



# Spelling Progress

## QUARTERLY



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## In This Issue

1. [From the Editor](#) . Walter B Barbe.
2. [Spelling Reform: An Educator's Perspective](#). Azalia S. Francis.
3. [Adult Spelling and Personality](#). John R. Beech and Christine Black.
4. [Phonics Countdown](#). Emmett Albert Bett.
5. [The Electronic Revolution and Spelling](#). Michael N. Milone, Jr.

### Readers' Forum

6. [SR1 and SR1a](#). Harry Lindgren
7. [Basic Principle of Learning](#). Harvie Barnard

*[Spelling Progress Quarterly. Volume 1, Number 1, Page 12 in the printed version]*

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## 1. From the Editor

Walter B. Barbe

This issue of *Spelling Progress Quarterly* is a **radical departure from past practices**. The format has been changed dramatically, the content has been expanded, and even the title has been changed. For those readers who were familiar with the old *Spelling Progress Bulletin*, the current edition must come as quite a shock. We considered phasing in some of the changes gradually, so as not to raise the ire of our loyal readers, but decided to take the plunge all at once as a statement of our commitment to the journal. It is our intention to bring *SPQ* into the mainstream of educational publishing, and there is no faster way to do so than to plunge right in.

Aside from the cosmetic changes that are evident in *SPQ*, we are expanding the content from its past focus on alternate orthographies. We certainly shall continue to feature the work of those who are searching for a more reasonable orthography for the English language, but we realize that there are other ways to promote spelling reform. We shall devote a section of each issue of *SPQ* to **spelling reform, spelling and reading, spelling instruction, and spelling and computers**. By broadening our scope, we hope to appeal to a larger audience, including many classroom teachers and school administrators. Spelling reform, or any educational reform for that matter, must be accepted at the school level if it is to succeed, and by appealing to teachers and administrators, we believe our message will be spread more rapidly.

In the past, articles that made extensive use of **alternative orthographies** were routinely printed in *SPB*. We shall continue this practice, but request that all manuscripts using a non-standard orthography be accompanied by a standard version. We shall print the two versions side-by-side for the convenience of our readers. If only occasional use is made of a non-standard orthography, we shall try to include as much of it as we can.

In addition to our four main sections, we have included a **Readers' Forum**. In this Forum, we shall give our readers a chance to express themselves and to interact with one another. As you will see [herein](#), the exchanges can be lengthy, and at times, heated. We shall allow controversy to rage, so long as common courtesy is observed.

We shall also try to include in each issue a **reprint of an article** that appeared in the past. There is a wealth of information in the past issues of *SPB*, and we want to share it with new readers. [This month's reprint](#) is by Dr. Emmett Betts, a distinguished educator.

The new *Spelling Progress Quarterly* will undoubtedly continue to change in response to the needs of our readers. We look forward to growing with you, and hope that our efforts will contribute to the way in which our language is used and our children educated. Both are very special to us.

## 2. Spelling Reform: An Educator's Perspective

**Azalia S. Francis**

Even the most casual observer of the language will notice that English has some peculiar quirks. The letter combination *ti*, for example, has the unusual sound of *sh* when it precedes the letters *on* in words such as *nation* and *exclamation*. The situation is even worse for *gh*, which sounds like *f* in *laugh* and *p* in *hiccough*, and is silent in *through*. These oddities of English orthography have fostered the spelling reform movement.

The irregular nature of the English language becomes a greater problem when you consider the differences that exist among individuals. Some children, for example, have difficulty discriminating certain speech sounds, and as a result, their spelling ability may suffer. Among the factors that influence how well students can discriminate sounds are learning styles, hearing status, ability level, and linguistic background.

Certain conclusions regarding these inter-individual differences have been drawn from research studies conducted by the U.S. Office of Education and authorities in the field of spelling. The following discrimination problems appear to hinder spelling ability:

- confusion of beginning and ending sounds by substituting *d* for *th*, *th* for *f*, *s* for *th*, and *t* for *th*
- slurring or prolonging vowels, as in *heeyar* for *here*
- distortion of *r*-controlled vowels by adding sounds, as in *mothah*
- formation of an incorrect comparative degree, as in *beautifuller*
- omission of the final *s* or *z* sound in plurals
- omission of the final *d* sound in past tense formations, as in *She play tennis yesterday*.
- omission of the final *s* in present tense, third person verbs, as in *John walk to school every day*.

It seems, then, that both the nature of English and the characteristics of the people who speak it interact to cause some significant language problems, especially in schools. The most frequently proposed remedy to the situation is to revise English orthography.

Arn Rupert, of Lunenburg, Canada, sums up the situation nicely. His data may be slightly off the mark, but the principal conclusion holds true.

Put simply, English spelling should be made more phonetic so it will be easier to learn and use. Study the words listed below, which are in order the 50 found by Dr. Godfrey Dewey to be used most in average print. They are also the most likely to be known and spoken by a six year old starting primary school and hoping to learn how to read and write. I think we must now add *she* and *her* to the list, but at the end, uncounted.

the	you	<u>but</u>	my	of	as	they	there
<u>and</u>	with	all	no	to	he	will	their
<u>a</u>	have	or	were	<u>in</u>	on	which	so
it	by	<u>from</u>	<u>him</u>	that	<u>not</u>	<u>had</u>	your
I	<u>at</u>	has	<u>can</u>	is	this	one	would
for	are	our	if	be	we	<u>an</u>	she
was	his	been	her				

Those underlined, only 17, were picked by Sir James Pitman as at least reasonably alphabetic, in that each letter of these 17 indicates the usual sound. *She* and *her* can't be included either, so 35 of the 52 must be confusing as a set of words to demonstrate the sound values of letters. And as the beginner struggles through some thousand or so common English words, the ratio of sane to silly spellings improves a bit, but only slowly, to about 50/50.

