

# THINKING ABOUT WHAT WE TEACH...

## TEACHING FOR TRANSFER: STRATEGIES

### STRATEGIES

- Are we teaching spelling strategies?
- Are we teaching students about what a successful speller does?
- Are we teaching the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to be a successful speller?
- Are we teaching for transfer?
- Or is the primary focus on spelling lists and tests?
- Are we **TEACHING** spelling?

### Why Teach Strategies?

- Good spellers have good memories AND good **problem solving**.
- Students **need** to develop a **range** of strategies for spelling and can ask themselves, "What can I do to help me spell this word?"
- Having a repertoire of strategies and knowing when to apply them, is **key** to successful spelling.
- Strategies give students skills and actions for **HOW** to spell unfamiliar or unseen words.
- **Transferable** to all words - students not limited by the words they know, have seen or used.

# SPELLING LISTS

**If we're giving students lists of words to learn we need to think about:**

- Are students learning words or learning **about** words?
- What have students been **taught** about the words on their list?
- What have students been taught about **how to spell** the words on their list?
- Are students learning words **on their own?** i.e. spelling activities and homework?
- Are students doing set activities with the word list or are the tasks **specific** to a spelling focus or strategy?

## Another word on lists ...

- Word lists are useful to guide us in the types of words to be taught and that are important to learn.
- It doesn't mean students have to be given word lists to learn **independently** as the primary way of learning these words.
- Any word list should either be **derived from teaching** or be **accompanied by teaching** of the words and how to spell and remember them.

*How are we using them?*

To guide word study, explicit teaching and investigations?

**OR**

Lists to be learnt by the student and tested each week?

**Word lists are OK, but...**

**It's what WE DO with the lists that makes the difference.**

*Given that the average person can spell 48,000 words, then to memorise these s/he would have to learn 10 words per day for 13 years approximately. If no learning was done at the weekends it would take 18 years assuming that none are forgotten and there is no need to relearn. Even if words are grouped in "families" the task is considerable. (Bouffler, 1984)*

Children and students do not become proficient spellers by the single strategy of memorising the spelling of individual words and teachers cannot teach students how to spell every word they will need to spell. However children and students can be armed with the knowledge and strategies to help them to develop as spellers. (DoE S.A. 2011)

**Child:** *I'll never learn to spell.*

**Mother:** *Why not?*

**Child:** *The teacher keeps changing the words.*

## TEACHING STRATEGIES

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Phonological strategies    | How words SOUND                                   |
| Visual strategies          | How words LOOK                                    |
| Morphemic strategies       | The MEANING of words and how words can be CHANGED |
| Etymology based strategies | The ORIGINS of words                              |

GENERALISATIONS

**We need to teach these explicitly.**

# PHONOLOGICAL

# STRATEGIES



# PHONOLOGICAL STRATEGIES

## KEY LEARNING

- words are made up of letters and these letters represent sounds in speech.
- we can identify the sounds in words and use our alphabet to show these sounds.
- some sounds can be shown with single letters (**h-a-d**) or groups of letters (**wh-ere**).
- some sounds can be represented by different letters (**me, tree, eat, chic, receive...**).
- some letters or groups of letters can represent more than one sound (**hat, was, apron**).
- we can identify sounds as single units or we can blend or chunk them (i.e. blends/ syllables and identifying vowel sound).

# PHONOLOGICAL STRATEGIES

## IPA

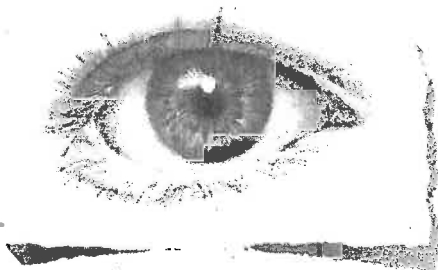
We can use the International Phonetic Alphabet to help identify sounds and syllables in words if we aren't sure.

