

# Spelling Progress Bulletin

Dedicated to finding the causes of difficulties in learning reading and spelling.

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## A Statement of Policy

Since none of the persons concerned with the publication of this Bulletin have any vested interest in the present methods of teaching reading and spelling, and are not bound by tradition to the status quo, we feel that we can consider any teaching aid, tool, or means of presentation that will help to eliminate the causes of difficulties in teaching reading and spelling to children as well as to foreigners, whether such innovations may be drastic or not, whether such changes may be initially costly or not, so long as the proposed changes can be shown to be capable of producing the desired results.

The desired and expected results must be able to be proven by experimental teaching projects. To this end, we hope to tailor this Bulletin, and will encourage such projects. We are especially interested in finding out about the progress of any projects in the teaching of spelling and reading.

We wish to print what our readers will find most interesting. Would you like to hear about some oldies that were considered interesting because they had that punch? Such as Fernald's How Our Spelling Damages the Mind? Or Mayhem in the Classroom? Or is Anguish Langwich Useful? Or Numeric Reform in Nesciouba?

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Our next issue will have some of the following articles: 1. The Best Method of Teaching Children to Read and Write, 2. A Foreigner and English Spelling, 3. The Use of a Phonemic Notation in Teaching Reading, 4. What About Schwa?, 5. The Problem of Reforming Our Spelling, 6. Eyes That See Not. 7. Keeping Up to Date on the Teaching Experiments.

If you did not get a copy of the prospectus for this Bulletin, we would be glad to send it. Now that you know what we would like to print, how about YOUR contribution to make the Bulletin a help to all those who are interested?

## **An Analysis of Spelling Errors, a New Slant. by Newell W. Tune**

In attempting to analyse spelling errors and to try to find the causes thereof, it is necessary to differentiate between errors due to physical causes and those due to mental aberrations. A physical examination by a specialist in children's defects can often quickly locate the cause of trouble when it is due to eyesight or hearing difficulties.

Assuming that the physical causes have been investigated and eliminated, there frequently remain many errors in pupils compositions and spelling lists. Spelling, whether oral or written, depends upon the mental association of certain arbitrary symbols obtained thru one or more sense channels, the subsequent recall of these symbols in a conventional order, and the expression of this ordered group of symbols by some form of motor activity. Spelling is a sensorimotor habit which expresses itself in every instance of the spelling of a word as a synthesized motorial reaction following certain complicated sensory and mental stimulations. Errors in spelling are more instructive of a pupils character than correctly spelt words. A careful examination of the misspelt words of pupils discloses that certain classes of errors are frequently reoccurring, due to deeply ingrained habits, even at tender years.

It should be kept in mind that the sharp lines of classification between the several kinds of spelling errors that seem to be indicated, do not always occur in fact. Many spelling errors are the result of several contributing causes. Hence the classification herein used cannot always be considered as the only class. Some errors fall in two classes and are therefore listed twice.

Harry V. Masters classified spelling errors in four groups, as follows-

1. Additions of letters: for the word "already", the most frequent error was "allready".
2. Omission of letters: for "ladder", the most frequent error was "lader".
3. Substitutions of letters: for "body", the most frequent error was "bode".
4. Transposition of letters: for "couple", the most frequent error was "coupel".

While this classification may sometimes give a clue to the cause of spelling errors, it is by itself not sufficient. It needs to be used in conjunction with other classifications and appraisals. Three other plans of classification are added.

In the second plan of classification, the most frequent errors were classified as being "reasonably phonetic" or "reasonably non-phonetic". In the third, as words (man for men), or as non-words (mon for man). And in the fourth as homonyms (homophones) or non-homophones. Each of these classifications gives us a different tool to judge the causes of a pupils spelling errors.

James E. Mendenhall found that class 2 gave interesting and significant answers to the causes of many spelling errors. His Table II portrays the following facts: 1. A large per cent, 62 to 83% of the most frequent errors are reasonably phonetic rendition of the words. From grades I and II this per cent increases more rapidly than before grade II. Masters made a study of the misspellings for words that were phonetically correct. He found out that out of 13,183 misspellings at the eighth grade level, "the total of the frequencies of the forms of misspellings which are phonetic spellings is 8,528 or 64.3% ". From this fact he concluded that "the majority of those pupils who do not spell the words correctly, do make an attempt to spell them as they sound". This along with similar studies of Oliver P. Cornman, Leta S. Hollingsworth, Gregory, Smedley, Donald Agnew, Glenn McCracken, definitely indicate that pupils natural instincts are to use logic and to try to spell phonetically, and that if our spelling were to be made completely phonetic in its system, that from 2/3 to 5/6 of the errors in spelling might be eliminated. Of course, this assumes that no different

kind of an error will take the place of the phonetical errors that would be eliminated by adopting a phonetic system of spelling. This remains to be seen by experimental teaching projects now being planned. Ernest Horn says: "Neither in reading nor in spelling have attempts at rationalization given results which are very satisfactory. The unphonetic character of English spelling may constitute an insurmountable barrier to successful rationalization of spelling".

The third classification, words or non-words, helps to decide the difference between split thinking, or change or reversal of thought, and plain carelessness or lack of attention or boredom. The latter could be caused by monotonous repetitions, ineffective methods of presentation of the subject, or lack of motivation for the pupil. All of these reflect upon the ability or the lack of ideas of the teacher. The old fashioned spelling contests did help in this respect but were so time consuming that they were largely dropped. Split thinking, etc. are indications of nervousness, apprehension, fear and worry in a child. These could be partly avoided if a child were able to analyse properly the sounds of a word, and to have more confidence in his ability to transcribe: correctly the sounds into the phonetic symbols of a regular spelling system. Oliver P. Cornman said: "So many errors were entirely due to reliance upon phonetic guidance and about one quarter of all errors were made with those confusing alternatives which the irrationalities of English spelling so abundantly provide. These results may well stimulate the advocate of spelling reform to energetic effort. The pedagogue, however, must accept the situation as he finds it and do the best he can under the most discouraging circumstances. Since nearly half of all errors are due to confusion and the unphonetic nature of English spelling, a properly developed spelling reform would not only eliminate half of the causes of spelling errors but would psychologically be a tremendous help in establishing the pupils self-confidence."

Mendenhall found that the fourth classification, homophones or non-homophones, does not constitute a very large or important source of trouble, varying from 3.4% in grade 1, to 9.1% in grade II and 3.1% in grade V. The rise in grade II is probably due to two causes - lack of understanding and a heavier burden of learning.

Oliver P. Cornman has rather different ideas and means of classifying spelling errors. He bases his classification on either motor or sensory incoordination, as follows:

1. MOTOR INCOORDINATION, all those classes of errors whose commission seems to have been predominately determined by defect in the motor process.

- (a) Omission; when one or more links (literal or syllabic components of a word) in the chain of associations are omitted: hoase (hoarse), Main (Maine), tortose (tortoise), grocies (groceries).
- (b) Addition, where one or more supernumerary letters or syllables appear: wolfe (wolf), tarble (table), Lincolin (Lincoln), pianomo (piano).
- (c) Change: where a letter is so incompletely formed or otherwise badly written as to form a different letter, or where one letter is unaccountably substituted for another: trumb (thumb), crach (crack), sise (six).
- (d) M & N: the confusion of M & N for each other is a special case of (c): swin (swim), printms (prints), Jin (Jim), Mell (Nell).
- (e) Transposition; where literal or syllabic transposition takes place: aminal (animal), chian (chain), voilets (violets), gril (girl), Call-hillow (Callow-hill)
- (f) Wrong letter doubled; this is an error somewhat related to (e). The doubling is shifted to the wrong letter: speel (spell), beff (beef, dool (doll), croos (cross).
- (g) Attraction-Sensori-Motor; a letter or arrangement of letters in a previously written word recalls a similar form where it should not occur: roap (rope) follows soap, cloes (clothes) follows shoes, groop (group) follows troop; or a prominent letter in a word calls out an incorrect repetition of that letter or a substitution of it for a correct letter in a later part or

syllable of the same word: Missiouri (Missouri), sunsut (sunset).