Making English more phonetic is the obvious solution, but this is no mean feat. There are several dozen alternate orthographies in use today, all of which seem satisfactory to those of us who are on the outside. Among the inner circle of spelling reformers, however, there is constant debate over which alternative is most effective.

In addition to the lack of consensus concerning the best orthography with which to replace English, there is considerable opposition to the notion of revising English at all. There is no institution more resistant to overt change than language. Add to this resistance the large and diverse populations that speak English, and you come up with an almost insurmountable problem.

The need for spelling reform is clear, and it is equally clear that a phonetically based alternate orthography is the solution. But what can we as educators do about it?

We cannot forsake standard English overnight, so our path must be one of moderation. Most obviously, we must remain aware of how our language is changing, both overtly and subtly. We should be familiar with at least one alternate orthography and perhaps even try it in our classroom as a language arts activity or an instructional tool to be used with a selected group of students who might need it. Encourage students to begin a New Word File, a collection of alternate spellings they encounter in their everyday activities. Words like *thru*, *nice*, and *aline* are all around us and demonstrate that our language is constantly evolving.

Next, we should keep abreast of the literature that deals with children's writing, particularly that which focuses on invented spellings. As we learn more about how children think and how they perceive our language, we become better able to judge the value of alternate orthographies.

Finally, we must consider the bold step of actually teaching alternate spellings. This is not to suggest that a new orthography should be used exclusively in the classroom. Instead, we should select a number of common words that have widely used alternate spellings and introduce them to our students. Accept such spellings on compositions and other written assignments, and even on the weekly spelling test. Some teachers have already taken this step and have discovered that both they and their students approach spelling with a new level of enthusiasm. That benefit alone is worth the effort.



# Spelling Instruction

## 3. Adult Spelling and Personality

**John R. Beech and Christine Black**

### **Abstract**

Cox (1978) reported an apparent relationship between personality and spelling ability. This study is a continuing investigation of the same relationship. From a pool of 118 students, good and poor spellers were selected and tested on repression-sensitization and other measures. A non-significant correlation was found between repression-sensitization and spelling ability, and there were no significant associations between spelling ability and intelligence, vocabulary, or gender of subject. But on a test involving the learning of new spellings of familiar words, the poor spellers took significantly more trials than the good spellers, suggesting that the problem of learning to spell is still manifest in adulthood.

Spelling disability is a problem that persists into adulthood. Because this problem exists among adults with varying degrees of formal education, it does not seem likely that there is a clear relationship between intelligence and spelling ability. Researchers have had to look elsewhere for possible causes of spelling disability, and have begun investigating the possible connection between spelling ability and personality traits.

Cox (1978), for one, found an association between repression-sensitization and spelling performance. In his study, adult subjects were divided into repressers and sensitizers; the sensitizers proved to be significantly better at spelling than the repressers.

The main purpose of the present study is to see whether or not the relationship found by Cox (1978) could be demonstrated in the reverse direction. That is, if subjects are divided into good and poor spellers, do they differ on the repression-sensitization dimension in the direction predicted by Cox's work?

The repression-sensitization personality dimension is a continuum representing the response to threatening stimuli. At one extreme are individuals who avoid threat by denying or repressing the threat-arousing situation. At the other extreme are sensitizers who approach threatening situations and attempt to intellectualize the events. Repressers are less likely to recognize anxiety-arousing material, whereas sensitizers are more sensitive in their detection of anxiety-arousing stimuli.

Cox (1978) does not offer a complete explanation for expecting a connection between spelling ability and the represser-sensitizer distinction. It is possible, however, that learning to spell is perceived to be an anxiety-provoking situation. Sensitizers are likely to approach the situation by attending to the details of spelling, whereas repressers avoid or ignore the spelling task. Eventually, the sensitizers become better spellers than the repressers.

In addition to the Repression-Sensitization Scale, subjects in the present experiment were given an intelligence test, a vocabulary test, and a test involving the learning of new spellings. These additional measures permitted the examination of other traits that might relate to spelling ability.

## Method

### Subjects

In the initial pool of subjects there were 80 female and 38 male students enrolled for psychology and education courses. The mean performance on the spelling test was 60.1% correct, and their average age was 21.2 years with a range of 18 to 48 years. The females averaged 20.3 years of age and spelled 61.4% of the words correctly, while the males were 23.1 years old with a mean spelling score of 57.3%.

From this pool of subjects, 16 good spellers and 16 poor spellers were selected. The good spellers consisted of 10 female and 6 male students whose mean spelling performance was 78.5% correct and whose average age was 23.1 years. The group of poor spellers included 9 females and 7 males. The mean spelling performance was 40.6%, and the average age of this group was 21.3.

### Instruments

The test used to choose the good and poor spellers consisted of 48 words. These were selected from a pool of 200 words that are frequently misspelled by college students (Hodges and Whitten, 1977).