**paper**

*noun* (MATERIAL) UK  US  /'peɪ.pə/



# VISUAL STRATEGIES



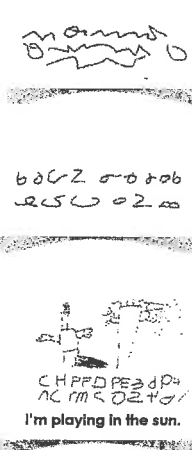
# SPELLING:

More Than  
Lists of  
words

Heidi Bush for Penguin District School May 2014

LET'S THINK  
ABOUT...

HOW SPELLING  
SKILLS DEVELOP

| WRITING STAGE  | SPELLING STAGE   | EXAMPLE   | "TYPICALLY" SEEN  |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p><b>ROLE PLAY WRITING</b></p> <p>The writer experiments with marks on paper with the intention of communicating a message and imitating adult writing. A blend of known letters and approximations of letters may be used.</p> | <p><b>PRELIMINARY SPELLING</b></p> <p>The writer experiments with writing-like symbols and knows that print carries a message. No understanding yet of the sound-symbol relationship and writing will not be able to read by others.</p> |  | <p>Kindergarten and Early Foundation.</p> <p><b>EYLF:</b></p> <p>develop an understanding that symbols are a powerful means of communication and that ideas, thoughts and concepts can be represented through them</p> <p>use symbols in play to represent and make meaning</p> <p>begin to be aware of the relationships between oral, written and visual representations</p> <p><b>Educators:</b></p> <p>encourage children to develop <i>their own symbol systems</i> and provide them with opportunities to explore culturally constructed symbol systems</p> |

| WRITING STAGE  | SPELLING STAGE   | EXAMPLE   | "TYPICALLY" SEEN   |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p><b>EXPERIMENTAL WRITING</b></p> <p>The writer experiments with writing letters and words, often representing words with 1, 2 or 3 letters (e.g. PRT for "party"). The writer may begin to write familiar words and represent some known sounds.</p> | <p><b>SEMI-PHONETIC SPELLING</b></p> <p>The writer shows a developing understanding of sound-symbol relationships and their spelling attempts show some evidence of sound-symbol correspondence. The writer may represent a whole word with one, two or three letters.</p> | <p>I su big yolk<br/>N ME YRP</p> <p>I saw a big yellow truck in my yard.</p> <p>i WFO<br/>i went fishing</p> | <p><b>Foundation:</b></p> <p>Their writing shows evidence of sound and letter knowledge, beginning writing behaviours...</p> |

| WRITING STAGE  | SPELLING STAGE  | EXAMPLE  | "TYPICALLY" SEEN   |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p><b>EARLY WRITING</b></p> <p>The writer is beginning to consider purpose and audience and writes simple sentences with correct punctuation. The writer correctly spells some frequently used words and when writing unknown words, uses letters on the basis of sound (e.g. "becos")</p> | <p><b>PHONETIC SPELLING</b></p> <p>The writer shows a near-perfect match for letters and sounds. Letters are chosen on the basis of sound rather than conventional letter patterns. Spelling attempts are meaningful and are becoming more like standard spelling</p> | <p>...the animal is the best because it<br/>...can blend in it is not a cat<br/>...it has it because it can do different ways<br/>...it can run fast now it is in the<br/>...and it is not because it is fast<br/>...the name first<br/>...it is more like the cat<br/>...wed. wed</p> | <p><b>From Year 1 -&gt;:</b></p> <p>They accurately spell words with regular spelling patterns... (Y1)</p> |

