

Spelling Development

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Over the past few decades, teachers have changed their methods of instruction. Spelling is very crucial at a young age. Children are just learning how to put sounds together to spell different words. Not all children will be on the same level; “there is no one right level for all children at a given age,” (Manning and Underbakke, 236). Teachers should review written material from previous grades to see what level their incoming children are on. The next step teachers should take is asking their students to spell some words. Once that information is collected, educators can have insight to what needs to be taught and how they can enforce different strategies.

There are several ways that teachers can encourage the development of spelling. They can have students write throughout the day, such as labeling pictures. Another strategy is after reading a story aloud, have the children write a few words about the article or book. Additionally, “words that are one letter away from being conventional can be assigned for spelling words,” (Manning and Underbakke, 237). An example of one of these words is “monkey,” which a child might spell as “monke.” One of the most common methods is using a word wall or chart to help remind children of the correct spelling of more difficult and frequently used words.

Once an instructor has administered ungraded tests or has observed the students, they can place each student in differing levels of spelling, ranging from 1 to 5. The type 1 speller writes words that contain no vowels other than letter name vowels. To help the type 1 student, have them listen for beginning and final

sounds of words during writing activities. A type 2 speller will write age-appropriate words that are misspelled. These students will need help listening for sounds in the middle of words. Type 3 spellers write some age-appropriate words that are conventionally spelled, but several spelling patterns are not recognized. Teachers should promote students to seek help from their peers when writing. The type 4 speller will write age-appropriate words that are nearly spelled properly. Occasionally they will have difficulty with a spelling pattern but they can overcome those challenges. Lastly, a type 5 speller composes age-appropriate words that are all spelled conventionally. These children need to continue to read and write since they will continue to typically spell those words they use.

Teaching techniques are continually changing, so it is important for teachers to be flexible and embrace change. Not all students will be on the same level; therefore the teacher should not have the same expectations for every child. The main goal should be to have the students improve upon their spelling development. For a child to progress in spelling, parents should help at home. They can do that by reading to their child, so at least over time they might learn to recognize new words. The key thing to remember is to have patients, children will learn, but at their own pace.

References

Manning and Underbakke (2005). Spelling development research necessitates replacement of weekly word list. *Childhood education*, 81 (4), 236-238.