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THE DEVELOPMENT OF BASIC WORD LISTS
AND
THEIR USE IN TEACHING SPELLING

THE DEVELOPMENT OF BASIC WORD LISTS

and

THEIR USE IN TEACHING SPELLING

A Substantial Paper
presented to

**THE FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
EASTERN ILLINOIS STATE COLLEGE**

In Partial Fulfillment
of the
**REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION**

by

NELLE GULLETT
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PREFACE

The subject of spelling has been of interest to the writer of this paper as a classroom teacher for many years, beginning in the era when Webster's Blue Back Speller had great influence, through precedent, in the teaching of spelling. The methods of teaching have undergone transformation, for in those years began the scientific investigations which have resulted in changes in the teaching of all subjects. Those changes caused the writer great concern in trying to find and use the best methods by which children would learn to spell more accurately.

The original paper on the subject of spelling was written as an outgrowth of the Course, Education, 470, Language Arts In The Elementary School which led to modified views of teaching spelling. This course, combined with increasing criticism concerning the teaching of spelling, caused the writer to do wide reading in the literature of research studies. This reading, in addition to action research in the classroom on some of the problems in spelling, has reached a culmination of interest which has resulted in the writing of this paper.

The writer had several purposes in mind in including extensive quotations from various authors: first, to have a compilation of material from several sources to include the different or similar viewpoints on definite phases of teaching spelling and how children learn to spell; second, to have this material in a condensed form so that it might be useful to some person or persons who need help in teaching spelling; third, to have the exact wording of the authors for fear that the communication through the writer might

be misinterpreted either by the writer or by those people who read the paper; and fourth, the authors' own words reflect their personalities which cannot be shown through the words of another person.

The writer of this paper is grateful to those people who have made so much careful research to prove an idea or ideas in which they firmly believed, and the writer feels indebted to those people, interested in the importance of correct spelling, whose work has been available for others to study.

Dr. Arthur U. Edwards, of the Eastern Illinois State College, has given encouragement to the writer not only in the preparation for this paper, but as a teacher through the years, and in the planning of the graduate courses.

The writer also wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Mrs. Martha Crites in typing, editing, and checking the references for this paper.

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INTRODUCTION

The spelling problem has been the cause of much comment and criticism, as well as a severe trial to school teachers, for many years although it has changed both in content and method with the progress made in education. It has been one of the fundamental subjects of the curriculum since Noah Webster published his Blue Back Speller in 1783. The vocabulary of this famous speller became the traditional spelling vocabulary of American schools and it is considered Webster's contribution to the concept of formal discipline as a principle of learning. His idea was that the learning of hard words would give a general spelling sense and would prepare for the pupils' needs as adults. Some of the words from the vocabulary in this speller continued to be placed in the word lists found in elementary school spellers down to the present time. This was due to Thorndike and Horn, according to Gertrude Hildreth, as the guides used in constructing the lists were the "Thorndike Word Book and Horn Basic Writing Vocabulary which tended to perpetuate the predominance of adult words in elementary school spelling lists because these studies are based wholly or in large part on formal adult correspondence and literary writing."¹

The tradition of oral "contest" spelling at school and the famous "spelling bee" as a part of social life in earlier days stemmed from the pronunciation exercises in Webster's book. The idea of teaching all children in the country to give the same sound to each letter and to each of the

¹Gertrude Hildreth, "An Evaluation of Spelling Word Lists and Vocabulary Studies," The Elementary School Journal, LI (January, 1951), 255.

important groups of letters occurred to Webster as a means of teaching all young Americans to pronounce words in the same way. This would lead to the unity of the various dialectic groups which existed in the United States following the Revolutionary War. In this manner phonics entered American reading instruction as a patriotic motive.²

Horace Mann questioned the value for most children of the "mechanical glibness" shown in the spelling contests. The objections were the following: that "(1) those who received most of the benefit were those who could already spell; (2) the method was exclusively oral with doubtful transfer to written work; (3) the pressure to learn a list of words where immediate use made for impermanent learning; and (4) the unusual words used and studied bore no relation to children's actual needs in writing."³

The increasing criticism made of the American schools in recent years has been directed toward the schools' efforts in teaching reading, phonics, and spelling, and it is the American businessmen who are becoming increasingly critical of the job that the schools are doing in the teaching of spelling. These men insist that millions of dollars are wasted annually in the business world because of misspelling.⁴ If we took all of these criticisms at face value, these comments would lead us to believe that the graduates of American public schools cannot read or write as well as they should, and certainly cannot read or spell as the generation of their fathers who are making these criticisms. However, this inefficiency does not seem

²Nila Banton Smith, "What Research Tells Us About Word Recognition," The Elementary School Journal, LV (April, 1955), 440.

³Gertrude Hildreth, Teaching Spelling (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1955), pp. 8-9.

⁴Thomas J. Maloney, A New Unified Approach to Spelling, Department of School Services and Publications No. 24, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn. (Columbus, Ohio: Wesleyan University Press, April, 1956), p. 1.

to be a recent matter as some of the lay critics would lead us to believe.⁵ We hear that children spell more poorly today than previously due to the fact that they are not taught the alphabet and phonics. Our method of teaching reading is said to produce wild guessing at words; this is reflected in less accurate knowledge of word structure and therefore the result is poorer spelling.

Most of these comments could be answered by simply pointing out the difference in school populations of today and yesterday. Today's schools attempt to educate practically all of America's youth, not merely a small hand-picked proportion of the whole school-age group. This causes a larger group of limited intellectual and cultural backgrounds to be included in the school population. In addition there are contrasts between the aims and practices in teaching spelling between the old and the new school. In the old school, pronunciation and rote spelling were stressed, pupils were taught to spell hundreds of words they didn't understand and consequently could never use in their own writing even though they could spell them. The spelling curriculum of today represents a very careful selection and gradation of words. The total list of words taught commonly averages about 3500 words chosen from extensive studies of the actual writing needs of the average child and adult. "No longer are children expected to learn the 10,000 and 12,000 words chosen by opinion and tradition from technical sources as was true in the old school."⁶ There is still no unanimous agreement among the writers of the spelling texts concerning the criteria for choice but the criteria of usefulness and difficulty are replacing less scientific reasons for choice.

⁵Edna Lue Furness, "Teaching Procedures for Spelling Disabilities," Elementary English, XXXI (March, 1954), 159.

⁶George D. Spache, "What's Wrong With Our Teaching of Spelling?" Education, LXXVI (January, 1956), 297.

Spelling errors detract from all written work, whether it is in material written in school, in personal letters, or in business activities. We know that although there are about 600,000 different words in the dictionary and that most of them are spelled at some time by some one, the average person, however, will probably need to write only a small proportion of these words. It is estimated that 3,000 words, which account for 97 per cent of the running words, will be used by an average person in a lifetime; the remaining three per cent of the vocabulary needed will be largely specialized and personal words.⁷ The most commonly accepted single objective then, for the teaching of spelling vocabulary, is to enable pupils to spell the words they need to write now and in the future. The perfect speller is rare because no person can possibly have enough experiences in his lifetime to spell correctly every word that he needs to spell. "Common observation indicates that the maximum for the typical literate person stops just beyond the spelling 'demons' and rarely reaches the loftier heights of poly-syllabic words derived from Latin and Greek origins."⁸ However no one questions the value of automatically correct spelling. It is standard equipment for literate adults. "Correct spelling is important because it enables the reader to progress through written material more readily and understandingly."⁹

One of the causes given for poor spelling is that the nature of the English language makes spelling difficult. Among these difficulties are the different sounds which are assigned to the same letter combinations, availability of alternate spellings, silent letters, homonyms, and a variety of letter forms such as manuscript and cursive.¹⁰ Edna Lue Furness explains the

⁷Maloney, op. cit., p. 4.

⁸Gertrude Hildreth, Learning the Three R's, (Minneapolis: Educational Publishers, Inc., 1936), p. 191.

⁹Ibid., p. 190.

¹⁰Maloney, op. cit., p. 1.

vagaries of English orthography due to the history of the English language: many words from Greek and Latin retain their original spelling such as alibi, analysis, atlas, comma, and bona fide; old French words, such as piece, example, chime have retained their medieval spelling and often their pronunciation; the Normans retained words of Anglo-Saxon origin, such as cow, sheep, calf, swim, even though they changed the spelling. Then she says that some of the eighteenth century writers, Dr. Johnson, Swift, and Priestly, directed their efforts toward making spelling more uniform even though they, themselves, were inconsistent about their own spelling. Then to all of this, young people of this era have need to spell more different words than did their grandparents.¹¹

Gertrude Hildreth asks the question: "If English spelling is so absurd, why isn't something done about it? Even though she asks the question in this manner, her discussion has a more serious note. She lists some of the advantages that the adoption of a simplified, consistent system of English spelling would give:

1. There would be time that could be devoted to more essential learning.
2. It would be an aid to learning, reading and pronunciation to foreigners learning English.
3. It would help to establish English as a universal language.¹²

Spelling reform has been advocated by such outstanding people as Charles Darwin, Alfred Tennyson, Andrew Carnegie, Theodore Roosevelt, Melvil Dewey, the inventor of the decimal system used in library classification, and George Bernard Shaw. Shaw reasoned that "two months' time could be saved every year for everyone through the adoption of a new alphabet to

¹¹Furness, op. cit., p. 158.

¹²Hildreth, Teaching Spelling, pp. 6-7.

represent the forty or more sounds in the English system."¹³ The advocates of spelling reform recommend that a plan be worked out either with a system of phonetic spelling or a simplification of spelling, by removing such letters as "k" in knife, "c" and "q." "There is renewed interest today in simplifying English spelling due to mechanical inventions for the transmission of language through codes."¹⁴ Uses are now being made of codes, such as the Morse Code, codes used in shorthand and speed writing, and codes used for teaching the blind to read.

"Professional writers, including those who compose editorials, are not necessarily good spellers and should be in the market for simplification," is a statement made in Life Magazine in a recent issue.¹⁵ The article explained the proposal from the Smithsonian Institute magazine, Torch, to start a simplified spelling program in 1957 by substituting "s" for soft "c," in 1958, the hard "c" would be replaced by "k," in 1959 public interest in a phonetic alphabet would encourage other procedures. The writer of the article in Life Magazine ridiculed the suggestions with the following comment: "At the risk of being against progress, maybe we should regard the foregoing (an explanation of the procedure suggested using the changed and deleted letters) as a horrible exampl and be content with spelling we have almost mastered."¹⁵

All attempts to reform the spelling of the English language, to any great extent, have met with strong opposition. The protests are based chiefly on three arguments:

1. Simplified spelling destroys the familiar word pattern and results in confusion in writing and spelling.
2. Pronunciation of words continuously changes through the years.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵"A Horibl Exampl," Life, May 6, 1957, p. 53.

Word forms would soon become unrecognizable if the spelling changed to meet each new method of pronunciation.¹⁶

3. All books written in present day English would immediately become as obsolete as Chaucer in the original spelling and the entire population would have to be re-educated to read and write.¹⁷

A second cause for poor spelling is that the misinterpretation of modern educational theory has created difficulties in the spelling situation. Such procedures as caring for individual differences, reaction against drill, elimination of group instruction in spelling, and the whole word approach in teaching beginning reading which has eliminated word analysis, have had their effect on spelling.¹⁸ The rebuttal has been ample in the area of reading concerning this unjust fault-finding, but it has not been so strong in defending the modern teaching of spelling according to George D. Spache who is associated with the reading laboratory and clinic at the University of Florida. He says that there are misunderstandings of current aims and practices in the teaching of spelling and that some teachers are not quite sure what the school is trying to do.¹⁹

A third cause given for poor spelling is that in our overcrowded schools, with a crowded curriculum, it has often been difficult to find sufficient time for spelling instruction.

However, as the research in the field of spelling is utilized, we shall find the problem of learning to spell cannot be solved by accepting these reasons only. The problem is more complex and it cannot be solved until we find more basic causes for spelling difficulties. By the same token, improvement will not be made until we learn to apply the findings of research and continue with research in many neglected areas which concern all phases of the spelling problem.

¹⁶Paul R. Hanna, "Spelling," The World Book, XV (1953), 7641.

¹⁷Hildreth, Teaching Spelling, p. 7.

¹⁸Maloney, op. cit., p. 1.

¹⁹Spache, op. cit., p. 297.

CHAPTER I

DEVELOPMENT OF BASIC WORD LISTS

Word Counts

American educators, in the early 1900's, began to realize that, if there were some way to identify the commonest words in English writing, the selection of words for teaching spelling would be greatly simplified. The question then became: How many "commonest words" are there?

The first study of importance that began the "era of scientific word counts" was published in 1915 by Leonard P. Ayres. Ayres' purpose in making the list, A Measuring Scale for Ability in Spelling, was "to construct a basic spelling vocabulary scale for classroom use, with the words arranged in levels according to the proven ability of the children to spell the words."²⁰ His plan was to make a list of the 2,000 commonest words, but after selecting the first thousand words, he found such a diversity of words that it was difficult to determine which words were in the second thousand. In research by Ayres, words were selected from "adult correspondence and literary writings of 23,629 words of which approximately 2,000 were different words. The published list contained 1,000 words of which 532 words appeared at least six times in the running words."²¹ Dolch states that Ayres abandoned this project for the following reason as reported by Ayres:

It is easily possible to identify the ten commonest words in written English. . . . It is likewise possible to identify the 50 commonest

²⁰Hildreth, Teaching Spelling, p. 128.

²¹Thomas George Foran, The Psychology and Teaching of Spelling, (Washington, D. C.: Catholic Education Press, 1934), p. 12.

. . . . With progressive decreasing reliability the list may be extended to include the 500 commonest words and possibly the 1,000 commonest, but not the 2,000 commonest, for long before this point is reached the identity of the frequently used words varies according to the subject under consideration.²²

Although the word frequency count made by Ayres was made from the writing of adults, an important principle of word usage was discovered, which has been stated above. This shows that relatively few words constitute the bulk of words used in writing and the vast majority of English words are seldom used. It is estimated that a hundred words take care of over half of our writing needs and a thousand words do about 90 per cent of the work.²³ Hildreth also reports that Ayres found in his study that the commonest 300 words made up more than three-fourths of all the writing analyzed, and the first 1,000 words made up more than nine-tenths of the material. He concluded that a few words with their repetitions made up a very large proportion of the words in adult writing.²⁴

Edward L. Thorndike, in 1921, tabulated an alphabetical list of the 10,000 most frequently used words from forty-one different sources. The count included 625,000 words from literature for children; about 3,000,000 words from the Bible and English Classics; about 300,000 words from elementary school textbooks; about 50,000 words from books about cooking, sewing, farming, the trades, and the like; about 90,000 words from the daily newspapers; and about 500,000 words from correspondence.²⁵ Thorndike stated in

²²Edward William Dolch, Better Spelling (Champaign, Illinois: The Garrard Press, 1942), p. 4.

²³Hildreth, Elementary School Journal, LI, 257.

²⁴Hildreth, Teaching Spelling, pp. 137-138.

²⁵Edward L. Thorndike, The Teacher's Word Book, (New York City: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1921), p. 111.

the introduction in The Teacher's Word Book that "this list is not a perfect measure of the importance of words but that it will be a help to all teachers in estimating the commonness and importance of words."²⁶ A revision was published in 1931, which contained 20,000 words, and the 1944 revision tabulated a list of 30,000 words of those words "occurring at least once per 1,000,000 words."²⁷

In 1926, Ernest Horn published A Basic Writing Vocabulary: 10,000 Words Most Commonly Used in Writing derived from what Hildreth calls "the most comprehensive count ever made of words used in adult writing."²⁸ In the 5,000,000 words tabulated from business correspondence, minutes and records, and letters of well known writers, all proper names, all words of less than four letters, and a number of words among the most frequent 100 were omitted, but the more common derived forms were included. Hildreth stated that Horn himself felt that this list was not representative of adult correspondence as it contained writings of persons at the higher educational levels.²⁹

The study made by W. F. Jones and published in 1915, Concrete Investigation of the Material of English Spelling, was the first comprehensive study made of words in children's compositions. Jones claimed to have found only 4,532 different words in 15 million running words.³⁰ Dolch makes the criticism of such a small total of words: "To show such a small total, the children must have been writing upon a very limited number of subjects,

²⁶Ibid., pp. iii-v.

²⁷Edwin L. Thorndike and Irving Lorge, The Teacher's Word Book of 30,000 Words, (New York City: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1944), Half Title Page for Part I.

²⁸Hildreth, Elementary School Journal, LI, 256.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Hildreth, Teaching Spelling, p. 132.

since other investigations of children's writing have found three to four times as many different words as Jones did."³¹

Another study of children's compositions was made in 1921 by W. F. Tidyman, to supplement the Ayres' list, who tabulated 538,500 running words in 50,000 spontaneous compositions written by children. He reported a list of 2,000 words, but had to include many words used by only five children to find 3,000 words in addition to the Ayres' list.³²

The Rinsland study of children's writing vocabularies was started in 1936, "When the University of Oklahoma requested a grant of funds from the Works Projects Administration of Oklahoma to carry on an extensive, nationwide study of words written by children who are in Grades I to VIII."³³ Rinsland's reason for this extensive study was that he felt that no study had been made of children's writing comparable to that which had been made of adults' writing and that vocabulary lists had been made mainly from the studies made by Thorndike and Horn which were primarily studies of adult writing.³⁴

In the Rinsland study, "two factors of sampling were involved to make the children's writings obtained representative of the United States: (1) the first factor had to do with a cross-section of all types of schools; and (2) the second factor had to do with a true cross-section of all types of writing of children."³⁵ In order to secure the material needed for study, letters were sent to 1,500 selected schools in all kinds of geographic, economic, and social areas; rural and urban schools; public, private and

³¹Dolch, op. cit., p. 2.

³²Ibid., p. 5.

³³Henry D. Rinsland, A Basic Vocabulary of Elementary School Children, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1945), p. 5.

³⁴Ibid., p. 4.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 5-6.

training schools connected with universities. The letters sent asked for original material written by children before corrections were made: stories, poems, compositions, examination papers, articles for school papers and reports on various items as projects, trips, etc. The word list that was the result of this research "included 25,632 words, of which 14,571 words occurred three or more times, from a count of 6,012,359 running words. One of the facts noticeable in this list, A Basic Vocabulary of Elementary School Children, is the large number of different words in each grade,"³⁶ which will be discussed more fully in the section on grade placement.

Greene's New Iowa Spelling Scale, n. d. gives information on the difficulty of 5,507 words derived from tests of 230,000 pupils throughout the country. In each grade the percentages of accurate spelling were computed for words that were spelled correctly by at least one-half of one per cent of the pupils who attempted the spelling of those words.³⁷

Basic Word Lists

Nearly all of the school textbooks in spelling have had lists of between 3,500 and 4,000 words. There are two suggested reasons for the number: (1) there were 4,000 words in the list of words tabulated from children's writing by W. F. Jones; and, (2) a possible reason is to supply the "needs" for spelling lessons: twenty words a week in grades three through eight would make a total list of 4,000 words. This question of the 4,000 commonest words, on which the different spellers did not agree, was finally examined by Carl T. Wise. He examined twenty well-known spelling

³⁶Ibid., pp. 10-11.

³⁷Ralph C. Staiger, "The Spelling Problem in High School," Education, LXXVI (January, 1956), 284.

books, each claiming to include the 3,500 to 4,000 commonest words, and found a total of 13,641 different words.³⁸ There were 884 words common to all of the lists which he examined.³⁹

Derived lists, that is, alphabetized spelling-vocabulary lists based on combinations of original word counts and selections of words from other lists, or prepared by using other lists, have been prepared from time to time by various authorities. The most important vocabularies are listed with dates and pertinent data:

The Iowa Ashbaugh Spelling Scales, 1922. Dr. Ashbaugh used the study made by W. W. Anderson in 1921 at the University of Iowa, which was based upon letters written by adults in the State of Iowa and brought to school by pupils in 23 towns and cities of Iowa. Ashbaugh determined the difficulty of words of high frequency by using them as tests in ordinary lists.⁴⁰

Washburne's School Spelling Vocabulary, 1923. A list of 3,585 words was derived from adult correspondence, children's compositions, and the first edition of the Thorndike Word Book. Washburne derived his list by including all words in the first and second thousand words appearing in these three lists, plus any word appearing in all three of the third thousand of the sources, which made an additional 386 words.⁴¹

The Buckingham-Dolch Combined Word List, 1936. This list, which contains 19,000 words, is one of the longer and more used lists as the source of school spelling lists. It was derived from a study of children's word knowledge in addition to the frequency counts of adult writing mentioned earlier in this paper.⁴²

The list compiled by F. S. Breed, 1930. This list of 3,481 words for elementary school pupils was based on eleven investigations of adult writing and five investigations of children's theme writing, selected entirely on the basis of frequency.⁴³

The Gates Word List, 1937. In the introduction to A List of Spelling Difficulties in 3,876 Common Words, Gates explained that the limitation to 3,876 words was arbitrary as this was the number of words chosen by those who make up the textbooks and

³⁸Dolch, op. cit., p. 3.

³⁹Hildreth, Teaching Spelling, p. 142.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 129.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 128-130.

⁴³Ibid., p. 130.

spelling lists, and therefore includes the 3,876 words most frequently taught in American classrooms. This list was derived from the words in twenty-five spelling textbooks, and state and large city spelling lists.⁴⁴

In 1949 The Fitzgerald Basic Life Spelling Vocabulary for Child and Adult, consisting of 2,650 words, was compiled from numerous child and adult writing vocabularies. "Every one of these words is found in the McKee-Fitzgerald child vocabulary, and in the Rinsland vocabulary; all but ten are in Breed's compilation; all but twenty-two are in Dolch's two thousand commonest words."⁴⁵ Fitzgerald says that this basic list of words covers about 95 per cent of the running writing of normal individuals but that it would not be as useful for gifted individuals.⁴⁶

Emmett A. Betts also made studies of the vocabulary of widely-used spellers. In the first study, published in 1940, he found 8,645 different words, with an average of 3,763 words used in Grades II through VIII. He found that the authors agreed on 543 words. In the second study made in 1949, eight spellers published after 1940 were used, in which a total of 8,652 words was found, with an average vocabulary for each speller of 3,716 words and an agreement on 483 words.⁴⁷

"The Dolch Minimum List of 2,000 Words" was published in 1942 in Better Spelling. Dolch derived this list from a check of the commonest words contained in various vocabulary counts and word studies: the Gates'

⁴⁴Arthur I. Gates, A List of Spelling Difficulties in 3,876 Words. (New York City: Bureau of Publications Teachers College, Columbia University, 1937), p. 1.

⁴⁵James A. Fitzgerald, The Teaching of Spelling, (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1951), pp. 15-17.

⁴⁶James A. Fitzgerald, "The Selection of Words for Spelling," The Resourceful Teacher, V (New York City: Research Service Department of Silver Burdett Co., 1951), 13.

⁴⁷Hildreth, Teaching Spelling, p. 143.

list made in 1938; the Fitzgerald list made in 1934 of 2,106 words written in letters by children of Grades IV, V, VI; the Free Association Study made by Buckingham and Dolch in 1936 of 9,520 words written by 21,659 children in Grades II through VIII. The Gates' list of 2,500 words from twenty-five widely used spellers was checked with these other lists.⁴⁸ Dolch says that his list of 2,000 words includes about "95 per cent of all the words written by the average person."⁴⁹

In 1945, Hildreth derived a list of approximately 5,000 words based on the total frequencies of usage from the Rinsland list. In 1951, she published a report of a study comparing the Rinsland study with the common words of the Thorndike and Horn lists, the studies made by Betts, and the Dolch list. These comparisons showed that the majority of the words in the lists sampled, except the Dolch list, are not the words used by children when they write, that the words children use and the vocabulary used by adults in informal correspondence are not the same words, that a statement made that a given list contains the most frequent 2,000 or 3,000 words may or may not contain derived forms, proper names, abbreviations, and contractions.⁵⁰

For years, this controversy has continued concerning the best criterion for the choice of words for the basic list. Some authorities insist the important criterion is permanent value and others assert that the all important criterion is immediate use by the child. Some authorities contend that a word should be selected for spelling because it is useful in adult writing, and others contend it must be chosen principally because of its

⁴⁸Dolch, op. cit., pp. 10-12.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 257.

⁵⁰Hildreth, The Elementary School Journal, LI, 261-262.

importance in child writing. After a careful consideration of these two hypotheses and an appraisal of the research that supplements them it seems that a central core of words with an overlap of child and adult vocabularies would help to solve the problem although there may not be an agreement upon the selection of some additional words outside the central core.⁵¹

A comparison made by Fitzgerald of Horn's, A Basic Writing Vocabulary, and Fitzgerald's Doctoral Dissertation, The Vocabulary, Spelling Errors, and Situations of Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Grade Children's Letters Written in Life Outside the School showed a core of 1,971 words in the overlap in the four thousand words most frequently written by adults and the three thousand most useful words of children's spontaneous writing.⁵²

Frederick S. Breed in "Selection and Gradation of the Spelling Vocabulary" wrote that if childhood was considered just as a preparation for adult life, then teach only the words used by adults with the hope that they would be remembered until time to use them; but if childhood is a part of life and also a preparation for adult life, then both child words and words needed by adults should be taught.⁵³

There is a trend today in the direction of teaching fewer words in the total elementary school vocabulary and teaching fewer words in each lesson. Several investigations have been made to show the importance of a relatively small list of basic words for writing. As has been previously mentioned, the Ayres list showed that relatively few words constitute the bulk of words used in writing; Dolch in his list of 2,000 words says that this list makes up 95 per cent of the writing vocabulary of the average adult; investigations made by Horn indicated that the one hundred most used words of adult writing and their repetitions made up about 59 per cent of the

⁵¹Fitzgerald, The Resourceful Teacher, V, 13.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Fitzgerald, The Teaching of Spelling, p. 5.

total running writing of a sampling of 1,000,000 running words and the 1,000 most used words made up about 90 per cent of all the total of the running writing.⁵⁴ These facts suggest that the spelling task for the school child is to learn the commonest 2,000-2,500 basic words, to learn how to derive correct alternate forms of these words, and to locate correct spellings of the less usual words for himself; then later on to learn special vocabularies needed in particular writing tasks. However comparative studies of the spelling vocabulary in widely adopted textbooks show lack of agreement in the words included, although the advertising material that is being produced today makes a major point of mentioning the lists from which the words are selected. Hildreth gives the following reasons for the lack of agreement in the spelling lists:

1. Differences in the bases of selection, that is, the word counts and other sources used.
2. Difference of opinion as to the forms of words to be included.
3. According to Ayres' principle of word usage word lists that range beyond the commonest 2,500 words cannot agree closely except by mere chance.⁵⁵

A recent research study in developing a core vocabulary in spelling was made by George C. Kyte and Virginia M. Neel of the University of California and was published in 1953. They used Horn's list, A Basic Writing Vocabulary, and the Rinsland list. The core vocabulary developed consists of a basic list of 501 words from the following frequencies:

1. 315 words from the 500 most commonly used words in the Horn and Rinsland lists.
2. 55 additional words from among the first 300 words used in children's writing.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 12.

⁵⁵Hildreth, Teaching Spelling, p. 144.

3. 21 words from the fourth 100 words of children's writing, and also occurring in the second 500 words of adults' writing.
4. 38 words occurring in the first 500 words of adults' writing and in the second 500 words of children's writing and also in the first 500 words in one elementary school grade.
5. 27 words occurring in the first 500 words in adults' writing and in the second 500 words in at least one elementary school.
6. 45 words occurring in the first 330 words in adults' writing but not in the first 1,000 words in any elementary school grade.⁵⁶

The authors' viewpoint is that this core vocabulary should make possible the learning of additional small words because of the derivative word forms which appear in lists made from adults' and children's vocabularies.

One of the areas in which little research has been made is that of spelling errors, their persistence in the writing of children at different levels and whether or not these words are included in the basic lists. An early study of this kind was made in 1913 by W. Franklin Jones, "Concrete Investigation of the Material of English Spelling." He examined 75,000 themes written by children in Grades II-VIII. The four worst demons — which, their, there, and separate — appeared in the second grade list. In Jones' study he indicated that the words misspelled in the second and third grade lists appeared again and again in misspelling throughout the grades.⁵⁷ An investigation made by Fitzgerald in 1932 of words most frequently missed

⁵⁶George C. Kyte and Virginia M. Neel, "A Core Vocabulary of Spelling Words," Elementary School Journal, LIV (September, 1953), 30.

⁵⁷James A. Fitzgerald, "Spelling Words Difficult for Children in Grades II-VI," Elementary School Journal, LIII (December, 1952), 221.

by children of the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade levels in life outside of school, reported 20,142 spelling mistakes. From this list there were lists of demons of 100 words for children of Grades IV, V, and VI. A crucial core vocabulary was developed from research by Frances J. Brittain on second grade children's spelling mistakes and the 100 most frequently misspelled words determined by Fitzgerald's research of mistakes made in third grade letters and from the errors made in Grades IV, V, and VI. Every one of these words is in the Rinsland vocabulary. All but three of these demons are included in Horn's, A Basic Writing Vocabulary. Fitzgerald believes that the spelling words of persistent difficulty throughout the grades should be included in the spelling program. The Jones' one hundred demons and the Fitzgerald 222 spelling demons should be considered in making a selection of words for spelling and also for the placement of words in grades.⁵⁸

Most school spelling series used previously to the present time selected their vocabularies from similar sources and they contained about the same number of words, 3,500-4,000, for Grade II through VIII. The chief scientific sources of the speller lists have been the frequency counts of words in printed matter, daily life writing of adults, children's school writing, children's informal writing, and various combinations of these sources as given in the lists of word frequency counts in a previous section of this paper.

At the present time in the city-wide required or recommended lists, and the state-adopted spelling curriculum lists, the vocabulary has been obtained from spellers and lists previously published which have been

⁵⁸Ibid.

supplemented with the best known scientific word-usage frequency counts, studies of word difficulties, "demons," and the special vocabularies in school subject fields.⁵⁹ The number of words to be taught will depend upon the philosophy underlying the curriculum where the spelling text is used. If we believe in child-development principles, the number of words to be taught must be adapted to the abilities and needs of each child. If the methods used in instruction provide for integration or a core program, the list of words for direct drill will be shorter than the list used in formal teaching of all subjects. If children in the elementary school can master 2,000-2,500 basic words, learn how to build other forms from them, and learn to use a dictionary, they will be able to add the necessary words to their vocabulary.⁶⁰

Grade Placement

Experts in language teaching have been working for many years in compiling a basic elementary school spelling vocabulary and assigning the words to the various grades. The question then becomes: Are there any reliable guides as to the words to be taught in each school grade? Just as the nature of the elementary spelling vocabulary will depend largely upon the philosophy underlying the planning of the curriculum so the philosophy will also affect the placement of the words. "Gradation can have two meanings with reference to the spelling vocabulary: (1) the sequential order of presentation, and (2) standard grade placement as in conventional

⁵⁹Hildreth, Teaching Spelling, p. 127.