| WRITING STAGE  | SPELLING STAGE   | EXAMPLE  | "TYPICALLY" SEEN   |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p><b>TRANSITIONAL WRITING</b></p> <p>The writer has increasing control over writing conventions such as punctuation, spelling and text organisation. The writer considers purpose and audience when choosing ideas and information and writing shows a bank of known words that are spelled correctly. The writer is less reliant on sounding words and is using other strategies such as visual and meaning based strategies to spell unknown words.</p> | <p><b>TRANSITIONAL SPELLING</b></p> <p>The writer relies less on phonetic strategies and begins to develop a wider repertoire of strategies including visual and meaning based strategies. The writer may still have some difficulty recognising if a word "looks right" but is able to use a bank of known words and proof these words.</p> <p>It may take a writer some time to move through this stage.</p> | <p>Once upon a time a dog named Rags got lost in the woods. All of the people looked for him. After a while he found his way home again. His family was very happy.</p> <p>Once upon a time there lived a handsome prince his mother was sick and he had to find some fruit to cheer her. In the kingdom there</p> | <p><b>From Year 2 -&gt;</b></p> <p>They accurately spell familiar words and attempt to spell less familiar words... (Y2)</p> <p>They use knowledge of sounds and high frequency words to spell words accurately, checking their work for meaning. (Y3)</p> |

| WRITING STAGE  | SPELLING STAGE   | EXAMPLE  | "TYPICALLY" SEEN   |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p><b>CONVENTIONAL WRITING</b><br/>The writer is familiar with most aspects of the writing process and is able to choose forms to suit different purposes. The writer uses a variety of simple, compound and complex sentences with correct punctuation and wide vocabulary.</p> <p><b>PROFICIENT WRITING</b><br/>The writer has developed a personal style and manipulates forms of writing to suit their purpose. The writer uses a wide vocabulary and has control over all aspects of the writing process.</p> <p><b>ACCOMPLISHED WRITING</b><br/>The writer makes critical choices about all aspects of writing including style, vocabulary, content and voice. The writer presents complex ideas clearly and evaluates and critiques own writing to ensure the writing has achieved its purpose for the intended audience.</p> | <p><b>INDEPENDENT SPELLING</b><br/>The writer uses a multi-strategy approach and has become aware of the many patterns and rules within the spelling system. They are able to recognise when a word doesn't look right and is able to think of an alternative spelling. The writer has acquired a large bank of known words with automatic recall of the correct spelling for these words. The writer recognises the importance of accuracy and proof reading.</p> | <p><i>I love spring with the sight of open flowers and full fresh buds the crisp smell of cut grass I love the energy enriching light I feel refreshed and new</i></p> <p><i>Samran the snake was slithering round when he heard his friends talking together. He decided to join them and so slithered over. They were <u>discoussing</u> a problem they had...</i></p> | <p>From Year 4 -&gt;</p> <p>They... use accurate spelling ...editing their work to improve meaning. (Y4)</p> <p>When writing, they ... use accurate spelling ...editing their work to provide structure and meaning. (Y5)</p> <p>They ... use accurate spelling and punctuation for clarity and make and explain editorial choices. (Y6)</p> |

## I WONDER...

What does a learner need in order to successfully move through this continuum?

What does a successful speller do? What does a learner at the end of this continuum think and do?

Why might someone become "stuck" in a stage of the continuum?

What can WE DO to progress learners through this continuum?

| What does it take to spell accurately?  | Why?   |
|---|--|
| Word knowledge (extensive vocabulary)   | The more words I know, have heard or have used, the more likely I am to make a correct or near correct spelling attempt.   |
| Knowledge of word meanings and origins  | When I know what a word means I can use correct spelling for the context, such as correct homophones. "I have cancelled the flights and the <u>fair</u> has been refunded."<br>If I know the origins of words, spelling makes more sense and I don't see our language as being so weird and hard to spell. |
| A high level of automaticity and visual memory for known words.   | When I remember common words or words I see or use often, I can spell them without consciously "encoding" and my writing is more fluent.   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A repertoire of strategies</li> <li>• phonological</li> <li>• visual</li> <li>• morphemic</li> <li>• etymological</li> <li>• knowledge of generalisations</li> </ul> | When I know a range of strategies I can apply these to all words I am trying to spell and I can choose the best strategy for the word I am writing. I don't have to rely on memory or whether or not I've used the word before.  |
| Knowledge of sound/letter links.  | When I understand sounds and letters I can understand the connection between spoken and written words.   |
| Use of analogy and links to known words   | When I recognise patterns and similarities in words, I can use the words I know to help me spell many more words. I practise   |