(h) Attraction-Ideo-Motor: a letter or arrangement of letters in a succeeding word recalls a wrong form. Both words have been held together in idea, but the order of subscription has not followed the order of ideation: groep(group) precedes troop, stateau (statue) precedes plateau; or the thought of a word not actually appearing at all upon the paper may determine a wrong spelling: heigh called out in association with height, nomber called out in association with the abbreviation No.

II COMPLICATIONS, including tongue twisting. This term is used to designate those errors which seem to be due to a combination of defective functioning of both sensorial recall and motorial expression: amanole (animal), pienshel (peninsula), oastross (ostrich), possesule (possesive).

III SENSORY INCOORDINATION: all those classes of errors whose commission seems to have been determined by defect in sensory process, the literal associations having been improperly formed; or forgotten or changed from the conventional order.

(1) Phonetic, where the errors are determined by attempted phonetic associations.

(a) Standard, where the spelling is largely determined by phonetic analogies and on the basis of an approximately standard pronunciation: Wensday (Wednesday), scolar (scholar), lether (leather), Dik (Dick), ismus (isthmus), telafone (telephone), nob (knob).

(b) Local and individual, where a more or less faulty or incorrect pronunciation or departure from the standard pronunciation is the basis on which the attempt to follow phonetic analogy is made: chimley (chimney), hookenlater (hook and ladder), Henery (Henry), dest (desk).

(2) Confusing; this class includes those words whose spelling is difficult because of the existence of similar alternatives which may or may not be phonetic.

(a) Similar and possibly phonetic; confusion of ei and ie, tion and sion, or, er, ar; ly and y; able and ible: grammer (grammar), rular (ruler), liley (lily), trolly (trolley), independent (independent).

(b) Doubling; using doubled letters for single ones: Hellen (Helen), gass (gas), Pannama (Panama), raddish (radish).

(c) Non-doubling; the reverse of the preceding, omitting to double a letter: galons (gallons), weding (wedding), swiming (swinging), cobles (cobles).

(3) Unclassified; including omission of silent letters and all other errors not treated under any of the other classes: Scuykill (Schuylkill), handerchief (handkerchief), hources (horses), Venezuela (Venezuela), Llonos (Llanos).

The first four subclasses of the first division, (a), (b), (c), (d), are all closely related. They all contain errors that show an incompleteness, inexactness or excess of execution of required movements. Very similar phenomena are manifested in oral spelling, and also in both oral and written language. In the latter, words or phrases are the elements that are omitted, changed, added, etc, contrary to the actual intention of the speaker or writer, and frequently without his subsequent perception of the fact. They are, no doubt, the result of fatigue or other cause inducing a temporary inefficiency of the highest psychic controlling factors: attention, apperception.

The four remaining subclasses of the first division also form a closely related group. They may all be regarded as illustrations of the effect of suggestion. Special emphasis has been placed upon this in the classes (g) and (h) by the use of the term "attraction", the sensori-motor and ideo-motor attractions being those exerted by direct sensory or idea presentations. Indeed, "suggestion" could have been used with propriety as a general class term under which to subsume the errors found in the classes (e), (f), (g), (h). The transposition of letters, for example, in crirle (circle), was probably due to the simultaneous rise of both elements in the consciousness and the triumph of "r" in the struggle for first expression, by reason of some superior suggestive force, tho "i" had sufficient dynamogeny to insure its belated emergence.

The second and third divisions are of more interest, perhaps, to the pedagogue than to the psychologist, as they present some of the more important spelling difficulties with which the teacher has to contend.

The errors in the second group occur rather infrequently, being only 2.3% in one group and 4.3% in the other group.

The errors in the third group occur about as frequently as the errors in the previous groups combined, therefore deserve a great deal of attention. The errors in the first section occur because of the pupils' natural instinct to try to spell according to the sound attributed to certain letters, although in English this is not consistent. Some of the errors in the second section, particularly in subsection (a) may be due to the same cause when a pupil has a choice of two similar digraphs that both sound alike under some conditions. The errors in the other two subsections are not the result of phonetic attempts but rather of the lack of knowledge of the rules of spelling.

Some of the subclasses of the main divisions may be examined in groups. A table shows the results of the pupils of the two schools for subclasses of errors to have varied very little from each other, though the errors of 102 and 502 papers are the basis of computation. The more purely motorial errors are 28.6% and 30.7%, while those mediated by suggestion are 19.6% and 14.1%. Of the errors in the sensorial type, 19.6% and 20.8%, or about one fifth were entirely due to reliance upon phonetic guidance, and 23.2% and 26.3%, or about one quarter of all errors, were made with those confusing alternatives which the English spelling has to offer when the pupil tries to spell by analogy. Together, this means that 43% in one school and 47% in the larger school were due to trying to spell by analogy, which means that almost half of the pupils' errors were due to the inconsistent, unphonetic nature of English spelling.

Concerning the subclass of confusing letters, Dr. Rice says: "The words that must be studied individually are those in which no clue is given, either by sound or by rules. The best to be done with such words, until our spelling is reformed, is to bring them to the notice of the child, and to trust for chance for the results. The simple reform of dropping the silent letter in the last syllable in such words as: beggar, driver, doctor, mantel, bundle, metal, would enable us to strike no less than 15% of the words from the described list of errors. Again, in the long vowel sounds the difficulties are endless, the same thing being represented in so many ways that it is a marvel to be able to master them at all. To illustrate: blue, to, too, two, shoe, you, ewe, lieu, view, new, knew, wooed, manoeuvre, sous, through, June, juice, pugh, rheumatism, ragout, coup. The long o-sounds are equally as bad. Again the choice between ee and ea, as in: reed, read, is extremely puzzling. What a boon to our children it would be to rid spelling of such peculiarities as these. While some of the errors of doubling and non-doubling, which go on to swell the above percentage, come under rule and could therefore be eliminated, according to Dr. Rice, from the list of confusing words if proper advantage were taken of some rules in English spelling, yet as it is usually taught they are as confusing as the rest.

Cornman's results were based upon two groups of pupils from two different schools, one of 102 pupils (30 boys, 72 girls), the other of 502 pupils, equally divided. While the smaller school is too small a group to be statistically accurate, even so the results closely approximate those of the larger school.

Still Cornman's method of classification leaves some room for dissatisfaction, because it does not tell us what we really want to know about the causes of spelling errors. His classification is concerned chiefly with the *manner* in which the errors are made. From some of these manners a deduction can be made as to the causes, but why not try to hypothesize the possible causes and

conditions, and see where they could fit in?

A classification of spelling errors based upon the possible causes such as the following, might lead us to information and data that could better explain the causes:

1. Sex difference of pupils.
2. Mental capacity (I.Q., or other).
3. Mispronunciation due to
  - a. dialect, b. speech defects, c. carelessness, d. lack of knowledge.
4. Phonetic analysis
  - a. of words not spelt phonetically, b. wrong analysis, c. wrong symbols used.
5. Length and kind of words, spelling demons.
6. Physical causes
  - a. defects - eyes, ears, b. motorial (fingers, hands), hitting wrong key, c. temporary - fatigue, inattention, health, sleep, time of day, d. physique.
7. Mental (including psychological)
  - a. emotional stress, b. aphasia, c. impetuosity, d. distraction, e. psychological.
8. Motivation
  - a. lack, b. competition with other motives.
9. Method of teaching
  - a. the spelling drill, b. look and say, c. analogy, d. incidental phonics, e. phonetics or direct phonics, f. self-teaching or idea suggestion.

In the next issue these topics will be explored to see what effect each has on spelling errors according to available data from research and publications.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin March 1961 p6]

## **Two Teaching Experiments, by Newell W Tune**

In London, England last May a teaching project was started by the University of London Institute of Education jointly with the National Foundation for Educational Research, with the blessing and official approval of Her Majesty's Minister of Education. Considerable publicity was obtained from articles in the Teachers World for Feb. 26, 1960 and the Schoolmaster, July 1, 1960, as well as in all of the English and American newspapers.