#### Words Used in Spelling Test

accidentally	beneficial	eighth	inoculate	paroled	scarcity
accommodate	bureaucracy	embarrassed	jewelrypermanent	separate	
admission	committee	euthanasia	leisurely	prescription	sincerely
adolescent	controversial	financially	lightning	presence	strategy
analyze	courtesy	guaranteed	maneuver	procedure	stubbornness
apparent	criticize	humorous	mischievous	pronunciation	temperature
assassination	definitely	immediately	necessary	questionnaire	truly
author	disappoint	incidentally	parallel	received	twelfth

The new-spelling test comprised ten familiar words that were assigned new spellings. The invented-spelling words were *inkreest* (*increased*), *rirnaening* (*remaining*), *kreeated* (*created*), *divoesion* (*devotion*), *mezher* (*measure*), *engaejed* (*engaged*), *sicling* (*cycling*), *dedikaet* (*dedicate*), *naesion* (*nation*), and *eekwal* (*equal*).

The vocabulary test was made up of 26 words selected from the adult PMA verbal meaning test. Subjects were instructed to ". . . write the meaning beside each word. You may write a single word or a sentence which you think conveys clearly what the particular word means. Erase any answer you may wish to change."

#### Words Used in Vocabulary Test

console	duplicate	inert	oblivious	pungent	stealthy
consolidate	eerie	liberal	orb	reimburse	vehement
constrict	fickle	luminous	paramount	riotous	verbose
convulsion	filch	meager	prior	serf	vigorous
defame	imperious				

The Cattell Culture-Fair Intelligence Test, Scale 3, Form A (1963 edition) was used because it is nonverbal and can be used for group testing of students.

The Repression-Sensitization Scale of Byrne (1963) consists of 182 items extracted from the MMPI. Cox (1978) had used Byrne's (1961) scale, but the 1963 version appears to have higher validity.

## Procedure

The 48-word spelling test was administered to the 118 students at the end of a lecture. The words were dictated at the rate of one word every 10 seconds. If a word was ambiguous, a sentence was provided to clarify the intended meaning.

Students with scores above 70% correct were classified as good spellers, while those with scores below 56% correct were regarded as poor spellers. Subjects within these categories were asked to take part in the rest of the investigation.

Two tests, the new-spelling test and the intelligence test, were administered to the subjects as a group. The remaining tests were taken by students individually.

Before the new-spelling test, the subjects were given an opportunity to learn the words. The ten words were presented on an overhead projector at the rate of one every 10 seconds. Each word was also pronounced by the experimenter as it appeared. After the learning session, testing took place. The same words in the same order were dictated at the rate of one every 10 seconds, and subjects were required to write them down in the new spelling. This constituted one trial.

The experimenter then corrected each test in clear sight of the subject. If any words were incorrect, the subject proceeded to the next trial, in which the words were presented in the same order. This continued until all ten words were correct within one trial. If by the end of the eighth trial the subject was still making errors, the trials were discontinued for that subject. This happened in the case of three of the poor spellers. After the completion of the new-spelling test, subjects were asked to write the words using traditional orthography.

## Results

All the performance measures of the subjects were intercorrelated (Table 1). The measure of greatest interest, spelling ability, produced only one significant correlation, which was with the subjects' ability to memorize new spellings. Logically enough, poor spellers took longer to learn new spelling combinations (5.1 trials) than did good spellers (3.2 trials). This difference proved to be significant ( $t = 3.93$ ,  $df = 30$ ,  $p < .011$ ).

TABLE 1  
CORRELATIONS AMONG AGE, COGNITION, AND PERSONALITY

Measure	2	3	4	5	6	Mean	SD
1. Age of subject	01	.48-	-.19	-.11	.19	22.2	5.43
2. Number of trials taken to learn new spellings		-.27	-.23	-.16	-.58	4.3	1.82
3. Vocabulary			.18	-.03	.22	54.0%	20.1%
4. Intelligence				-.06	.08	22.3	4.3
5. Repression-Sensitization					.28	46.0	17.8
6. Spelling ability						59.6%	20.4%

$p < .01$  "  $p .001$        $df = 30$

The expected correlation between spelling ability and performance on the Repression-Sensitization Scale did not materialize. There was a moderate correlation between the two measures (.28) but not enough to

attain statistical significance. Vocabulary level and spelling ability were also unrelated, a finding that is consistent with the work of Lyle (1969). The richness of the subjects' vocabularies was, however, related to age. As might be guessed, older subjects had a larger vocabulary. This is probably because older subjects have a greater experience of language, both written and spoken.

## Discussion

According to the present study, poor spellers have greater difficulty in learning new words than good spellers. This suggests that the problem of learning to spell is not just present in the early years, but is still manifest in adulthood. There was no significant association between spelling ability and intelligence, so this cannot be a complete explanation for poor spelling ability.

There was no significant association between vocabulary development and the ability to spell. Poor spelling, in other words, does not go hand in hand with an impoverished experience in the written language. Frith (1980) has suggested that there is a category of poor speller who reads by using partial cues and is thereby an adequate reader. But because the orthographic cues within the words are not being fully utilized, the experience of the written language may actually be impoverished. Thus, it is possible to process words semantically and develop a reasonable vocabulary without having a good knowledge of how the words are spelled.

What produces the difference in performance between good and poor spellers? One possibility is that spelling problems may have a neurological basis (Sasanuma, 1975; Pizzamiglio & Black, 1968). Kinsbourne and Warrington (1962) give four case studies of patients with right hemispheric lesions who had problems in the interpretation of pictures and who also suffered from "spelling dyslexia."