⁶⁰Ruth Strickland, "Utilizing Spelling Research," Childhood Education, XXXII (Washington, D. C.: The Association for Childhood Education International, October, 1955), 72.

spelling books."⁶¹ Concerning placement in conventional spelling books, Horn gives the criteria that have been used: spelling difficulty of the words; logical principles, including the development of phonetic generalizations and the progressive building of derived forms from base words; the importance of words in adult writing; and the frequency of use in the writing of school children.⁶²

Spelling difficulty at one time was thought to be an important principle in determining the grade placement of words. If words are to be taught according to the child's needs, however, some difficult words will be needed in the early grades. The same thing is true of the development of phonic abilities and the ability to build derived forms. The frequency with which words are written by children in a given grade is now generally regarded as the primary principle for the selection of words for that grade.⁶³ Hildreth also makes this point in sequential order of presentation: to teach the most commonly used words before the less common words. The second criterion for grade placement of spellingwords, according to Hildreth, is learning difficulty.⁶⁴ Several authorities have reported the median grade placement of words in widely used spellers as a basis for arriving at grade placement. These studies, which include investigations made by Betts, Gates, Buckingham and Dolch, and the New York State list which was prepared under the direction of Fitzgerald serve as guides to

⁶¹Hildreth, Teaching Spelling, p. 157.

⁶²Ernest Horn, Teaching Spelling, Department of Classroom Teachers American Educational Research Association of the National Education Association No. 3, (Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, January, 1954), pp. 6-7.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Hildreth, Teaching Spelling, p. 158.

"normative grade placement for the elementary school population as a whole."⁶⁵

Horn suggests that each grade, from Grade I through Grade VI, select the words most frequently used in that grade that are of high permanent value regardless of their difficulty; then select other words that have not been taught in earlier grades; and review the words which still seem to be difficult. Then in Grades VII and VIII include, in addition to the same type of selections made in lower grades, also difficult words of high frequency in adult writing, even though they may be used seldom in these grades. Horn criticizes the plan of limiting the study of spelling words mainly pertaining to various units and activities, as some of these words may never be used in later years.⁶⁶ Foran says that it is easy to carry the principle of children's interest to extremes, and it is always necessary to supplement such a method by other bases in grading words. In addition, this method may introduce some words prematurely and this "may result in a considerable degree of forgetting before general use provides sufficient practice to enable them to be retained."⁶⁷

Hildreth states four factors to explain why spelling word lists, from which the authors of spelling texts have selected the vocabulary, are not valid:

1. The construction of spelling lists and the whole treatment of spelling in the schools has borne little relation to word usage in children's writing as a criterion of word selection.
2. Although textbook authors agree on the criteria for grade placement, books in common use show a wide range of grade placement for the same words as shown in studies made by Betts, Buckingham and Dolch.
3. Grade placement of words in the entire spelling vocabulary is only an administrative device. The placement of each word

⁶⁵Ibid. p. 161.

⁶⁶Horn, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

⁶⁷Foran, op. cit., p. 33.

at just one grade level assumes that words are permanently learned with brief practice which is not borne out by evidence.

4. The fixed grade placement of words is inconsistent with variability of pupils of similar age and experiences in learning to spell. Uniform lists imply that all the words must be learned at the same rate, by every child.⁶⁸

All teachers do not agree that the graded speller, as a means of selecting words to be learned by pupils, is the answer to the problem of word selection by grades. Miriam Howell found that children, in their writing, use many of the words listed in vocabulary lists for grades below and above them; they use more words than in the basic word lists; they tend to have a far more favorable attitude toward spelling and writing when they start with experiences which stimulate them to write; and their writing vocabularies are largely individual. Her conclusion is that children's individual needs require an individualized spelling program.⁶⁹ Charles S. Ross says:

Spelling must be individualized if the chief aim of spelling instruction is for the child to develop permanent ability to spell words correctly. In the spelling program real study and practice must be devoted to each child's spelling difficulties with continued emphasis on word analysis, dictionary skills, and other elements which have been proved effective in the classroom.⁷⁰

Some teachers, however, feel that the teaching of spelling can become too individualized. Lawrence Deacon, in an unpublished doctor's thesis, conducted an experiment to compare the effectiveness of the word list system of teaching spelling with a system employing only the words needed by an

⁶⁸Hildreth, Teaching Spelling, pp. 144-145.

⁶⁹Miriam Howell, "Spelling Through Written Expression," Elementary School Journal, LII (December, 1951), 207-213.

⁷⁰Charles S. Ross, "Using Words as An Approach to Language," The Resourceful Teacher, V (New York: Silver Burdett Company, 1951), 10-11.

individual in his writing. His findings relative to individual gains in achievement in the experiment indicate that children using the word list system of instruction in spelling show significantly greater gains in reading, spelling tests, and in accurate spelling experiences in story writing. It seems that individualizing a spelling system based on the words that a child needs would be of maximum benefit to every person concerned. However, Deacon makes this point, that those people who favor this method of instruction fail to realize that the child may forget how to spell a word that he has learned. In addition, the words that each child learns as he needs them may limit his list as well as the richness of his vocabulary. The teacher may be unable to spend enough time with each individual child to adequately teach the skills in building the list, and the child may be inclined to be lazy or careless in the matter. Since the experiment shows a clear superiority in reading and spelling results for the word list method, Deacon concludes that this method appears to be the more suitable of the two methods in his comparison. Some strong features of the word list method seem to be the following:

1. The materials include words that are part of the 1,000 most commonly used words found in children's and adults' writing which account for 90 per cent of all words used in their writing.
2. As the "ladder" is extended for the upper grades, it is built of some 3,763 words and accounts for 95 or 96 per cent of words used by children and adults in their writing. It is then evident that though an individual may not know what some of the words mean, and in many cases is unable to recognize the word in printing at the beginning of a lesson, some words, if not all, become part of the child's reading and writing vocabulary.⁷¹

It is important to remember that it is impossible to teach all of the words which children need in their writing, much less all words needed when

⁷¹Lawrence Deacon, "The Teaching of Spelling Can Become Too Individualized," Education, LXXVI (January, 1956), 301-302.

they become adults. The spelling lessons in any grade therefore are restricted to words of high importance. Using the spelling list method does not mean that spelling is restricted to the basic list or what is taught in a period specifically devoted to teaching spelling. In comparisons as the one that Deacon has made, we need to see that the "ladder" built by each individual can supplement the "ladder" built by the list of words. Spache states his view in this manner:

The modern school stresses individualization of spelling instruction to meet each child's writing situations. In so far as possible, each child is helped to learn to spell correctly to the best of his ability, those words he wants to use in communicating with others. Indiscriminate learning of the same long lists of words by all pupils is definitely on the wane. A core vocabulary of words that are useful and of permanent value for most pupils will certainly be taught but this is only the center of the spelling vocabulary from which his spelling needs and interests will radiate.⁷²

Most authorities agree that more attention to a basic list is desirable, but that consideration should be given to children's everyday needs of spelling in writing. The statements from "Trends in Teaching"⁷³ appear to be the agreement of several studies in research on this problem of teaching lists and individualized spelling. Some of these trends are quoted:

1. Spelling lists for the elementary school have been reduced to the 2,000 to 3,500 words most frequently used in writing by children and adults.
2. Spelling lists are more frequently used for inventory purposes as well as for direct teaching. They are used to measure a pupil's spelling ability, to discover his spelling errors and uncertainties and to locate his spelling needs.
3. Individual spelling lists supplement grade lists. These lists consist of the words which individual pupils wish to use in

⁷²Spache, Education, LXXVI, 298-299.

⁷³Wisconsin Cooperative Educational Planning Program, "Trends in Teaching," Spelling in the Language Arts Program, Curriculum Bulletin XVI (Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Cooperative Education Planning Program, May, 1949), pp. 6-7.

writing situations.

4. In the upper grades more time is devoted to individual study.
5. The need for carefully directed instruction is commonly accepted although a few children learn many words through reading and writing in meaningful situations.
6. Greater stress is placed on techniques of study and on the particular technique best suited to each individual.⁷⁴

Further consideration of the subject of grade placement, then, must include the provision for the individual needs of pupils in a spelling class. Suggestions have been made to include books on at least three levels in any given class being selected by spelling age rather than by grade placement. Spelling lists, activities, and standards should be differentiated to meet the spelling needs of slow pupils who will do little writing and use a meager vocabulary and of gifted pupils who should express themselves extensively through writing.

A truly functional word list, then, will include words that have been selected by criteria upon which research has been made for the basic core, the most difficult words at each grade level should be reviewed the following year, provision should be made for the enrichment of the word list by the additional words needed by the individual. A good program must present to the child words for writing when he needs them as he develops from grade to grade. To make sure that correct spelling carries over into written work in other fields, a great deal of experience in using words in context should be provided. The fact that children learn to spell many words outside the spelling class points to the need of coordinating instruction in spelling periods with the development of spelling ability in other activities.

⁷⁴Ibid.

Horn makes this conclusion for basic evidence in the selection of words:

For each word which might reasonably be considered for inclusion in the spelling curriculum, we have evidence, dependable for all practical purposes, regarding its frequency of use in adult writing, its frequency of use in the writing done by children both in and out of school, its frequency in reading done by adults and older children, and its difficulty, grade by grade. Judgments may vary as to the significance of these various types of data, but all judgments should be made on the basis of established facts.⁷⁵

⁷⁵Horn, op. cit., p. 5.

CHAPTER II

SPELLING IN THE SCHOOL PROGRAM

Why We Teach Spelling

Correct spelling is too important in life to leave its attainment to chance or to incidental learning. The advantages of good spelling ability and the disadvantages of poor spelling ability call for careful planning for helping pupils to spell correctly. "Spelling is a part of life, a skill which, if properly mastered, facilitates written expression and makes living more pleasant and more adequate."⁷⁶ Spelling is a subject which needs to be taught just as do the subjects of reading and arithmetic. How well children learn to spell is affected by many factors correlated to growth, to motives and interests, as well as what is done in reading, in written composition, in handwriting, in speaking, and in periods devoted specifically to direct instruction in spelling. Some important reasons why we teach spelling are:

1. Spelling is an important tool of literacy. To be able to spell readily and quickly the words commonly needed in writing contributes to communication and the development of linguistic powers.
2. Spelling contributes to the ability to pronounce words correctly and distinctly, which marks the educated person. "Scientific investigation has shown that over twenty-two per cent of errors in spelling are due to careless and inaccurate pronunciation."⁷⁷

⁷⁶Fitzgerald, The Teaching of Spelling, p. 1.

⁷⁷Rose Wickey and May B. Lambader, Teaching Notes for Goals In Spelling, (St. Louis: Webster Publishing Co., n. d.), p. 2.

3. Spelling may be a means of acquiring word meanings and a vocabulary which develops ease of self-expression. Dolch says that knowledge of word meanings is a direct aid to spelling and "constitutes in itself quite an education."⁷⁸

4. The technique of learning how to spell the words in the basic list will help develop a "method of studying and attacking new words that will be of help in all school subjects and life outside the school."⁷⁹ As it is necessary for children to spell correctly a basic list of words and know their meanings, it is also necessary for children to use these words in other situations.

5. Spelling is a contribution to the growth of children. "If we consider education, in school, as primarily an opening of doors and not a pigeonholing of information or the acquiring of a limited number of specific skills,"⁸⁰ then, by emphasis on correct spelling of the various forms of words, the meanings of words, attention to individual differences, and techniques used to develop a "spelling power," spelling can become a vital part of the curriculum. "If all of these are recognized as necessary elements of the spelling program, these learning experiences will contribute to the growth in personality of the child." Billington continues this theme in "Spelling and Child Growth:"

In the field of spelling there is every opportunity to capture the imagination of the child and to keep his interest and at the same time to help him develop highly necessary skills in communication. . . . The child does not inherit language at birth, but he does inherit the ability to acquire understanding of language and skill in using it. And he also inherits an almost unlimited opportunity to develop constantly increasing finesse in the use of words which

⁷⁸Dolch, Better Spelling, p. 114.

⁷⁹Wickey and Lambader, op. cit., p. 3.

⁸⁰Lillian E. Billington, "Spelling and Child Growth," The Resourceful Teacher, V (New York: Silver Burdett & Co., 1951), 3.

are the basic units of language.⁸¹

6. Awareness of correct spelling is a social asset in the sense that it gives the individual a sense of self-assurance and security from embarrassment in his communication as well as a vocational tool of high importance. "It is important that children learn to feel a sense of obligation to conform in spelling, because doing so is a matter of common courtesy to the people who will read what has been written."⁸²

The significance of words in the basic vocabulary in teaching spelling has, through research, had an effect on spelling in the curriculum and also had an effect on the curriculum in general. An evaluation of the words listed in these research studies will assist the curriculum builder in determining the most useful words for writing. The words selected for spelling must not be chosen just because they have been found in word lists, unless the purpose of the studies had this for its main concern, for every individual has not one, but has several vocabularies. Strickland lists the types of vocabularies:

1. Understanding vocabulary, which includes the words an individual recognizes and comprehends through listening, and the words an individual recognizes and comprehends through reading.
2. Speaking vocabulary, which includes the informal words used in the process of every day living, and the formal words that the individual understands and can draw upon when the occasion calls for them.
3. Writing vocabulary, which includes the informal words used in personal correspondence, notes and memoranda, and personal diaries, and the words used in more formal correspondence.
4. Potential, or marginal vocabulary, which includes the words which could be interpreted from context, and the words which could be interpreted because of knowledge of word form

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ruth Strickland, The Language Arts in the Elementary School, (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1951), p. 213.

(prefixes, suffixes, roots) and because of knowledge of other languages.⁸³

Strickland says that "the linguistic level on which an individual operates not only colors but also shapes the contours of his whole life."⁸⁴ It is for this reason that teachers try to help each child reach as high a level of operation as he can.

Spelling In The Language Arts Program

Spelling influences and is affected by the experiences and abilities which comprise the language arts program in the school. Good spelling habits are essential for effective communication through writing, a phase of the total language arts program which includes listening, speaking, reading and writing. Betts says that the "evidence indicates that language development takes place in an orderly sequence."⁸⁵ He lists this sequence by stages: experience, which includes seeing, hearing, feeling and other processes, through which the child acquires the prerequisites for language; hearing comprehension, the second stage of language development when the child differentiates between the speech noises; speech production, when the child learns to make use of speech sounds as a means of communicating with others; reading, when the child is initiated into a means of communication even more abstract than speech sounds, the visual symbols; writing, in which stage the child uses the visual symbols for communicating with others. In developing writing skills and abilities, spelling is only one of the language problems confronting the child. When he is ready for systematic writing and spelling, he will have acquired a speaking vocabulary of about

⁸³Ibid., p. 182.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 213.

⁸⁵Emmett Albert Betts, Foundations of Reading Instruction. (New York: American Book Co., 1950), p. 6.

five thousand words and a reading vocabulary of at least three or four hundred words.⁸⁶

In spelling, as in reading, writing, speaking, and listening, the role of meaning is important. Also, all of the language activities are influenced by the hearing of words spoken by others and by the pupil's own pronunciation. "A word improperly pronounced is more likely to be misspelled, misread, misunderstood when heard, and more difficult to learn correctly for any use."⁸⁷ We need to understand the relationships that exist among all of the language arts and develop an integrated program so that we can improve the teaching of spelling by using the techniques in all of the areas of the language arts.

Eleanor M. Johnson agrees with Gates that "proficiency in the various areas of the language arts, handwriting skills, methods of teaching, and other items influence the ability to spell."⁸⁸ She states that the two key factors in spelling success are meanings and word structure patterns which are common to several of the language arts areas. All of the language arts are related through vocabulary and the implications of this for spelling are to give rich experiences in all areas of the language arts, and growth in meaningful vocabulary will take place. In a summary of 140 studies with implications for spelling disability, Spache concluded that "vocabulary knowledge is a more significant determinant of spelling success than intelligence, particularly in the first five grades." He also found

⁸⁶Ibid., pp. 6-9.