The objective of this planned experimental teaching is to determine the value of the Ehrhardt Augmented Roman Alphabet as a transition teaching tool to enable children to grasp more quickly the relationship between the sound and the English spelling of words. The Ehrhardt Augmented Alphabet consists of the 23 Roman letters of the alphabet (excluding c, q, and x), augmented by connected digraphic letters that look very much like the unconnected digraphs conventionally used for the rest of the 40 sounds of English speech. (wh is not recognized as a separate sound, since it is not pronounced in Southern British speech, but nevertheless it is represented by an appropriately

connected symbol). The Ehrhardt symbols were designed and made by the Monotype Corporation in cooperation with I. J. Pitman, S. S. Eustace, and others. Attention is called to the idea that this alphabet is intended to be used only as a transition teaching tool for children in their early stages of learning to read. For this reason, certain forms of our present, spelling, such as the t in "watch", is retained in order to make the transition that much easier. A reversed z, something like a squared off s, is used when ever s has the z-sound. A comparison is made between words printed in conversational spelling, Augmented Ehrhardt, and the International Phonetic Association system of sound representation, called the I.P.A, Alphabet. The latter, of course, suffers badly not only because the sounds are divided into smaller units than we are accustomed to using and understanding, but also because the I.P.A, symbols are, in some cases, radically different from conventional letters or digraphs. Consequently, in about 7/8 of the words, Ehrhardt looks so closely like conventional printing that almost anyone can read it without special reference to the pronunciation key. The I.P.A. system, on the other hand, not only requires memorizing the sounds of many new characters but also a change in a person's thinking of the composition of quite a few of our English sounds of speech. Needless to say, the Ehrhardt Alphabet adequately fills a definite need for which previously nothing was available.

Altho the teaching experiment was announced last May 28, 1960, actual teaching with it will not start until September of 1961, due to the time needed to raise funds for teacher's salaries (The British Government is not supplying any money for this experiment, only its approval and best wishes). Many American teachers are contributing to the fund because in that way they will get first hand information on the results of the problems as they come up in trying out the experiment. A few booklets explaining the use of the Ehrhardt Alphabet are on hand at the Research Committee for Spelling Reform, Hollywood, Calif. When these are exhausted, Mr. I. J. Pitman, of London, England would be glad to supply any teacher with the booklet.

The second teaching experiment started last September, 1960 in Denver, Colo. on a small scale. Dr. Helen Bonnema, Principal of the Edgewater School, is using a slightly modified version of World English as a similar method of introducing the study of reading, mind you, to two classes of pre-kindergarten and kindergarten children. This is to be compared with the progress of pupils taught in conventional manner (but probably of a year more in age (?), since kindergarteners are not usually taught reading). Her modification of World English consists of adding the I.P.A. Schwa symbol, inverted e, but also bows to convention in allowing th to represent both the voiced and unvoiced sounds conventionally represented by th. Since only one symbol was needed to be added to typewriters, the preparation of material could easily be made inexpensively by Hektograph or Mimeograph processes. Another advantage, since the project is still in the exploratory stage, is that reading materials can be made easily, and quickly revised whenever points of incomprehension or weaknesses of similitude are encountered.

We are anxiously awaiting progress reports from both of these two experimental teaching projects. A preliminary report from Dr. Bonnema typed in her modified World English, is inserted here so you can judge its readability. The pressure of administrative duties and plans for expansion of her program require so much of her time that it will almost preclude any detailed individual correspondence about the project, but from time to time more information will be available in the form of bulletins. If there are any questions about the project that this Editor can answer or get the information, we will be glad to inform such readers.

[Spelling Progress Bulletin December 1961 pp7-8]

Denver, Colo,  
February 1961  
Miss Helen Bowyer  
Mr. Newell Tune

### Deer frendz:

The suupərintendənt ov skuulz has on hiz desk a prəpoezəl bie thə direktər ov kərikyələm and thə suupərviezər ov eləmentəri eduekaeshən that thə dikshənəri kee reeding eksperiment bee ekstendəd for three yeerz. In adishən tuu fonik wurk in kindərgartən it wood bee karrid on in furst graed nekst yeer, thə furst and sekənd thə foloe.ing yeer, and in furst, sekənd, and thurd aftər that. Thə tranzishən tuu kənvəshənəl wrieting wood be maed in thurd graed.

Ie think the chield shood bee aloud tuu uez this sistəm for three yeerz. In aul priemarri graedz hee shood uez thə eezi dikshənarri wae ov indikaeting soundz, wrieting enithing hee wishəz in this mannər. Then wun bie wun, hee kan lurn thə 48 jenərəl speling ruelz, and transkrieb hiz wurdz intuu standərd wrieting. Hee wood hav thə sikueriti ov proeseeding from thə noen, thə dikshənərri noetaeshən ov wurd soundz, tuu thə un-noen, thə kənvəshənəl speling. Hee kood lurn standərd speling fastər this wae than bie methədz emploid heertuufor, and bikum ə mor konfidənt, akuerət, and efektiv reedər. Wee wood liek tuu kəmparr thə reeding abiləti ov thurd graed childrən huu hav ben taut bie thə dikshənarri kee sistəm with thurd graedərz huu hav ben taut bie uthər sistəmz uezd in Jefferson County. This kəmparrisən wood bee maed in thə spring ov 1964.

### Results duering tha furst səməstər

Thə results in kindərgartən duering thə past three munths hav led us tuu bileev that such ə projekt iz wurth trie.ing. Wun iz surpriezəd at hou much thə teechar haz akomplisht when kənsidəring thə smaul amount ov tiem spent on it kəmparrd with thə tiem uezd in furst graed. In kindərgartən it haz ben twenti minəts a dae sins the midəl ov Octoebər, or əbout an our and a haf ə week, whiel in furst graed it haz ben mor than ten ourz ə week sins thə furst ov Septembər.

### Rieting

At furst thae roet onli thə individue.al letterz ov thə alfabet. Nou, short wurdz and ə fue short sentənsəs such az *ie luv yuu*, and *this iz ground hog dae*. Thae sound out eech siləbəl bifer rieting. Not much tiem iz spent on rieting. Much less than wee had antisipaetid when bigining thə projekt. Rieting iz teedius and laborius for theez litəl foeks. It maeks us apreeshi.aet the atempts sum skuulz hav maed tuu furnish tiepwrietərz for puepəlz.

Thae uez:

1. wurdz and sentənsəs taekən from ther ekspiri.ensəs ov thə dae.
2. short poe.əmz
3. sentənsəs which wee kaul short storiz.
4. nursəri riemz
5. wurd kardz tuu match 8x10 pikchərz ov objekts
6. fonik kardz tuu plaes bifer endingz.

Thə teechar poots much ov thə mäteeriel on ə 24x30 chart. Thə childrən kan reed if shee uezəs ə pointər. Shee thinks that az thae bikum mor mäteur thae'l bee aebəl tuu reed bie foekəsing ther iez on wun wurd at ə tiem without thə aed ov thə pointər.

Feb. 61

Sum of thə thingz thae hav liekt are:

storiz about ther stor, wintər, thə sevən dworfs, chikən litəl, jingəlz such az

litəl blak bug

lital blak bug

wher hav yuu ben?

ie hav ben under thə rug

sed thə litəl blak bug, bug

ug, ug, ug, ug

litəl green flie, etc.

litəl oeld mous, etc.

Mrs. Edna Maley, thə teechar, sez that eech dae taeks karr ov itself az tuu mäteeri.əl. Shee fiendz that thə short seshən wurks wel. "Ie keep intens intəräst bie not dwelling tuu long on eech faez, but kwikli goe.ing tuu uthər mateeri.əl, and nevər ripeeting thə saem thing dae aftər dae. Wee reed poe.əmz oevər for enjoimənt, but thə children suun sae thə wurdz from meməri, and that's not whot nou iz waantəd."