A second possibility is that there is a connection between personality and spelling ability. Although this study produced a non-significant correlation between spelling ability and the repression-sensitization dimension, the association was in the same direction as was predicted by Cox (1978).

The test for the Repression-Sensitization Scale appears to have rather a diverse set of questions which may have introduced some noise into the personality scores. Consequently, another study was undertaken using a shortened questionnaire of 21 items on 45 subjects. These items had successfully differentiated between good and poor spellers in the previous study. A further 7 items were added to the questionnaire from Cattell's 16PF, which measured a factor similar to the repression-sensitization dimension. This shortened questionnaire also failed to produce an association between spelling performance and repression-sensitization ( $r = -0.04$ ). There were, however, four items in the questionnaire that emerged as being associated with spelling ability in both studies.

**TABLE 2**  
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SPELLING SCORES AND SELECTED ITEMS ON THE REDUCED REPRESSION-SENSITIZATION QUESTIONNAIRE

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Correlation	Item and scoring answer
.47	I am unhappy (most of the time).
.39	Life is a strain for me (always).
.37	I have given up doing a thing because I thought too little of my ability (several times).
.32	I am a good mixer (never)

---

The answers to the questions are shown in the sensitizing direction.



In conclusion, although the relationship between spelling ability and repression-sensitization has not been replicated in the present study, some items on the personality questionnaire were consistently associated with spelling ability. These items suggest that the poor speller, who tends to be reasonably contented and confident, is not concerned with correcting misspellings and pays little attention to orthography.

The profile of the poor speller that has emerged from this study is consistent with the contention of Peters (1967) that the poor speller has a casual attitude. According to Peters, such an attitude was revealed not only in spelling, but extended to other written skills such as handwriting, punctuation, and the construction of sentences and paragraphs. This lax attitude towards tasks may explain in part the performance of the poor spellers on cognitive tasks such as learning new spellings. The problem with this explanation is how to distinguish, both theoretically and empirically, between the casualness of the approach of the poor speller and possible cognitive malfunctions, perhaps of a structural nature.

### **Summary**

This study failed to find the significant association between the repression-sensitization personality and spelling ability that was reported by Cox (1978). The poor speller emerged, however, as a confident and casual type, whose lax attitude may contribute to spelling difficulties.

Poor spellers also had difficulty learning entirely new spellings of familiar words. One possible explanation is that this problem stems from cognitive deficits that originated in childhood and have persisted into adulthood. Spelling is usually acquired incidentally as children and adults read. Each exposure to a word that is read contributes something to the individual's ability to spell the word. The child who has a difficult time learning new spellings due to cognitive deficits will require many exposures to a word before the spelling is mastered, if at all. In adulthood, the problem of mastering new spellings persists.

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# Spelling and Reading

## 4. Phonics Countdown

### Emmett Albert Betts

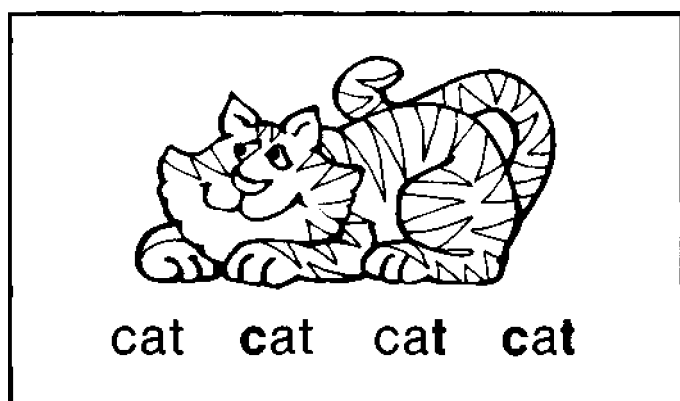
The Phonics Countdown, developed in the Reading Research Lab at the University of Miami, is a good method of teaching both reading and spelling skills. It is used with words of one syllable, such as *big* or *made*, and with the stressed syllables of words that are several syllables long (the *hap* of *happy* and the *can* of *candy*).

The Phonics Countdown is a simple procedure for teaching pupils the pronounceable parts of a word or a stressed syllable. It also helps build the association between words and the objects they represent.

The first step in the Phonics Countdown is to construct a card such as the one below. Paste to the card the picture of an object; then below it, write the name of the object. Repeat the name three times, highlighting the initial sound, then the final sound, then both the initial and final sound. In the illustration of the cat on the next page, we have highlighted the initial and final sounds by printing them in boldface type. You can do the same by writing the word with a felt-tip marker and going over the initial and final letters heavily.

1. Show the picture to the child and ask "What animal do you see?" (cat)
2. Point to the first word and ask "What is the first word?" (cat)
3. Point to the second word and ask the child to "Say the part of the word that is printed in dark letters." (cat)
4. Point to the third word and ask the child to "Say the part printed with a dark letter." (cat)
5. Point to the last word and ask the child to "Say the parts printed in black." (cat)
6. Ask the child "What is the sound for the letter a in the word *cat*?" (/a/)
7. Point to the last word and ask "What is this word?" (cat)
8. Ask the child to finish sentences that relate to the picture and word. Some examples are shown below.  
"A cat is       " (Responses will vary: an animal, black, furry, etc.)  
"A cat likes to       " (Responses will vary: play with yarn, sleep, etc.)