⁸⁷Arthur I. Gates, "Developing the Basic Spelling Techniques in the Language Arts Program," Education, LXXVI (January, 1956), 275.

⁸⁸Eleanor M. Johnson, "Two Key Factors in Spelling Success," Education, LXXVI (January, 1956), 271.

"that a low meaning vocabulary is more likely to be a cause of spelling difficulty than is low reading ability."⁸⁹

Most authorities in the fields of spelling and in the language arts agree that there are large contributions made to spelling by the other language arts. Some of their views are stated in the following paragraphs.

Learning to Spell Through Reading. There is a close relationship between learning to read and learning to spell. "People who have worked with disabled readers have found that poor readers tend to be even poorer spellers."⁹⁰ Correlations which have been reported between spelling and reading are nearly as high as those which have been reported between intelligence and reading. "Few persons who are excellent readers are poor spellers and few, if any, poor readers are good spellers."⁹¹ Reading helps children to expand and deepen their fund of meanings for words. The easier words to learn, both in reading and in spelling, are those which have concrete meaning, and a difficult word will be easier learned if it holds great interest for the child. Strickland does not agree with the suggestion that children should learn to spell new words when they are met in reading. Many words which children learn to read will have little or no use in writing in school or later, although some of the words which appear most frequently in reading are words common enough to be used in writing.

Many spelling demons are among the words repeatedly met in reading. If abbreviations, proper names, and derived forms not reported by Thorndike are omitted, all but nine of the 100 words which, according to Ritzgerald, are most frequently misspelled in Grade II-VI are among the 1,000 words of highest frequency in reading.⁹²

Horn also disagrees with the suggestion of taking time to spell new

⁸⁹George Spache, "Spelling Disability," Journal of Educational Research, XXXIV (April, 1941), 545.

⁹⁰Strickland, Childhood Education, XXXII, 70.

⁹¹Horn, Teaching Spelling, pp. 10-11.

⁹²Ibid.

words when met in reading. In addition to the same criticism given by Strickland, he makes the criticism that this method would be detrimental to the development of good reading habits. He believes that the contributions of reading to spelling are the "development of auxiliary habits as the use of the dictionary, improvement of pronunciation through oral reading, and the ability to associate letters with sounds."⁹³

William Kottmeyer, Director of the Reading Clinic, St. Louis Public Schools, makes the point that there is some evidence to show that children can be given greater competence in both spelling and reading when they can see the relationships in reading and spelling. In analyzing the skills in both he says that the "look and say" method of teaching word-recognition is useful in reading but the child cannot depend entirely upon this word recognition skill as an aid in spelling. But there are some skills taught in reading as the sound-blending techniques and syllabication, which will be useful to the child in spelling. There are some sound-blending sounds that are more useful in spelling than others, as the beginning and ending sounds. But the child needs more than these sounds; to get an effective power in spelling he needs to know the vowel sounds and their classifications and he needs them in reading to develop his word recognition skills. In spelling the need for accurate association of symbols and sounds is greater than in reading. In recognizing words in reading, configuration and context clues can be used and the pronunciation can be approximated, then the word can be guessed if the approximation is close enough. In spelling this technique will not work; an approximation does not work and one mistake makes the spelling all wrong. Kottmeyer then concludes:

If children are taught in spelling to listen for the sound element in words and if they are taught the common visual

⁹³ Ibid., p. 12.

representations which stands for those sounds, they develop a useful power beyond visual memory to guide their spelling.

Word recognition skills can be taught more appropriately and effectively during spelling instruction than during reading activity. In studying spelling, minute scrutiny of word parts is desirable but in reading we are after meaning.⁹⁴

One of the objections that is made to teaching phonics in teaching spelling and word recognition skills is that the English language is not phonetic so the learning of auditory-visual relationships is not only useless, but is confusing and leads to spelling errors. Although the use of phonics in the teaching of spelling will be discussed as an aid in teaching spelling, a summary is made here of the views of some of the authorities in reading and spelling for the reason that the problem of whether to teach or not to teach phonics pertains to both spelling and reading. This summary is not a complete one so no generalizations can be made. The statements made are views expressed in some of the references studied in writing this paper.

Betts says that an undesirable phonics program in reading is the teaching of phonics as the chief aid to word recognition, by drill on isolated words, by drill on the blending of phonograms into words and that it has no place in the reading program. A desirable program in phonics is one in which phonics is "only one aid to word recognition and that phonics instruction is given when needs arise in reading situations."⁹⁵ He also says that "one way to confuse children in spelling is to teach the child to spell words by isolated sounds, drill him on certain sounds so that he will write what he hears and then misspell the word."⁹⁶

⁹⁴William Kottmeyer, On The Relationship of Skills in Reading and Spelling, (St. Louis: Webster Publishing Company, n. d.), pp. 3-5.

⁹⁵Betts, Foundations of Reading Instruction, pp. 614-615.

⁹⁶Emmett Albert Betts, "What About Spelling?" Education, LXXVI (January, 1956), 311.

Dolch, according to Betts, has expressed his views on the teaching of phonics in these words:

Phonics have a recognized place in the teaching of reading. Despite many complaints about the ineffective teaching of phonics, there is common agreement that the child who cannot sound out new words is handicapped in any independent reading.⁹⁷

In Better Spelling in a summary of how the spelling period is to be used, Dolch has the following to say:

The step of checking the sound with the letters is the most important one in spelling analysis. First, phonics as used in reading are used to see whether the letters would tell a reader the correct sound of the word, then phonics used in spelling are tried to check whether this process can be reversed, that is, whether the sound will tell the letters.⁹⁸

Gates, according to Betts, thinks that phonetic training should have a place in the modern reading program, as one of several useful devices of developing independent word recognition. Gates, himself, says: "Spelling, reading, speaking, and hearing words are all dependent upon the child's phonic skills and phonics becomes a problem in every area."⁹⁹ Paul Witty, as interpreted by Betts, would "in reading or in spelling, in the case of children experiencing failure or great difficulty, use phonics judiciously."¹⁰⁰

Foran states his views of the problem. There have been several studies of the phonetic nature of the English language but these studies can be accepted only with reservations, for the spelling vocabulary of the elementary school constitutes but a small fraction of the total number of words in English.¹⁰¹

Horn discusses the subject of phonics in "Phonics in Relation to Spelling" in which he makes the following points:

1. Most of the early research on teaching phonics was planned to

⁹⁷Betts, Foundations of Reading Instruction, p. 615.

⁹⁸Dolch, op.cit., p. 168. ⁹⁹Gates, Education, LXXVI, 275.

¹⁰⁰Betts, Foundations of Reading Instruction, p. 615.

¹⁰¹Foran, The Psychology and Teaching of Spelling, p. 127.

discover its effect upon reading.

2. Recently there has been a growing interest in the possibility that teaching sound-to-letter relationships might contribute to the improvement of spelling ability.
3. Even though the evidence is meager on some important matters, it seems to justify considerable emphasis upon phonics.
4. Instruction in phonics should be regarded as an aid to spelling rather than as a substitute for the systematic study of the words in the spelling list.¹⁰²

Fitzgerald says that the question of phonics is a troublesome one and even though some research indicates that some phonics should be taught as an aid to pronunciation of words and as a help in spelling, he commits himself to this statement only:

Although drills on large families of words are not thought to be so necessary, the child should be taught common phonograms and some consonant sounds so that he may begin to attack the pronunciation of words independently.¹⁰³

Strickland says that research has called attention to the limitation of phonics, rather than to indicate its values in learning to spell. She feels that it does have value at some points, but says that "most of children's misspellings when they write stories and letters are phonetic. The word is spelled as it sounds to the child, without regard to conventional spelling requirements."¹⁰⁴

Hildreth's view favors the use of phonics in teaching spelling according to the following statements:

Repeated oral and auditory experience with words sensitizes the child to the recurring letter-sound relationships that are the basis of correct spelling. Work in phonics sharpens both auditory and visual discrimination which aid the child's reasoning ability in trying to

¹⁰²Horn, op. cit., p. 24.

¹⁰³Fitzgerald, The Teaching of Spelling, pp. 114-115.

¹⁰⁴Strickland, Childhood Education, XXXII, 75.

spell new words. Practice in pronouncing and sounding words benefits both reading and spelling.¹⁰⁵

Knowledge of phonics is an indispensable aid to advancing spelling, both in recalling the spelling of practiced words and in writing other unpracticed words independently. The phonetic techniques that aid spelling are learning the commonest letter sounds, identifying phonograms, giving the letter equivalents for common sounds, pronouncing words distinctly and correctly, and syllabifying. According to Dolch simple letter phonics help more than anything else.¹⁰⁶

Kottmeyer's opinion is that deviations from regular phonetic patterns do not mean that the teaching of phonics in spelling is useless. For a child to spell "phonetically" the meaning, according to Kottmeyer, is for the child to scrutinize the word he wishes to spell and he observes that it is spelled as it should be spelled, but if the word deviates from the regular phonetic pattern he notices the deviation. He also speaks of looking at the word discriminatingly by which he means that the child observes the agreement with, or deviation from, generalization of phonetic rules. Kottmeyer's belief is that if children are taught to look discriminatingly at words, they will strengthen their spelling skills wherever they look at print symbols for any purpose. His conclusion is "there is some evidence to show that we can give children greater competence in both spelling and reading when we make the relationships of similar skill clusters more apparent."¹⁰⁷

Learning to Spell Through Written Work."Spelling is an inseparable part of written language and the spelling of words must conform to common practice if the written material is to be read with ease and the assurance of correct interpretation,"¹⁰⁸ is Ruth Strickland's thought about

¹⁰⁵Hildreth, Teaching Spelling, p. 110.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷Kottmeyer, op. cit., p. 6.

¹⁰⁸Strickland, The Language Arts in the Elementary School, p. 212.

the potential contributions of written work to spelling. The teaching of spelling, then, becomes the responsibility of every teacher and will be well taught only when every teacher recognizes it is a part of every teacher's work in all classes where any written work is done. The more use that the child makes in his writing of the words he is learning to spell, the more quickly he achieves mastery. In the same manner, the greater interest that the child has, the more attention he will give to the mastery of spelling, and the more closely his writing in school resembles the writing that he does and sees others do outside of school, he will be more apt to master the words that he needs.

Sometimes the criticism is made that the words that children need in their written work are not the words in the basic spelling list for their grade. This criticism is partly justified due to the same reasons that Hildreth gives in questioning the validity of conventional spelling lists; two of these reasons being due to the sampling of words used in constructing the list and the criteria used for grade placement.¹⁰⁹ Other words are needed but these additional words will vary from pupil to pupil and some will have only transient value. Strickland lists three categories into which the words in children's study lists fall:

1. The words all children need to learn as they progress through the grades; these can be found in the best of the recent textbooks.
2. The words children use in writing material of local or current interest; some of these words will be copied from the board but not necessarily learned.
3. The words that are important for individual children to learn, and words that are required by the child's individual interests.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹Hildreth, Teaching Spelling, p. 144.

¹¹⁰Strickland, The Language Arts in the Elementary School, p. 214.

The writing of letters, bulletins, items for the school news, reports on special problems and other forms of creative writing are possibilities for realistic practice in spelling. Many children's experiences furnish motives for learning to spell words as well as maintenance of words which they have studied in the spelling lessons. Children should be taught to be experimental in their use of words, use words when they are not sure of the spelling, with the checking for spelling after the word is written. "The important thing is that children use words as needed to communicate clearly, fluently, and with color and originality."¹¹¹

Children should learn early that careless handwriting and inaccurate letter formation may be interpreted as inaccurate spelling. Poor handwriting is frequently cited as one of the factors that causes difficulty in spelling.¹¹² Children who write legibly and with reasonable speed have many advantages: they can give their entire attention to the spelling and thought they wish to express; they are not penalized for illegible letters; their work can be better interpreted by those who read it.

A great deal of progress in spelling takes place apart from spelling lessons, from skills, and words taught in the language arts area and from their contributions to spelling. Children do learn to spell in activities outside of the areas mentioned and they also learn the use of the dictionary, associating sounds with letters, and other techniques considered a part of the language arts field. According to Horn, "there is some evidence that suggests that, when spelling lessons are highly motivated and efficient, pupils develop an interest and conscientiousness in spelling in other curriculum areas causing increased contributions to spelling."¹¹³ Many examples for

¹¹¹Richard Madden and Thorsten Carlson, A Guide for Teachers Using Success in Spelling, (Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York: World Book Company, 1955),

¹¹²Horn, op. cit., p. 14.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 15.

motivation from other areas could be cited; only a few are given: writing original "story problems" to be used in the arithmetic class; recording science experiments; taking notes for reports in social studies and from classroom films; and listing questions in preparing assignments for which answers are sought.

The fact that children do learn to spell so many words outside the spelling class points to the need of coordinating instruction in spelling periods with the development of spelling ability in other activities. One of the trends in modern education is the trend in integrating spelling with other language activities, to which several references have been made in this paper. By a variety of writing experiences the child acquires the power to write the word and to know whether or not he has spelled it correctly. "If the words being learned are associated with social experiences in units of work being studied, opportunities for functional uses of words may be found. Children learn permanently what they use and what has meaning for them."¹¹⁴ A number of research studies have shown the results obtained when spelling is treated as a tool for writing rather than as an isolated school study. A few of these tests with results obtained are listed:

1. As early as 1902, Oliver P. Cornman tried the experiment of teaching spelling as an integrated study in two elementary schools in Philadelphia. At the end of three years, results showed, by means of composition tests, that spelling was fully as good as when it was taught in isolated drill periods.
2. In 1923, C. W. Washburne found that children with no formal instruction in spelling progress from grade to grade, making definite advance in ability to spell year after year.
3. In an experiment in 1936 in New York City, Helen Howland equated groups of primary-grade pupils; one group was given conventional work in English, and other groups were given activity work in which learning to speak and write played a prominent role. The results showed that the activity groups were consistently ahead

¹¹⁴Gertrude Hildreth, "New Light on the Spelling Problem," Elementary English, XXV (April, 1948), 206.

in spelling skill and other phases of the language arts.

4. A report of work with slow learners by Gates and Bond, in 1936, demonstrated that the unit method of teaching, which ties the different skills to a common content and vocabulary, worked successfully with slow learners.
5. Experimentation has been conducted in New York City schools in teaching spelling as an integral phase of language arts. Results prove that a functional approach combined with systematic word-study procedures produces good results.¹¹⁵

Hildreth, in discussing the above tests, says that teachers should not think of integrated teaching and incidental learning as excluding systematic, well-organized drill. From the child's writing will come evidence that he will need systematic word study and drill will be needed to master his words.¹¹⁶ Strickland says: "Children need basic lists of words which all children study, as well as individual lists which fit each child's needs."¹¹⁷ Madden and Carlson think specific instruction in spelling each day is necessary to develop the various word study skills.¹¹⁸

Teaching Spelling, Board of Education of the City of New York. Hildreth mentioned the experimentation that has been conducted in New York City schools in teaching spelling as an integral phase of language arts as one of the newer objectives in spelling.

This experimentation began in 1946 and was completed in 1953. Experimentation in spelling began as a part of two projects in language arts. In the first project experimentation centered around efforts to teach spelling functionally without word lists with the following conclusion: objective

¹¹⁵Hildreth, Teaching Spelling, pp. 17-19.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 34.

¹¹⁷Strickland, The Language Arts in the Elementary School, p. 214.

