Four (or five) Steps to Better Spelling Instruction

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Handouts and resources available at http://goo.gl/EuuKsf

Structured Literacy Instruction

- Explicit
- Systematic
- Rule-based

- What are the rules of the English orthographic system?
- We have to know what they are if we are to teach them.

Most people--including Reading Specialists--get spelling wrong

- When we read, we go from Print ➔ Sound ➔ Meaning (automatically)
- When we spell, we go from Meaning ➔ Sound ➔ Print

(Handout p 2)
**MORPHO-PHONEMIC Language**

English spelling is a highly regular, orthographic system based in a morphophonemic spelling system that “takes precedence over letter-sound simplicity” (Venetzky 1999, 9).

Morphological Awareness makes a unique contribution to reading and writing—Ken Apel

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**Does this sound familiar?**

“Sound it out”
I’m |ˈbɛd| it does. (American Heritage Dictionary)

|ˈfæm(ə)li| = *<famly> or <famly>
|ˈa(ə)r| or /ɔrn/ = *<iorn>
|dɛ| = *<daey>

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**We Say Things Every Which Way,**

- allophonic variation
- --AND, we often don’t say things the way we think we do.
- Ticksin frens say, “Ah dint harya, but l kin far ya.”
NOT Going to wander into wild old words

- Phonology and the IPA
- Phones, phonemes
- Allophones, accents and dialects
- The Great Vowel Shift
- Vowel Diphthongs & Glides:
  - /eɪ/ /aɪ/ /doʊ/ /ju/ 
- The Schwa Ə

oral : meadow :: spelling : garden

ortho = correct, regular
graphy = writing

Instruction that
- Emphasizes and exposes the regularities
- Rule Based
- Structural regularities

Treiman T6
NOT a Rule

• “<i> before <e>…”
  – “except after <c>,”
  – “or when it sounds like /ɛ/ (aka ā) as in neighbor and weigh”
• Thirty-three violations of this “rule,” including <either> and <height>.
Now, that is one weird “rule,” and one that we might not want to seize hold of.

SPELLING is REGULAR; PRONUNCIATION VARIES

X sight words
X red words
X irregular words
X misbehaving words
How do words behave?

Teach REGULARITIES:
Structural Matrix

• say pay lay
• says pays lays
• said paid laid
  – (why don’t we say “sayed”)

12/6/16
How do you spell _____?

1. What does it mean?
2. How is it built?
3. What are its relatives?
4. How is it pronounced

Word Analysis: Reading (syllable)  
VS. Spelling (morpheme)

handout page 1

Five Principles

1. Elements (morphemes) are stable— they never cross morphemic boundaries (joints) and never change their spelling.
2. Word families share common spellings.
3. Three changes at the suffix joints— highly regular and rule-driven.
4. Stable graphemes in predictable patterns.
5. Words with similar meaning will have similar spelling.
Five Practices

1. Teach morphemes (base, affix, connectives) using words sums
2. Teach Word Families using matrices.
3. Teach the “joints” using the flow chart.
4. Teach graphemes and predictable graphotactics.
5. Teach structural similarities, regardless of pronunciation.

MORPHEME

- A unit of meaning (and of spelling)
- That cannot be further divided
- I.e., it NEVER CHANGES

Major Terms

- Morphemes
  - Bases
    - Free
    - Bound
  - Affixes
    - prefix
    - suffix
    - Connective
MORPHEMES:
base, affix, connective vowel (p 3)

THE WORD SUM

prefix + BASE + suffix

Words are built from the BASE outwards
Words with a common BASE
are in the same FAMILY

Practice 1: Teach Word Sums

prefix + BASE + suffix => spelling (handout p 4)
"gets re-written as"

Announce Spelling by LETTER NAME, Why?
Pause at Joints between morphemes, Why?
“Gets Re-written as...” Why?

in + struct + ion => instruction

THE WORD SUM

• foot + ball => football
• note + book => notebook

• house + boat =>
• boat + house =>

• What do they mean?
• Why is the <th> not pronounced /ð/ or /θ/
THE WORD SUM

<lead> O.E. free base “to direct or be in charge of”
lead + s =>
lead + ing =>
lead + er =>
mis + lead =>
leader + ship =>

stem vs. base

Bases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>free</th>
<th>bound</th>
<th>twin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;lead&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;struct&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;vert/verse&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;cheer&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;ject&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;duct/duce&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How do you spell...

• |ˈstrək(ə)n|
• |ˈstrək(t)ər|

• Are <tion> and <ture> suffixes?
• pressure vs. assure
ACTIVITIES: Be a Word Nerd or Scientist, a Spelling Detective, a Linguist

• PROVE IT!
  – Linguistics is a science
  – Orthography is the field
  – The body of evidence is the written record
  – Dictionaries are our main secondary resource
    • Note: They can be wrong! (see <-tion> above)

PROVE IT!

One great resource: Etymonline: An Online Etymology Dictionary
By Douglas Harper
http://www.etymonline.com/

Minimal pairs:
• hatched, hatchet, hatchcheck
• moth, mother (thanks Julie Wolter W5)
• villa, village, villain (no –ge or –in suffixes)

Etymology and Morphology

Hypothesis: <vill> + <-in>, + <-ge>
Morphological proof: No <-ge> suffix

Hypothesis: <vill> or <ville> + -a, -ain, -age?

Etymological proof: Etymon (Root vs. Base)
L. villa/ O.F. villain & village
villas / villains, villainous / villager

silly/salute
http://www.etymonline.com/
**Spelling Error Analysis**

- “visible” as “visble” -- PA (syllable segmentation) deficit;
- “visible” as “vesible” --PA (sound discrimination) deficit.
- “visible” as “visibl”--orthographic knowledge deficit,
- “visible” as “visable”--deficit in storage and retrieval of the orthographic word image (MOI) in long-term memory.

**How do you spell...?**

- <classified> as <calasified>
- Yes, a PA, but...
- How do you SOLVE it?
- <class> + -ify + -ed

**Activities: Invent words**

(again Julie Wolter)

- micro ("small") nom ("name") ion ("action")
- eu ("good") free ("let loose") ify ("process of")
- un ("not") dict ("say") ia ("condition")

- micro + dict + ion => saying something softly
- un + free + ify => making someone less free
- eu + nom + ia => the condition of having a good name
- A note on “Is that a word?”
Learn by Analogy (again LLEAD)

- reverse = “turn back”  research = ?
- piglet (small)  owlet (small)
- so, what would be a toilet?
  - Etymonline: (a small clothes bag)
- bucket? omelet? (common root: laminate)
- poet? asset?
  - (a quick word on false etymologies…)

Word Study, Vocabulary, and Etymologies

- Spelling is for words you already know
- No one needs to spell a word they don’t know the meaning of.
- Etymology and word study can help develop
  - interest in words
  - vocabulary

How does this inform and improve our Instruction?

- Regularity and Predictability
- Practice building words—in both directions
  - Give sum and ask for spelling
  - Give spelling and ask for sum
- Lessons and Units that have stable spelling patterns
- Morphemes matter—even in decoding
Morphemes Matter
—even in decoding

Decode and pronounce:
• reac☐
• reach vs. react ☐
• rea ch re • act

Teach them to spell words they already know

NOT Ad hoc
• New GSL http://www.newgeneralservicelist.org/
  – 3000 words, 92% of written words
• New AWL http://www.newgeneralservicelist.org/nawl-new-academic-word-list/
  • 83% of corpus of 243 M words
• Arrange by structure: morphemes and graphemes

Practice 2: Teach word families using a matrix

prefix  base  suffix

http://www.neilramsden.co.uk/spelling/matrix/berg/index.html  Handout p 5 & 6 answers p 7
<lead> and <ject>

• <lead> O.E. free base “to direct, be in charge of”
  – (p.s., you have to know what it means to pronounce it correctly.)

• <ject> L. bound base “to throw”

Find the Common Base

• lead discover
• plead discount
• mislead coverage
• leader counter

• Challenge: leaden discus/discuss

Great Resource:
Teaching How the Written Word Works
by Peter Bowers

Two Great Tools

• The Word Searcher (see Handout p. 16)
  http://www.neilramsden.co.uk/spelling/searcher/index.html

• The Mini-Matrix Maker
  http://www.neilramsden.co.uk/spelling/matrix/temp/index.html
How can this inform their practice?

• |kəmpəˈthɪf(ə)nl| = *<computishun>

• competition = the stem is compete
• Relative is competitor

How Can this Inform our Instruction?

• Give a spelling test with just one base
• Give them a matrix and ask them to spell as many words as they can
• Give them a word list and have them create a matrix

• What else could you do with this?
Principle 3: Three Regular Suffix Rules

1. Drop final –e
2. Final <y> changes to <i>
3. Final consonant doubles

Teach as Suffixing Rules

1. Drop single, final, non-syllabic <e> before a vowel suffix.
   Ex. sham + -ing → shaming
   but shame + -ful → shameful
2. Change <y> to <i> after a C when adding any suffix except j-suffixes
   Ex. bury + -al → burial
   but bury + -ing → burying
3. Double final consonant in stressed V-C base when adding a vowel suffix (1-1-1 rule)
   Ex. defer(r) + -ed → deferred
   but defer + -ment → deferment

Or Suffix Checker Flow Chart (p 8 & 9)
Vowel Suffix vs. Consonant Suffix

- move + s => moves
- movê + ing => moves
  - announce “no <e>”
- movê + ed => moved
- move + ment => movement

How to Announce the Changes

- happy + ness => happiness
  - announce as “y change to i”
- hop(p) + ing => hopping
  - “double p”
- hopê + ing
  - “no e”
  => hopefully?