This approach is systematic and focuses on the pronounceable parts of words. At no time are consonants pronounced in isolation from vowels, because they need to be blended with succeeding vowels or preceding vowels in order to be pronounced. This use of pronounceable units eliminates the confusion introduced by asking students to produce consonant sounds in isolation.





# Spelling and Computers

## 5. The Electronic Revolution and Spelling

**Michael N. Milone, Jr.**

As Dr. Francis points out in her [article above](#), language is very resistant to sudden change. It takes a dramatic event such as a war, a mass migration, a climatic catastrophe, or the like to transform a language in any noticeable way. In the normal course of events, the most significant change that will occur to a spoken language in a generation is the addition of a new word or two. And if spoken language is slow to change, then the written word is positively adamant.

Yet, there are some noncataclysmic events that can change orthography considerably. The invention of the printing press was one such happening. It forced a high degree of standardization on written language as printers adopted various conventions that would make their job easier. In today's world, the widespread use of the computer in education may also change orthography.

The direction in which the computer is influencing spelling is as yet unclear. Just as was true with the printing press, one trend seems to be toward conformity to standard English spellings and rules. But there is a secondary trend, and that is distinctly toward spelling reform.

Standardization is obviously promoted by computer-assisted instructional programs in spelling. These programs are based on the existing orthography and reinforce students for spelling words as they have been entered by the programmer or teacher. The nature of computer-assisted instruction makes it quite effective for teaching spelling, and so you can expect achievement in this area to increase. The outcome is that standard spelling patterns will be reinforced by another generation.

A second influence on standardization is the need to address the computer in very specific terms. Computers are highly inflexible, and to communicate with them, words must be spelled one way and only one way. When the computer expects a word like *for*, *next*, *array*, or *LDA*, it will not accept *four*, *nekst*, *aray*, or *eldeay*. The result is that people who use computers may become more rigid in their approach to language. They are likely to reject any new orthography because it means they may have to change the way they program the computer.

On the side of reform are several strong influences, the first of which is the computer's ability to generate an endless variety of alternate character sets. A set of characters used in printing is called a font. In times past, only the well-to-do could even dream of reforming the alphabet because it cost a small fortune to create or modify a font. Today, there are several inexpensive programs that will let even a novice computerist create a totally new font to be displayed on the monitor or printed on paper. Spelling reformists will have a field day when they discover them.

Reform will also be promoted by the computer's ability to convert books printed in standard English to a new orthography. One of the chief stumbling blocks to reform of our spelling system was the need to reprint existing books. This can now be done at relatively little expense because once a body of text has

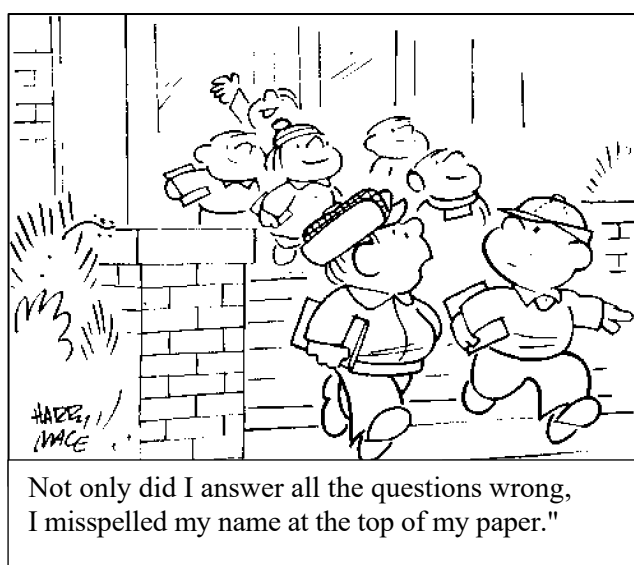
been entered into the computer in standard English, a computer program can convert the text to any alternate orthography that is rule governed. Press a button and presto, the text is converted to World English Spelling, NS9, or what have you. By the way, the ease with which a new orthography can be converted to standard English is a good indication of how serviceable it will be. If problems are encountered in the conversion attempt, then the alternate orthography may not be a good substitute for what we already have. After all, the reason we want to change standard English is its lack of a clear set of orthographic rules.

Previously, we mentioned a possible tendency for computerists to resist any new orthography. The opposite possibility also exists. In an attempt to program computers, a whole new set of languages has been devised. They carry cryptic names such as BASIC, FORTH, FORTRAN, Pascal, and C. These languages are often a radical departure from English and have created a whole generation of people who are already comfortable with nonstandard English. These users may be far less resistant to a new orthography than their forebears.

Finally, just as computer-assisted instruction has the potential to promote the standard form of English, it can also foster the acquisition of any new orthography. All it takes is a minor adaptation to the spelling software that now exists. Were you to change standard spellings to those of an alternate orthography, then the program would do a serviceable job of teaching that new orthography.

It seems, then, that the balance is weighted toward spelling reform. The computer certainly offers the prospect of a medium through which spelling reform could be accomplished on a broadly based front. Does this mean that spelling reform is now inevitable? Hardly, because there are many other factors that play a role in the acceptance of a new orthography, no matter how pressing the need for reform seems. The electronic revolution that we are experiencing today offers the opportunity to reform but does not promise it. And whether or not the opportunity will be seized by spelling reformers remains to be seen.

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## Readers' Forum

This feature of *SPQ* will be devoted to encouraging an exchange among our readers. We will print as accurately as possible the letters that are submitted to us, including alternative orthographies. We do insist, however, if an alternative orthography is used extensively throughout, that the writer include a standard English version of the same letter. We will print both versions of the letter for our readers who are unaccustomed to alternative orthographies.

### 6. SR1 and SR1a

Professor Hofmann's two problems (*Spelling Progress Bulletin*, [Fall 1983](#), Item 9), inasmuch as they relate in part to SR1, call for comment by the fellow who started it all.

1. The first is that no one wants his writing to look uneducated, so a spelling such as *wot* insted of *what*, which now signals an uneducated writer, would be an unfortunate inclusion in a first reform step. There's an implication that SR1, an attempt to get over the problem, doesn't.

1.1. But SR1 includes no such words. In eny sample of a few thousand words or more, the commonest SR1 words are *eny* and *meny*, as in the statistics below. They are quoted from *Spelling Action* 80/5, and relate to three issues (79/3, 79/4, 80/1) of the quarterly *Teacher Feedback*, published until recently by the New South Wales Teachers Federation and using SR1 throughout. They contain 55,000 words altogether, of which 120 + 160 + 151, i.e., 431, are **SR1** words. The commonest are

<i>meny</i>	23+	33+	37=	93,
<i>eny</i>	17+	34+	23=	74,
<i>agens</i>	3+	9+	11=	23,
<i>sed</i>	11+	2+	10=	23,
<i>already</i>	6+	8+	7+	21.

(*Insted* is under-represented in this sample. Its frequency in my book, *Spelling Reform: A New Approach*, is 22/26000.)

Now the spellings *eny* and *meny* are used by few if eny of the uneducated, owing to extensive over-learning of *any* and *many* at school. Their use doesn't therefore signal ignorance but has another reason, and it's up to the writer to give it.

The same argument applies almost as much to the SR1 spellings next in frequency to *eny* and *meny*, so SR1 spellings do not signal ignorance. Whether the writer is ignorant or educated will be discernible not from his SR1 spellings but from his grammar, his vocabulary, the elegance of his style, the logic of his arguments, and the profundity of his thoughts.

1.2. In Professor Hofmann's first paragraph, he *ses* that an illiterate is more likely to spell an irregular word regularly (e.g., *site* for *sight*) than a regular word irregularly (e.g., *sight* for *site*). This doesn't however mean that the erroneous spellings, regular under present rules, are typical reformed spellings; in the example quoted, for instance, it's unthinkable that the diphthong in *site* should ever be denoted thus in a reformed spelling. So writings peppered with misspellings do not have the look of a reformed spelling, other than a crude one.

Having *sed* this, I add that when spelling reformers pepper their writings, published for instance in a newspaper for all to read, with spellings such as *wot*, *skool*, and *teecher*, we know it's not a sign of ignorance. But it is a sign of ignoring the natural reaction of the man in the street, who (unlike the scholars) may be presumed to have no strong feelings either way about spelling reform, never having thought about it. His natural reaction is that spelling reformers are crazy, as Professor Hofmann remarks. Unfortunately this contempt rubs off onto others like me, who aren't crazy at all.

2. The other problem is to devise a uniform spelling despite dialect differences, illustrated first by the watershed of dialects with and without *r*. (More precisely, since we all pronounce *r* before a vowel, such *r*'s must be excluded.)

2.1. This problem is solved for final *r*, to the satisfaction of both *with-r* speakers and *without-r* speakers, on pages 51.2 and 65-7 of *Spelling Reform: A New Approach*, to which I must refer you for details. As for *r* before a consonant, *with-r* speakers are again fully satisfied thereby — so it seems — but *without-r* speakers must cope with having two ways of writing what for them are the same sound, namely, the sounds in *ah* and *are*, in *awe* and *ore*, and in the first syllables of *suppose* and *surprise*. If *with-r* speakers confess that they don't pronounce the last of these *r*'s either, and after all are to this extent in the same boat as *without-r* speakers, by not denoting the unspoken *r*'s the burden on the latter is reduced to probably fewer than 100 words.

One needs only to listen, to learn that *with-r* speakers don't pronounce non-final *r*'s as in *conversation*, *entertain*, and *liberty*. As documentary evidence, the American Mark Twain wrote *p'simmons* in *Huckleberry Finn*, chapter 12, and the Americans Sinclair Lewis and Evan Hunter wrote *s'prised* in *Elmer Gantry*, chapter 9, and *The Blackboard Jungle*, chapter 3, 3/4 of the way through. These three authors are of course by no means the only ones to use an apostrophe thus.

2.2. A second illustration is said to be the denoting of the obscure vowel as in unstressed *you*, which has to be spelled *yuh* in the New World and *yer* in the Old. But these are attempts to denote it in the present spelling; to denote it in a reformed spelling is no problem at all.

Even in the present spelling the sensible symbol is, so to say, choosing itself already, namely, the apostrophe as in *p'simmons* and *s'prised*, above, and in numerous current examples such as "Shop 'n Save" (an Australian supermarket chain) and "C'mon, Aussie, c'mon" (a recent popular song). The universally acceptable spelling of unstressed *you* is therefore *y'*, used already in Australian fiction.