¹¹⁸Madden and Carlson, op. cit., p. 5.

evaluation of pupil progress is difficult when spelling is taught without lists. The following conclusion was reached from the second project: they needed to develop a basic word list that would use the findings of recent research and meet the writing needs of New York City children.¹¹⁹

The conclusions reached when the study was concluded in June, 1953:

1. The spelling program is materially improved when pupils have in their hands an alphabetical listing of words which they are using in their writing.
2. The teaching of spelling is materially improved when teachers use an organized plan.¹²⁰

The "Premises of the Spelling Program" in this manual show the "integration of spelling and the other language skills with the entire curriculum and consideration for the growth and developmental needs of the learners" which, according to Hildreth, are among the newer objectives in spelling.¹²¹

In the New York City spelling program pupils are given a core of words based on research studies, principally from the findings reported by Henry D. Rinsland in 1945. Using the criterion of frequency of use, Ethel I. Salisbury of the University of California at Los Angeles and Gertrude Hildreth developed an alphabetized word list of approximately 5,000 words based on the Rinsland list.¹²²

The Course of Study in Spelling for the City of New York schools for Grades I-VI includes a modified form of the Salisbury-Hildreth list of approximately 2,500 words that are most commonly used in children's writing. From 2,000 to 2,500 additional words will be taught in the junior high school

¹¹⁹Board of Education of the City of New York, Teaching Spelling, Course of Study and Manual, Curriculum Bulletin, VI, (1953-54), 129.

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 135.

¹²¹Hildreth, Teaching Spelling, pp. 21-22.

¹²²Board of Education of the City of New York, op. cit., p. 4.

to those pupils who have mastered the words previously studied. As children mature, words required in the writing vocabulary and those words used in the writing of adults will be taught in the high school as those words are needed.¹²³

¹²³Ibid., pp. 4-5.

CHAPTER III

MODERN TRENDS IN TEACHING SPELLING

What We Teach In Spelling

A spelling program which is to help each pupil to learn to spell correctly will be planned to achieve certain objectives. The course of study of the Board of Education of the City of New York is an example of this type of program. This program includes a statement of the objectives listed by many authorities in spelling. The names of twenty-seven people who have written on the problem in spelling appear in the reference in the manual.¹²⁴ The objectives listed are as follows:

1. Gain mastery of:
 - a. basic words in a valid list of those words found to be most frequently used in children's writing
 - b. words frequently written which are peculiar to the locality in which the children live
 - c. other words peculiar to the writing vocabulary of the individual child and in frequent use by him.
2. Spell the words in the basic program correctly as needed, in writing situations.
3. Acquire an efficient method of studying new words needed for writing both in and out of school.
4. Apply to spelling in daily writing such techniques as:
 - a. referring to a spelling list or a dictionary when in doubt about the spelling of a word either at the time of writing or in a proofreading period.
 - b. finding and correcting misspelled words.
5. Appraise their own spelling growth.
6. Develop an interest in words and their derivations.¹²⁵

¹²⁴Board of Education of City of New York, Teaching Spelling, Course of Study and Manual, Curriculum Bulletin VI, pp. 78-80.

¹²⁵Ibid., pp. 2-3.

Horn says that the statements of objectives in teaching spelling should be "specific and should be realistic in view of what pupils can be expected to accomplish."¹²⁶ Some of the matters on which decisions should be made, according to Horn, are as follows:

1. Which rules, if any, should be learned?
2. What dictionary skills should be developed?
3. How much should we rely on incidental learning and on direct instruction?
4. What phonic knowledge should be taught?
5. How much attention should be given to the study of the meaning and derivation of words?¹²⁷

Other authorities in the spelling field list the "development of a consciousness of need for correct spelling"¹²⁸ and that "children should learn to feel a sense of obligation to conform in spelling as a matter of common courtesy to the people who will read what is written,"¹²⁹ "to have good spelling serve as an aid to self expression, rather than permitting the fear of misspelling to become a barrier to writing, and a curiosity to analyze and learn more about each new word."¹³⁰ Learning the words that one needs is a continuous task. Some of the words that adults use did not exist when they were children and many did not carry the meaning they have today. "Every individual probably learns far more spelling after he leaves the last class in which it was taught than he has learned in school."¹³¹

It appears then that the two chief objectives in teaching spelling should be: (1) to help each child develop an effective method of learning

¹²⁶Horn, Teaching Spelling, p. 4.

¹²⁷Ibid.

¹²⁸Wisconsin Cooperative Educational Planning Program, Spelling in the Language Arts Program, Curriculum Bulletin XVI, 6.

¹²⁹Hildreth, Teaching Spelling, p. 214.

¹³⁰Spache, Education, LXXVI, 51.

¹³¹Strickland, Childhood Education, (October, 1955), p. 69.

spelling. This must be a method that he can use by himself so that he can use it when he has need to learn new words; and (2) to help each child learn to spell accurately as many as possible of the common words of English. We have evidence of what these most needed words are from the studies of Horn, Gates, Thorndike, Fitzgerald, Rinsland, and others.

Since a large proportion of each person's total learning of spelling is done individually and not through direct teaching in the school, techniques for learning to spell words correctly should be developed. Some authorities state a definite technique similar to the one below which is an integration of vision, hearing, speech and writing. The steps are as follows:

1. Meaning and pronunciation. Look at the word. Pronounce the the word. Use the word correctly in a sentence.
2. Imagery. See and say the word. See the syllables of the word. Say the word by syllables, then spell the word.
3. Recall. Look at the word. Close your eyes and spell it. Check to see whether spelling is correct. In case of error, do steps 1, 2, and 3 again.
4. Writing the word correctly. Check writing to see that every letter is legible.
5. Mastery. Cover the word and write it. If correct, cover and write again.¹³²

Fitzgerald says that spelling has been successfully taught by these steps and similar ones. Foran states, "If pupils are taught by a systematic method to spell, the method itself will become habitual;"¹³³ but he does object to the division of words into syllables. Hildreth objects to instructing pupils in a formal series of steps to be applied to all spelling words but suggests a similar process to that of Fitzgerald with the recommendation that the steps be followed in studying all difficult words.

¹³²Fitzgerald, The Teaching of Spelling, p. 38.

¹³³Ibid.

She includes the steps: pronounce longer words by syllables.¹³⁴ Horn says that the findings of research in determining the best way for learning to spell a word are incorporated in a series of steps, which are much the same in most modern spellers. "Better spellers may not need to follow all these steps habitually, but even the best spellers may find it safer to use them in learning words that cause them special difficulty."¹³⁵ To him the recall of the correct spelling is the most important step as this is the ability that is needed in writing.

In addition to teaching a technique for learning to spell words correctly, a desire must be developed to do so. Wickey and Lambader in discussing essential attitudes and habits say that children must like spelling if they are to learn to spell correctly. "Such an attitude or feeling toward spelling is absolutely necessary," they say, "for it is the way people feel about a thing that determines largely the way they act about it."¹³⁶ There are numerous ways of securing this attitude. Those ways listed below are the ideas of Wickey and Lambader:

1. One of the most important is through imitation. If our pupils admire and like us,, if they find us courteous, understanding and willing to help them, if they see that we take pride in the way we speak, write, and spell,, then we may be certain that we are developing a similar attitude in them.
2. Other ways are through friendly interest in each child, through sympathetic understanding of each child's difficulties, through the giving of help on how to study any word that the individual may wish to use whether in school or out, through encouragement to each one to excel himself from week to week and month to month, and through praise of effort and progress.¹³⁷

Of course we expect children to master the spelling of the twenty-five hundred most commonly used words that make up ninety-six per cent of the

¹³⁴Hildreth, Teaching Spelling, pp. 229-230.

¹³⁵Horn, op. cit., p. 19.

¹³⁶Wickey and Lambader, Teaching Note for Goals in Spelling, pp. 4-5.

¹³⁷Ibid.

writing needs of the average person by the time they have completed elementary school. Formerly pronunciation and rote spelling were stressed and children were taught to spell hundreds of words they didn't understand and probably would never use in writing. Now children are taught to understand the structure and derivation of words by stressing roots, suffixes, prefixes, and syllables. The modern course of study in spelling also aims to teach complete understanding and correct usage of words in addition to correct spelling and pronunciation. We expect children to develop an interest in words and their meanings.

There is no way that we can teach all of the words that every individual will need in his writing, but we can teach children an effective way of meeting their needs in spelling in writing as the need arises, to build up a "spelling power" through the development of habits that grow out of the desire to learn to spell correctly. Some of these habits that are necessary for the mastery of words, listed by Wickey and Lambader, are the following:

1. Proofreading all written work to detect errors;
2. Checking "guesses" of the spelling of words by looking them up in a dictionary or asking how to spell them;
3. Looking intently at all new words and thinking about their sound, their spelling, their hard parts;
4. Becoming increasingly aware of success of effort.¹³⁸

How To Teach Spelling

Dolch, in his book, Better Spelling, says that it is important for teachers to know all of the ways in which people may "know how to spell" and with the methods of teaching and learning that result in the different ways

¹³⁸Ibid., p. 5 and 20.

of knowing how. He says that spelling power is due to many kinds of spelling knowledge, which he lists as hand spelling, lip spelling, ear spelling, eye spelling, and thought spelling.

By "hand spelling," Dolch means the words that our hands write without our thinking about the letter sequence in each word. This includes most of the words adults write automatically, which is the result of many experiences in writing each individual word. This fact, long ago, was probably the reason that children, in the past, were sometimes asked to write words over and over again, sometimes as many as hundred times each. Now we know that merely writing a word a given number of times does not guarantee its mastery, also too, that for some children, a hundred repetitions of the word may not be enough to make the writing of the word automatic. In this kind of writing, consciousness is thinking on ahead, and if this is done time after time, the letters seem to follow one another automatically and the person seems to write automatically. This explains why we need other kinds of spelling knowledge which tell us what letters to put down.

Dolch defines "lip spelling" as the saying of the letters as they are written down. This is the easiest method of learning to spell because it doesn't take much effort to say the letters, but this does not guarantee, by itself, word mastery due to the fact that there is not much carry over from one word to another. It makes a separate spelling experience of each word as it fails to take into account the fact that many words contain similar spelling elements. This method of spelling is useful in developing "hand spelling," but may be a drawback to the learning of spelling in later life.

A third kind of spelling knowledge, "ear spelling," is the name that Dolch gives to phonetic spelling. His two criticisms of this method of saying the word by its syllables, then putting together the sounds which

make the syllables are: (1) that this method is of value only if our pronunciation of the word is accurate, (2) and that the English language is not a phonetic language. Although these two difficulties, according to Dolch, make it impossible to get fully correct results by this method, yet he says that it is used to a great extent by everyone. "Yet the results secured by 'ear spelling' are so liable to error that they should always be checked by other types of spelling knowledge, especially by 'eye spelling'."¹³⁹

The fourth kind of spelling knowledge is really a mental picture, or a visual image, of the word. The two ways in which "eye spelling" operates are as a check on "hand spelling" and "ear spelling," and the use of the mental picture in the moment of hesitation when the hand does not know how to spell the next word. "There has been a tendency to limit all teaching of spelling to the use of visual imagery, but the chief reason to use many types of imagery is to make vivid and lasting impressions by the use of repetition and variety."¹⁴⁰

A fifth kind of spelling knowledge is "figuring out" the spelling to which Dolch gives the name "thought spelling." This means that we draw upon our knowledge of spelling-elements that we have learned. Reasoning is used to a great extent in spelling in spite of the claim that English spelling is irrational. Dolch thinks that most of us use "thought spelling" more than most of us are aware and an improvement could be made in our spelling if we used it still further.

This discussion points out that no one type of learning technique can be used to the exclusion of others because some children depend more upon one type than another. This method is one of the ways then that "teachers

¹³⁹Dolch, Better Spelling, p. 37.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., p. 44

can help children become proficient in methods of attack on words: see to it that children hear each new word distinctly; say it correctly; see it clearly; analyze it skillfully; write it accurately; and use it repeatedly."¹⁴¹

Other authorities are not in entire agreement with Dolch's kind of spelling knowledge. In a Letter to Supervisors published by the New York State Education Department, the authors of the article say that research on the question, "How do children learn to spell," is quite conclusive. The first method, which they think is the best way, is to focus on the spelling of each individual word; to understand the meaning and to be able to pronounce it correctly; the child then develops an auditory image of the word and hears the word; then he recalls its spelling by the sounds of the syllables and the letters. The method of second importance is visual imagery. The child must "see" the component parts as well as the whole word, which is different from "seeing" words in reading. In the third method, he learns by kinesthetic imagery when he gets the "feel" of a word by writing it.¹⁴²

A second consideration, in the discussion of how to teach spelling, is concerned with interest, and was discussed to some extent in the previous section of this chapter under the subtitle, "What We Teach In Spelling." Here the problem is how to get the child to assume an attitude of seriousness with regard to his accuracy in spelling. "How well a pupil learns to spell depends largely upon his interest, which determines what he will undertake to do, how hard he will work and how persistent he will be,"¹⁴³ is Horn's introduction to the subject, "Creating Interest in Spelling." He then discusses the ways in which a teacher can aid pupils to develop interest and attitudes which will

¹⁴¹Wickey and Lambader, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

¹⁴²George Murphy and Walter A. LeBaron, "Let's Spell It Out," The Education Digest, XX (March, 1955), pp. 11-12.

¹⁴³Horn, op. cit., p. 19.

improve their spelling. These ways are listed below:

1. Pupils can be led to appreciate the fact that spelling errors make a poor impression in letters and other written work.
2. They should understand that the words in their spelling lessons are those most likely to be needed now and in the future.
3. The interest of pupils is increased when they learn an efficient method for studying their spelling lessons.
4. Pupils should be convinced that they can improve their spelling ability.
5. Children should be helped to assume responsibility for learning to spell, for setting goals and taking responsibility for reaching them.
6. Abundant opportunities should be provided for writing on subjects of interest to children and creating a need for spelling.
7. Pupils can be led to take pride in correct spelling in all written work and to proofread their writing for errors in spelling.
8. Individual children are more likely to be interested in a class where there is high morale. Mutual helpfulness is better than competition.¹⁴⁴

The teacher's attitude has been discussed as a factor in creating interest in the section to which a previous reference has been made, but Horn has made further interesting observations:

(1) that spelling is one of the subjects which many teachers dislike to teach; (2) methods may be used to create more interest by the teacher: understanding the importance of correct spelling, by being assured of the soundness of what he is expected to teach, by knowing that the methods he uses have been proved efficient, and by evidence that pupils can improve their spelling.¹⁴⁵

Methods of Instruction

Incidental Instruction vs. Systematic Instruction.In spelling, incidental learning has been a subject of controversy for over fifty years.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 19-20.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., p. 21.

In an article, "The Futility of the Spelling Grind," published in Forum in April, 1897, J. M. Rice concluded that incidental teaching of spelling was as effective as the systematic teaching of the subject.¹⁴⁶ This was a criticism of the formal teaching of spelling as it was carried on at that time. Then in 1902, O. P. Cornman, whose study was reviewed in a section of this paper, "Learning to Spell Through Written Work," further criticized the formal teaching of spelling and concluded that spelling was as good when taught as an integrated subject as it was in isolated drill periods.¹⁴⁷ Fitzgerald pointed out that in those early days that there had not been the development of word lists, procedures for teaching, and tests for measurement that were developed later. By 1911, more scientific procedures were used by J. E. Wallin and W. H. Winch, both of whom concluded that the systematic plan of instruction was more effective than incidental learning of the subject.¹⁴⁸ In more recent years, Paul McKee said that a direct attack on words by a systematic and direct drill was an efficient procedure and "will make use of the incidental learning of children outside their formal spelling program,"¹⁴⁹ while "Grace Fernald gave formal word lists but small place in the spelling program."¹⁵⁰

Fitzgerald summarized the controversy in The Teaching of Spelling published in 1951. After reporting the reasons advanced for both points of view, he made the statement that "systematic teaching of spelling should begin where incidental learning leaves off."¹⁵¹ Horn has taken a similar point of view in writing that "spelling is unquestionably improved by an instructional

¹⁴⁶Fitzgerald, The Teaching of Spelling, p. 25.