#### Siez ov gruup

Aul 40 ar taut təgethər, hou.evər nou in thə 5th munth shee haz about 10 huu ar ə bit sloe.ər and riseev individue.əl help. Thə reezən sum ov theez ar not up tuu par iz that thae hav ben il. Ther ar 2 huu ar not proegresing bikauz ov litəl intəräst.

#### Tranzishən

Riports from hoem indikaet that ther haz ben a bit ov tranzishən tuu konvenshənəl reeding, but at skuul wee konsentraet on thə kee sistəm. Wee hav observd nuthing spektakuelər in thə wae ov reeding on ther oen, and feel hapi that thae ar lurning tuu rekəgniez thə soundz ov letərz and tuu kleeerli see thə rilaeshənship bitween spoekən and ritən wurdz.

ie doen't noe just whot thə parrents reeli think -- and wee doen't trie tuu get them tuu kəmit themselvz az yet.

#### Ansərz tuu uthər kweschənz

Wee duu not hav thə I.Q.'s ov thə childrən. Aul wee noe iz that thae ar tho upər haf az ditermind bie rau skorz on thə Lorge-Thorndike test given duering thə last week ov August.

Thae ar aul kindərgartnərz. Thae duu not hav eni arithmätik or eni uthər wurk biyond thə reguelər kindərgartən proegrəm (eksept thə kee reeding, ov kors).

Wee hav purpəsli sed nuthing about it publikli bekauz wee waantəd tuu maek our litəl studi furst. Bie thə fakt that ie am pooshing for akseptəns ov a mor ekstensiv eksperiment, yuu kan see that ie am kənvinst ov its merit.

Sinseerli yorz,  
Helen Bonnema

[Spelling Progress Bulletin December 1961 pp9-10]

## **Writing by Sound; a New Method of Teaching Reading. by Dr. Helen Bonnema.**

The effective teaching of reading receives priority in elementary grades. More time is spent on it than on any other activity. And yet, failures in reading continue to plague us.

New methods of teaching reading are proposed every year. Most of them are concerned with the first, or perception phase of the following steps: 1. word perception, 2. comprehension, 3. reaction and integration.

The systems used for teaching this first step of perceiving or identifying printed words bear various names, such as: "word method", "phonic method, sentence and word", and "story". Educators and parents go round and round, or perhaps one should say, back and forth, in their attempts to find a scheme which will work for *most* children, and which will not consume the greater part of their first six years in school.

In public schools the most widely used method includes five aids: (1) meaning clues from the context, (2) form or appearance of a word, (3) structural clues, (4) phonetic clues, (5) the dictionary.

Many private and parochial schools claim success in using only step (4) above, i.e. phonetics.

However, regardless of the methods or the names assigned to them, all of those used depend upon the eye - upon sight - as the main gate to the brain. Even the generally used phonetic systems depend upon the *appearance* of syllables and words. None of them start where reading should start -- with sounds -- with the ear. The method proposed herein starts with *hearing*. It is an entirely new approach, one which has never been tried in the United States.

It starts with the spoken language as the child knows it. The six-year old has a vocabulary of around two thousand words. The problem is to show him how to put these spoken words on paper so that he can be taught to communicate by writing as well as by talking. He can and will be shown how to write any word he uses and understands. When he tells what he sees on television using such difficult words astronomer, scientist, fantastic, enormous, allergic, or temperature, he is given a means for writing them.

When he reads back what he has written, he can easily see that reading is really listening to the sounds as marked on the paper. Reading is this ability to hear the words which his marks on paper are saying. He soon finds he can put letters on paper which stand for any word he speaks, and then can read these words. Not only can he read his own marks but he finds he can as easily read the marks made by his fellow pupils. He even finds he can speak words correctly, the meaning of which he does not know.

This easy method that is infallible has been available to use for a century, yet apparently has been overlooked. It is based upon a logical analysis of the sounds in a word, and the representation of these sounds by the phonetic symbols used in the dictionary. This easy method that is taught the child is the one that the dictionary uses to show us how to pronounce any word we see in print. It is the bridge between our spoken English and our written English. It is the way the dictionary makes sure it has communicated the exact sounds it intended. It tells us how to say: come, by writing it "kum", physic by writing it "fizik", Sosnowiec, by writing it "sos no' vyets'.

Why shouldn't the beginner use the communication system of the dictionary until he learns to spell in the standard manner? Fortunately, we believe that this system can teach him the conventional

way of spelling faster than any other. We merely reverse the notation so that the child learns that the word that he hears as: kum, is written "come", sed is written "said", ges, is written "guess". The method of reading proposed gives him this assistance. It uses parallel sentences in both notations, for the transition.

In his first writing, the child is taught the dictionary way of indicating sounds. He writes anything he wishes in this manner. Then one by one, he learns the 48 general spelling rules, and transcribes into standard writing the words he uses. For example, he learns that the k-sound followed by the a- or o-sound at the beginning of a word, is usually speled with "c", as cake, coat. And at the end of a word the k-sound is sometimes spelled "ck" or "ch". He memorizes words in which this is true; bak=back. And that the f-sound is sometimes spelled "gh" or "ph", memorizing: laf=laugh, ruf=tough, foto=photo. The child always has the security of proceeding from the known - the dictionary notation of word sounds - to the unknown or new to him - standard spelling. He establishes self confidence in learning to read, before he has to face the intricacies, the contradictions, the illogic of our standard spelling, which he does not face all at once.

### **Objectives.**

It is the purpose of this experiment to find out whether he will learn standard spelling faster this way than by methods employed heretofore, and whether he will become a more confident, accurate, and effective reader. The plan is to compare the reading ability of third grade children who have been taught by the "Dictionary-key" system, with third graders who have been taught by other systems used in Jefferson County. This comparison is to be made in the Spring of 1964.

### **Groups being used.**

The children being taught the "Dictionary-key" system are now in the morning kindergarten class at Edgewater School. They were selected from the enrollees last August because of receiving scores in the upper half on the Lorge-Thorndike intelligence test. They will continue as the experimental group during the first three grades, having vacancies in their rank filled by newcomers who also test in the upper half. Control groups will be children from any schools in Jefferson County who receive closely similar scores on the regularly administered intelligence tests.

### **Additional costs.**

A budget to support this program involves \$800.00 for materials the first year, and \$200.00 added compensation for one teacher; the second year will allow \$1600.00 for materials and \$400.00 added compensation for two teachers; the third year \$2400.00, for materials and \$600.00 for added compensation to the three teachers involved. Total cost of the three year program will be \$6000.00. The \$300.00 is to be allowed for multilithing, paper, tagboard, etc., teacher-made charts, and duplicated sheets and booklets. Few, if any ready made books are available.

### **Teachers.**

In 1961-62 an interested, capable teacher in first grade, to remain with the program for three years.  
In 1962-63 a teacher with the same qualifications for second grade, to remain for at least two years.  
In 1963-64 a third specially selected person in grade three for at least one year.

We realize that the demands on the teacher and the time required for preparing the materials will be great. For that reason we have suggested extra compensation of \$200.00 to be paid at the end of the school year.

### **Evaluation of project.**

To determine the progress made by the experimental and control groups, results of achievement tests administered in the regular program of District R-1 shall be used, as well as any others selected by the director of the Division of Instruction and Supervisor of Elementary Education. In addition

the children shall read orally from third grade social study, science, and other books.

**FLASH! March 18, 1961.** The Director of Elementary Education informed us that the "Dictionary-key" reading experiment has been approved. It will be included in a Fels Foundation budget for a three year total of \$6000.00 as set forth in the above memo of January 17.

The greatest value to result from this project may be the boost it gives spelling reform thru accustoming people to unorthodox word forms. They may lose their assurance that conventional English writing is good. But some will resist. They are the people who regard tampering with conventional spelling as impious. They are more offended by simplified spelling than by assaults upon their religion!

