

Transform Your Spelling Instruction to Help Struggling Readers and Writers

Session Highlights

- You want to teach spelling, not assign it.
- The memorize-and-move-on / one-size-fits-all spelling programs found in basal reading series are typically not powerful enough to help children increase their reading and writing achievement, especially those who struggle.
- Teach children how to spell, not what to spell.
- Spelling is for reading. To understand why, think of how the orthographic processing works in the brain.
 - Sound and letters; sub-lexical level
 - Patterns (chunks, families): sub-lexical level
 - Entire words: Dictionary of the mind, lexical level
- Strategies are used to spell words
 - Sounds and letters
 - Analogy (Patterns)
 - Meaning
 - Whole words
 - Mnemonic
 - Circle, get close, correct
- Teach strategies and skills through aligned activities
 - Stretch, Tap, Zap
 - Spelling grids / Elkonin boxes
 - Word ladders
 - Look, Touch, Say
 - Word sorts
- Reinforce strategies and skills through aligned spelling centers
 - Flip books
 - Block toss
 - Rainbow words
 - Spelling teacher

- Teach and reinforce strategies by connecting spelling to reading and writing
 - Reading scavenger hunt
 - Reading word hunt
 - Writer’s Workshop and Kid Writing: write, write, write!

- Create master word lists that are narrow and rich. In each lesson, teach fewer spelling features and conventions. Show more words and teach more deeply by creating a master list. Use your master list to differentiate your spelling lists.

- Gather “big picture” assessment data through the use of spelling inventories. Give one at the beginning of the year. Use inventories like benchmark assessments: give at beginning, middle, and end of year (and then pass the information along).

Primary Short Form Spelling Inventory for a Class

Date _____

Teacher Name _____

Word	Spelling Features	Highlight spelling features that more than 20% of class missed.
set	s-e-t	*Beginning consonants *Middle consonants *Ending consonants *Beginning blends *Beginning digraphs *Ending digraphs *Soft c *nk *Doubled consonant (tt) *Short vowel sounds *v_e vowels *Other long vowels (igh, ea, oa) *Variant vowels (oi, aw) *Suffixes (y, ful) *Final syllables (le) *Endings (s, es, ed, ing)
mob	m-o-b	
dip	d-i-p	
hug	h-u-g	
flash	fl-a-sh	
slick	sl-i-ck	
hill	h-i-ll	
mess	m-e-ss	
junk	j-u-nk	
bottle	b-o-tt-le	
stone	s-t-one	
grapes	gr-ape-s	
chime	ch-ime	
flute	fl-ute	
faithful	f-ai-th-ful	
dream	dr-ea-m	
coach	c-oa-ch	
lightest	l-igh-t-est	
coin	c-oi-n	
sprawl	s-p-r-aw-l	
yard	y-ar-d	
thorny	th-or-n-y	
burned	b-ur-n-ed	
shirt	sh-ir-t	
wishes	w-i-sh-es	
snapped	s-n-a-pp-ed	
hiding	h-i-d(e)-ing	
racing	r-a-c(e)-ing	

LIST OF RELATED CITATIONS

- Adams, M.J. (2011). The relation between alphabetic basics, word recognition, and reading. In S.J. Samuels & A.E. Farstrup (Eds.), *What research has to say about reading instruction* (4th ed., pp. 4–24). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Bear, D.R., Invernizzi, M.R., Templeton, S.R., & Johnston, F. (2015). *Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling Instruction (6th Edition)*. Pearson.
- Ehri, L.C., & McCormick, S. Phases of word learning: Implications for instruction with delayed and disabled readers. In Alvermann, D.E., Unrau, N.J., & Ruddell, R.B. (Eds.). (2013). *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (6th ed., pp. 339–361). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Gentry, R. (2007). *Assessing Early Literacy with Richard Gentry: Five Phases, One Simple Test*. Heinemann.
- McCandliss, B., Wise, J., & Yoncheva, Y. (2015). Hemispheric specialization for visual words is shaped by attention to sub-lexical units during initial learning. *Brain & Language*. 145–146 (2015) 23–33
- Rapp, B., & Lipka, K. (2011). The Literate Brain: The Relationship between Spelling and Reading. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*. 23(5): 1180–1197.
doi:10.1162/jocn.2010.21507
- Willingham, D.T. (2015). *Raising kids who read*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass