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1. Editorials
Kenneth Ives

Combining Therapy and Literacy

About a year ago, I attended a Whole Language Institute at a nearby university. The emphasis was on sharing personal problems, aided by literature which explores these. The instructors modeled this approach by sharing autobiographical vignettes. They urged that children reading literary materials relate their reading and writing to exploring their own lives and problems.

As a former psychiatric social worker, this approach seemed to me to be therapeutic for both teachers and pupils. Since many pupils come from homes and communities with serious problems and deficiencies, this approach can be useful. It can help forestall teacher burnout and pupil inattention and acting out. Perhaps this explains much of the attraction of whole language for teachers. It is part of the "teacher empowerment" factor in the whole language movement, as defined in "Issues in Education", reviewed in Item 13 of this issue.

However, the purpose of therapy is to free people to learn, grow, and be productive. It should not, and need not, interfere with those goals.

Unfortunately, hard line Whole Language "exclusivists" advocate avoiding any explicit phonics instruction, as Patrick Groff notes (see Item 3). This seems to be a reaction to the former "phonics exclusivist" over-emphasis on dull drill of 100 or more skills, isolated from meaningful and interesting text. The "reading wars" of the last century and a half, oscillating between these two extremes, seem to be a classic case of a "stalled dialectic", bouncing back and forth between thesis and anti-thesis, without developing any synthesis.

Valerie Yule's table of basic language information, and the proportion of adults and children who did not know each of the 28 aspects (page 18, this issue) indicates the variety of information needed for fluent and accurate reading. She reports that some poor readers improved dramatically with even one review session on those aspects, as part of testing for possible dyslexia, a case of "teaching by testing".

This experience reinforces the position of the emerging "Whole Language Plus Phonics" advocates, described in the last issue (**1994/2**, Item 15).

Forwarding the Spelling Reform Movement in the U. S.
One result of the publication of this *Journal in* the United States has been its circulation to members and advisors of the three spelling reform movements here — *American Literacy Council, Better Education thru Simplified Spelling and SSS.* This totals nearly 200 people, of whom only about one tenth are SSS members.

With the likely return of *Journal* editing to England in 1996, how can these people continue to be informed and active in the movement?

At least a few of the recipients of the *Journal* find it more technical and detailed than they prefer. And the number of recipients who would feel inspired to pay $20 a year for SSS membership would fall far below the 200 figure. Thus it is time for the three organizations to think thru and adopt a plan for moving ahead. One such plan is presented below, as a basis for these discussions.

To retain the mutual acquaintance and cross-fertilization among the three US organizations, a formal "Spelling Reform Coalition" of them could be set up. This should probably issue a newsletter, twice a year at first, to all interested parties and to selected people and organizations interested in literacy. Somehow the three organizations should finance this to all their contributors and advisors. Out-of-pocket costs might run about $2 a year per recipient, a total of perhaps $500 a year. Recipients would be encouraged, but NOT required, to join SSS at $20 a year, to continue to receive the *Journal* and *the SSS Newsletter.* Newly interested persons could be encouraged to join one of the three, or the Coalition, at $ 5 a year (plus optional contribution).

American Literacy Council has a full time staff person, and is field testing its *SoundSpeler* program as an aid to teaching literacy.

How can the other two help this and what practical projects can they develop of their own? Can spelling reformers develop and market of the phonics aids — printed, software, and video — which can be used in existing and alternative reading and writing programs? This could get more teachers and students aware of the spelling reform idea as a practical alternative.

2. BUILDING SPELLING REFORM'S TROJAN HORSE
The long range focus of the American Literacy Council
Edward Rondthaler & Joseph Little

In Item 4 of the last **JSSS (1994/2)** Chris Upward points out that spelling reformers "need to ask how their expertise can be practically applied to publicly beneficial ends ..."

That's asking the right question.

Such matters as how to spell the long vowels, what to do about schwas, how much "cutting' is optimal, and resolving other phoneme/grapheme problems are all important. But of greatest importance is how to implement spelling reform. That's always been the tough nut to crack.

In spite of the fact that we have a living language but a deadening writing, the door to writing reform is bolted shut. The only hope of getting it open is to use the Trojan Horse strategy.