¹⁴⁷Hildreth, Teaching Spelling, p. 17.

¹⁴⁸Fitzgerald, The Teaching of Spelling, p. 25.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁵⁰Ibid.

¹⁵¹Ibid., p. 28.

program rich in opportunities for reading and writing, but it is further improved by direct instruction."¹⁵² Hildreth's comments show the modern trend in thinking as well as in teaching. Her comments follow: "Teachers should not think of incidental learning and integrated teaching as excluding systematic, well-organized drill. From the child's attempts to write will come evidence of his need for systematic word study."¹⁵³ There are many evidences that children know many words before they begin to study spelling in school that they have learned from various sources. Most authorities seem to agree that incidental learning of spelling is not enough because it leaves the identity of the words to be taught very vague and their selection to each individual teacher. They also believe that all children will profit from a daily period of instruction in which specific words are learned and in which insights into the nature of word structure are acquired.

Test-study vs. Study-test Method. . . . Two basic plans of spelling instruction are the test-study and study-test methods. A summary of the literature as shown by Blanchard¹⁵⁴ shows that approximately twice as many investigators favor the test-study method. Some investigators believe the study-test plan should be used for the slow learner at all grade levels. Others believe that if an adequate program of readiness for spelling were developed, and if the words used were only those words which had been securely fixed in their speaking and reading vocabularies, then they think that the test-study plan would be the more effective method to be used in all grades. Tidyman and Butterfield say that a good case can be made for

¹⁵²Board of Education of City of New York, Teaching Spelling, Course of Study and Manual, Curriculum Bulletin VI, 3.

¹⁵³Hildreth, Teaching of Spelling, p. 34.

¹⁵⁴Board of Education of City of New York, op. cit., p. 3.

either procedure but that a disadvantage in the study-test procedure is the amount of time wasted in studying familiar words, but the "truth is that the advantage of either procedure can be magnified and the disadvantages minimized by competent teaching"¹⁵⁵ Horn advocates that pretests be given and that they be corrected by the pupil himself. The advantages for this method of pretesting: (1) it shows each child which words he has not yet learned and needs to study; (2) it shows the teacher which children most need help; (3) by working carefully as he corrects the test, the child can learn many words as the teacher spells each word aloud. The attention of the child is focused on each word that he has misspelled. In commenting on this method of checking, Horn says: "This procedure is the most fruitful single learning activity per unit of time that has yet been devised."¹⁵⁶

Foran states certain advantages and disadvantages for the test-study plan of teaching the words to be learned after a review of experimental studies made of the test-study and study-test methods.¹⁵⁷ The first investigation of this problem was reported by John H. Kingsley in 1923. His argument was that "time would be saved through teaching only the words that need to be taught rather than treating all words as equally unknown and difficult."¹⁵⁸ The most comprehensive study made of the program was by Gates in 1931. His results showed that "duller pupils made greater gains when taught by the study-test method. In later grades they do well when taught by the test-study method."¹⁵⁹ Foran states the principal advantages

¹⁵⁵Willard F. Tidyman and Marguerite Butterfield, "Spelling," Teaching the Language Arts, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1951), p. 345.

¹⁵⁶Horn, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

¹⁵⁷Foran, The Psychology and Teaching of Spelling, pp. 64-74.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., p. 65.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., p. 68.

possessed by the test-study method are as follows:

1. The time that it saves for nearly all pupils.
2. The release from the study of the words is sought by the pupils and they attempt to obtain perfect scores as soon as possible.
3. It increases interest in spelling.
4. Pupils develop a technique for studying words.¹⁶⁰

The disadvantages are stated below:

1. The failure of the test to reveal accurately pupils' ability to spell the words of the assignment. Children do not always spell correctly the words they have once spelled correctly.
2. The failure to detect an error and the word is not included in the pupil's list of words to be learned.
3. The preliminary test may cause pupils to misspell words that they do not know and this increases the difficulty in learning to spell such words correctly.¹⁶¹

Hildreth makes the following comments on the test-study-test:

The test-study-test weekly spelling unit is restricted to children who have already attained considerable spelling skill. The appropriate grade level is fourth and beyond. A critical attitude is developed and practice of error prevented through cautioning pupils not to write words on the pretests unless they are sure of perfect spelling. If children are penalized more for a wrong than for an omitted response, they will quickly form this habit.¹⁶²

The Use of the Basic Word List.The words to be taught in spelling should be selected to satisfy the needs of the child in his writing. Children differ in their needs due to many factors: difference in abilities; varying experiences; difference in backgrounds; difference in interests; and difference in aptitudes for writing.

One of the most important problems in planning for spelling instruction is the selection of the basic words which a child needs to spell.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰Ibid., p. 73.

¹⁶¹Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁶²Hildreth, Learning the Three R's, p. 811.

¹⁶³Fitzgerald, Education, LXXVI, 286.

A great many authorities in the teaching of spelling believe in selecting the words from valid vocabulary investigations with the addition of a supplementary list. Horn stated very concisely in the topic, "Contribution of Research to Special Methods: Spelling," in the Thirty-Seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education:

There has been a great deal of rather meaningless tabulation of lists in spelling. Perhaps the worst examples are those in which large numbers of word lists are thrown together with little or no consideration of the nature, validity, or the reliability of the data back of the individual list, and without competent knowledge or interpretation of existing data. The result has been to confuse the real issues and discourage original investigations that would expand and refine our present knowledge.¹⁶⁴

In planning for word selection for spelling instruction, Fitzgerald outlines a plan in which he says that the following studies should be used:

1. The valid vocabulary investigations should be inspected in detail: worth-while child writing vocabularies should be studied; vocabularies based upon investigations of children's letters should be analyzed, vocabularies of adult writing should be evaluated; spelling-error lists should be utilized; and even the vocabularies of related fields may be drawn upon with some discretion.
2. Each of the important words from the valid studies with frequency of use, persistency of difficulty, and grade placement should be listed. Then each word should be evaluated and by careful comparison, eliminations may be made and the final selection of a basic list made.¹⁶⁵

Fitzgerald does not approve of a common supplementary list because of the difference in the interests, needs, abilities and aptitude of children. He believes that after "the basic core of well-selected words has been taught, each child will be motivated to keep an individual list of words which he finds useful in writing."¹⁶⁶

Hildreth says that the nature of the elementary spelling vocabulary will depend largely upon the philosophy of the curriculum in use which determines the aims and purposes of elementary school instruction. How.

¹⁶⁴Ibid.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 286-287.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., p. 289.

words are best taught, according to the theory of the curriculum, will determine the number of words and the particular words to be taught. The instructional methods will depend, also, on the theory, whether it provides for integration or for formal teaching.

The reasons given by Hildreth, why conventional spelling lists may be invalid, have been stated in the section on "Grade Placement" in Chapter II of this paper. She says that there are a number of reasons why words that children use should take precedence in the spelling vocabulary through the grades and we have to know the background and experiences of the child, as well as his grasp of ideas, to know when he is ready for certain words. The objection is sometimes raised to basing the children's spelling lists on the words that they use most frequently which is said to make the lists invalid because children avoid writing words that they do not know. Hildreth says that "this argument overlooks the fact that children usually are less perturbed about spelling errors in writing than are adults."¹⁶⁷

Hildreth has made a spelling list from the Rinsland vocabulary of children's writing and Folger's study of the frequency of word usage in the Rinsland vocabulary, which she says "is convenient to use for the construction of graded spelling and vocabulary tests for class use or survey purposes."¹⁶⁸ In deriving this list, Hildreth selected approximately 7200 of the most commonly used words according to indications of total frequency of use and divided these words into ten levels. These levels do not refer to school grades. From this ten-level list, a shorter list of six levels, containing 2,998 words and a supplementary list of 440 words were prepared. She states that beyond the number of words given here that

¹⁶⁷Hildreth, Teaching Spelling, p. 148.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., p. 310.

"children's vocabulary needs in writing are so specific to various themes and topics, and there is such a vast range of words of comparable difficulty, that no highly valid single list can be recommended."¹⁶⁹ According to Hildreth the reliability and validity of this list are based on the reliability and validity of Rinsland's list.

The Wisconsin Cooperative Educational Planning Program, quoting Fernald, Dolch, and Hildreth, states "the words which children wish to write in their written work in social studies, science, literature, and other activities should be given first place in a spelling program, and the words which have been found by research to be valuable to most of the pupils in a grade should receive attention."¹⁷⁰

In the New York City spelling program, pupils are given an alphabetical core of words based on the research studies of Henry D. Rinsland with the criteria of frequency of use developed by Ethel I. Salisbury and Gertrude Hildreth. A modified form of this Salisbury-Hildreth list was used in an experimental program as the basic list and during the experiment, adjustments were made for the New York City children.¹⁷¹ One of the premises of their program is stated: "Spelling is taught functionally both through the use of reference material as words are needed in daily writing and through direct instruction."¹⁷²

A second problem in the use of the basic word list is the question of which is the best method: teaching words in context or in lists. Horn

¹⁶⁹Ibid., p. 303.

¹⁷⁰Wisconsin Cooperative Educational Planning Program, Spelling in the Language Arts Program, Curriculum Bulletin XVI, 11.

¹⁷¹Board of Education of City of New York, Teaching Spelling, Course of Study and Manual, Curriculum Bulletin VI, 4.

¹⁷²Ibid., p. 2.

disagrees with many authorities concerning this problem. He says: "Research has consistently shown that it is more efficient to study words in lists than in context."¹⁷³ He gives his reasons: that words studied in lists are learned more quickly, remembered longer, and transferred more readily to new context. Another point that he makes is that children are more likely to use a word in their writing when they know the meaning of the word. The words in the list will have been selected by their frequency, therefore the pupils will know the meanings of most of the words. Association with meaning is further developed for the reason that most spelling books advise that each word first be pronounced, used in a sentence which helps pupils to identify the word to be spelled, then finally pronounced again. Horn, however, does agree, that "occasional lessons may be taught in which words are used in context for the purposes of encouraging children to do certain types of writing."¹⁷⁴

Most of the views on these methods of presenting words for spelling, especially those authorities who believe that spelling is a phase of the language arts program, believe in providing opportunities for the writing of words in context, and also teaching spelling words by systematic instruction. Hildreth says:

Both direct and indirect approaches have a place in spelling instruction above the primary grades. Learning spelling as a tool for writing does not preclude direct spelling drill on words needing practice. As the upper grades are reached, more formality in spelling study can be introduced without sacrificing the valuable feature of functional writing."¹⁷⁵

Strickland's views are the following:

The major objective of spelling instruction is to enable children to write what they want and need to write. Basic lists are needed, at least for reference, in the later grades though individual lists

¹⁷³Horn, op. cit., p. 16.

¹⁷⁴Ibid.

¹⁷⁵Hildreth, Teaching Spelling, pp. 170, 171, 176.

should be given major attention.¹⁷⁶

Whether the words for spelling study are selected from a standard list or from the content about which children need to write at any time, experience in composing and writing is essential to the good learning of spelling.¹⁷⁷

Probably the great majority of elementary teachers in the country set aside a definite daily period for the study of spelling and use a textbook both for the words to be studied and the method by which they are studied.¹⁷⁸

In the Teaching of Spelling, Fitzgerald considers both the systematic teaching of spelling and using words in context to be necessary in the teaching of spelling. Concerning the first point, he recommends direct and incidental methods for teaching and learning spelling and says that the systematic teaching of spelling to an individual will depend partly upon his spelling learned in reading, writing, and other fields.¹⁷⁹ Concerning the second point he says:

A good spelling program, properly integrated in the language curriculum, provides opportunities for practice and use of the words learned. One thoughtful perfect use of a word in a meaningful writing situation is worth more than many repetitive writings of the word in ordinary drill.¹⁸⁰

Techniques of Word Study

The Word Study Skills, Phonics. Systematic instruction in the word-study skills will contribute to correct spelling of the words needed by children in their writing. Kottmeyer says:

There is little point to review the various arguments about whether we shall teach children "phonics." . . . the position is arbitrarily taken that no human being can become competently literate in the English language unless he can use such a body of skills.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁶Strickland, The Language Arts In The Elementary School, p. 212.

¹⁷⁷Strickland, Childhood Education, XXXII, 70. ¹⁷⁸Ibid., p. 73.

¹⁷⁹Fitzgerald, The Teaching of Spelling, p. 28. ¹⁸⁰Ibid., p. 182.

¹⁸¹Kottmeyer, On The Relationship of Skills In Reading and Spelling, p. 3

There is strong evidence that phonics are fundamental in good spelling, even though we have many unphonetic spellings. Brochures for six new spelling texts, or revisions, all discuss phonics in their new editions. The brochures that have been examined are the following:

1. Lillian E. Billington, Using Words.

The child must know something about word structure. He must learn the correct pronunciation of words. It will be a great aid to him in recognizing word symbols if he is able to pronounce words correctly and distinctly, and recognize them when he hears them. Phonetics must therefore be a part of the spelling program.¹⁸²

2. Nadine Fillmore, Steps to Mastery of Words.

Steps to mastery of words is more than phonics as customarily offered incidentally in the reading program; it is word analysis which integrates all recognition skills.¹⁸³

3. William Kottmeyer and May Lambader, The New Goals in Spelling.

The words are grouped to present common phonetic characteristics. The phonics program is maintained and enlarged through all the grades. The phono-structural grouping of weekly word lists enables boys and girls to speedily learn and review important generalizations about phonetic patterns and word structures.¹⁸⁴

4. Richard Madden and Thornsten Carlson, Success in Spelling.

Pupils are given valuable insights into the spelling of sounds. The authors stress the point of view that although phonetic and structural rules often fail with a given word, phonetic and structural insights are invaluable.¹⁸⁵

5. David H. Patton and Eleanor M. Johnson, Spelling for Word Mastery.

By equipping children with balanced training in phonics, word analysis, and dictionary skills, Spelling for Word Mastery builds spelling confidence and independence. Studies show that the correlation between phonic knowledge and spelling is higher than between phonic knowledge and reading.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸²Billington, The Resourceful Teacher, V, 4.

¹⁸³Nadine Fillmore, Steps to Mastery of Words, (Benton Harbor, Mich.: Educational Service Incorporated, n. d.), p. 1.

¹⁸⁴William Kottmeyer and May Lambader, The New Goals in Spelling, (St. Louis, Missouri: Webster Publishing Co., n. d.) p. a.

¹⁸⁵Richard Madden and Thornsten Carlson, Success in Spelling, (Yonkers-on-Hudson, N. Y., 1955), pp. 3-4.

¹⁸⁶David H. Patton and Eleanor M. Johnson, Spelling for Word Mastery, (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, 1956), p. 19.

6. Gerald A. Yoakam and Seward E. Daw, Learning to Spell.

Learning to Spell has many rich experiences in word study and makes use of a phonetic approach. A wide variety of study exercises such as acquainting the pupil with phonetic peculiarities of words and developing principles that govern the spelling of variant forms are used.¹⁸⁷

Whether or not these brochures show that phonics are fundamental to spelling or whether they show the influence of the recent reading problem, it appears that children are going to be exposed to the teaching of phonics in spelling.

