6. There was a lot of foam on top of his soda.
- 7. A baby gote is called a kid.
- 8. The mule can carry a heavy load.
- 9. Of all my friends, I like Jill the mowst.
- 10. The houses were in a long <u>row</u>.
- II. We rode our sled in the snow.
- 12. Sandra had to saok her sore thumb.
- 13. Use soap and water to get clean.
- 14. She can thro a ball a long way.
- 15. I opened my window to get fresh air.

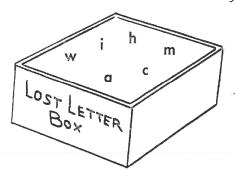
2

	Name	Homework Master
	Write the spelling words on the kite tails order. Each word must have the spelling	s. Write each group in a-b-c pattern shown on the kite.
Copyright © Zaner-Bloser, Inc.	below	od - floot
Copyrig		

	Name				Practice Master 13			
		ı. write	3. check	5	. watch	7. father		
		2. shall	4. church	6	. mother	8. finish		
ons Grade 3	A.	Write the spel	ling words in a-b-	-c ord	er.			
Spelling Connections Grade	I.			5.				
Spellin	2.			6.				
	3.			7.				
	4.			8.				
Ú	B. Add sh, th, or ch to make spelling words. Write the words.							
aner-Bloser, In	I.	all		4.	ur			
Copyright <sup>©</sup> Zaner-Bloser, Inc.	2.	fini		5.	fa e r			
	3.	e c k		6.	mo e			

1	Name		Practice	Master 13
ACCESS OF	write	check	watch	father
NA REAL IN	shall	church	mother	finish
Male		ANNUAL PORT DATE AND AND AND AND		AND DESCRIPTION OF THE REST OF

C. Change one letter in the word to make a spelling word. Use the letters in the Lost Letter Box. Use each letter only once.



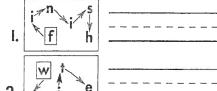
- I. wrote
- 4. bother

2. shell

5. fatter

3. cheek

- 6. catch
- **D.** Follow the path of each spelling word. Start with the letter in the box. Write the words.







	Name	Test	M	aste		
	Read each sentence. Look at the underlined spelling word. Fill in a circle. Show if the word is spelled <b>Right</b> or <b>Wrong</b> .					
le 3	Sample It is not polite to showt out loud.			ght V	Vrong	
Spelling Connections Grade			A	nswe	r Box	
onnec				Right	Wrong	
elling C	!. I like to play <u>cach</u> with my baseball.		I.	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	
Copyright <sup>©</sup> Zaner-Bloser, Inc.	2. Little children like to chase fireflies.		2.	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	
	3. Mom had to chek the oil in the car.	25	3.	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	
	4. There is a bell near the top of the chirch.		4.	$\bigcirc$	0	
	5. I like to help my father work on the car.		5.	$\bigcirc$	0	
	6. He will soon finish his homework.		6.	$\bigcirc$	0	
	7. You look a lot like your mother.		7.	$\bigcirc$	0	
	8. I think that I shal fly my kite.		8.	$\bigcirc$	0	
	9. The balloon was in the shap of an animal.		9.	$\bigcirc$	0	
	10. The point on the pencil is very sharp.		10.	$\bigcirc$	0	
	II. The branch on the tree was thik.		II.	$\bigcirc$	0	
	12. I like to watch my baby sister play.	ĺ	12.	$\bigcirc$	0	
	13. It is fun to wrapp the gifts.		13.	$\bigcirc$		
	14. Will you writ to me soon?		14.	$\bigcirc$	0	
	15. I <u>rote</u> a letter to you yesterday.		15.	$\bigcirc$	0	

	Name		Homework Master	13
	Change or letters in th	ne letter in the word ne Lost Letter Box. U	to make a spelling word. Use the Jse each letter only once.	
	l. cheek		o P a	<b>ope</b>
	2. chose		LOST LETTER	spelling Connections Grade 3
	3. share			tions Grade
19	4. shawl		6. fatter	&
	5. hatch		7. write	·
	Write the m	nissing letters to con	nplete each spelling word.	
	1	i † e	5 a p e	Copyrig
	2	ur	6. w r	Copyright © Zaner-Bloser, Inc
	3	i	7. fini	Bloser, Inc.
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8. m o \_\_\_\_ e r