One of our administrators shows this attitude. He said accusingly, "You call this a reading experiment. You can't fool me. It's the same plan to reform spelling that you tried to palm off on us a few years ago." I didn't admit to him that I had, indeed, purposely avoided the naughty word "spelling".

The big problem is how to inform and influence the largest possible number of people during the three years that the project is under way. How can we get them to hear about it? Popular magazines as well as educational journals should tell of it in the fine manner of the recent Parents Magazine article by no less than its editor, George Hecht. But this is the part for which I do not have the time. I could not possibly carry on the correspondence necessary to properly publicize the project. Is there someone nearby who would be willing to volunteer for this work?

Sincerely, Helen V. Bonnema.

The Spelling Progress Bulletin will help to keep readers informed and questions answered.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin December 1961 pp11-13]

### **A Review of Articles, Editorials, and Books on the Quality of Reading & Spelling in Our Schools, by Newell W. Tune.**

The tremendous furor caused by the book by Dr. Rudolf Flesch: "Why Johnny Can't Read", - which appeared in 1955, has not died down. Its total repudiation of our current "Look and Say" method, its unequivocal advocacy of a return to "phonics" has called forth both ardent support and adamant opposition. The book by Duker and Nally "The Truth About your Child's Reading" came to the defense of our current teaching practices. It is a bare knuckle attack on Flesch's statements. John P. Sisk added fuel to the flames with "Johnny Can't Spell, Either", in the America Magazine for Sept. 15, 1956. Following this in 1958, came an inspired book by Sybil Terman and Charles Walcutt: "Reading, Chaos and Cure", which wholeheartedly sided with Dr. Flesch. It was packed with data, facts, quotations and experiences. It blamed not only the reading retardation of millions of our youngsters on the "Look and guess" methods of most of our schools but also indicated that they were the causes of many of the disciplinary problems as well. Then came Glenn McCracken in 1959 with "The Right to Learn" -- another forceful, dynamic book castigating the existing books and methods of teaching reading. He also tells of many experiences in teaching reading classes in schools by improved methods.

Then in Feb. 1959, the Ladies' Home Journal had a two page spread demanding "Is This American Education?" an amazing display which exclaimed "If you find it difficult to imagine high school students who have not learned to read or write, these examples will help you", a mild statement for

such startling proof. In the same vein many newspapers opened fire. To be sure, most got no farther than general bewailment of the low level of our first two R's. The Los Angeles Mirror-News for Dec. 27, 1956 quotes Dr. Kenneth B. M. Crookes, late of Fort Valley College, in "Collegians Flop at Orthography". The President of the University of Southern California, Dr. Norman Topping, in the Hollywood Citizen News for Dec. 11, 1960 cited facts to prove that there is a widespread inability to use the English language properly due to a lack of reading ability. Dr. Kenneth Oliver, Chairman of the English Department at Occidental College, in the Los Angeles Times in Nov. 1959 says "Many English Teachers are Untrained, Survey Finds". The New York Herald Tribune for Nov. 19, 1960, gave 20 column inches to Terry Ferrer, Education Editor, with "Johnny Can't Spell, Sister is Better but not Much". On Feb. 26, 1960, in the Teachers World, (London), 36 column inches were devoted to "Spelling-a Handicap to Reading?" And to top it all, in the Los Angeles Times for Dec. 11, 1960 is Louis Cassell's article "Basic Phonic Reading Still not Taught". Yet look at the attitude some newspapers take: the Newark, N. J. Evening News on Dec. 14, 1960 had an editorial which quoted Dr. Victor H. Goertzel, a psychologist, saying "If your youngster doesn't like school, don't worry about it. He may be one of the gifted ones who can educate themselves". Whereupon it quotes from an analysis of the careers of 77 world figures who educated themselves, 7 who did not finish elementary school, 7 were only elementary school graduates, and 14 did not go beyond high school. (That still leaves 49 who apparently went beyond high school). (It failed to mention anything about the millions who were unable to educate themselves). This evoked an answer from Wm. W. Murphy in the Dec. 21, 1960 issue, who said, re quoting: "If your youngster doesn't like school, don't worry, he may be able to educate himself; all he has to do is to become a 'hungry reader', like Winston Churchill or Bernard Baruch", so in effect says your editorial. Never have school children been less likely to develop into 'hungry readers'. If your youngster doesn't like school, it is chiefly because his introduction to reading has made of it a laborious guessing game, to be avoided whenever possible.

"After learning to use the ten digits, he is soon able to read numbers like 97,653 on first sight. If he learned to use the 26 letters as Churchill and Baruch did, he would just as easily read words like 'convert' with a sense of achievement and a feeling of self-sufficiency. But no - it looks like the image of 'convent' which is among the few hundred words that he has been taught to recognize as 'pictures' just as the Chinese and Japanese must learn their thousands of pictograms. So Johnny guesses the wrong word, misses the meaning of what he is reading and gives it up as 'not worth the trouble'. Small wonder that he dislikes school. "Here is one of the important reasons for school drop-outs. And this is the beginning of much of our juvenile delinquency, which the psychologists and school boards seek to blame on poverty and broken homes. "

Back in July, 1956, the year after "Why Johnny Can't Read" made its dynamic debut, the Council for Basic Education got its start. Basic to most academic study is the power to read and write with ease, speed and accuracy. This valiant little organization lost no time in striking at the low level of such ability imparted by our schools. Its monthly bulletin staunchly championed the phonic method of Terman and Walcutt's "Chaos and Cure". It has also been warmly sympathetic to the screen projection methods Glenn McCracken describes in his book "The Right to Learn". Yet it shies away from putting the blame where it truly belongs - on the erratic character of our English spelling.

An outstanding event of 1960 was the publication in April of the report of the San Francisco Curriculum Survey committee, a group of eight academicians from Stanford University and the University of California. Most of the trenchant criticism they leveled at our public school system is summed up in these 36 words: "Perhaps the most formidable barrier to a more solid and mature public education in the United States, is the failure of the schools to produce in sufficient numbers, students who read rapidly, accurately and with pleasure".

As to the remedy for this failure, the Committee does no more than line up with Flesch, Terman, et

al; "We recommend", it says, "that reading be taught by a systematically phonetic method from the beginning - a method which stresses a rational and analytic approach rather than the guessing approach of the "Look and Say" method. But alas, by "phonetic" this recommendation meant only phonics. It did not try to get at the basic cause of the trouble. It did not advocate the scrapping of a single one of those 402 jumbled spelling units with which our 41 basic speech sounds are so erratically represented.

Nonetheless, the report aroused the bitter hostility of the "power elite" of California's public schools. Six of the most hierarchic organizations of its State Teachers! Association Journal in an ungloved rebuttal in a pamphlet entitled "Judging and Improving the Schools", castigated the professors as being too far removed from beginning classroom teaching.

But none of the discussions either side evoked, reached the position for which this first number of the Spelling Progress Bulletin stands. None of it recognized that "The Worm at the Root" of our reading problem is what Helen Bowyer describes elsewhere in this issue. However, as long ago as 1958, (Aug. 31, Sept. 1 and 2), the Los Angeles Examiner devoted 130 column inches to a factual presentation of the claims for spelling reform in John Creecy's three day continued article "Why Nobody Can Spell". The only thing we have to criticize about it is the writers conclusion that "So great are the obstacles, that there is no hope for it in the foreseeable future".