## So what does this mean for teaching and learning?

| What can we do?   | Why?  |
|---|---|
| Include explicit <b>word study</b> into the classroom literacy program.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective spelling is taught not "caught".</li> <li>• Word study is the explicit teaching of skills, strategies, patterns and the principles of word construction.</li> </ul>  |
| Teach spelling in <b>context</b> .  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As well as explicitly teaching spelling principles through word study, students need the opportunity to see and use these in writing.</li> </ul>   |
| Incorporate a <b>daily /regular</b> focus on spelling, spelling strategies and word knowledge   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short, engaging and regular spelling lessons are more effective than occasional skills sessions.</li> </ul>  |
| Use <b>investigative, problem solving and inquiry</b> approaches for teaching and learning to promote <b>thinking</b> about words and spelling. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning spelling should be learning <b>about</b> words, not slavishly learning lists of words.</li> <li>• Using investigations, questions and problem solving teaches students to think and transfer their learning and take an interest in words and their use.</li> </ul>                         |
| Explicitly teach <b>strategies</b> .  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When we have a repertoire of strategies we can approach unfamiliar words more effectively by choosing the most appropriate strategy for the word we are attempting.</li> <li>• Strategies are transferable. We are not limited to whether or not we have had the word on a spelling list.</li> </ul> |

- shared, regular -
- unly
- guided reading -
- Thinky ; Posty questions ;

### charts & slips

- short, slip 15 min
- vocab pallettes ;
- identify teachable moments
- 10<sup>th</sup> misconceptions ; (for list)
- phoneme / graphemes -
- **Explicit** teach of spell
- etc - recognition etc -
- self / unly -
- Play with language ;
- fun with words ..

## So what does this mean for teaching and learning?

| What can we do?   | Why?  |
|---|---|
| Encourage students to <b>share</b> the strategies they are using.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When students develop a metalanguage for talking about words and spelling, they can better understand what they are doing or not doing when they spell.</li> </ul>   |
| Use a <b>balance</b> of groupings (whole, small, partner, independent) and <b>flexible groupings</b> (same "readiness", mixed "readiness").                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When we use flexible groupings, we can target the learning to the students.</li> <li>• Flexible groupings enable students to learn from and with a range of peers.</li> </ul>  |
| Use a range of <b>tasks</b> (written, investigations, explanation, hand-on...) that are <b>relevant, meaningful and purposeful</b> , rather than just "activities". | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A range of tasks enables students to learn and apply spelling principles in a range of contexts.</li> <li>• Task variation heightens engagement and promotes authentic and deeper learning over memorisation.</li> </ul>   |
| Avoid overuse of pre-set word lists without associated <b>teaching</b> .  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spelling lists are fine but it's what we DO with the lists that makes the difference.</li> <li>• Word lists given to students without explicit teaching will often lead to students memorising their words for a short time and then they are forgotten ("I know it on Friday but forget it on Monday")</li> </ul> |
| Have a spelling <b>focus</b> from which students construct their own lists.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A focus makes it clear to students what they are learning and practising.</li> <li>• Teaching this focus provides an opportunity for students to create their own word lists to investigate and learn.</li> </ul>  |

- Avoid - word lists
- In a vacuum ;
- Spelling tools may just be annoying memory.

→ Ambition ;

## A SPELLING FOCUS...

|   |  |
|---|--|
| a <b>phoneme/grapheme</b> focus   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• common spellings and variations for spelling different phonemes.</li> </ul>   |
| teaching and using <b>strategies</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• introducing the language and application of strategies then ongoing teaching and application.</li> </ul>                                |
| <b>homophones</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the connection between spelling and meaning.</li> <li>• meaning and visual strategies to identify correct use of homophones.</li> </ul> |
| <b>generalisations</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• spelling "rules" that apply to how words are spelled or when adding a suffix</li> </ul>   |
| a <b>prefix or suffix</b> focus   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adding a prefix or suffix to change meaning or tense</li> <li>• the meanings and origins of affixes</li> </ul>                          |
| strategies for " <b>spelling nasties</b> "<br>a <b>need</b> arising from students' spelling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strategies for overcoming persistent spelling errors.</li> </ul>  |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strategies for spelling these words, or as a vehicle for</li> </ul>   |



