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A Survey of Methods of Spelling Instruction and Analysis of Textbooks Which Incorporate these Methods

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A SURVEY OF METHODS OF SPELLING INSTRUCTION
AND ANALYSIS OF TEXTBOOKS WHICH
INCORPORATE THESE METHODS

A Research Paper
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington College of Education

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
Helen Gladys Hudson
August 1961

THIS PAPER IS APPROVED AS MEETING
THE PLAN 2 REQUIREMENT FOR THE
COMPLETION OF A RESEARCH PAPER.

Fay H. Harbin
FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For some time charges have been made that the spelling methods in use have not produced the results desired. This judgment has been deduced from observation of day by day scores, and from the results of Achievement Tests. Then, too, many college professors complain that students in higher education do not know how to spell correctly. Business men deplore that secretaries and stenographers cannot spell. Some authors have to depend upon proof readers to correct their errors.

All this is a challenge to everyone in the teaching profession, especially to those in the elementary field of education. That is where the foundation for good spelling must be laid.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to discover what general procedures in spelling instruction are considered necessary in good spelling pedagogy, regardless of what series of texts, or whether any text, is used. In addition, the purpose was to find the specific methods of instruction believed to be most productive of good results and the texts incorporating these methods.

II. THE PROBLEM

The problem, then, has three parts.

First, the general procedures considered of most value in teaching children how to spell correctly will be noted. This section will include a review of factors influential in promoting permanent mastery of common words. A study will be made of procedures, not specifically attached to any series of books, but usable with any test, or when no text at all is used. An attempt will be made to find answers for basic questions such as:

1. Should phonetic and other rules be taught?
2. How often should spelling be taught, and how much time should be used?
3. How does the presentation of words affect the learning process?
4. How many words does a child need to know how to spell and what determines those to be learned? How will he learn words he needs to know after he leaves grade school?
5. Will learning the meanings of words help him learn to spell?
6. What should be done for the child who cannot keep up with the class? What should be done for the child who already knows most of the words?
7. How often and for how long should review be continued?

Second, a survey will be made of the various methods of day by day teaching of spelling with which experimentation has been done. If possible, the study will determine the one most efficient in producing good spellers. Those studied will be: Study-test versus Test-study, and Context versus List. A number of minor methods will be reviewed. These are Individual Study, Own Story, and Corrected Test.

Third, various published texts and workbooks will be examined to find which ones in their objectives and study plan include the general procedures noted as most desirable. Likewise, it will be determined which texts advocate the method, or methods, of most efficient day by day instruction.

III. PROCEDURE

Data will be collected by examining research bulletins, reports of studies made in this field, and books by educators in the field of language arts. To determine the objectives and contents of various published texts, it will be necessary to examine the publisher's comments. Usually this will be the teachers' editions of each series of texts.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD SPELLING INSTRUCTION

College and high school teachers sometimes complain that their students do not know how to spell. Many children and adults fail to remember the correct spelling of common words. According to Strickland (41:368), spelling's only purpose is to enable the reader to know what is written, and the learning of spelling is a basic task of every school child. Gertrude Hildreth says, "The routine, regimented drill that has prevailed so long proves in the end to be inefficient" (13:476).

Thus it appears that a more efficient method must be devised and used. As McKee says (29:369-70):

In the light of all available data, it is the judgment of the writer that in order to secure superior results spelling must be attacked directly as spelling, the child's attention must be directed at the importance of correct spelling in all writing, and a functional course of study in written composition must be in operation in order to insure incidental learning opportunities of a desirable type.

Reese (37:492) also lists some desirable spelling objectives:

1. To make automatic the accepted sequence of letters in words most commonly written.
2. To develop the meaning and use of words to be spelled.

3. To develop a spelling consciousness which leads one to recognize almost instantly the correct spelling of common words and to examine critically the words about which the writer is in doubt.

4. To develop a spelling conscience--an ardent purpose or desire to spell correctly.

5. To develop a technic for the study of spelling.

Strickland (41:371-72) makes these suggestions.

First, help each child develop a method of learning spelling he can use by himself when he must learn new words--one he can use easily and effectively all his life. She says it is possible that most adults learn more spelling after they leave such classes than they ever did while in school. Second, help each child learn to spell accurately as many of the common English words as he can.

Hildreth (13:477) assures us that functional spelling is taking the place of much drill work. Much writing must be done in the activity units of other subjects. There is some reason for learning to spell the words needed "right now to write this article."

McKee (29:366) lists six important characteristics of good spelling instruction: (1) general procedures, (2) manner of presenting new words, (3) pupil's study procedure, (4) testing procedures, (5) review procedures, and (6) maintaining learning. These seem to be a good outline for the following presentation. For the sake of clarity the last three have been combined under one heading.

I. GENERAL PROCEDURES

Factors in Learning to Spell

Certain definite factors must be considered in learning to spell. Gertrude Hildreth lists some of the most important of these:

Intelligence or ability to learn is only one element in the situation; among others are interest, attention, emotional control, good or poor eyes and ears, and favorable or unfavorable home influences (13:478).

Again, Breed (5:301-302) refers to Williamson's list of important factors in learning to spell, in part:

(a) Span of apprehension; (b) knowledge of meanings; (c) verbal intelligence; (d) perception of word form; (e) generalization of phonetic units; (f) rote memorizing; and (g) desire to spell.

Then, too, children have their own various ways of perceiving words. Visual perception is a method used most often. Spelling requires this more than any other subject. Thus any method which increases vividness of perception is an aid to many pupils in the learning of words (12:230). Cook and O'Shea (7:53) cite Horn's statement that "elementary school children are predominantly visual."

Still another author (42:445) maintains that only one sensory means is needed and one is as good as another. He states: "However differences in interest value and differences in development of mechanical means of presenting material, may make one method more available than another."

But visual imagery is not the only means of perceiving words. Not all people are the same in visual, motor, and speech imagery in learning to spell. Other imagery processes such as hearing, speaking, and writing are also present in most children; and appeal to these avenues must be made in the presentation and study lessons (29:378-79).

Stroud (42:445) further suggests that if children cannot learn by visual perception there is still the auditory, the kinaesthetic, or the vocal motor stage.

Thus, the sensory factors in learning to spell are the visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, and vocal.

Another thing to consider in general procedure is whether rules should be taught, and if so, when and which ones.

Teaching of Rules

The teaching of phonetic elements and rules does not appear to be of primary importance, though they are helpful to some.

Teaching of phonics. Gertrude Hildreth (13:477) believes that spelling rules and phonics should not be taught until the child is able to understand and profit by such knowledge. They should be taught when they can be of immediate use.

Strickland (41:388) refers to this statement by

Duncan:

Because patterns of words are remembered as visual images, pupils who have made the approach to reading through "wholes" . . . have tended to spell well. Probably a phonic approach to reading is responsible for much poor spelling, partly because the natural habit of observing words as wholes has been disturbed and partly because such a high proportion of common words in our language are not phonic.

She further states that phonics "should be utilized whenever and wherever they are helpful in learning to spell." If a word can be more quickly learned without phonics, then it should be so learned.

Again, Breed notes that: "Garrison and Heard found no significant difference in spelling ability between primary pupils trained in phonetics and those not so trained" (5:83-88).

Teaching of other rules. Each word should be taught as an individual problem in the lower grades. In the upper grades a few rules may be taught as supplementary learning when they are needed to aid in real difficulties. Three types of rules thought to be most helpful are rules concerning words ending in "y," the rule for doubling a final consonant before adding a suffix, and the rule for dropping a final "e" before adding a suffix (36:757).