Rules and Generalizations. . . . The teaching of spelling rules, formerly so prevalent, fell into disrepute as soon as the poor results of formal training in rules were observed, and when spelling became a functional school activity. Foran says that the outcome of an experiment of W. A. Cook which was reported in the Journal of Educational Psychology in March, 1912, hastened the doom of rules, although Foran thinks it was largely the manner in which rules were taught that was the more important cause of the general mistrust of rules.¹⁸⁸ There is general agreement that a few rules are valuable when the child is mature enough to apply them. Horn says that "the only rules which should be taught are those that apply to a large number of words and have few exceptions and they should be developed inductively."¹⁸⁹

Hildreth says that "there are certain characteristics that run through some classes of English words which can be summarized in terms of spelling rules,"¹⁹⁰ and she suggests that instead of memorizing the rules that "teacher and pupils work together to discover the rule."¹⁹¹ Strickland says: "In

¹⁸⁷Gerald A. Yoakam and Seward E. Daw, Learning to Spell (New York: Ginn and Co., n. d.) p. 10.

¹⁸⁸Foran, op. cit. pp. 125 and 138.

¹⁸⁹Horn, op. cit., p. 21.

¹⁹⁰Hildreth, Teaching Spelling, p. 251.

¹⁹¹Ibid.

teaching spelling, attention needs to be called to opportunities for comparison and generalizations. There is no value in teaching any rule unless it will help children to learn with greater economy of effort."¹⁹² Other authorities that agree with Foran's generalization concerning the teaching of rules are Tidyman and Butterfield,¹⁹³ Eleanor Johnson,¹⁹⁴ Betts,¹⁹⁵ Wisconsin Cooperative Education Planning Program,¹⁹⁶ (with twelve authorities listed as references), Board of Education of New York City,¹⁹⁷ (with twenty-seven authorities listed as references), Dolch,¹⁹⁸ Fitzgerald,¹⁹⁹ and the authors of the brochures mentioned in the section on the use of phonics.

Foran's conclusions regarding the teaching of spelling rules follow:

1. Only a few rules should be taught.
2. Some rules should be taught because children will generalize what they have learned and such generalizations should be directed.
3. A rule should be taught only where there is a need for it.
4. Rules should be taught inductively.²⁰⁰

Foran does not approve of general reliance upon rules. He believes that for most students, direct teaching and independent word study are more beneficial than learning generalizations, to which there are many exceptions.

¹⁹²Strickland, The Language Arts in the Elementary School, p. 215.

¹⁹³Tidyman and Butterfield, op. cit., pp. 352-353.

¹⁹⁴Eleanor Johnson, Education, LXXVI, 274.

¹⁹⁵Betts, Education, LXXVI, 320.

¹⁹⁶Wisconsin Cooperative Educational Planning Program, Spelling in the Language Arts Program, Curriculum Bulletin XVI, 11.

¹⁹⁷Board of Education of City of New York, Teaching Spelling, Course of Study and Manual, Curriculum Bulletin VI, 4.

¹⁹⁸Dolch, op. cit., pp. 235-236.

¹⁹⁹Fitzgerald, The Teaching of Spelling, p. 144

²⁰⁰Foran, op. cit., pp. 144-145.

Although they may play only a small part in achievement, however, "effective instruction cannot afford to ignore them."²⁰¹ The rules and generalizations on which the greater number of authorities agree may be found in the Appendix to this paper.

The Dictionary Skills. Learning to use a dictionary is an essential part of learning to spell. Effective use of the dictionary should be systematically and thoroughly taught. In order to use the dictionary efficiently, the pupil should:

1. Be familiar with the alphabetical arrangement of letters. Although the fourth grade is generally considered to be the grade in which dictionary training is begun, alphabetizing of words is begun at the third grade level, and even in the lower primary grades, the picture dictionary may be useful.

2. Be able to use aids to pronunciation. Children can learn to spell many words by pronouncing them correctly. One of the probable causes for poor results in spelling is careless pronunciation. This reason is listed by most of the authorities who are mentioned in this paper. Opportunities for speaking help to develop fluency in expression which is likely to carry over into written work. After pronunciation has been studied through the use of a dictionary, they should know how the pronunciation of words in a dictionary is shown by a system of diacritical marks and phonetic spellings. Many pupils have not learned to hear words accurately or pronounce them correctly. Listening, one of the neglected parts of the language arts, can be improved through instruction concerned with the skills involved in the listening process.²⁰²

²⁰¹Ibid., p. 149.

²⁰²Edward Pratt, "Experimental Evaluation of A Program for the Improvement of Listening," The Elementary School Journal, LVI (March, 1956), 315.

3. Pupils are taught at about the sixth grade level, along with keys to pronunciation, that dividing words into syllables is helpful in spelling. There are a few generalizations that are useful in dividing words at ends of lines which may be taught at this time. About the first time that a child needs to write more than one line, in order to complete the word correctly on the following line, he needs an understanding of syllabication. Here is another need for the dictionary skill. In a discussion, "How Syllables Can Help in Spelling," Thomas D. Horn says:

Most parents and teachers have a feeling that breaking words down into syllables should provide help in spelling. We know from various investigations that adults, mature students, and superior spellers do tend to study words by syllables. As a matter of fact, it is doubtful if "big money" winners on television could have successfully spelled words, without breaking them into syllables.²⁰³ In the conclusion of his article, Thomas Horn makes the following generalizations:

1. Since an understanding of and a "feel" for syllables in words is a characteristic of the good speller, continuing attention to syllabic elements is needed.
2. As a regular method of learning to spell, the undivided presentation should be used.²⁰⁴

4. Be able to understand various meanings of words that are given in the dictionary of his level. Hildreth makes the suggestion to "use spelling lessons to teach the spelling of known words and give more time in language work to vocabulary building."²⁰⁵

Grouping for Instruction in Spelling

Readiness for Spelling.In planning programs for systematic instruction in spelling, questions are asked by teachers as to when should children begin the formal study of spelling and what should be done to help

²⁰³Thomas D. Horn, "How Syllables Can Help in Spelling," Education, LXXVI (January, 1956), 291.

²⁰⁴Ibid., p. 294.

²⁰⁵Hildreth, Teaching Spelling, pp. 208-209.

them develop a readiness for spelling? Readiness for spelling is just as important as readiness for reading. Betts says:

The child who is ready for systematic instruction for writing, including spelling, will have acquired among other learnings, a speaking vocabulary of about 5,000 words, and a reading vocabulary of at least 300 or 400 words. If the child does not possess the necessary maturity, skills, and attitudes, time should be allowed for developing the necessary factors.²⁰⁶

The factors associated with readiness for reading have a bearing on readiness for spelling. The following factors are phases of readiness for learning to spell:

1. A fairly large sight vocabulary.
2. The ability to perceive differences in letter forms with some accuracy.
3. Sounds and visual symbols must be identified for good spelling habits.
4. Control of finger and arm muscles is essential to good written expression.
5. Curiosity about words is important in effective use of words in writing.
6. There must be a purpose for writing.
7. An adequate meaning vocabulary is a necessary background.²⁰⁷

Provision for grouping should be made to take care of the difference in the time needed to develop these abilities. "There is a best time to teach children how to spell, and parents and teachers can help children to a good start by understanding facts on each child's readiness."²⁰⁸

Grouping For Instruction in Spelling.In a program of systematic instruction in spelling, teachers are concerned with the problem of finding the spelling level at which children should work. One of the main purposes of a basic spelling program is to help pupils learn to spell the words they need in writing but have not yet learned how to spell. Betts suggests that

²⁰⁶Emmett Albert Betts, "Interrelationship of Reading and Spelling," Elementary English Review, XXII, (January, 1945), 15.

²⁰⁷Wisconsin Cooperative Educational Planning Program, Spelling in the Language Arts Program, Curriculum Bulletin XVI, 7.

²⁰⁸Betts, Education, LXXVI, 315.

the few pupils who can spell ninety-two per cent or more of all the words at their grade level should concentrate on words that they need individually for their other curriculum activities, and the remainder of the pupils should be grouped according to their instructional levels in spelling.²⁰⁹ He also suggests that "small groups may be organized for help on auditory perception, adding suffixes, spelling demons, or other specific needs."²¹⁰ This grouping need not be static, but throughout the year regrouping should place the pupils in the group where they may receive the most benefit. Suggestions also have been made to use spellers on at least three levels in each class. There is an objection to the procedure of excusing children from the regular spelling class if they can spell most of the words correctly on an inventory test at the beginning of the term. Horn says:

That although this plan has much to recommend it, it does require considerable supervision, and most teachers prefer to keep superior spellers in the regular class, especially since those pupils study, in their daily and weekly work, only those words which the test before study shows they cannot spell.²¹¹

Many teachers have adapted the word lists to the different groups by dividing the class into groups by a pretest, giving the best group the privilege of doing some kind of other work when they have completed their study, giving the middle group assistance in some special difficulty, and giving the low group help in detailed study. Ordinarily these groups can parallel the reading and language groups. "When some type of grouping plan is used, the pupils are more successful and achieve more growth because more favorable conditions for learning are provided for all pupils,"²¹² is the opinion of some educators.

²⁰⁹Ibid.

²¹⁰Ibid.

²¹¹Horn, op. cit., p. 24.

²¹²Betts, Education, LXXVI, 316.

However, in recent years, there has been a great deal of criticism about this instructional problem of grouping, especially in reading, but the same thing is true of grouping in spelling. Warren A. Ketcham wrote in an article, "How Should We Look At Levels?" as it applied to reading:

For many years the two-group and three-group methods for reading have been the most prevalent. Now we are finding the effects on the mental health of treating part of the children as the "lower" group.²¹³

This criticism suggests that regrouping should be done often, especially for the slowest learners. Then a plan used in the Kingston, New York schools could be used: most of the teaching involved only small groups of pupils based on achievement in inventory tests. However, the teacher worked with the whole class as a group from time to time to demonstrate certain techniques, and individual help was given to those children who had need for it.²¹⁴

Betts' theory of "Levels of Differentiation," should be helpful to those teachers who feel that this problem of adaptation of instruction to try to make learning situations be the greatest help to all children is a very difficult problem. Betts says:

Differentiated instruction is a way of living in the classroom so that the broader objectives of education can be achieved. A carefully planned program of differentiated instruction for children of all ages does not lead in the direction of highly individualized instruction; instead the ultimate goal is the development of skills, abilities, and information in social situations which capitalize on individual and group contributions. All learning is an individual matter Differentiated instruction then, gives every child an equal opportunity to learn. . . .and fosters the development of desirable attitudes by giving the child practice on when as well as how to use language skills.²¹⁵

²¹³Warren A. Ketcham, "How Should We Look at Levels?" Childhood Education, XXXII (December, 1955) 156.

²¹⁴Hildreth, Teaching Spelling, p. 176.

²¹⁵Betts, Foundations of Reading Instruction, p. 713.

CHAPTER IV

EVALUATION OF PROGRESS IN SPELLING

Types of Evaluation

Teaching and evaluating are not separate parts of the program but should operate together. Evaluation, according to Virgil E. Herrick, Professor of Education, University of Wisconsin, is "a process which anyone carries on when he considers how well he is accomplishing what he sets out to accomplish dependent upon the concept of a goal and the concept of a standard."²¹⁶ Horn says:

Whatever goals have been set up to guide instruction, whether it is the learning of the most useful words, the ability to use the dictionary, the knowledge of rules, the ability to correctly associate letters with sounds, or the ability to proofread written work, it is essential that both the teachers and pupils know the degree to which their goals have been reached, and achievement must be measured regardless of the general pattern of the curriculum.²¹⁷

Just as it is necessary to arrive at the validity of a basic list of words through carefully conducted research, and the methods and techniques used in teaching need to be subjected to scientific research, so the evaluation of results obtained must be arrived at through the application of controlled techniques and the collection of authentic data. There are several types of evaluation: standardized tests, pretests and tests which measure daily achievement, diagnostic tests, and observational techniques, all of which should be used to guide and improve the learning of spelling. The manual for Teaching Spelling, which is used in the New York City schools gives this meaning to evaluation in spelling:

²¹⁶Virgil E. Herrick, "Steps Toward Evaluation," Teacher's Letter, (New London, Conn.: Arthur G. Croft Publications, 1957), p. 1.

²¹⁷Horn, Teaching Spelling, p. 28.

Evaluation in spelling is concerned with each pupil's growth and achievement; with the growth on a class or school basis; with the evaluation of the teaching practices and instructional material that are a part of the program.²¹⁸

The evaluations which are of the most help in influencing learning are those helps that the teacher gives from day to day as she becomes conscious of the children's needs, helps them with spelling techniques, observes the level on which the children are working and plans the succeeding steps for them. Teachers have been criticized for using teaching time for testing rather than for teaching spelling techniques. In a recent article, "Are You a Teacher or a Tester?" by Daisy M. Jones, Director of Elementary Education, Richmond, Indiana, her definition for teaching was given: "Teaching is a stimulating and directing of the mental, physical, or emotional activity of the pupil to the end that learning takes place."²¹⁹

In addition to the observational techniques, there are inventory tests given before the study of a lesson to show what the child needs to learn and tests given after the period of learning to show his achievement. Strickland says that the "real test of spelling achievement is not what children can do when their attention is centered on spelling, but what they do with spelling when their attention is centered on what they are trying to express."²²⁰ The most significant test of a good spelling program is made in terms of the words that children use in their daily writing.

Standardized tests are of value in the school testing program for the following purposes: they may show the power that a child is gaining in

²¹⁸Board of Education of the City of New York, Teaching Spelling, Course of Study and Manual, Curriculum Bulletin VI, 45.

²¹⁹Daisy M. Jones, "Are You a Teacher or a Tester?" (Row, Peterson and Co. Publications: A Monograph for Elementary Teachers, No. 85; Evanston, Ill.; Row, Peterson and Co., 1957), p. 1.

²²⁰Strickland, Childhood Education, XXXII, 76.

generalized ability in spelling by testing on the words other than those words that the child has studied; for a check up on the general level of the class as a whole; and to find a pupil's general achievement level in spelling compared with children of his age and present grade placement. These tests do not show to any extent what learning has taken place in the spelling class; they are not the measure of a teacher's competence; they do not test the effectiveness of the methods used in teaching the class.

In evaluating the spelling program the probable causes for poor results, which are listed by many authorities from research studies, will help to evaluate the practices which need to be improved or revised.

The probable causes of poor results in spelling listed by the Wisconsin Cooperative Educational Planning Program are as follows:

1. Formal instruction in spelling is begun too early.
2. Too many words are taught which the child has no opportunity to use in functional writing situations.
3. Too much time is spent in testing, too little time on teaching and studying.
4. Pronunciation of words is careless and inaccurate.
5. Too little attention is given to individual differences and to spelling problems.
6. Motivation for good spelling is inadequate.
7. Word lists are too long for slower pupils.²²¹

The Study of Spelling Errors

Many investigations of spelling errors have been made from time to time to determine what types of errors are made most frequently, why such errors are being made, and what preventive measures should be taken. Gates tested children of New York City and published the results in 1937. This study resulted in

²²¹Wisconsin Cooperative Educational Planning Program, Spelling in the Language Arts Program, Curriculum Bulletin XVI, 19.

A list of spelling difficulties in 3,876 words, showing the "hard spots," common misspellings, average spelling grade-placement, and comprehension grade-ratings of each word.²²² For most pupils misspellings are instances of failure to solve a spelling problem rather than failure to recall a practiced spelling.²²³

Several lists of words that are commonly misspelled have been compiled from time to time. Notable among these are the Jones list of the one hundred most difficult words which has become famous as "demons" in teaching spelling and the Fitzgerald list of the one hundred words most frequently misspelled in each grade from fourth to sixth. Fitzgerald says: "The mastery of the one hundred words of greatest difficulty for each grade would eliminate half of the spelling mistakes which children of the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades make when writing letters outside of their school work."²²⁴ Most of these "demons" have been added to the basic word lists.