2.3. The discussion in 2.1 and 2.2 is of two particular cases of the dialect problem. The general solution is to base the spelling of each word on its pronunciation by the majority, and it should be clear that this solution gets neatly over the problem, there being no reference to dialects at all. Nevertheless lots of objectors fail to see this and ask again, what about dialects?

Perhaps the following argument will satisfy them. There's scarcely a language on earth that doesn't have dialects; nevertheless most languages that have an alphabet, including some with complicated pronunciation, have sensible spelling. Since English hasn't, and you say that because of its dialects it can't, you must think that English-speaking scholars aren't as clever as foreign ones.

3. Professor Hofmann appends to the two problems a proposal, namely, to replace SR1, which is not as he states but, more generally: *write 'e' for the clear short vowel-sound as in 'bet' regardless of present usage.* (*Eny, redy, sed, etc.*)

He prefers SR1a: "the same, but double the consonant if necessary to show the short vowel (*bredd, redy, hedd*)." And, presumably, *redd*.

3.1. It's hardly a sensible way of indicating that a vowel is short, to show the pronunciation of one symbol by doubling another. The sound naturally denoted by a doubled consonant-symbol is — need I say it?—a doubled or sustained consonant. That's how it is, I can confidently assert, in just about all languages in the world except some of the Germanic ones. (Not all, for in Swedish and Norwegian a doubled non-final consonant is regularly pronounced double.)

The natural way of distinguishing long and short vowels is by means of separate symbols for the vowels themselves. They are preferably uniformly related as by the grave accents used in my Phonetic B:

Short: bat bet piti pot but gu'd  
                               (pity)                              (good)  
 Long: pam fèri lìn hòl fùri mûn  
          (palm) (fairy) (lean) (haul) (furry) (moon)

(In mûn, acute + grave = circumflex.) To reinforce the present practice by extending it is retrograde, a truly remarkable step in reform. Better to proceed gradually as in SR1, preparing us for the elimination of all such doubling by introducing a few words without it, and similarly in later SR's steadily reducing the number of doublings where it is safe to do so.

3.2. You've red the case for SR1 in 1.1 and 2.1-3. Now comes more of the case against SR1a.

According to Professor Hofmann, the doubling is "the most basic rule of spelling English vowels ..., and if we spell *ready* as *redy*, it ought to be pronounced as *reedy*." Well, it might be the most basic, provided it were largely followed. Is it?

Reflecting that, under it we should write *beddouin, eredit, deddiccate, edditor, feddederal, meedal, meddical, peddal, reddolent, seddative, seddiment, seddulous, etc.* (lest we think they're pronounced *beedouin, creedit, deeddiccate, eeditor, feederal, meedal, meedical, peedal, reedolent, seeddative, seeddiment, seeddulous, etc.,*.

We may decide to roughly estimate how many words in the present spelling contain a short vowel followed by a single consonant that would need to be doubled. So we compile (as a thought-experiment only!) the table illustrated, in which the rows not shown are labeled *d, f, g(gh), l, m, n, p, r, s(ss), s(z), t, u*. We enter words containing short *a* followed by undoubled *b* such as *abacus, cabin, fabulous, gaberdine, habit, labyrinth* in column 1, row I, and so on. (Thus *bedouin, credit, dedicate, etc.,* will be in column, 2, row 4.)

a	e	i,y	o	
				b
				c(k)
				c(s)

Not many of the squares contain fewer than 10 entries, and several (e.g., *at* as in the suffix *-atic*) will contain hundreds. (A fifth column hedged by *u is* omitted, since it would contain so few entries: *subaltern, ducat, study, pumice, punch, culinary, and jugular* if it becomes accepted to pronounce them that way.)

So we can safely say that the rule alleged to be basic has a thousand or two exceptions. A short vowel followed by a single consonant is then so frequent, and therefore so familiar, as to nullify any expectation that the vowel need be long, e.g., to think that *redy* ought to be pronounced *reedy*. On the contrary, it might well be that the vowel is more often short than long!

3.3. Professor Hofmann also finds in favor of SR1a that spellings such as *bredd, reddy, and hedd* look more like English. I'm surprised, for to me the first and third look distinctly less like English. This is because English words ending in double *d* are very rare — only two, *add* and *odd*, are at all common. To me they look like Swedish and Norwegian, and in fact *bredd* and *redd* are Swedish words meaning *breadth* and *roadsted*.

3.4. As Professor Hofmann himself sees, SR1a is "not so admirably short and succinct" as SR1. He may be surprised to learn that even SR1 can be confusing. The trouble is that rational thought isn't all that widespread, and one consequence is that lots of people need to learn that *clear* means *clear*, *short* means *short*, and so on. Hence we find misunderstandings such as that under SR1 *heard* becomes *herd*. This one has been perpetrated even by some supporters of SR1. For many people SR1 will be an introduction to rational thought, a pill true enough but one not too difficult to swallow.

But does this apply to the bigger pill, SR1a? It is less readily grasped than SR1, and isn't readily applied since it often calls for judgment, to double or not to double. Many words affected will be real conundrums for the non-bookish man in the street. Is he to double or not to double in: *agenst* (in view of *agenn*), *bredth* (in view of *bredd*), *clenliness*, *dense*, *debt*, *dremt*, *endevor*, *heven*, *heuy*, *leuen*? Moreover does one double, and if so how, in *breakfast*, in *pesant*, *phesant*, *plesant*, *ses*, in *breth*, *deth*, *fether*, *Nether*, *lecher*, and in *lesure*, *mesure*, *trechery*, *tresure*?