Duboff and Smith determined that only a very small percentage of the errors made in spelling were amenable to

correction by applying a rule. McKee (29:372-74) cites Gates, who says the teaching of rules does not increase ability to spell in general, but it does increase ability to spell derivatives. He himself feels that in most instances applying a rule will not relieve the difficulty.

Although all the evidence does not favor the elimination of the teaching of rules, the weight of the available data seems to make it preferable to teach the pupil to attack each word as an individual problem.

However, if rules are taught, McKee feels there are certain criteria to consider (29:372):

1. Will it apply to enough words in the lesson?
2. Are there so many exceptions to the rule as to be confusing?
3. If applied, will it remove the difficulty?
4. Can children learn to apply it as needed?
5. Do those who learn rules do better work than those who do not?

For the most part, then, the teaching of phonics is not essential but a means to an end. A few rules may be taught in the upper grades, but only as they provide real help in the learning of spelling.

Further consideration will be given to both the daily and weekly length of time to be devoted to spelling.

The Plan and Time Allotments

Alloted times should be set aside for teaching spelling and a definite plan should be followed.

A definite plan. Some have advocated that learning spelling incidentally was sufficient, but McKee (29:368) feels these earlier experiments were invalid and were conducted before word lists had been developed and efficient methods of teaching established. He believes a definite procedure must be followed in both teaching and testing.

A definite time. The same author lists four main areas present in any efficient method of teaching. First, there will be a time when new words are presented. Second, there will be a time when each child will study his own difficult words. Third, there will be a time for testing what has been learned. Fourth, there will be a time for review (29:375).

Stauffer admits that authorities do not agree on the length of time which should be devoted to spelling, but most of them seem to feel there should be definite times and time limits. He contends that the best spelling is done in schools where it is studied five days a week for about twenty minutes a day and where all spelling in written work is carefully checked (40:187-88).

Horn recommends not more than sixty minutes per week for spelling, and less for the above average pupils (19:285). Any more time than that might better be spent in other areas. Tidyman (43:371) states that "the important thing is the way in which the time is spent."

Again, McKee feels there must be a definite time of about fifteen minutes daily to teach spelling as such (29:368). Another authority believes more learning is accomplished by teaching spelling during short periods with intervening time than by using one long period (15:69).

Thus it seems most authorities agree there should be a definite plan of allotted time for the study of spelling and that these times should be short and frequent.

Some of the general procedures have been examined. The next section will review the importance of the manner of presentation.

II. MANNER OF PRESENTATION

The manner of presenting words and the order of presentation have an important part in the learning of spelling. Likewise, the make-up of the word lists largely determines how many of the words will be learned.

Manner of Presentation

Horn (17:53) feels that the ability to pronounce a word correctly has a great deal to do with spelling it correctly. The teacher must pronounce and enunciate all words correctly, since that is the child's pattern. Each child should see the word as it is pronounced and should pronounce it himself as he sees it.

Strickland (41:372-73) believes that many who spell incorrectly do so simply because they are trying to spell what they say, and they do not say the words correctly. She observes that

Talking with individuals and the group and listening to the teacher's clear speech as she reads . . . have helped the child to hear and to articulate sounds correctly and to enunciate words and syllables clearly. All this is background for his task of learning to spell.

Lists and Grouping of Words

Word lists have been derived by scientific study and thus may be profitably used by teachers. It seems desirable, however, to supplement these with individual word lists.

Contents of lists and how they are derived. A word in an established list is placed at the grade level where scientific studies indicate it is first used the most often. Words most often misspelled are then repeated in the lists for succeeding grades (36:757).

A test of the 220 words of the Dolch list was given to find how much difference there was in the spelling of these common words. All of these words are in the basic list of the first five grades. On 1134 test papers, not one word was correctly spelled by everyone. Errors per word ranged from 5 - 550. Only 3 per cent made no errors. Thirty-seven per cent made from 1 - 10 errors, 21 per cent

made 11 - 20 errors, and 39 per cent made more than 20 errors. Thirty-three per cent made 100 or more errors. Yet only a few mistakes were made by enough pupils to warrant general review. Rather, the results seemed to indicate that for each pupil an individual list and study was needed (33:498).

An individual word list may be made from a child's own writing. Thus, each will study his own list of words, which he himself has devised, and will not spend time on words he already knows or words someone else needs to learn (13:477).

However, this same author believes there must be use of a combination of the individual list and the scientifically prepared list.

It should be made clear, however, that incidental exposure to spelling will not of itself teach children to spell efficiently, although incidental practice is decidedly beneficial. Systematic teaching of selected words belongs in every elementary-school program, no matter how informal it is or how largely integrated is the content taught (13:480).

Length of lists. McKee believes research indicates that more spelling learning and retaining of that which is learned is accomplished if the word list for any one lesson is not too long (29:370).

By the fifth or sixth grade, Hildreth feels slow learners may be expected to know about 500 words, average

learners may know 1200 - 1500 words, while bright pupils may know many more. In her estimation 850 words are necessary for practical needs in English writing.

In the present writer's judgment, it would be better for our sixth-grade graduates to learn to use this many words with confidence than to make only a haphazard attempt to learn a much larger number (13:480).

Thus it seems an established fact that although individual lists of words are helpful, scientifically prepared lists should have their place in a regular spelling program. These lists should not be too long.

The next question is whether word meanings should be taught.

Teaching of Meanings

Although the meaning of a word should be taught, a knowledge of that meaning will not guarantee the correct spelling of a word.

One source of difficulty is correctly remembering the spelling of a homonym with a given meaning. There is not agreement concerning the grouping of homonyms, but it seems sensible not to teach pairs together unless there is a definite need to do so (36:757).

McKee (29:384-386) believes an understanding of meaning is only a part of the learning process. Merely teaching the meaning of a word does not remove spelling errors. It is only an aid to learning spelling. A teacher should try

to make the word a part of the child's spontaneous writing vocabulary.

According to another author, words with concrete meanings are easier to spell (41:374).

McKee also feels that children should be encouraged to want to know the meanings of words. If a word is used correctly in a sentence, it still may not indicate that the child understands its meaning. In fact, he found low correlations between spelling a word correctly and knowing the meaning in the context of an original sentence. For instance, if a child writes the sentence: "The conservatory is over there," he still might not know the meaning of conservatory.

The teaching of word meaning, then, is only one of the many procedures in the teaching of spelling. It is another means to an end.

No spelling program is efficient unless some time is given to the pupil's procedure; this will be considered in the following section.

III. PUPIL STUDY PROCEDURE

In the teaching of spelling the teacher must be sure both the class and the pupil understand good study procedure. Each pupil must know how to study and how to detect and correct his errors. The teacher must also establish a well-defined plan for considering individual needs.

In the light of all available data, it is the judgment of the writer that in order to secure superior results spelling must be attacked directly as spelling, the child's attention must be directed at the importance of correct spelling in all writing and a functional course of study in written composition must be in operation in order to insure incidental learning opportunities of a desirable type (29:369-70).

Pupil Study Plan

The pupil must have a definite plan; it is the teacher's responsibility to guide him in developing such a plan.

It is important for the teacher to provide the class with an effective method of study. The teacher must also be sure each child receives aid in locating his own difficulties and learns a helpful method of personal study. Likewise it is the teacher who creates right attitudes toward worthwhile study habits.

The same author says much of the success of learning to spell is dependent upon the conditions of the study period. Again it is the teacher's responsibility to maintain a classroom mood in which effective studying can be done. Each child must be assisted to adopt a plan by which he can overcome his own deficiencies as revealed by a preliminary test (29:404).

Treatment of Errors

One very important phase of spelling instruction is the consideration of the cause and treatment of errors.

Types of errors. Though there are many types of errors, McKee (29:383) declares scientific study has shown that, for the most part, it is difficult to detect any particular type as being predominant.

He defines a hard spot as a common form of misspelling a word, or a part of a word. It is assumed that most words have a "hard spot," but he states that not many words have such a common form. However, he cites Mendenhall's list of a number of different "hard spots." (1) The "hard spot" in most words is at the center or to the immediate right of center; (2) the latter syllables of a word are harder; (3) a, e, i, and u are especially difficult; (4) many errors are phonetic; (5) the second of double letters, final letters, silent letters, key consonants, and central syllables are often omitted; and (6) in the second syllables one vowel is often substituted for another.

Does the length of a word increase the probability of error? Again Mendenhall makes this statement, in part:

The first syllable of four- and three- syllable words is much less difficult than the first syllable of a two-syllable word. (This same fact holds for the difficulty of the first letter in words of various lengths. The first letter of a nine-, eight-, or seven-letter word is less difficult than the first letter of a six-, five-, or four-letter word).

Each letter or syllable added makes the learning of a word harder. It seems that the first part of a long word is over learned while the latter part is underlearned. It

would be more important to determine which letter or letters within a syllable was giving trouble (32:28).

Hildreth (13:480) suggests that some mistakes commonly considered spelling errors may rather be errors in language usage. For example: "He ate an apple an a pear." or "We use to go there often."

Another type of error is that of syllables. In citing an investigation of fifth grade pupils by Horn, Stauffer (40:121) notes his conclusion: "that presenting words in syllabified form offered no advantage and selecting generalized classifications for presenting words in syllabified form possessed no advantage." In fact, errors may actually be caused by syllabication, and this can exert a negative influence on learning to spell.

In regard to errors, Horn (15:67) believes that, for the most part, no one error is sufficiently characteristic of enough misspellings to warrant special attention. "For most words, the percentage of the most frequent type of error to the total misspellings is very small."

Again, in his experiment, Mendenhall answers the question, "Is a particular form of error typical enough to warrant special attention?" First, he cites Master's conclusion: "At the eighth grade level, 41 of the 114 words have one form of misspelling which makes up 50 per cent or more of the total misspellings of the word at this level" (32:32-3).

Then he says that, in the last analysis, the answer lies within the realm of experimentation rather than of speculation. He feels that the experimenter must decide for himself whether or not he will consider errors of from 20 per cent to 45 per cent large enough to merit special consideration (32:19).

Locating and eliminating errors. The teacher needs to give the class and each individual in it personal guidance and help in the prevention of errors. If mistakes are made the pupils should understand how to detect and correct them.

Four stages in the learning of a word are designated by Cook and O'Shea (7:282). (1) Once a word has been written incorrectly there is a strong tendency to continue the same misspelling. (2) Next, there is a variation of the misspelling which indicates progress toward correction of the error. (3) A casual correct spelling may occur but is not retained. (4) The word is well-mastered. After this, lapses rarely occur.

Most people do not go through the first stage for more than a few words; other stages may be skipped by prolonged practice. Thus, better methods of presentation, they feel, might eliminate many errors in the first three steps.

Again, in administering a test, the teacher needs to

be especially careful to enunciate clearly so errors will not be made simply through misunderstanding the word. Likewise, faulty handwriting must be distinguished from spelling errors. Children will usually accept the fact that a word should be written only once and should not be changed. Rewriting or changing a word may indicate the child does not really know the word; in fact, it is obvious he is not sure of the spelling (29:391).

It is a good idea to stress associating the visual impression of a word with the sound of it, since many English words are not spelled phonetically. The child who learns what a word looks like can more readily recognize errors in his written work (33:502).

McKee (29:410-411) believes a child should not only be able to detect errors in his work but also should be able to spell correctly. In fact, we can say one is not really able to spell until he can detect errors in his written work. He needs to develop a "spelling consciousness" which enables him to detect incorrect words.

It seems reasonable, however, to assume at present that the best way of teaching a pupil to be aware of a misspelling of a given word is to teach him how to spell that word correctly.

In commenting on the inefficiency of drilling on the "hard spot" in a word, Horn (16:287-88) says:

In the first place, difficult words with a single hard spot are the exception rather than the rule. There

are, of course, some such words. Naturally, the number of different hard spots in a word tends to decrease as experience in spelling increases. In the second place, the hard spot for one student is not necessarily the hard spot for another. The way for any student to discover the part of any word that is hard for him is to attempt to spell it.

The consideration of pupil procedure has included a review of the causes and detection of errors. Each pupil also needs assistance in meeting his individual needs. In the next section some ways of meeting those needs will be noted.

Consideration of Individual Needs

Though the basic spelling list for each grade should not be ignored, a teacher must give careful thought to providing for the individual needs of pupils of all levels of ability. Breed (5:85) cites Williamson's conclusion that it would be better to consider general intelligence and develop skills of learning than to think so much of spelling disability.

Again, not all children develop spelling ability at the same time or at the same rate. It is a waste of time attempting to teach him how to spell words for which he has no immediate use (13:417).

Teachers need to be vigorous in teaching the required basic lists, even though they are making the necessary adjustments for individual needs.

It is important for both teachers and pupils to realize that the value in the mastery of these basic words lies in their frequency of use in written expression, and that satisfactory achievement in list spelling is not an end in itself but a valuable and economical means toward the desired end of being able to spell satisfactorily in written expression (33:497).

Again, different individuals have differing visual perception. Fernald lists three groups into which most poor spellers can be classified.

1. Individuals whose visual images are too vague and indistinct to give the details necessary for a correct reproduction of the word, though they visualize with sufficient clearness for any situation that does not require detailed reproduction.

2. Individuals who get little visual imagery at first but gradually develop it after the word has been partly learned in terms of some other imagery.

3. Individuals lacking, or almost lacking, in visual imagery (8:191).

According to Hildreth (13:477-79) individualized spelling can be conducted within the class. It is not imperative to teach each child separately; such an arrangement would be "impractical and unnecessary" in large classes such as most schools have. In any grade there can be a variation in achievement of several grades. Teachers and administrators need to recognize this and make arrangements to care for the needs of each group within the class.

As an individual matures he learns to understand the social implications of poor spelling habits. He learns to keep his own spelling list and use mastered words in

correcting his own errors. Interest may be maintained by using games and drills (36:758).

Furthermore, individual words should be taught when they are needed. "When the pupil asks for the word because he needs to use it, the time is psychologically ripe for real teaching." Rather than merely supplying the word a start, at least, should be made toward the teaching of it. How much teaching is done at this time will depend somewhat on the commonness of the word (33:500).

Strickland (41:382) feels that a child should be helped to learn what he needs now. Then he should be taught techniques for learning words which he finds at a later time he needs to know.

Then, too, the superior speller must not be neglected. Many children consistently seem to know most of each week's words when a pre-test is given. Such spellers do not need further drill but should concentrate on misspelled words from their own written work.

Since spelling is a skill subject, the spelling study plan must be designed for the poor speller. Enrichment must come thru other types of word study and not just by having more words to spell (24:485).

This section has been concerned with the pupil's study procedures. The teacher must "set the stage" for effective study. A child must have a definite plan of attack outlined for him by the teacher, he must know how to

detect and eliminate errors, and he must know how to meet his own individual spelling problems.

In the next division of this chapter the program of review and testing for mastery will be surveyed.

IV. REVIEW, TESTING, AND MAINTENANCE OF LEARNING

It seems advisable to have a plan for review and testing if the pupil is to maintain knowledge of the correct spelling of words he has studied, and this should be, to a certain extent, motivated by the teacher on an individual basis.

Testing

There should be provision for several testings. McKee (29:407) cites Ashbaugh's statement that usually words are written in more than one test, for a child who can spell a word once cannot always do so again. Neither can all difficulties be located by one testing. Again McKee assures us that in studying one group of words for a week there will be at least one study period and two testings, in addition to other word drills and exercises (29:414-415).

Each test given presupposes a review, and often this should be accomplished by different methods and presentations of the words. Cook and O'Shea (7:98-100) found in

comparing results of the daily and final tests "that the efficiency of the different types of presentation in the daily tests is almost exactly the reverse of that in the final test."

In a series of tests given they found a decided "slump" on the final test. They feel this was due not to the manner of presentation but rather to the lapse of time since the previous test. This difficulty might well be solved by review.

Review

There must be constant review. According to McKee, (29:412-14), there is an urgent need for over learning, since much that is learned is soon forgotten unless it becomes so firmly fixed that loss cannot occur. He cites Woodworth, who says most forgetting is done within the first twenty-four hours. Thus definite plans must be made for thorough review, even though some of it may be very incidental.

Again, he says, if the learning has not been thorough, review must be more intensive. Likewise, certain words may need more intensive review than others. It is noted, however, that the highly intelligent child may not require as much review as other members of the class.

It should be obvious that the amount of review to be expended upon a given word will depend upon the effectiveness of the initial learning period, the learning difficulty of the word, and the ability of the learner.

Words should likewise be reviewed at succeeding grade levels. That is, if words are introduced in one grade, they should be reviewed in the following grade. If the text does not provide for this review, the teacher may need to make up review lists. In addition, words children need to spell and cannot should be reviewed in every grade; if it is necessary such words should be reviewed all the way from the second grade to the eighth grade (14:189).

Motivation

Review must be motivated by the teacher. In the next three paragraphs, McKee's opinions are noted (29:414-426). He says a child needs motivation so he will be interested in learning correct spelling. Most adults will abandon work that is not interesting and in which they see no need. Likewise, children will not be interested unless they see a need. Thus the teacher's task is one of motivation.

Sometimes this can be done by telling a child something of the etymology of a word. Sometimes it can be accomplished by a discussion of semantics. A child who can see progress will be more alert. Charts and graphs, both for individuals and for the class, may be used quite effectively to motivate learning.

The teacher may make sincere effort to develop a child's pride in his spelling achievement. But in the end, nothing will be accomplished until the child acts upon that motivation and learns because he knows he should.

The pupil ought to know that correct spelling is a mark of respectability, that it is considered of value in both social and business writing, and that vocational opportunities have been lost because of inability to spell (29:426).

In this chapter four main divisions of spelling procedure have been reviewed: (1) General procedures, (2) manner of presentation, (3) pupil's study procedure, and (4) review and maintenance of learning.

First, the general procedures considered were the visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, and vocal approaches to the learning of spelling as the main necessary factors. Rules were found to be helpful as needed; but they are not of primary importance. There must be a well integrated plan of spelling procedure with definite allotted daily and weekly times set aside for spelling study.

Second, the teacher's manner of presentation is very important, especially her pronunciation and enunciation. Scientifically derived word lists should be used, supplemented by individual lists. Lists should not be too long. The meanings of words should be taught, but this does not guarantee words will be learned; it is just one means of aiding in the learning of words.

Third, it is the teacher's responsibility to provide the pupil with a definite plan of study and create a proper study routine. The teacher must be sure the pupil knows some of the causes of error and how to detect and eliminate his mistakes. Consideration should be given to individual needs.

Fourth, provision should be made for adequate review and testing so learning may be maintained; this will be motivated by the teacher.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF METHODS

Many different people have conducted experiments to determine the most effective method of producing good spellers. In this chapter some of these will be reviewed together with conclusions of the experimenters and others.

I. STUDY-TEST

A description of an experiment in the public schools of Beloit, Wisconsin, will explain the general procedure of a study-test program. There are some minor variations from school to school, but the main features generally follow the pattern thus described. This experiment was conducted by Dorris May Lee and J. Murray Lee for the purpose of trying to determine what study plan was most effective. They prepared their own materials (24:484-87).¹

First, a word list was prepared. After making a careful study of many word lists they determined to cut the total number of words to 2800. If a child can spell the 2800 words most commonly used by adults he has mastered 97.2 per cent of all the words he will need as an adult writer.

¹Most schools who use this plan, not experimentally, use a scientifically prepared word list and study exercises as given in a textbook.

There is little to be gained in drilling beyond this. It would be better, rather, to reinforce learning of these basic words so they are thoroughly mastered by the end of the eighth grade. Finally, the words were subdivided according to grades and the words the pupils were regularly using in their writing. Before starting the experiment each class was given a pre-test on eight week's words.

The second step was to decide on the daily method of study. After trying several, this procedure was adopted as the best. "Then in general the plan was to see the word, say it, write it, see it with eyes shut, write it, see if it is right, and write it again" (24:486).

The third step was to try several methods of weekly study. They decided the following method was most effective.

Monday: Present the study by reading the story and studying the six more difficult words. The method quoted above was used.

Tuesday: Study the six remaining words and review Monday's words.

Wednesday: Dictate the story. Each child corrects his own misspelled words and copies them in a notebook as a permanent record. This is his own special list of words to be learned.

Thursday: Reteach the difficult words. The pupils do the study help exercises and receive individual help as needed.

Friday: Dictate a test, in column form, which includes six review words from the previous lesson. Each child places his misspelled words in his individual spelling list.

They felt the results were gratifying. From the records kept it was noted that the average gain each week between the pre-test and the final test "was more than satisfactory." The score on the pre-test of 96 words (eight weeks' work) was an average of 40.8. The final test at the end of eight weeks showed an average score of 88.5. A number of scores were perfect or nearly perfect.

The pupils could learn the words where there were not so many. The words were learned more easily, for the lists were determined by the maturation level of the pupils. In daily written work these same words were used so that the pupils had opportunity to meet them in many ways. Review served to "fix" these words in the minds of the pupils.

The greatest achievement, however, was found in the reactions and attitudes of individual pupils. All spelling improved, and pupils who had before considered themselves failures in spelling began to have perfect or nearly perfect papers. Pupils became more conscious of their spelling in all written work. They began looking up words which they were not sure of in modified dictionaries or spelling lists. The children's whole attitude toward spelling changed (24:487).

II. TEST-STUDY

A description of the weekly procedure in the test study plan is given by Gates (9:3ff) in a report of his experiment. Some variations of the method are described by Louis (27:3-4).

Monday: Test on all the words for the week.

Tuesday: Pupils study individually the words misspelled on Monday. Pupils having no errors are excused.

Wednesday: Test on the new words and review words from the previous lesson.

Thursday: Pupils study words missed on Wednesday. Those who received a perfect score are excused.

Friday: Test on Wednesday's words. All pupils restudy all words missed during the week.

Further information and suggestions are noted in a report of an experiment in the Baltimore schools (37:488-95). Reese suggests a daily pre-test could be given on each lesson unit in low ability classes. This school used a modification of the pre-test; that is, there was class presentation of the words before the pre-test was given. The teacher writes the word on the chalkboard and pronounces it. The children pronounce the word. If a word has multiple

meanings, several pupils may use such words in sentences to indicate these meanings. Syllables are underlined by the teacher and by pupils. Several spell the word orally, then pupils write the word and compare it with the one on the board. This is done several times by the class. At the close of the period a pre-test is given.

In Horn's study (19:280) it was determined that pronunciation of words before the pre-test increases achievement.

Reese suggests further:

In the pre-test, it is a good plan to dictate the words in the order given in the book or on the original list so that omitted and misspelled words may be quickly located. In the final test the order should be changed to prevent children from remembering the spelling of a word by its position in a list. In this test it is very desirable to have children write from the teacher's dictation sentences which include some of the words taught during the week. In teaching periods, the needs of the pupils will determine whether or not a class method, a group method, or a combination of both will be used (37:493).

At the conclusion of the experiment, Reese asserts, Baltimore schools decided the Test-study method was most successful. It was incorporated into the course of study for the intermediate grades and has been found to be a thorough method of presentation. Each teacher was allowed to choose what method of pre-test to use.

Gates also concludes that the pre-test plan has all the advantage in the management of easy words, for it saves

the pupil from needless over learning of words he already knows. Almost all pupils will know some of the words, and many will know most of them. The three tests assure that words not well learned will be missed on a subsequent test and will be studied again. He has tabulated results in time saving to give percentages of words which would not need to be studied under the pre-test plan.

Grade 2--	35	per cent
Grade 3--	55	per cent
Grade 4--	65	per cent
Grade 5--	69	per cent
Grade 6--	71	per cent
Grade 7--	75	per cent
Grade 8--	68	per cent
Average--	62.7	per cent

The test-study plan requires three reviews of the two-thirds of the words a pupil knows--in the Monday, Wednesday, and Friday tests, and conserves all the rest of the time for mastery of the one-third of the words which he does not know (9:18).

Gilbert (10:339) undertook to discover whether the use of flash cards would enable slow pupils to learn faster how to spell a word.

He used three groups composed of pupils as evenly matched as possible. The experimental group A was given quick drill with the flash cards and were told to study fast as they would have only a short time. Group B was given flash drill but was allowed to see the word as long as desired. The third group was taught by the usual Test-study procedure.

Group A surpassed the other two groups in learning efficiency and in time of study. The pupils exhibited increased proficiency in both immediate and delayed recall. Furthermore, interest and attention were better in the experimental group.

However, he feels his test was not conclusive enough to make a final statement because of the limits of time and the number of subjects. Yet, it appears that the use of flash cards with a limited time of exposure may have a value in cutting down the perceptual time (10:351).

III. VINDICATION AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE TEST-STUDY METHOD

These two methods, Study-test and Test-study, appear to be the principal ones on which research has been done. The Study-test method was already well established, and the Test-study plan was the new method being advocated. Therefore, much of the evidence appears to be refutation of objections to it.

Word Mastery

One objection to the pre-test has been that errors in checking might cause an initial error to be overlooked and thus to be unpracticed. Gates believes this indicates a need for more efficient methods of checking rather than an

abandonment of the pre-test. Then, too, it is likely in the three-test plan that the error would be observed on the second test and the word would be studied again (9:16).

A closely related objection is that a word might by chance be spelled correctly in the first test and really not be mastered. Again Gates (9:14, 16) states that this can be well cared for in the subsequent tests. He found that 21 per cent of the words spelled correctly on the first test were misspelled on the second test. But the Wednesday test reveals such errors and these words are studied on Thursday.

Still another related objection is that initial errors made in the pre-test tend to be perpetuated and to be regarded complacently. Gates (9:17) admits this may be somewhat true but feels it cannot be determined how much a tolerance for error may be developed. He says:

It is not impossible, indeed, that testing, by revealing errors, tends to cultivate an opposite inclination to correct them and to develop a sensitivity to errors which ordinary writing does not properly cultivate. The general tendency for initial errors to persist is apparently far less strong in spelling than in some other functions.

Likewise, Horn makes the following statement:

The resulting feeling of dissatisfaction of having missed the word, plus the concentrated attack on remedying the exact difficulty, more than outweigh any disadvantage rising from the initial misspelling (15:60-61).

On the same page, he cites Woody's statement that initial errors in the pre-test do not tend to persist in the

original form; they may be misspelled differently the next time.

Kilzer also believes errors made in the pre-test do not persist after further study. He says if a pupil is not sure of a word in the first test he should study it even though he may by chance spell it correctly (21:525).

Again, in commenting on the assertion that an initial error in the pre-test will persist, Breed quotes Woody, in part:

There was no significant tendency in the pre-test method to cause errors made in the first spelling of a word to persist. This same conclusion is supported by other investigators (4:301).

Kilzer (21:525) states that after five months, with no intervening drill, there was no significant difference in recall between the two methods. Furthermore, he points out that for the good spellers the Test-study method is "significantly superior" to the Study-test for immediate recall; for the poor spellers "it is at least equal." He concludes that since the methods differ little in recall value the Test-study method should be adopted because it saves time.

Time Saving

Kilzer (21:525) declares that the Test-study method saves the time of pupils since they do not study words they already know. Woody (46:155-71) also believes that time is saved in the pre-test method. McKee (29:389) cites Ritter

and Horn for the statement that if all children had to study all the words, 75 per cent of the class time would be wasted studying words already known. This percentage is still higher than the figure quoted from Gates earlier in this paper.

Gates (9:15) defines "easy" words as those needed now and "hard" words as those not needed until later. He states that whereas the Test-study plan makes it necessary to waste time learning "hard words" which are maintained over a long period of time, the Study-test plan wastes the time of the learner in studying words he already knows. However, he believes, this weakness of the Test-study plan could be largely removed by a revision in the grade placement of words.

With the limitation in grade placement now in effect, it is probable that one of these deficiencies is about as bad as the other. Theoretically, then, the contest may be called a draw up to this point.

Conclusions

Gates has already been cited as favoring the Test-study plan, although he has been frank in admitting its weaknesses. With these admissions, though, he has stated his suggestions for overcoming them. He further states that, in his opinion, most of the weaknesses of this method lie not in the plan, but in the inefficiencies of the pupil methods of study and the inadequacy of teacher supervision of pupil study (9:18-19).

Keener's conclusion is also cited by Gates (9:17). Most teachers definitely favor the Test-study method because the pupils show greater interest in spelling, and because they can help where they are needed. In a sample vote taken among the pupils with whom he conducted his experiment, the Test-study plan was favored ten to one.

Keener's study was based upon work with 976 pupils in grades two to eight. His experiment seems to show the Study-test method to be a little superior in grades two and three, and the Test-study superior in grades six, seven, and eight, with little difference in the intermediate grades (9:1-2).

Kilzer, as has already been noted, believes the Test-study is significantly superior for the best spellers, and at least as good for the poor spellers (21:525).

On the other hand, after extensive experimentation with these two methods, Woody concludes the differences are not very great (46:155-71).

The results obtained in one school were reported by Kingsley (22:127). A teacher who had been using the Study-test method knew her class was consistently low in spelling. She switched over to the Test-study method. "The results were more than surprising; they were almost unbelievable." Half of the class almost never had a lesson to prepare; no one ever had to study the whole lesson. The pupils learned to like spelling. In one month they moved from sixth place

(the lowest) to third place in daily class average. Soon other grades switched methods, and the following year still others. The results were much the same.

In giving a general summary of his study, Kingsley states that grades using the Test-study method showed better gains in class average and there was a higher general average than for those using the Study-test method (22:129).

Finally, Horn summarizes his findings; "Test all words before teaching" (15:60).

Thus far, the main features of the Study-test and the Test-study methods have been surveyed.

The Study-test method appears to be established, and the advocates for Test-study have been concerned with answering objections to their method and giving their reasons for belief in its superiority. The Test-study method saves much time of the pupils in that they do not have to study words they already know. Suggestions have been made for overcoming the weaknesses of this method. In the end it appears that there is not much difference in the ultimate results between the two.

In the next section some variations of these methods will be considered.

IV. COLUMN VERSUS CONTEXT METHOD

Another phase of spelling instruction on which there

has been experimentation and study is the column versus context. Some advocate the dictation of words in sentences, paragraphs, or phrases; while others believe that words studied and dictated in column form are more efficiently learned.

McKee (30:247-54; 31:339-48) wished to find whether the type of context would make any difference as opposed to the column plan. He conducted three experiments. In the first experiment, one group was taught by the list method, the other by context in phrases. In the second experiment, the list group was compared with a group taught by context in sentences; and in the third experiment, the second group was taught by context in paragraphs.

Each lesson consisted of twenty words. There were 5 fifteen minute spelling periods a week. Each pupil was given a list with words in a column or in context according to which group he was in. Three tests a week were given: initial, midweek, and final.

Each section on every experiment was evaluated by these four criteria:

- . . . (1) continuous improvement during the week,
- (2) improvement from the initial to the final test,
- (3) improvement from the initial to second test, and
- (4) improvement from second to final test (30:251-52).

The pupils in the column group, on all lessons, had the higher percentage of perfect scores on the second test,

and a larger percentage of perfect scores in six of the eight final tests.

Likewise, in a recall test after nine weeks, the column group was again superior. In the ability to use words previously studied in new context, both groups did almost equally well--there was no significant difference (30:253-54).

Hawley and Gallup found these results in an experiment. At the beginning, pupils in grades four to eight who were to be taught by the sentence method were slightly better spellers than those who were to be taught by the list method. At the end of the experiment the list-taught pupils were better spellers (12:309-10).

Difficulties in Transfer

Another experiment has been conducted by Cook and O'Shea (7:282). They concluded that the column form tended to be more accurate, but there did not seem to be a corresponding carry over in actual writing. Thus the correct spelling "of isolated words does not insure their correct spelling when the child tries to use them in expressing his thoughts."

On the supposition that the formality of the dictation may have been conducive to greater inaccuracy, another test was given at a later time. During the high interest

level dictation exercise the participants did not realize they would be tested for spelling. Later a column test was given using words from the dictation exercise. This time there was a decrease in frequency of errors of 24 per cent in the column method as compared with the context method. However, some of the difference may have come because attention to spelling was distracted by having to remember the sentence formation.

Hunkins makes several observations concerning this difficulty in transfer which may be true regardless of method used. He notes that pupils in lower grades have more difficulty in transfer than pupils in the upper grades. However, there are indications that some children form certain writing habits which interfere with transfer, and these are more noticeable in upper grades. He feels these poor writing habits may be forestalled by more checking of spelling in written work. Poor spellers exhibit greater difficulty in transfer than good ones (20:699).

When these facts were presented to the teachers involved, they readily admitted it was their responsibility to provide for more work to increase the transfer from column presentation, shown to be superior, to the use of the words in written exercises (20:693).

The loss in transfer from column presentation to sentence context was found by Tidyman to be 11 per cent. Both

high and low ability showed loss in transfer for hard words, and low ability pupils also showed loss on easy words.

The remedy, he feels, is not in discarding the list method but in supplementing the regular drill work by using the words in written exercises after the regular isolated drill period. He believes tests and reviews might be given in the form of dictated exercises so that there will be more contact with the words than in the usual work of the school (43:211-13).

Context form may occasionally be used to demonstrate to the child how his learned words may be used. In this case, according to McKee, the paragraph form is more suitable than sentences as it more nearly cloaks the words to be tested (29:412).

Winch (45:110) states that those who studied in column form could transfer words into cursive dictation much more readily than those who had studied the same words in context form. Also there was a greater gain in freedom of usage when words were first learned by the "direct" method-- that is, in lists.

Conclusions

Hawley and Gallup (12:310) conclude definitely that there is no advantage in the sentence-context method. They further state:

If the teachers wish to test pupils on the new words of the week, as is advocated by the best authorities, and if they desire to have the spelling work reviewed within the allotted time, they will use the list method. That they will be justified in so doing is suggested by the results of this experiment.

The same persons are quoted by McKee (29:411) for the statement:

Pupils are more able to spell in the form of connected discourse when the "teaching" tests are administered in column form than when they are administered in context form.

A brief, but pointed, statement is made by Hunkins. He says children spell more poorly by context than by lists, and probably spell still more poorly in written work (20:699).

Welch (44:31) concludes that the column method produces better spellers than the context method although both groups seem to understand meanings equally well.

McKee's final conclusion, as the result of his three experiments, is this:

Context exercises . . . do not constitute a procedure in the teaching of spelling which is as efficient as the common column form. When to the fact of their inferiority is added the amount of time and energy necessary for the construction and administration of these context forms in the classroom, they become not only inefficient but also impracticable (31:348).

In answering the question "Should we find a substitute?" Tidyman (43:213) has this to say:

In the first place, it is not a question of finding a substitute for the column method of presenting words. No one has ever found a method of teaching that would

take the place of a good drill exercise, involving taking the word out of its setting and studying it in isolation. It does mean that some modifications of the usual drill exercise should be made in order to guarantee greater facility in the use of words in context.

Thus, from the evidence here given, learning words in list form is considered to be the most efficient. However, it seems to be the general consensus of opinion that more attention should be given to the provision of exercises using these words, so that transfer of words learned in lists to written work will be more efficiently accomplished. In the next section three more minor variations of method will be considered.

V. MINOR METHODS

Individual Study

A number of experiments have been made with individual study. One of these was conducted in San Francisco by O'Reilly (34:503-505).

The first part of the year the class studied together from a workbook containing the words for the year. Lists of words were grouped according to subject. Words were dictated after only a brief scrutiny and errors recorded. After a few weeks the children who missed only a few words studied alone and learned the words they missed. Periodically a check test was given to determine their progress. Those having more difficulty studied with the teacher's

supervision. A semester test determined total progress to that time. A year end test of the entire list was given and results compared with the results of previous tests.

O'Reilly believes this method is highly successful though he does not claim it is the only successful method. In the pre-test 70 per cent missed more than ninety-six words, in the midyear test 20 per cent missed more than ninety-six words, and in the final test 56 per cent missed less than thirty-two words.

He points out these advantages: (1) it meets individual differences, (2) each child can concentrate on his own needs without spending time on words he already knows, (3) the teacher can easily compare tests and evaluate her own effectiveness as a teacher, and (4) each child can see his own progress.

Salisbury (39:208-216) has devised another plan, similar to the Winnetka plan. The teacher provides a scientifically derived master list of 5,000 words to be learned by the completion of the eighth grade. Each Monday every child chooses from the list the words he will learn that week; the teacher checks his list for accuracy. No pre-test is given; all the time is spent in learning. The next three days the child studies these words. On Friday he and his partner test each other. The teacher checks the tests, and

misspelled words are corrected and recorded to be included in the list for the following week.

She has not done research, but she feels this would be a fruitful field for investigation. She believes it would help children to learn to spell words when they are needed in written work.

Own Story Method

Basically, this method consists of devising spelling lists taken from the child's own written stories. Millar (33:496-502) reports such an experiment conducted in the Madison schools in grades three to six.

For the first test, all pupils were asked to write a short story. They were told to spell as best they could; no help was given. The second test was a vocabulary test. Each child was given a mimeographed sheet of twenty-five words from the social studies of the previous grades. On four blanks after each word they were asked to write four words suggested by each key word. The third test was a fifty word review test based on regularly selected words from the basic list of the previous grade.

The results showed, consistently in all grades, the greatest accuracy in the pupil's own stories; second best in the pupil's own vocabularies, and least accuracy in the review test of the previous basic list. This seems to

indicate that pupils learn best the words they actually use.

Millar further refers to a report by Dr. John Guy Fowlkes and a group of graduate students of the University of Wisconsin who wished to test the range in the own story method. They made a study of the 690 third grade pupils' own stories for running word count and different-word (words not in the basic list) count, with a breakdown into correct and incorrect spellings.

He notes that on this one occasion 38,960 running words were used. Seventy-one per cent of these had already been taught in the basic list. Among these words the average error was 10 per cent. Among the remaining 2,304 different-words the average error was 18 per cent. These same children had made 39 per cent error in the review test on the basic list.

Dr. Fowlkes concludes that possibly a child tends to spell more accurately when he is expressing his own thoughts than when using words not of his own choosing. It also is apparent that many children had learned words not in the basic list. From this it seems much consideration should be given to spelling outside the basic lists (33:497).

Corrected-test Method

An experiment was conducted by Horn (19:277-85) to determine the effect on learning of correcting the three weekly tests.

The first week all three groups followed the regular Test-study procedure. The second week Groups A and B took tests on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday as usual, but each child corrected his own test immediately and took another one right away. Group C did the same except that the words were pronounced before the first test on Monday. None of them studied the words between times.

From the results Horn concludes that the corrected test would greatly benefit pupils in grades above the primary level. Without any other study the corrected test alone was sufficient for near mastery by the upper one-third of the class. He feels the correcting of tests appears to be the most important single factor toward greater achievement in spelling (19:285).

A variation of the corrected test was tried by Louis (27:3ff) for the purpose of discovering how much could be accomplished in learning to spell simply by listening to the teacher spell the words.

In one group the Test-study procedure was followed with modified introduction on Monday. In the second group the tests were given as in the Test-study procedure, but the children did not see a word list and did not study beyond what was done in the class period. The teacher pronounced a word, used it in a sentence, and pronounced it again. Then the children wrote the word. Each child listened to the

teacher spell the word orally, then corrected his own. The same procedure was followed on Wednesday and Friday. There was no other study. The teacher checked all papers for accuracy.

The two groups were nearly the same, within 1 per cent. But the second group did not spend time and effort in formal study. He feels that listening acuity was improved--the children knew there would be no other opportunity to study. There was an increased spelling consciousness. The recall value was equal to the regular Test-study. He concludes the corrected test ought to be utilized more (27:93).

Saale (38:14) notes these results of Louis' experiment. The results show that three lessons a week are sufficient to attain at least as high a percentage of accuracy as the Test-study method alone. Thus the auditory approach seems to be effective. Motivation was increased and much time saved, especially by the faster learners. Recall was 65 per cent accurate after thirty days.

From this review of minor methods it seems that individual study would be especially desirable for the high ability spellers, who already know the words of the basic list and need to concentrate on their own errors. Furthermore, it seems there might be more efficient transfer of words from list to written composition if children were encouraged to use them in writing their own stories. It

might be just the motivation needed to make children want to learn to spell. And last, there appears to be some value in the child's correcting his own tests and in listening to someone spell the words.

In the next chapter various textbooks will be reviewed to discover the general objectives of each and the method followed.

CHAPTER IV

AN ANALYSIS OF VARIOUS SPELLING TEXTBOOKS

This analysis has noted mainly the phases considered in this paper. Each series has been examined as to its general plan and objectives, the plan for word mastery, and the general method of study. The Test-study method is designated as modified if the words are introduced, pronounced, or discussed before the pre-test is given. The list method is considered modified if the words are also presented in a story or sentence context. All statements have been taken from the published material of the company-- usually from a teacher's edition.

Hildreth (14:188-89) gives some advice on the use of workbooks and texts. She says if texts are used only in a mechanical, uniform way, the purpose of teaching may be defeated. There may not be a carry over to all written work. For best results the teacher should follow the suggestions as outlined by the authors of the text.

The use of the workbook is one way in which spelling is linked with reading and language. Sometimes the lists in these books are used merely as check lists to determine if pupils are learning the words they need for content writing.

Language Arts Speller (3)

Plan and objectives

1. That the child shall learn to spell automatically the 3,525 words in grades two to eight. This list will care for 97 per cent of his writing needs.
2. To promote associative learning, that is "to spell at the end of his lead pencil in a meaningful situation."

Word mastery

1. Each word is written four or five times a week, and reviewed after each test.
2. Words are reviewed in the fourth unit after each test.
3. Words are reviewed in later units of the same book, and in succeeding books.

Method

1. Modified Test-study.
2. Modified list method.

Learning to Spell (47)

Plan and objectives

1. To include in each grade list words related to each child's everyday experiences, words whose meaning is likely to be already understood.
2. To supplement the basic list for all children with supplementary enrichment lists for rapid learners.

3. To stress handwriting.
4. To correlate each unit with some other subject.

Mastery

1. A review lesson at the end of each group of five units includes all the words of the unit.
2. These are tested twice.
3. Most difficult words are incorporated into word lists for succeeding grades.

Method

1. Study-test.
2. Modified list.

Spelling We Use (18)

Plan and objectives

1. To provide natural integration with other areas of the curriculum.
2. To provide motivation for the continuous application of spelling in all writing activities.
3. To promote skill in the application of spelling rules, use of the dictionary, and accurate writing.

Mastery

1. Each week's lesson includes five of the hardest words from the lesson four weeks previous.

2. Each grade list includes difficult words from previous grades. These are not studied unless they are misspelled on a test.

Method

1. Modified Test-study.
2. List.

The New Sanford Speller (2)

Plan and objectives

1. To help each pupil develop basic spelling and word study techniques.
2. To emphasize the importance of accurate observation and pronunciation.

Mastery

1. There are four review units, each presenting words of the previous eight units.
2. Provision is made for individualized review as it is needed.

Method

1. Modified Study-test.
2. Combination list and context.

Building Spelling Power (11)

Plan and objectives

1. To help the child learn to spell correctly in all written work.
2. To assure mastery of the 390 words at each grade level.
3. To review previously learned word skills and teach new ones appropriate to each grade level.

Mastery

1. The child keeps a notebook of his own misspelled words and continues to study them.
2. There is a review of previously learned phonetic elements.

Method

1. Modified Test-study.
2. Combination list and sentence context.

New Learning Words (1)

Plan and objectives

1. To teach the words most commonly met in reading and writing at each grade level.
2. To set a standard of 100 per cent mastery of the 4,153 words in the entire series.
3. To thoroughly teach spelling rules and skills.¹

¹Teacher's manuals contain a spelling rules handbook, and in grades six to eight a list of new words recently coming into use.

Mastery

1. Individual restudy of words missed on final tests.
2. From grade three and up each unit has four words from the previous year.
3. The last week of each year has a review of all the hard words of the entire year.

Method

1. Study-test.
2. List.

Spelling for Word Mastery (35)

Plan and objectives

1. To stress word analysis skills.
2. To encourage the use of all the senses in learning to spell.
3. To give practice in dictionary skills.
4. To stress mastery of the 3,310 words in the series which supply 97 per cent of the words needed.
5. To improve handwriting.