Using advanced technology to build that horse has been the focus of the American Literacy Council for years. It's been a challenging task, and still is.

In pursuing this objective the Council has been very fortunate in having had, since the early '70s, the volunteer services of Dr. Edwards Lias, a highly committed humanitarian, brilliant computer programer, author of computer aided instruction courses and the book "Future Mind" which has been used as text in colleges and universities worldwide. Dr. Lias' contribution to the cause of simplified spelling cannot be overstated.

The Trojan Horse strategy calls for tools that will teach traditional orthography (t.o.) efficiently but at the same time sow seeds of spelling reform. Dr. Lias saw how computers could accomplish this and offered to design the software. He, of course needed a good simplified spelling notation to use as a base. We realized all the while that the particular phonemic spelling system chosen for developing these tools was not necessarily etched in stone, and could be changed, if appropriate. when the opportunity for widespread implementation arrived.

So we selected a system modeled on those that had had the best track record. It was a 26-letter no-diacritic notation based broadly on the general concept of British "New Spelling," American "World English Spelling," Pitman's "i.t.a" and , to a degree, IBM's "Writing to Read!" and "PALS." At the outset we made the mistake of calling it "American Spelling," and issued a dictionary under that title. But for several years we have been less insular, and wisely changed "American" to "Fonetic." The decision to use this notation was to extent influenced by our connection with Dr. Godfrey Dewey in the 1970s, and by the fact that "World English Spelling" was strongly supported by the Phonemic Spelling Council, ALC's predecessor. In retrospect it was probably a responsible decision — at least as responsible as any other would have been, and probably more so.

Another point favoring this notation is that in our increasingly technological world much of the burden of spelling change is destined to be borne by inanimate tools — totally unaffected by tradition, habit, or emotion. So it is not amiss to aim at a notation that comes as close as possible to mirroring a clear, unmistakable version of spoken English. That could well be "General American." Our British friends may not agree, but it is worth noting that often on BBC broadcasts the Chinese, Japanese, Russian, German, and other foreigners carefully pronouncing English as best they can, are understood more easily by most listeners in the English speaking world than is the BBC announcer.

The tools now available are listed below, and on the inside front cover. The SoundSpel computer software is fully usable as it now stands but, like all innovations, it is being improved daily as we broaden its scope and iron out imperfections that have come to light in use by certain New York City high school students, by the parents of Head Start children, by teenagers in Newgrange remedial programs, by participants in other installations, as the result of a 1993 test at Columbia University Teachers College.

It should be borne in mind that all except the Fonetic Translator (Item 6) are offered as aids to teaching t.o. Their function in paving the way for spelling reform is intentionally underplayed.

1. Soundspel.
This is the standard teaching program developed primarily to rescue functional illiterates and aid foreign students learning English. It has a corpus of 25,000 words and operates on IBM or IBM-compatible computers with a memory of 640k or more. Words may be typed in either t.o. or fonetic, and are displayed on the computer screen in parallel lines. The t.o. lines stand out in full contrast white-on-black. The fonetic spelling appears on the line below the t.o. and is shown in subdued red-on-black. Translation to or from t.o. takes place instantaneously as the spacebar is touched — a pedagogic achievement supported by the axiom that immediate correction sends much stronger signals — to the mind than delayed correction. After some tutorial assistance in getting started, the lightning speed of correction combined with the computer's infinite patience, privacy and total absence of pressure or censure, tends to stimulate the pupil and encourage the use of words that would otherwise be avoided.

The following illustrations is approximation (without color) of how the parallel lines to t.o. and fonetic appear on the SoundSpel computer screen:

When in the course of human events
When in the cors   of hueman events

have connected them, and to assume
hav   conected   them, and   to asoom

it becomes necessary for one people
it becums   nesesaixy for wun peepl

among the powers of the earth the
amung the powers of the   erth the

to disolve the political bands which
to dizolv   the political bands which

separate and equal station to which
separet   and eequal staeshun to which

SoundSpel is available in both British and American t.o. Major word processing features such as wrap-around, insertions, deletions, arrow key movements, page up, page down, file storage and retrieval, printout, etc. are an integral part of the software. The pupil is given a choice of large or normal size letters on the screen. A reference list of regularized vowel spellings appears across top

and down the right-hand side of the screen, and a line at the bottom describes the various F-key functions. For example:

The "FI" key triggers the "Help" screen which, in turn, summons up other screens that give instructions for using all features in the software.