One other recent investigation was made by Augusta M. Nichols who found in her study of research that "the majority of authorities agree on certain types of ability which they believe condition spelling success."²²⁵ Miss Nichols constructed tests in which she selected words from the best available studies in each of the following types of ability: (1) spelling achievement, (2) proofreading, (3) word meaning, (4) handwriting, (5) visual discrimination, and (6) auditory discrimination. Miss Nichols reports the following information from her study:

The object of the study was the construction of a spelling test which could be used in analyzing spelling errors and in determining the effectiveness of remedial instruction. The results indicate

²²²Gates, Spelling Difficulties in 3,876 Words, title page.

²²³Ibid., p. 4

²²⁴Foran, The Psychology and Teaching of Spelling, pp. 211-212.

²²⁵Augusta M. Nichols, "The Analysis and Correction of Spelling Difficulties," The Elementary School Journal, (November, 1949), p. 154.

that as ability increases in proofreading, word meaning, handwriting, visual discrimination, and auditory discrimination, children will spell more accurately.²²⁶

In another study made by Sister M. Roberta Wolff:

The purpose was to find the types of errors made most frequently in the spelling in essay writing and tests. The following conclusions were made:

1. The high per cent of mechanical errors calls for development of a spelling conscience, for better handwriting, and for more accurate letter formation.
2. The phonetic errors indicate a need for emphasis on visual and auditory images.
3. Grouping words according to difficulties, special care in pronunciation, use of words in context are suggested for remedial help.²²⁷

Some of the sources of difficulty in spelling can be attributed to the difference in sounds given to the same letter or letter combinations, silent letters, and unphonetic spelling of words, but "actually English is approximately about eight-five per cent phonetic, and there are many consistently pronounced elements, so other factors must be the cause of errors."²²⁸

In seeking the causes for poor spelling, it is important for the teacher to keep in mind that inability to spell is more often the result of multiple factors than of a single factor. The following suggestions are taken from the Manual for Teaching Spelling used in New York City:

What is observed as a cause may be a result, and a symptom of a deep-seated, not easily observable, disturbance in a child. In planning remedial action, therefore, the teacher should be aware of the complexity of the problem and relate the child's difficulties

²²⁶Ibid., pp. 160-161.

²²⁷Sister M. Roberta Wolff, "A Study of Spelling Errors With Implications Concerning Pertinent Teaching Methods," The Elementary School Journal, LII (April, 1952), 464-465.

²²⁸Hildreth, The Teaching of Spelling, p. 224.

in spelling to his learning problems in other curriculum areas and to his personal-social development.²²⁹

"Awareness of error may be a first step toward correction, while an understanding of the causes contributing to error is a decidedly advanced step toward correction."²³⁰ A composite list, "Analysis of Spelling Disabilities, Types of Error, Causes, and Suggested Teaching Procedures," is included in the Appendix to this paper.

²²⁹Board of Education of City of New York, Teaching Spelling, Course of Study and Manual, Curriculum Bulletin VI, 32.

²³⁰Wolff, op. cit., p. 458.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In the world of affairs spelling is often used as a measure of a person's learning in spite of the fact that it is not considered as important a part of the curriculum of the school as many other subjects. Few things are more critically observed than a person's ability to spell. Whenever there is a new idea, a new process is discovered, or there is a new product, a new word is used or an old word takes on a new meaning. All of the words that every individual needs cannot be taught in school, so we need to utilize all reliable research in spelling to improve the program to obtain better results in spelling for every child.

During the period when children learned to spell from Webster's Blue Back Speller, they learned to spell great numbers of words for which most children had no possible use in writing. Down to the present time the spelling vocabulary of elementary schools has included many words of adult literary usage and of great difficulty due to the influence of Webster's book and to the precedent established that the original word counts were right. The extensive word counts made in the early part of the 1900's by Ayres, Horn, Thorndike, and others were based on adult writing and long lists of these words were selected as the words to be learned. With a change in the philosophy of education of preparing for the children's needs as adults to the philosophy of needs of child development as well as needs for the future, word counts began to be studied from children's writing both in and out of school by W. F. Jones, Dolch, Fitzgerald, Rinsland and others. Through

research, beginning with Ayers, the principle of word usage was established that relatively few words constitute the bulk of words used in writing, and it was finally agreed upon by most authorities that little is gained in teaching a large number of words. It has been estimated that around 2,000 words make up about ninety-five per cent of the running words in children's writing, and that about 3,000 words account for about ninety-seven per cent of the running words which the average adult will use in a lifetime.

Although there is little agreement among the writers of spelling textbooks relative to the grade placement and selection of words for the basic list, there has been research on these problems. The number of words to be taught has been reduced in spelling textbooks, one of the causes being the studies made, which were begun by Carl T. Wise, to find what the commonest words were which were used in the spelling textbooks. The derived lists built by Dr. Ashbaugh, Washburne, Breed, Gates, Fitzgerald, Dolch and others resulted in the number of words to be taught being reduced to around 2,500. Studies of gradation of words made by comparison of the words in the spelling textbooks by Betts, Gates, and others led to the conclusions that frequency of use and difficulty should be considered in gradation, but unless a word was needed at a certain grade level and used in practice and context, it might not be mastered at that level. Neither does a spelling textbook meet the needs of all classes and all pupils in the class. Authorities recommend grouping children for instruction in spelling and the use of several spellers with words on different levels. There is a growing feeling that spelling textbooks should be selected on the basis of spelling-age level rather than by grade level.

Studies of methods and techniques in teaching spelling have been given a great deal of attention in research. The individualized approach has been

considered because it would seem to meet the needs of each child but several objections have been found to this method, chiefly that the child's spelling list may not become enriched in proportion to his intelligence and needs. Also, most authorities say that, through research, lists have been derived of commonly used words to which all children should give some attention. Today the interrelationship of all parts of the language arts program has been accepted, and a unified approach of spelling with all of the curriculum is being used, which methods furnish words to be learned by use of the words in context as well as by systematic instruction.

With the assumption that a valid list of words for spelling has been selected, that the words have been graded by valid criteria, then the methods used in instruction should be those methods which have been established by research, providing that these methods will lead to the objectives of the spelling program determined by the philosophy of the curriculum: to help the child succeed in spelling the words he needs when he needs them, and to find the words he needs and learn techniques to spell the words that he will need in the future. Research has shown that certain methods of instruction, the test-study method, systematic study of words, and the use of words in context, are successful methods. Research also shows that a great number of words are learned apart from a period devoted to the teaching of spelling; therefore, definite emphasis should be placed upon a method of learning to spell a word, which method has been analyzed and stated by Fernald, Dolch, Fitzgerald and others. Research also shows: that since people differ in their methods of recall, a multiple sense approach is important in teaching children to spell; that a few rules and generalizations are useful; that a carefully organized program of word analysis, in which phonics, word-building, pronunciation, and syllabication, should be taught; and that word meaning is

an important factor which influences correct spelling.

Other problems that have been investigated that influence correct spelling are readiness to learn spelling, awareness of correct spelling, spelling ability and the cause of errors, successful attack upon errors, and the interest that a child has in spelling. In the research for cause of errors, some of the causes, when analyzed, show that they are serious enough to need the service of specialists.

Many children do not benefit from these studies of research, but findings such as the ones mentioned should urge teachers to study the research that has been made and to do research that is greatly needed on some of the problems in spelling: the need for better word frequency counts; which words and the number of words to be placed on each level; the studies of typical age levels appropriate for teaching certain words; and individual problems that arise in the teachers' own classrooms. Teachers are urged not only to know what has been accomplished through research, but also to use the conclusions that have been arrived at by authorities, to achieve the goals of more accurate spelling and increased vocabulary. Some suggestions to reach these goals are the following:

1. Greater emphasis should be placed on the techniques to be used in learning to spell. Teachers should consider that the techniques used in learning to spell words will carry over so that new words can be spelled.
2. There should be more teaching in the spelling period and less testing, although testing is a part of teaching.
3. Each child should be helped to develop the particular technique best suited for him to learn to spell.
4. Directed systematic instruction in spelling is needed.
5. Words should be practiced and written in context as most children do not learn to spell a word through one presentation.

6. All subjects contribute to vocabulary growth.

7. A diagnosis should be made when unsatisfactory work is done and remedial measures used.

8. Each child should have an accessible and alphabetized list of most of the words that he will need in his writing.

9. Habits and attitudes should be developed that will lead to more accurate spelling: an interest in spelling, awareness of correct spelling, and a desire to learn to spell accurately.

10. There is no easy road to accurate spelling, but spelling power can be developed by training children for independence in spelling by using the suggestions that most authorities make in their research studies on the spelling problem.

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APPENDIX

SPELLING RULES AND GENERALIZATIONS

There is general agreement that a few rules are valuable when the child is sufficiently mature to apply them. The rules and generalizations suggested by some authorities include the following:

1. Formation of plural forms of nouns.
2. Formation of possessive forms of nouns.
3. Comparison of adjectives and adverbs.
4. Tense of verbs.
5. Adding prefixes and suffixes.
6. The letter "q" is always followed by "u."
7. The letter "i" in use with letter "e."
8. The apostrophe is used to show the omission of a letter.
9. Abbreviations are followed by periods.

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AN ANALYSIS OF SPELLING DISABILITIES, TYPES OF ERROR

Disabilities and Types of Error

Causes

Physiological

1. Visual defects

Defective visual imagery.
Lack of visual memory.

2. Auditory defects

Unable to hear many sounds.
Unable to discriminate between similar sounds.
Does not understand or follow directions.
Has such disabilities as: speech and articulatory defects, mispronunciation, difficulty in auditory learning and phonetics.

Psychological

1. Emotional maladjustments

Emotional problems characterized by: frustration, insecurity, restlessness, timidity, negative attitude, fear of failure, lack of confidence, tension in home or school parents' indifference to pupil's work, distaste for spelling, speech disorders, frustration because writing vocabulary lags behind speaking and reading vocabulary.

2. Lack of spelling readiness

Mental and physical immaturity. Muscular incoordination. Lack of adequate instruction. Lack of language facility. Unable to perceive differences in sounds of letters and syllables. Unable to recognize differences and similarities in words. Short attention span. Lacks curiosity about words, their meaning and use. Lacks desire to express himself in writing.

Instructional

1. Defective perception of word form

Defective vision. Eye movements irregular. Failure to grasp whole word. Inadequate instruction in perceiving word forms. Faulty work habits. Low mentality. Too few associations of meaning. Limited skill in word analysis. No meaning association with word form. Lack of analytical ability. Uncertain about sequence of letters. Random spelling.

CAUSES, AND SUGGESTED TEACHING PROCEDURES

Suggested Remedial Measures

Refer to medical authority. Study configuration of words. Establish habit of observing and examining words, letter by letter. Use colored chalk on blackboard. Divide words into syllables in oral and visual presentation. Emphasize difficult parts of word. Recall visual image, write the word, compare with correct form.

Refer to medical authority. Give a hearing test. Teach visually. Associate a printed letter with a situation in which sound is used with a pictured object which begins with that letter. Write large words with crayon and chalk. Ask child to trace words with forefinger, saying each part as he traces. Say the word, emphasizing each syllable. Show the relation between sound and written symbol.

Confer with parents. Try to meet basic needs. Look for physical causes of emotional maladjustment. Remove pressure, jealousies, fears and worries. Show need for words taught. Limit words to those which pupil is unable to spell. Emphasize individual and class progress. Encourage pride in achievement.

Train eye to move left to right. Provide a rich reading program. Provide rich background of experiences: include trips; discuss pictures, stories; print name on possessions; make labels and captions; compose original stories. Use a wall or desk chart showing the alphabet. Use a picture dictionary with primary children. Make a scrapbook. Spell name of relatives, pets, friends. Write several words from dictation. Write own name without a model.

Match words and meaning. Make parts of words that are alike and point out differences. Use dictionary to study words. Use homonyms in sentences.

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| 2. Faulty pronunciation | Speech impediment. Acquired from teacher or associates. Lack of attention to form of word. Dialectical pronunciation. Carelessness. Poor enunciation. Home environment as foreign speech, illiterate home and slovenly speech. Lack of emphasis on final sound. |
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| 3. Defective word recognition skills
Wrong word
Difficult words | Inability to give sounds of letters and blends
Incomplete observation of words. Failure to notice sound elements that make up words.
Unable to give number of parts or syllables in word after hearing word said or seeing it written. Lack of systematic study techniques. |
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| 4. Omission of letters or wrong use of letters
Substitution
Insertion
Confusion
Transposition | Incorrect grammar. Faulty pronunciation.
Poor or careless hearing. Poor vision.
Nervousness. Inattention. Excessive ambition. Ignorance of letter sounds.
Lack of techniques in attacking words.
Phonetic inadequacy. Uncertainty of vowel sounds and combinations. |
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|-----------------------------------|--|
| 5. Inaccuracy due to carelessness | Poor vision. Nervousness. Lack of interest.
Lack of pride in spelling accomplishment. |
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| 6. Lack of spelling practice | Decreased emphasis on spelling. Lack of well planned spelling program. Emphasis on known words. Presentation of unnecessary words.
Lack of integration in spelling activities.
Poor selection of words studied. Social factors. |
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|----------------------|---|
| 7. Illegible writing | Deficient in speed and quality of handwriting.
Sensitivity of older pupils in ability to spell. Poor motor coordination. |
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| 8. Lack of meaning vocabulary | Immaturity. Inability to remember. Limited vocabulary. |
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| 9. Lapses | Inversion of letters. Doubling the wrong letter. Substituting letter or letters of like or approximate phonic value. Influence of another language. Lack of motivation. |
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Suggested Remedial Measures

Adequate speech training. Teacher uses proper pronunciation and enunciation. Listen to radio announcers, moving pictures, and television. Explain phonic irregularities. Child pronounce words carefully, distinctly, and by syllables one word at a time. Write the word. Check pronunciation with dictionary.

Teach prefixes, suffixes, and roots. Observe word as a whole. Detect syllables, phonograms, and double letters. Identify words through picture clues, phonetic analysis, structural analysis, syllabication, and use of dictionary. Recognize the vowels in a word. Show specific causes of errors.

Check vision. Reorganize pupil's method of attack. Use as many sensory avenues as are necessary: drill on auditory sounds; use initial blends. Combine and blend sounds in a total word. Stress word meaning.

Correct physical defects. Create attitude of caring about spelling. Encourage pride and cooperation in spelling achievement. Provide definite method of learning. Emphasize individual and class progress. Insist on careful spelling in all written work. Correct all spelling errors. Allow no erasing or rewriting. Development of spelling conscience.

Select carefully the words to be taught and motivate practice on these words. Encourage wider reading. Develop vocabulary by conversation. Teach words the pupil needs to know. Teach earliest the words most commonly used in correspondence. Teach in appropriate grades the words needed in other subjects. Numerous activities for use of words. Enlist cooperation of home.

Insist on legible handwriting. Appeal to pride. Bring errors into the open and stress care in formation of letters and words. Stress correct spacing of letters and words.

Study prefixes, suffixes, roots, word derivation. Study inflection of verbs, adjectives, antonyms, synonyms, and homonyms. Note new words in reading. Use dictionary.

Teach a definite procedure of word study. Give closer attention to sequence of letters. Point out phonetic values of letters transposed. Study words ending in silent "e". Distinguish between long and short vowel preceding a final consonant.

Disabilities and Types of Error

Causes

10. Attempt to spell phonetically	Overconscious of phonetics. Tries to spell by analogy.
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11. Misuse of apostrophe	Lacks knowledge of concept of possession. Fails to distinguish between singular and plural forms. Carelessness. Social factors
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Suggested Remedial Measures

Give drill with word families (importance, existence). Develop visual familiarity with varied spellings for the same sounds (sede, ceed, cede).

Show application of rules and generalizations to spelling words. Check all written work to see if rules are applied. Work on specific errors.