Mastery

1. There is daily review within the unit.
2. In grades two and three there is a review every three weeks.
3. In grades four to eight there is a review each six weeks.

4. There are semester reviews.
5. There is grade to grade review of difficult words.

Method

1. Study-test.
2. Combination list and sentence context.

We Spell and Write (26)

Plan and objectives

1. To teach the 3,324 words of highest frequency in the child's reading and writing.
2. To emphasize spelling, writing, and dictionary skills.

Mastery

1. Each week words are reviewed and tested several times during the week.
2. After unit six a running review is begun for two days a week and continues the rest of the year.
3. There is a review unit every sixth week.

Method

1. Study-test.
2. List.

Spelling Today (10)

Plan and objectives

1. To teach accurately the words for each grade.
2. To promote the learning of dictionary skills.
3. To teach spelling skills.

Mastery

1. There is individualized review of words missed.
2. Each unit contains review words.
3. Each ninth unit is a review, in two sections.
4. Opportunity is given for regrouping of the class after each review unit.

Method

1. Study-test.
2. Modified list.

Teaching for Success in Spelling (28)

Plan and objectives

1. To teach 94 per cent of the words needed to write.
2. To provide bonus words for good spellers.
3. To provide practice with spelling skills.

Mastery

1. Each unit contains review words.
2. Each book contains review words from the previous grade.
3. Each sixth unit is a review of the previous five units.
There is individualized review of words missed on the final tests.

Method

1. Study-test.
2. Modified list.

The New Spelling Goals (23)Plan and objectives

1. To develop spelling power
2. To teach in each grade, phonic generalizations which can be understood at that level.
3. To promote knowledge of dictionary skills.

Mastery

1. Each unit contains review words.
2. There is general review of phonetic generalizations learned in previous grades.

Method

1. Study-test.
2. List.

My Word Book (6)Plan and objectives

1. To incorporate the skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing.
2. To present words which are already known.
3. To emphasize phonics.

4. To develop word meanings.
5. To emphasize the correction of writing habits which are the cause of spelling errors.

Mastery

1. The beginning units contain review words from the previous grade.
2. Each sixth unit is a review unit.

Method

1. Study-test.
2. List.

This survey of current series of spelling texts and workbooks being used, for the most part, shows that they have incorporated the principles of good general procedure noted in Chapter II.

Some of them seem to emphasize phonic and dictionary skills, though these have not been omitted by others. All of them have made provision for word mastery. There are more using the Study-test method than the Test-study.

A more complete summary will be made in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

General Characteristics

The general procedures considered in this study should be observed in teaching spelling, no matter what text is followed, or whether any text is used. The main factors noted may be summed up thus: visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, and vocal perception. To these must be added the child's intellectual ability and his desire to spell.

Answers to questions listed in the introduction have been found in the material examined.

1. It has been found that phonetics and other rules should be taught only when they will be a definite help in learning to spell specific words. They are an aid, not a means.

2. Most authorities believe a definite time each day should be allotted for the study of spelling. They do not agree on the length of these periods, but most feel that short periods on successive days are better than a long period once a week. It is the teacher's responsibility to plan a scheduled time for such learning and to provide a study atmosphere in the schoolroom.

3. The teacher must be the child's pattern in pronunciation and enunciation. A child may misunderstand a word

and make errors simply because he is trying to write what he hears. Words should be presented so a child may use both visual and auditory perception while he is learning a word. Poor spellers may need to add kinaesthetic and vocal perception, thus using all four at one time.

4. There is a wide variety of opinion as to how many words a child needs to know, but most authorities seem to agree that he should learn only those for which he has a current need in his writing. Most textbook lists have been scientifically derived with this in mind. By comparing figures from different texts, the average number in a series is 2,800 - 3,000 words. This is about 97 per cent of the words needed in adult life. It also seems the general belief that teachers should not abandon basic spelling lists, but should supplement these with individual lists and instruction.

Each child should be given a definite routine to follow in learning a word, and this should be done on an individual basis. Not every child can learn the same way.

As has been noted, by the end of the eighth grade a child can know 97 per cent of the words needed by the average adult. But he needs to be taught a permanent method of learning spelling so he will have a means, as he goes on in school, by which to learn the other 3 per cent. If he goes on into higher education he will need to learn to spell

many, many more words than the average adult. So it is important in the grade school to teach him how to learn spelling.

5. Meaning, it appears, will be taught as needed for the child's understanding of the word, but it is not to be considered as a method of learning to spell the word. Words with concrete meanings are easier to spell than abstract words. A child may be able to use a word in a sentence correctly and still not know its meaning. (The use of visual aids might help correct this shortcoming).

6. If a child cannot learn all the words in a basic list, he should just learn part of them; but he should learn the ones he most needs in his current writing. Again, the pupil who already knows the words of a basic list should concentrate on learning words he has misspelled in his written work. He might also do some work in etymology and semantics. Each child should keep a list of his own misspelled words, both from the basic list and from his written work.

7. Review and testing go hand in hand; both should be conducted frequently and should continue year after year. Some words may, indeed, be reviewed every year from the second to the eighth. This is necessary to assure complete mastery, the goal of all spelling instruction.

Method

A study has been made of the Study-test and Test-study methods. Most of the experimentation was done from twenty to forty years ago--or longer. Thus most of the principles found to be good have been incorporated into textbooks. It seems, likewise, that Study-test is the older method. Test-study was found to be just about as good; there did not appear to be much difference in their relative efficiency. The advocates of Test-study appeared to be on the defensive, yet they enthusiastically favored that method. They offered solutions to weaknesses and generally seemed to be defending their conclusions. The Study-test method saves time in that words are learned as they are needed, not a year or two before. On the other hand, Test-study saves time because words already known do not need to be studied. On the whole, the difference does not seem to be great enough to be decisive for either.

The conclusion regarding Context versus List methods is very different. The evidence overwhelmingly favors using a list of words and studying each one in isolation. Then, after it is learned, it may be transferred into context material the teacher will provide.

Those who have tried the Individual Study Method feel that it is successful, but not enough research and experimentation has been done to warrant any recommendations.

This method may be especially good high ability spellers.

The main conclusion from the Own Story Method is that possibly a child tends to spell more accurately when he is expressing his own thoughts.

From the Corrected-test study were found two conclusions. First, the correction of each test by the child himself may be an important factor in learning to spell; second, some children, at least, may benefit greatly by listening to the teacher spell the words orally as they correct their tests. Not much experimentation has been done with these last two methods.

Textbook Analysis

From the examination of textbooks it was found that all of them incorporate, in one way or another, the general procedures noted in Chapter II. Some of them have made direct statements, others have included them in a very general way. This conclusion was expected since it seems obvious that textbook writers would not have ignored the research that had been done.

Each series makes some provision for review, though some plan for more intensive and thorough review than others. Most of them provide grade to grade review. Only one provides for three levels of ability in the basic list. Others simply advocate choosing supplementary words from the child's own writing.

Most of them seem to have stayed with the older Study-test Method. Only three of the twelve examined use the Test-study approach, and some of these are modified by a Monday word presentation. However, all but one of them use the list method, though several modify this with context presentation of words.

Final Conclusion

In conclusion, it seems that any fault which may be found with spelling instruction lies not in the methods used but in the administration (or lack of it) of those methods.

Efficient methods have been devised, by careful study and experimentation, and incorporated into textbooks. The authors of these series have included enough instruction for the efficient teaching of spelling.

Now teachers should accept the challenge and use more efficiently and diligently the material provided.

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