The "F2" key brings up a series of commonplace sentences to be copied and questions to be answered. The use serve to help a reluctant or unimaginative pupil get started typing. The teacher, of course, may customize or replace the sentences and questions with text more suitable to the particular pupil's needs.

When a t.o. homonym such as "read" is typed, or a fonetic spelling such as "heer" (which could translate in t.o. "here" or "hear), a popup box with brief definitions appears instantly on the screen, guiding the user to a choice.

A very important feature of SoundSpel is the "wild card," "invented," or "ad-lib" spelling part of the program. This enables the computer to translate a word correctly even tho it is spelt erratically in what the pupil may think is the right spelling or the best that he or she can do. This feature is, as it should be, more applicable to long words than to short, The word "hot" for example, may be spelled in only one way — hot — since any other spelling would represent a different word. The word "rule," however, may be typed not only in its t.o. spelling "rule" or the fonetic "rool," but will be translated correctly into t.o. and fonetic if typed **ruel, rual, rulle, ruol, ruell,** or several other erroneous ways.

A still longer word like "democracy" will be translated correctly into t.o. and fonetic if typed in more than a thousand ways, including, such aberrations as **dimokrusy, dammucresi, domakrucy,** etc. In all cases the abortive spelling is temporarily shown (in purple) on a line below the fonetic so that the typist may see his or her mistake clearly and be helped in learning not to make it again. (The use purple spellings are automatically erased when the cursor moves to the next line.) Spellings that are too far afield — such as **dikumrisy —** turn the letters blue. By using the arrow keys or backspacer the pupil may then change a letter here or there in the blue spelling until a quick shift to normal colors signals success. Determining for each word the precise point at which a misspelling would not falsely translate into an unintended word, but would turn the letters blue was, of course, a very exacting and time consuming task, typical of many subtle refinements built into the program.

To help a teacher assess a student's progress, every misspelled word is recorded in a special file. The contents of file may be seem on the screen or printed out. Access to it can be limited to the teacher.

2. Soundspel + Voice.
This program has all the characteristics of SoundSpel described above, plus voice. Words are spoken by the computer as they are typed, and whole sentences are spoken by the computer as they are typed, and whole sentences are read aloud. Syllable stress is an important feature of the voice program. A speaker is provided with the software.

3. The Discovery Game.
This is a varation of the SoundSpel program with a vocabulary designed primarily to help children learn syllabic spelling patterns of English. It should be viewed as rhyming game, and fits well into

either the Phonics or Whole Language classroom.

In playing the game the child sets out to discover all the words that rhyme, for example, with "bat." One consonant after another is typed before at. When "dat" is typed the letters turn blue. Thus the child discovers that d-a-t does not spell a word. Another discovery is made upon typing "nat": the top line immediately displays the t.o. spelling "gnat." In the end there are 21 word-pairs on the screen. Twelve of them are blue. Altho those 12 pairs rhyme with bat, the blue color indicates that they do not make words. The other nine pairs are in normal color and do make words — and English spells the n- word "gnat"!

The possibilities of discoveries are endless. Homonyms offer particularly exciting opportunities. When typing words that rhyme, for example, with "air," the "fair" brings a popup on the screen with definitions that give a choice of **fair** or **fare.** Typing "bair" triggers the choice of **bear** or **bare.**

While the Discovery Game is essentially teaching the patterns of t.o., it is also pointing out English spelling inconsistencies that must be memorized individually — from minor ones like **heart** and **guard** to major ones like **gnat, debt, wreck, said, come, blood,** etc. The fonetic line keeps hammering home how simple such words could be spelled if they were spelled as they sound.

