Spelling knowledges: taking a strategic approach

Jan Hagston
Discussion:
What word do you find hard to spell or that trips you up?

What strategy do you use to deal with this?
About the workshop

➢ Provide an overview of different spelling knowledges

➢ Analyse spelling errors using the framework of the spelling knowledges
Spelling knowledges

- **Orthographic**
- **Etymological**
- **Morphological**
- **Phonological**
- **Visual**
What’s a morpheme?

- Morphemes are the smallest meaningful linguistic units.
- Cannot be broken down into smaller meaningful parts.
- They include base words, suffixes and prefixes.
- Indicate changes in verb tense, possession and plurality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>prefix</th>
<th>base word</th>
<th>suffix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>re</td>
<td>act</td>
<td>ed</td>
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</table>
Why use morphemes?

- Letter sounds in the English language are inconsistent—only 56% of its words can be predicted by sound-symbol correspondences.
- Morphemes are more predictable because they are almost always spelled the same across words.
- Morphemes have consistent rules that can be applied when adding to them. E.g. dropping the ‘e’ when adding ‘-ing’ (brake-braking, hope-hoping).
Why use morphemes?

• Morphological interventions produce improvements in children’s spelling and are likely to be effective in improving the spelling of adult literacy learners.

• Morphological awareness is a tool for problem solving how to spell words and working out the meaning of words.

• Breaking words into morphemes helps students spell by allowing them to spell one morpheme at a time.

un-help-ful

un = not or opposite of
full = full of
Phonological knowledge

What is phonological knowledge?

Phonological knowledge is knowledge about the sounds of language and letter-sound relationships (phonics). It involves knowing:

• the names of letters and the sounds they represent
• the ways in which letters can be grouped to make different sounds, e.g. vowels, consonants, consonant blends, word families, the concept of onset and rime

Phonological knowledge includes:

• the ability to hear and manipulate individual phonemes (phonemic awareness)
• knowledge of the different ways that letters go together to make different sounds
• knowing how to chunk parts of words into sound segments.
Phonological knowledge is critical to spelling and reading. About 50% of English words can be spelled correctly using phonological knowledge alone. Teaching phonological skills can significantly improve spelling. Phonological knowledge assists in reading words or parts of words. Without phonological knowledge, spellers must rely heavily on memory to spell words correctly – and that’s the least efficient way to spell.
Discussion:

What are some activities you can do to help students develop:

• morphemic knowledge?
• phonological knowledge?
Some ideas to develop morphemic knowledge

- Breaking words into morphemes.
- Making (new) words from morphemes:
  - Joining prefixes and base words
  - Joining base words
  - Joining prefixes, base words and suffixes.
  - Changing prefixes and suffixes
- Investigating the meaning of prefixes and suffixes
- Investigating what happens when morphemes join together – making spelling rules.

’y’ changes to an ‘i’ when there is a consonant before it

busy → business
Some ideas to develop phonological knowledge

- Word webs using a rime and onsets.
- Finding words that sound the same (may look different or similar).
- Investigating similarities and differences in words.
- Analyse groups of words and formulate own spelling rule/s.
- Syllables – games and poetry (e.g. haiku).
What is etymological knowledge?

- Etymological knowledge is the understanding of the history and origin of a word or morpheme.
Why use etymological knowledge?

- Around 60% of English vocabulary comes from non-Anglo Saxon languages.
- Knowing the origin of a word provides problem solving clues and can help with spelling because words with similar origins can have similar, often irregular, spelling patterns.
Etymological knowledge

Why use etymological knowledge?

• Focussing on etymology encourages students to pay attention to the meaning and patterns of words and specific parts of words or letter groupings.

• It can help students to deal with words that have irregular spelling and to make connections between words with the same meaning.

• It can help students understand how scientific words have been constructed using Greek and Latin roots.
What’s visual knowledge?

- involves thinking about whether a word looks right – that is, observing, memorising and recalling the appearance of words or parts of words.

- can include memorising a word as a pattern, letter sequence, or shape, or remembering part of a word and using other strategies to spell the other parts. It also involves checking that a word ‘looks right’ after it is written.
Why use visual knowledge?

• Visual knowledge is useful for spelling words with irregular spelling patterns.

• Many of the most frequently used words have irregular spelling and require memorisation.

• Having a memory bank of frequently used words increases fluency in writing and allows the writer to focus on spelling more difficult words.

• Visual knowledge can be used when a person is unsure about how to spell a word. For example, they may write the word several different ways and pick the spelling that looks right. It is also useful when proofreading as a way of identifying words that look incorrect.

• Visual knowledge can build automaticity by helping to store words in long-term memory. Automaticity improves writing fluency and allows students to focus on content and structure.
Discussion:
What are some activities you can do to help students develop etymological and visual knowledge?
Some ideas to develop etymological knowledge

- Group words with the same spelling pattern from different origins.
- Word roots and numbers (tri, bi, quad, etc).
- Investigate the meaning of word roots.
- Match root and ending to make a word.
- Match a word with its meaning.
Some ideas to develop visual knowledge

- Analyse and memorise words using LOOK SAY COVER WRITE CHECK.
- Find words within words.
- Mnemonics.
- Add a silent letter to make a word.
- Identify the correct homophone.
What knowledges do you use to spell tricky or new words?
Morning tea 😊😊
Some theory around spelling

What do we know about adults who struggle with spelling?