# VISUAL STRATEGIES

## KEY LEARNING

- Identifying incorrect spelling.
- Recognising possible and impossible letter sequences.
- Identifying visual patterns in words.
- Developing a visual memory for words.
- Spelling by analogy - We can use what we remember from words we've seen, to help us spell words. *"If I know how to spell this word, how will it help me spell ..."*
- How to self monitor:
  - Does it look right?
  - Which part of the word doesn't look right?
  - What else could it be?
  - What other letter /s can represent that sound?
  - Does any part of the word look like another word we know?

# MORPHEMIC

# STRATEGIES



# MORPHEMIC STRATEGIES

## KEY LEARNING

- the important link between spelling and meaning
- some words can be spelled the same but have different meanings (homonyms, homographs)
- words can sound the same but have different spelling and meaning (homophones)
- words can be changed by adding or removing parts and this can change meaning (e.g. prefixes, suffixes, plurals, word building and tense)
- words can be combined to make new words with new meaning (compound words):

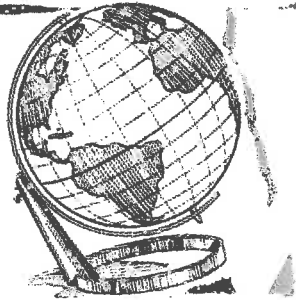
There are approximately 9000 homonyms (bear, bear) homophones (to, too, two), and homographs (dove, dove) in the English language.

***Can we teach them all with lists?***

MEANING is intrinsically linked to spelling.

***Do we give it the same attention as phonics?***

# ETYMOLOGICAL STRATEGIES

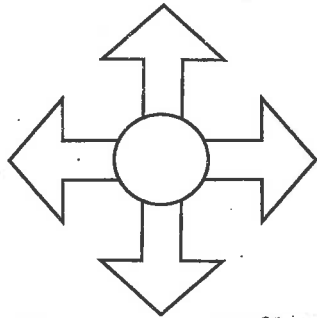


## ETYMOLOGICAL STRATEGIES

### KEY LEARNING

- English has borrowed words or parts of words from other languages and this can explain how words are spelled.
- sometimes long words are shortened or abbreviated.
- the English language is always changing as new words are created.
  - brunch, google, scuba, frenemy

# GENERALISATIONS



## GENERALISATIONS

### KEY LEARNING

- There are "rules" or generalisations that can be applied when spelling words.
- Generalisations are transferable and can be applied to many words.
- There might be exceptions to a generalisation.
- Spelling isn't random, there are predictable patterns and rules that can help us spell unknown words.

## REFLECT...

- *Are we explicitly teaching spelling strategies?*
- *What strategies are being taught?*
- *Are any "weighted" more heavily than others?*
- *Are students assessed and given feedback about their use of spelling strategies?*
- *Do we look at writing diagnostically to determine the strategies students are applying or not applying?*
- *Or is spelling simply marked?*
- *Do students have a metalanguage for discussing spelling strategies? Have we taught them this?*

## **SOME KEY MESSAGES FOR TEACHING MIDDLE AND SECONDARY SCHOOL**

- We can't take students' knowledge of the alphabetic principle for granted.
- Spelling proficiency doesn't happen simply through immersion in spoken language.
- Phonological and morphological weaknesses can often explain older students' difficulties with spelling.
- Older students require a focus on word derivations and spelling conventions.
  - \* generalisations
  - \* spelling by analogy
  - \* word families

### ***What about spell-checkers?***

Research has found that spell check was only able to identify the target word for 53% of misspellings. (Fresch, 2008).

## **Student Surveys**

*"What strategies do you use when you write and want to use a word that you don't know how to spell?"*

Make a list and we'll share

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Teach for **transfer**.
- Teach **about** words and **how to** spell words.
- Teach students to **think** about words and **think** about how to spell words.
- Be **interested** and **curious** ourselves about words and our language and **model** this to students.

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