HAPPINESS is a well-spelled word!

- <happy> <unhappy>
- <happiness> <happily>
- <happen> <happened>

What is the “root” of happiness?
<hap> “event, occurrence”
How does this improve instruction?

• Breaks it down into simple steps
• Reveals patterns
• Introduce one or two concepts at a time
• Practice builds confidence

See Handout p 10 & 11 for sample exercises

Principle 4: Spellings are created from Graphemes, MORE SO than Letters (alone)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOUND</th>
<th>SYMBOL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>oral</td>
<td>visual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading</td>
<td>writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decoding</td>
<td>encoding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phone</td>
<td>letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phoneme</td>
<td>grapheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>word (or “pronounced”)</td>
<td>spelling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Words that mean similar things will be spelled similarly

REGARDLESS of PRONUNCIATION

• height
• weight

SPelled the same, MEAN the same, PRONOUNCED differently
Words that mean similar things will be spelled similarly

- he
- she
- they
- them

SPELLED the same, MEAN the same, PRONOUNCED differently

Not only a morpheme level, but also at grapheme level

Even graphemes can have families

- tw: two, twin, twice, between
- wr: wrist, wring, wriggle, wrestle

PRACTICE 4: Teach STRUCTURAL Similarities

- here
- there
- where
- ere

“There’s a here in there and everywhere.”

SPELLED the same, MEAN the same, PRONOUNCED differently
Teach REGULARITIES of STRUCTURE

- be    do    go
- being  doing  going
- been  done  gone
- -----  does  goes

Why not <bene>?

Practice 5: Teach graphemes, not letters (alone) (handout p 12)

- A grapheme is a 1-, 2-, or 3-letter string that represents a phoneme
- Almost all of the phonemes in English have multiple graphemes—and we have more digraphs than letters!
- Teach Graphotactics: frequencies and patterns
- Teach position: initial, medial, final

<b>

- <b> i, m, f  /b/  bread, table, rib
- <bb> i, m, f  /b/  rubber
- m,f    / /  doubt
- <mb>   f    / /  lamb, bomb
- or     /b/  bombardment
<ea>
- When you are teaching /ë/,
  “The digraph <ea> sometimes is pronounced (or
represents) /ë/.”
- When teaching /è/,
  “The digraph <ea> sometimes is pronounced (or
represents) /è/.”
- When teaching /ā/,”occasionally, the digraph
  <ea> is pronounced (or represents) /ā/.” (9)

TEACH Digraphs and Trigraphs
as one string (see Farrell T4)
- ch sh th qu
- ai ea oo
- ck tch ugh

GRAPHEME Spelling Test
<igh>
- s______t   r______t
- n______t   t______t
- f______t   l______t
- m______t   br______t
- s______   h______
GRAPHEMIC and PHONEMIC Awareness matching

Letters, Phonemes, Graphemes (handout p. 13)
• cat
• catch
• mate
• might

Teach Spelling Grapheme Matrixes as you teach Phonemes

/k/ spelled <ck>
in final position, in single vowel base
in medial position, in accented syllable
ba____  bu____et
ta____  ta____le
bla____
ne____
si____
blo____
du____

Give ONE CONCEPT Spelling Tests that EVERYONE CAN ACE

Find first vowel, has to be one letter between.
• ba□k “back” /bæk/
• be□k “beak” /bɪk/
• ba□k “bank” /bæŋk/

Differentiated spelling tests
• (Same for <ch>/<tch> and <ge>/<dge>)
Struct + urØ + ed
Liter + acy
In + struct + ion

Structural Regularities
• Complex but NOT crazy (crazØ + -y)
• Spelling highlights structural similarities between similar words whether we pronounce them the same or not.
• Built from elements that never change — Except under strict, rule-bound conditions

Acknowledgements
• Real Spelling
  http://www.realspelling.fr/Welcome_to_Real_Spelling/Choose-New.html
• Gina Cook at the LEX (Linguist-Educators Exchange)
  http://linguisteducatorexchange.com
• Pete Bowers of The WordWorks Literacy Centre
  http://www.wordworkskingston.com/WordWorks/Home.html
• Douglas Harper of Etymonline
  http://www.etymonline.com/
• Neal Ramsden Word search and Mini-Matrix Maker
  http://www.neilramsden.co.uk/spelling/index.html

• Marcia Henry
  Unlocking Literacy: Effective Decoding & Spelling Instruction

• Jan Wasowicz Spell-Linksand Spelltalk ListServ
  http://www.learningbydesign.com/dr-jan-wasowicz.html
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