He'll need more guidance than the mere statement of the rule. And if it can be thought that *heard* is affected by SR1, you can be sure that some people will wonder, since *bury* becomes *berry*, whether *very* becomes *verry* and so on.

The list of SR1 spellings is only for looking through initially to get the idea, and thereafter will seldom need to be consulted, if ever. On the other hand, a list would be an indispensable part of the specification of SR1a, something to be learned by rote and remembered, and this necessity spells the doom of any reform step.

3.5. It is stated on behalf of SR1a that SR1 replaces one irregularity with another, namely, *ea* denoting short *e* with short *e* followed by an undoubled consonant. But as I point out on page 127 of *Spelling Reform: A New Approach*, far more anomalies are removed than are introduced.

3.6. Before proposing a reform step such as SR1 or SR1a, one should examine every word affected by it, for if you're serious about a proposal you want to know what's wrong with it, so that you can try to improve it. For instance, under SR1 *bury* becomes *bery*, under SR1a, *berry*. Now it's not hard to imagine that in certain circumstances this SR1a spelling would be found offensive. On the other hand, the SR1 spelling is emotionally neutral, and its similarity to the orthodox *very*, as well as the general argument in 3.1, will prevent any tendency to pronounce it *beery*.

4. Near the end of his article, Professor Hofmann *ses* that "perhaps SR1 has had its chance and has not succeeded. Perhaps it failed to get support because of the reasons cited above."

Has it failed already? Six books have been published that use SR1 throughout, two or three journals have used SR1 throughout for a few years, others have printed regular features using it, quite a number of articles using it have appeared in journals, magazines, and newspapers, and so have readers' letters in such periodicals. Such published use of SR1, still continuing, eclipses that obtained by any other proposal.

In spite of all this, it's only a pious hope that scholars (meaning those in language and education) could ever be converted. More realistically, when the time comes and reform can no longer be ignored, they'll fight it tooth and nail. When continued resistance becomes vain they'll claim that they are experts that should control it, and if we let them they'll white-ant it.

On the other hand, it might have been expected in view of SR1's published use that spelling reformers in general would welcome it, realizing that hitherto they've been wandering in blind alleys, and therefore mending their ways by henceforth using SR1 (and NOTHING ELSE) themselves and seeking every opportunity to get it used in published matter. But it hasn't happened that way; nearly all of them prefer the familiar rut, not so much concerned to introduce reform as to talk and write about it, pushing crude complete schemes and now and then proposing to muck up SR1 by altering or adding to it.

I've given good reasons, just above and in 1.2, why SR1 hasn't succeeded, yet. But published use of it as indicated above is, I repeat, still continuing, so it's premature to say it has failed.

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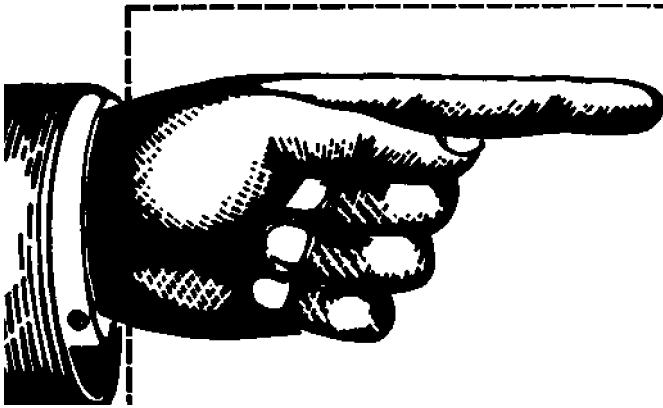


## 7. Basic Principles of Learning

1. Children who are healthy, well nourished, and loved. (accorded deserved attention and consideration), are eager to learn, inquisitive, curious, and will accept instruction cheerfully whenever it is offered in a spirit of generosity and friendship.
2. The human brain may be regarded as an "Organic Computer," ready for programming at birth, and as such will continue to accept input under all favorable circumstances throughout life.
3. The circumstances of programming are the conditions of environment which are perceived by the individual as friendly and favorable to their survival of the person.
4. Successful teaching-learning also requires that the materials to be taught are perceived by the student as rational, (reasonable, and *makes sense* to the learner). This input information, unless it meets these acceptance requirements, will be rejected by the organic computer, will not be learned or retained in their memory.
5. To summarize: teaching-learning will be successful when we have a combination of the 4 conditions mentioned above. Number 2 is virtually instinctive and involuntary, being a *natural* human capability, requiring only that its existence be recognized.

What we are basically concerned with is programming, heretofore usually described as *education*. The fundamental basis of primary and elementary education is COMMUNICATION, which includes: listening, memorizing their basic sounds of the language, learning their symbols, (letters), for these sounds; and having learned their relationship between sounds and symbols, developing the skill of reading these written symbols back into visualizations concepts or words which have meaning to their reader. Thus in writing-reading-comprehension we have a full circle of communicative experience. First we represent an idea or concept by alphabetic symbols, which we call writing, followed by recreating their writer's original idea by *reading* (decoding) these symbols which have been written so as to make possible the initial concept in its entirety without loss or ambiguity of meaning. This is communication, both an art and a science, which is undoubtedly their basic objective of teaching in their elementary grades. If learned early, as intended, communication ability may be said to be their foundation for success in later achievement, and without which no person may hope to develop his or her full potential as a component of our present society.

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