• There are similarities between the way that adults and children learn to spell.
• Instruction for adult learners is most effective with explicit teaching using personally meaningful reading and writing activities and real world contexts.
• Adults who experience difficulty with spelling show greater deficits in phonological and morphemic knowledge.
• Adults often use morphemic knowledge when reading but this does not always translate to their writing.
• Adults may have over reliance on visual knowledge and orthographic rules.
• Explicit teaching of spelling knowledges can develop the linguistic skills that students need to become proficient spellers (http://www.teachingacenglish.edu.au/explicit-teaching/spelling/explicit-spelling-overview.html)
• Developing spelling knowledges can help adult learners to be self directed and take control of their learning.
Successful spellers …

… draw on multiple strategies and a range of spelling knowledge.
Discussion:
How do you assess your students’ spelling?
How to assess spelling?

- Commercial spelling tests
- Teacher developed spelling tests
- Analysis of student writing
**Analysing student writing**

Provides information about the strategies used:

- when students attempt to write unfamiliar words
- students’ ability to identify and correct errors
- categories of errors that students make

Best done by analysing pieces of writing over time to provide more accurate and in-depth information about:

- student’s spelling knowledge
- how they are applying the knowledge
- strategies used.
I went Fishin on SATURDAY and I mist The high tide so i didn't think i would have corted aney thing so i went out with my boat. Aney way i and sat down and i started to REALAX. All the sader i got a bite so i started to pull and the biggest fish in my jumped out of the water skering me to death.

1. Make a list of the misspelt words.
2. Choose two or three errors and think about the types of knowledge the writer is using.
3. What teaching points come from this?
Summary
- Overuse and/or incorrect use of phonics
- Spells some common words correctly
- Represents most sounds with a orthographically correct option
- Limited self correction

Teaching points
- Memorise frequently used words
- Develop morphemic knowledge – base words, suffixes, doubling final consonant when adding ending
- Revise sounds particularly common digraphs
- Develop sound analysis skills
- Use analogies for ‘me’, ‘we’, ‘she’, etc.
For Xmas this year, we had 15 people over for dinner. We had a BBQ with sausages and burgers, and we got everyone to bring a salad. Everyone seemed to have a good time. There were some great photographs on Facebook. We had so much food left that we were eating leftovers for a week.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intended word</th>
<th>Student spelling</th>
<th>Self-correction attempt</th>
<th>Error type &amp; possible strategy used (morphemic, etymological, phonological, visual, other)</th>
<th>Teaching points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>people</td>
<td>peeple</td>
<td>Y / N</td>
<td>Phonic spelling of ‘eo’ sound (ee). Shows the ability to analyse the sounds in words correctly and understand sound letter relationships but lack of understanding of letters that can made ‘ee’ sound</td>
<td>Letter combinations that can make long ‘e’ sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dinner</td>
<td>dina</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>‘n’ not doubled ‘a’ instead of ‘er’ - also shows ability to analyse sounds and letter sound relationship</td>
<td>When consonants are doubled. Develop morphemic knowledge - ‘dinner’ comes from the word 'dine'... when we add ‘er’ to the end of a verb it changes to a noun e.g. run---&gt;runner or hit---&gt;hitter Rhyming words – sinner, winner, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sausages</td>
<td>sosages</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>‘o’ instead of ‘au’. Lack of understanding of letter/s making short ‘o’ sound. Again shows ability to analyse sounds, letter sound relationships</td>
<td>Become familiar with different ways of representing short ‘o’ sound Memorise/mnemonics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>everyone</td>
<td>evry one</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of understanding of compound words and that meaning can be changed when words are combined</td>
<td>Every frequently used word – memorise Compound words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyone</td>
<td>Evry one</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>bring</td>
<td>Unclear bing?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Unclear how spelled on first attempt</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Correct spelling Y / N</td>
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<tr>
<td>salad</td>
<td>salid</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Phonic spelling. Over reliance on basic sounds</td>
<td>Visual picture</td>
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<td>Word in words</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Syllabification</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>History of word – from French ‘salade’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>photographs</td>
<td>photigrafs</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Used ‘i’ instead of ‘o’. Didn’t recognise root</td>
<td>Common Greek roots and their meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Used ‘f’ instead of ‘ph’. Didn’t recognise root</td>
<td>Sounds from Greek words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>though</td>
<td>tho</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>‘o’ instead of ‘ough’. Shows ability to analyse sounds and letter sound relationship. Lack of understanding of letter combinations that can make long ‘o’ sound</td>
<td>Frequently used word – memorise</td>
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<td>Word families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>were</td>
<td>wer</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>No final ‘e’. May show understanding of CVCe rule?</td>
<td>Frequently used word – memorise / LSCWC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion:

What will you do with the information from the analysis?

1. Summarise the key information
2. What are the main teaching points?
Assessment

**Summary**
- Overuse and/or incorrect use of phonics
- Spells some common words correctly
- Limited self correction
- Limited morphological and etymological knowledge

**Teaching points**
- Introducing the concepts of prefixes, base words and suffixes
- Investigating how words can be built from base words using prefixes and suffixes
- Using base words to make compound words
- Identifying spelling rules that can be used when joining morphemes
- Observing the spelling patterns of words from different origins
- Investigating everyday words that have Greek and Latin roots
- Finding the meaning of word roots
- Using the Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check technique
- Repeated use of the words
- Using mnemonic for the tricky letters in a word e.g. people eat oranges for the word ‘people’
- Overenunciation e.g. saying “p-e-o-ple” when spelling the word.
References


Devonshire, V, Morris, P, Fluck, M 2013, ‘Spelling and reading development: The effect of teaching children multiple levels of representation in their orthography’ Learning and Instruction, no. 25.


Westwood, P 2008, What Teachers Need to Know About Spelling, Australian Council for Education Research, Camberwell, Australia.
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Don’t forget to put your email address on the sheet if you would like to receive the handouts – and a copy of the powerpoint.

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