Another article that was able to analyse correctly the cause of the trouble, was Dr. James L. Julian's "So U Can't Spell" in the May, 1959 CATALYST. It caused a tide of comments and editorials, in newspapers and was widely quoted from Maine to Georgia -- the St. Paul Dispatch, Los Angeles Examiner, Anaheim Bulletin, Porterville Recorder, and many others. In a little lighter vein was the tone of "Its Not Johnny" by Helen Bowyer in the Phi Delta Kappan of June, 1959. Its message was that few things could be easier or more rewarding than transcribing by a completely phonetic system each of our 41 basic sounds with a letter or digraph that was invariably used for one sound and only that sound. The ideas in this article evoked wide interest, both pro and con. The T-V program of the Dave Garoway show had a discussion of it. Paul Coates in his column and on his program of August 12, devoted both program and column to an approving review of it. The following November the Pittsburgh Teachers Bulletin published it in full, and the California Teachers Journal carried shorter pieces by its author in December, 1959 and February, 1960. Then came a singularly unbridled attack on Bowyer's Kappan article by Dr. Louis Foley, a frequent objector to spelling reform (viz: "It isn't So Simple" in School and Society, Aug. 25, 1945), in the June, 1960 Word Study", a scholarly little quarterly put out by the publishers of the Merriam Webster Dictionaries. This onslaught, "Upsetting the Alphabet Cart", is so expressive of the sanctity with which many professors of English hold for our archaic English spelling, that we unreservedly advise its perusal to all who are inclined to underestimate the force of this reverence. The Dec. 1960 "Word Study" carried a rejoinder by Helen Bowyer, which in turn brought a reply from Dr. Foley, and so the controversy still goes on.

Some magazines have opened their pages to spelling reform. The International Language Review devoted nearly half of its April-June, 1960 issue to 25 pages of discussion of the merits of spelling reform. However, the best concept of all the articles in magazines is the editorial in the January 1961 Parents Magazine by George Hecht, "The Case for Simplified Spelling". Not only does this cover the subject more comprehensively than any one book or article we have seen, and yet is as brief as possible, but also it analyses the problem logically and suggests the possible future action to be taken. On the heels of Mr. Hecht's editorial, came another by Helen Bowyer, in the Feb. 1961 Phi Delta Kappan, which stresses "Not Back to Phonics, Forward to Phonetics". It is a gesture against the willingness of the Council for Basic Education, the San Francisco Curriculum Research Committee, and some other fighters of the "Look and guess" method, to settle for nothing more fundamental than a better method of teaching ph, gh, phth, ough, igh, eigh, ei or ie, ui, pn, kn, gn,

mn, in place of erasing them completely from the blackboard and the spelling book.

More sobering thoughts come from perusing articles with a more serious vein, such as the article in Product Engineering for Dec. 28, 1959, "China Drives Toward her own Technology", and the Los Angeles Times for Dec. 11, 1957, "Communist China will adopt Latin Alphabet for Phonetic Script". The Chemical and Engineering News for Sept. 21, 1959, opened our eyes with "Teachers - a new weapon for the Soviets", where low marks are considered a reflection on the teacher's ability, and where students have little trouble learning to read because it is so easy.

Ever since Sputnik 1 there has been a wave of warnings and exhortations against the challenge of communist education. "Must We Compete with Moscow in the Education Race?" asked the three-page spread in Product Engineering of June 30, 1958. Taking part in this parley were such outstanding scholars as Norman Cousins, Editor of the Saturday Review, Dr. R. Goheen, President of Princeton University, Dr. H. L. Bevis, Chairman of Eisenhower's Committee on Scientists and Engineers, Dr. J. R. Dunning, Dean of Engineering, Columbia University, and Dr. L. V. Ginger, President of the National Education Assoc. They all agreed that we must more than equal the quality of the Russian education by the results of our education, if we expect to maintain the democratic way of life. But none of them, nor to our knowledge, any other national figure who seemed with the threatened superiority of Soviet education over ours, evinced an inkling of the basic factor which makes that superiority such a cinch. Not one of them mentioned the fact that Soviet children easily sail thru text-books based upon a highly regular spelling -- while ours are wallowing in the mire of what is probably the most chaotic mess of spelling anomalies the world has ever known, the handicap that puts them at least two years behind their Soviet competitors.

Six months later that point was strikingly brought out by Victor Crassnoff, who ought to know. Educated thru his early twenties in pre-revolutionary Russia, he came to Alton, Illinois in 1915. When he had to finish his education in the United States, he saw the difference. The Alton Evening Telegraph was so impressed by his writing that it devoted 58 column inches to a ripping article dated Feb. 2, 1959, entitled "One Russian Weapon is Certainly no Secret". It starts out: "Recent meteoric successes of the Russians in scientific and engineering fields are a matter of simple arithmetic, a preponderance of brain-power generated by ease of learning". This ease of learning he unequivocally attributes to the fact that Russian reading is based upon a highly phonemic system of spelling.

Along with the articles and editorials herein mentioned have gone hundreds of others on the sorry state of reading ability in our schools. Already mentioned was the San Francisco Curriculum Survey Committee, but also the Conant reports, various preliminary statements of Project Talent, and the utterances of other responsible bodies of educators and laymen, all who are disturbed by the low rating of our two R's.

Have these hundreds of article done any good? Have they had any effect whatever on our legislators? Do legislators ever read such articles? Do they ever have time to read such articles even when they are sent to them and particularly called to their attention? Do they even have time to read carefully each bill that they vote on? One sometimes wonders - otherwise it is hard to understand how some bills are passed which are later found to be very one-sided and not prepared with good judgement, while at the same time legislation that can be shown to be of great help in the education of our children and which will also save nearly a billion dollars a year by shortening by two years the time needed to arrive at a certain level of education, is given the cold shoulder. This should teach us a lesson. Legislators respect only one thing - volume of mail on a given subject. And I wonder whether they weigh it on scales or measure the height of the stack, instead of reading it.

Have you written to your Congressman about it?

[Spelling Progress Bulletin March 1961 pp14-17]

## **Spelling Achievement of Above Average Pupils, by Sister Josephina, CSJ, D.Ed.**

Errors in spelling made by pupils in the elementary grades have been adequately analyzed by Gates [3], Fitzgerald [2], Johnson [5], Horn [4], and others. Core vocabularies along with lists of spelling demons have resulted from these studies.

One phase receiving scant attention in the research literature is that of the spelling competence of gifted or high I.Q. pupils. The purposes of this article are as follows:

- (1) To analyze a standardized spelling list in terms of grade placement of each word;
- (2) To report the results of correct spelling of the list by a group of elementary pupils with I.Q.'s of 120 and above;
- (3) To compare the grade placement with the normative data.

The Morrison-McCall Spelling Test consisting of fifty words was the tool used for testing achievement. TABLE 1 gives the data in terms of grade placement.

**TABLE 1**  
Norms from Morrison-McCall Spelling Test

Grade Placement	Number Correct
2.0	6
3.1	15
4.1	21
5.1	27
6.0	32
7.0	37
8.0	41
8.4	42
8.8	43
13.0	50

The group of fifty-one pupils from grades 4, 5 and 6 came from various schools. The background of spelling varied, as different texts are used, along with the amount of time devoted to the teaching of spelling each day.

The Intelligence Quotients were obtained from the Stanford-Binet Test of Intelligence, Form L. After the test was administered, the testee was asked to write from dictation the list of words. TABLE 2 shows the list of words and the grade placement obtained from "Spelling Difficulties in 3876 Words" [3].

**TABLE 2:**

Morrison-McCall Spelling Test with Grade Placement as given by Gate.

Word	Grade Place	Word	Grade Place	Word	Grade Place
can	2.3	picture	4.5	business	6.2
ten	3.1	change	4.6	citizen	7.4
old	2.3	number	4.4	elaborate	7.7
six	3.0	strike	4.0	association	7.8
ice	2.4	personal	7.4	evidence	7.9
child	4.2	address	5.9	secretary	7.6
his	2.2	several	5.9	character	7.9
that	2.3	known	5.0	cordially	8.1
far	2.7	their	2.8	especially	6.8
from	2.3	perhaps	5.8	disappoint	7.5
glad	2.6	popular	7.4	decision	7.7
same	2.6	against	5.4	parliament	8.8
night	2.8	treasure	7.3	recommend	7.9
cent	2.9	investigate	7.8	endeavor	7.8
within	6.1	certain	6.9	privilege	7.8
point	4.6	really	6.3	villain	8.3
money	4.5	conference	8.5		

The criteria used for the order of presentation by the authors are not known. Studying the grade placement one can see a gradation of difficulty. However, some reallocation of the words appears necessary when compared with Gates' listing. Notable are the words: within (6.1), personal (7.4), their (2.8). These grade placements deviate markedly from the words surrounding them.

Are pupils whose intelligence places them in the superior category achieving according to their potential? Studies related to this problem reveal a marked discrepancy between potential and achievement [1]. Does the classroom teacher rest content when the grade level on a standardized test is reached by her pupils irrespective of their ability? Knowing that tests, standardized for the most part on an average population, show normative data applicable to a similar group, the teacher must lift out, so to speak, those whose ability ranks them above their peers and weigh their achievement against their potential. Just as an understanding teacher does not expect the same type of achievement from Judy with an I.Q. of 85, so, too, she looks for something quite different from pupils ranking in the top 10 to 15% of the population (I.Q. 121+).

TABLE 3 shows the mean and standard deviation obtained from the Stanford-Binet Test of Intelligence. Fifty-one pupils were tested in grades 4, 5, and 6.

The highest obtained I.Q. was 167 and the lowest 120. The means for grade 4 (134.50), and grade 6 (138.00) placed these two groups in the very superior group.

**TABLE 3**

Means and Standard Deviations  
for fifty-one pupils tested by Stanford-Binet Tests of Intelligence

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Grade 4	10	134.50	10.50
Grade 5	11	128.80	8.50
Grade 6	30	138.00	14.50
Total group	51	133.76	11.6

TABLE 4 shows the percentage of words incorrectly spelled from the Morrison-McCall Test. The first five before "child" and the seven words following it were spelled correctly by all. Therefore these words are omitted from the table.

Some words were misspelled by all pupils in grade 4 and 5. These words are;  
 Grade 4 -- disappoint, decision, parliament, recommend, endeavor, privilege, villain, business;  
 Grade 5 -- cordially, parliament, villain.

The ten most frequently misspelled words by the entire group are:

villain	96%	cordially	82%
endeavor	96	secretary	78
parliament	94	disappoint	78
privilege	92	especially	71
recommend	90	decision	69

These words have a grade placement above 17.10, with the exception of "especially", 6.8, consequently, pupils in these grades will experience difficulty with them.

TABLE 5 shows the mean and standard deviation for the results of the Morrison-McCall Spelling Test.

**TABLE 5**

Group	N	Mean	Obtained Grade Equivalent	Standard Deviation
4	10	29.5	5.2 (4.6)	4.8
5	11	31.5	5.11 (5.6)	7.0
6	30	37.1	7.0 (6.6)	6.2
Total	51 aver.	32.7	5.77	6.0

Norms for the grade are in ( )

**TABLE 4**

Percentage of Error in Spelling of Pupils  
 in Grades 4, 5, and 6, on Morrison-McCall Test

Word	Grade Place	Grade 4 %	Grade 5 %	Grade 6 %
child	4.2	0	9	0
within	6.1	20	9	0
cent	2.9	0	9	0
picture	4.5	0	9	0
change	4.6	0	9	0
number	4.4	0	0	0
strike	4.0	0	9	10
personal	7.4	50	82	13
address	5.9	20	36	3
several	5.9	30	18	3
known	5.0	40	18	7
their	2.8	10	27	27
perhaps	5.8	10	9	10
popular	7.4	60	27	13
against	5.4	20	0	10

treasure	7.3	10	36	7
investigate	7.8	50	64	30
certain	6.9	60	45	33
really	6.3	60	45	20
conference	8.5	60	64	33
business	6.2	100*	73	50
citizen	7.4	50	45	27
elaborate	7.7	50	82	53
association	7.8	80	73	37
evidence	7.9	80	55	40
secretary	7.6	90	73	77
character	7.9	80	73	50
cordially	8.1	90	100*	73
especially	8.8	80	82	63
disappoint	7.5	100*	82	70
decision	7.7	100*	82	53
parliament	8.8	100*	100*	90
recommend	7.9	100*	91	87
endeavor	7.8	100*	91	97
privilege	7.8	100*	91	90
villain	8.3	100*	100*	93

It shows in TABLE 5 that the placement for each group was above the norm for the grade. However, it should be remembered that these pupils do not constitute a normal sampling but rank considerably above the average in ability.

From this study, limited in number and restricted in range of ability (mean IQ=133.76) and sigma os=11.16) and from a varied background of language arts curricula, data are given in Table 5 that these pupils, ranking in the top 2% of the population, did perform at the grade level, that is, pupils in grade 4 ranked at 5.2 grade placement; pupils in grade 5 at 5.11; and pupils in grade 6 at 7.0 grade placement. However, when one examines the ability with the production, one readily notes a gap in the kind of performance given. These above average pupils, in keeping with their ability level, actually ranked six to four months above the norm, which is not a significant deviation to warrant a teacher complacency that all is well with the kind of spelling curriculum given to bright pupils.

Since spelling demands discipline on the part of the learner, gifted pupils should be taught fundamental techniques in learning to spell. Likewise, they should develop a "spelling-eye-and-ear sense" so that accuracy in their work and a sense of confidence and satisfaction accrue to them.

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### **Editorial Comment.**

While not wanting to detract from this article, might we not also deduct that high I.Q. does not necessarily result in pupils ability to cope with the intricacies and anomalies of our spelling? Perhaps a different type of mind is needed? One that depends upon memory rather than on logical thinking? What are the tests that would show this?

### **Free Offer**

The Research Committee on Spelling Reform announces that the widow of Dr. Edward Blaine has offered to donate his typewriter with the Blaine Phonetic Alphabet to some school or college that would agree to the following conditions:

1. To use it to teach phonetics by means of the Blaine Phonetic Alphabet, or
2. To use it to instruct teachers of reading the use of the Blaine Phonetic Alphabet and to make a comparison of the relative ease of teaching reading by means of a phonetic alphabet in comparison with any present means of teaching our conventional reading and spelling, or
3. Some similar project of your choice which might be acceptable to Mrs. Blaine and the Research Committee.

### **Brush Up On Your English, with Hints on Pronunciation for visiting Foreigners, from the Manchester Guardian.**

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

Beware of heard, a dreadful word  
That looks like beard and sounds like bird.  
And dead; its said like bed, not bead;  
For goodness sake, don't call it "deed"  
Watch out for meat and great and threat,  
(They rhyme with suite and straight and debt).  
A moth is not a moth in mother,  
Nor both in bother, broth in brother.

And here is not a match for there,  
Nor dear and fear for bear and pear,  
And then there's dose and rose and lose -  
Just look them up - and goose and choose,  
And cork and work and card and ward,  
And font and front and word and sword.  
And do and go, then thwart and cart.  
Come, come, I've hardly made a start!

A dreadful language? Why, man alive,  
I'd learned to talk it when I was five,  
And yet to write it, the more I tried,  
I hadn't learned it at fifty-five.

with appologies to T. S.W.

## THE WORM AT THE ROOT, by Helen Bowyer

In this "cold war of the classroom," I wonder if you realize that we are simply handing the victory to Russia? We have not the least reason to suppose our primary children are any more verbally gifted than hers, yet we make learning to read and write many times as difficult for them. While almost any child could quickly master "hav, haf, laf, graf, ant", we waste his irrecoverable time on "have, half, laugh, graph, aunt". Where his eager memory could so easily retain "eni, peni, sez, sed, hed, frend, beri", we load it down with "any, penny, says, said, head, friend, bury". Whereas "duz, duzn, kuzn, flud, kupl, wuns, dun" would develop his reason - his consistency, sense of cause and effect - we war on these high human attributes with "doest dozens cousin, flood, couple, once, done". Is it any wonder that most of our beginners finish their second semester with a reading recognition of no more than 200-250 words? And all too many of those only in the context of their babyish preprimers.

Whereas most of their grademates in the phonemic U.S.S.R. end theirs with a reading (and writing) command of their whole speaking, understanding vocabulary - probably not less than 10,000 words, A skill which they have acquired on a diet of fairy tales, fables, hero stories, bits of history, geography, adventure, all designed to develop, not infantilize, the burgeoning young minds they brought to their first classroom.

From there on, the gap between the two child worlds widens year after year. While Vanya can now take his spelling and pronunciation in his stride on his "Way to that nationwide, seventh-grade exam, whose "toughness" so astounds our educators who have visited Russia, our Johnny is still bogged down by the more mechanics of "trouble, bubble, mellow, melon, lose, choose, whose, bruise, booze, ponder, wonder, thunder, physical, quizzical, psychical", and endless other such anomalies, What wonder is it if his reason revolts, his memory goes on strike, his attention gives up the struggle, and he ends up in that one-third of our high school enrollment who will never read beyond fifth grade norm - when even that!

What in the matter with us that we leave our children at this hopeless disadvantage with their young rivals for the leadership of tomorrow's world? It isn't as if it would be at all difficult to give them an even break -- as witness this little demonstration of an excerpt from "Father William" [1]. The spelling is close to that of World English" [2], long and effectively used in the beginning teaching of our tongue in the foreign mission field. Pronounce these digraphs: ae, ee, ie, oe, oo, as in "maelstrom, fee, fie, foe, fool", aa and au as in "bazaar and because"; oi, ou, uu, as in "fool, foul, full"; u as in "murmur, must, minus", zh as the s in "pleasure", and underlined th as in "thin, both", and y as in "youth". Give all other letters and digraphs the sounds they most commonly have in our present spelling.

"Yoo aar oeld" sed the sun, "and yoor jauz aar too week  
For enthing tufur than soo-it.  
Yet yoo finisht the goos with the boenz and the beek,  
Prae, hou did yoo manij too doo it?"

"In mie yooth", sed hiz faathur, "Ie tuuk to the lau,  
And aargyood eech kaes with mie wife,  
And the muskyoolur strength that it gave too mie jau  
Haz lasted the rest ov mie lief".

"So it shuud", rojoind Muthur Wilyum, "okaezhunl az woz  
The wurd Ie kuud evur got in!"

Here we have the 40 basic speech sounds to which our language reduces, each transcribed by a letter or digraph which is never used for any other sound. Together they constitute an alphabet even simpler than the Russian, if a few units longer. Given this approximately even break in their reading, (in their basic learning tool, that is, couldn't our youngsters come up with the brains, the motivation, and the effort to win abreast of their Soviet grademates in whatever studies tho threat and the promise of this now age demands of both?

Notes:

[1] From Lewis Carroll's "Nonsense Verses".

[2] World English is not of course, the only phonemic alphabet we might use. There are others just as consistently phonemic. We are using this modification of World English because it makes a fewer number of changes in our spelling "az iz".

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin December 1961 p18]

### **The Parable of the Flies, by Ralph Dornfeld Owen, Ph. D.**

A man with a flair for scientific methods once inherited a substantial home. His father had enjoined him not to change everything. So he only modernized it to a slight degree by putting in a central heating plant and screening doors and windows.

When summer came, he and his family were almost devoured by flies. Here was a problem for his scientific appetite. He offered a new bicycle to the child who could devise the best method of mastering the flies. His three boys competed. He asked three experts to rate the methods and award the prize.

#### Method A

This boy closed the door of the room and, disregarding a set of rules he had once memorized, pursued the flies with a swatter, without any consideration for size or degree of familiarity.

The experts agreed that "a very important determiner of the size of the kill is the child's interest and desire to kill." But they rated this method low, because the experimenter had not provided a control group.

#### Method B

The boy installed a fly-trap disguised as a sirup pitcher. He kept a chart showing the amount of time each day required to fill the trap. At the end of each period he took the trap outside and released the captives.

The experts were unable to agree on the merits of this method because "studies are too numerous and (expert) opinions differ too much on the importance of time allotments."

#### Method C

The boy first rehearsed the rules he had learned. Then he made a random sampling of the flies and classified them into very hard, hard, medium, easy, and very easy. He discovered that while most flies buzz, the hard ones do not, and so he designated the latter as "unphonetic".

The experts were unanimous in rating this method first, because while the number of flies killed was small, the method had a broad scientific basis.

After the experts had departed and the winner was riding his new bicycle, the fly problem again became acute. Boy A, in snooping around, discovered that there was an open transom over the kitchen door, and that it had no screen. He reported his findings to the family council. His father frowned and said: "I promised my father that I would respect his design of the house and that I would not change everything about this house. He must have had some reason for this even though we don't know what it is. I have too much respect for my forefathers to close up that transom or put a screen on it. Moreover, if I did commit such an act, of filial impiety, you boys would lose your chance to apply your scientific methods."

Children trying to eliminate "errors" in spelling are situated like the three boys who tried to eliminate the flies. The transom is the pseudo-historical, illogical "correct" spelling imposed upon us by Eighteenth Century English purists and kept in place by printers and publishers.

Let's close the transom by adopting a consistent, logical system of spelling.

Don't try to teach children to form conflicting habits! Don't waste time devising elaborate methods for attacking the secondary causes of spelling irregularities! Attack the basic cause! The inconsistent, illogical, unsystematic condition of English spelling.

Don't leave it to George to do -- it's really up to you. Write to your Congressman, who is the only one who can make any official action to put such changes into effect.

### **Words of Wisdom.**

"Whatever the difficulties and inconveniences of changing our spelling now are, they will be more easily surmounted now than hereafter. Sometime it must be done, or our writing will become the same as the Chinese as to the difficulty of learning and using it". -- Benjamin Franklin, 1768.

### **That Time is Now!**

Dear Reader - If you agree with the scientist and statesman, Ben Franklin, don't play the part of Jim Cautious. Jim was a country boy, a faithful church-attendant. At twenty-one he went to the city and found a job. When he came home for a visit, the pastor asked him, "James, as a Christian, do you find it hard to get along with the people in the wicked city?" Jim replied, "No, -- you see I don't let them know I'm a Christian. What good does that do?"

You will never see any change in our chaotic spelling unless you are willing to stand up and be counted. You *can* be effective by acting as follows:

First: Show your courage by - using simpler forms of spelling, especially those that readily show that they are your deliberate choice, e.g.: Telefone, foto, fonograf, fonetic, thru, tho, thoro, Wenzday, moove, proove, coud, dout, dauter. Omit the unnecessary silent letters in such words as would not be misunderstood. Use a rubber stamp on your correspondence: Simpler Spelling Used.

Second: Support the House Resolution HR 2476, introduced by Hon. Harlan Hagen, M.C, authorizing the appointment of a National Spelling Commission. Write to your friends about it. Start a chain letter. THE TIME IS NOW!

### **English Rime Words, by Helen Bowyer.**

For the most part, they fall into three classes:

1. Eye rimes like "have" and "gave".
2. Ear rimes like "vigor and trigger.
3. Eye and ear rimes like "metal" and "petal".

The following couplets have eye rimes. Notice what happens when they are read aloud.

#### **Diver River, by Helen Bowyer.**

I wish you were  
A long with us here,  
Hale and limber as we are,  
Glad and gay and free from care;  
You would love it here, I know  
With the Spring upon us now.  
Everything we need we have  
And, oh, the precious hours we save  
For the things we really love,  
But for which we vainly strove,  
Pressured by the noisy rush  
Of the city's whirl and push.  
Oh come, dear friend, do come  
Here with us to make your home.

#### **The Hired Man, by Anon.**

Our hired man named Job  
Has got a pleasant job,  
The meadow grass to mow  
And stow it in the mow.  
At work he takes the lead,  
He does not fear cold lead,  
Nor is he moved to tears  
When his clothing tears.  
A book that he had read  
He handed me to read.  
He spends much time in reading  
When not at home in Reading.

The homographs in the above would be eliminated by fonetic spelling.