4. "BEFORE teaching the ABC'S"
This is a 25-minute audio tape and 24-page booklet combination intended for use by pre-school teachers and parents of children 3 to 6 years old. It was prompted by reading of Dr. Marilyn Adam's (1990) book "Beginning to Read," a definitive study of Phonics vs. Whole Language funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the exhaustive, 3-year Study of Reading at the University of Illinois. One important fact cited is that children who know the names of the letters when they enter kindergarten or first grade have a better chance of becoming good readers and writers than those who do not.

Any spelling reform advocate who reads the book cannot fail to see that if pre-school children are greatly helped by learning the <u>names</u> of letters — which are, in fact, not the phonemic building blocks of words — they will be helped far more by learning, first of all, the sounds of letters — which <u>are </u>the phonemic building blocks of words. Associating the shape of a letter, upon first encounter, with its name rather then with its sound misses the whole point of alphabetic writing.

Why do letters have names? They were given names long ago to overcome the difficulty of hearing the sound of certain letters when spoken in isolation without accompanying vowel. Letter names are a convenience, just as acronyms are. When you know, for example, where the United Nations is and what is does, then you can use the acronym "UN" for convenience. In like manner, when you know the sounds associated with the shapes M, H, S, W, K, D, C, Q, etc. then you can use the names that have been given to those shapes for convenience — **em, aich, ess, double-u, kay, dee, see, cue** etc. Letter names are convenience but, except for the five long vowels, they do not clearly represent a letter's only reason for being — its sound. Teaching the names of the letters before their sounds can be misleading.

A struggling child who has been taught letter names before sounds and, as a consequence writes MT (empty), EZ, NV, XL, etc. is showing that he understands the alphabetic principle and would be well on the way to writing if he had first been taught the sounds of letters rather than the names.

Relegating the teaching of letter sounds to second place is a reversal of priorities not easily untangled by some children. Consider this simple, novel proposal that puts the sound of a letter in first place and is easily understood by a child:

Everybody has a first name, like Gregory or Dorothy. we also have nicknames, like Greg or Dot. Since each letter has a name and a sound, why not let the sound of letter be called its nickname? — and teach it first . That establishes the right priority. AU children understand the word "nickname." Using it for letter's sound, and teaching it first, eliminates any misunderstanding of the importance of a letter's sound, and keeps the relationship between the letter's shape and its sound where it should be — up front.

Before teaching the letter names, then, a parent or teacher should point to the letter M (or m) and say "the nickname of this letter is mmmmmm. Every time you see it remember that its nickname is MMMMM.

Using the word "nickname" is much clearer to 3, 4, 5, or 6-year-old than saying, "The name of the letter is 'em', but remember that its sound is mmmm" — or saying " This letter is called 'em'. You can bear its sound at the end of its name, e-mmm."

The booklet and tape, "BEFORE teaching the ABC's," shows how the five short vowels and the consonants **m n l r w z j f h s** can be prolonged and put together to make certain words. (it also shows how letter <u>names </u>put together rapidly one after the other make jibberish.)

It then deals with the more difficult task of hearing the nicknames of **b d g p t c/k —** the plosive consonant sounds that cannot be prolonged. For the child who has trouble hearing the difference between certain sounds, plosive or not, the booklet shows how the sense of touch may be used to acquire the muscular "feel" of producing the sound. If a child cannot hear a letter's sound clearly he may be taught to feel it. This pedagogical angle has been widely overlooked until recently.
Next comes the introduction of glides or blends like **bl, fr, nt, sk.** then vowel pairs like **oo, ou, oi:** consonant pairs like **ch, sh;** r-pairs like **er, or,** and finally the long vowels — which <u>are</u> pronounced like their names.

The booklet illustrates how a large print book may be interlined to help a boy or girl read words not spelt as they sound. It also gives a chart of vowel and consonant notations to help a parent interline such a page — until books are printed in that manner.

| Once upon a | time a big | duck sat | high up on the | edge of a | fence |
| *Wuns* | *tiem* | *duk* | *hie* | *ej* | *fens* |

| built around a | large | duck pond. | Some of the | little | ducks | wanted |
| *bilt* | *larj* | *duk* | *Sum* | *litl* | *duks* | *wonted* |

| to fly up and | sit with the big | duck. | But he | said, | "Your wings |
| *flie* | | *duk* | *sed* | *Yur* |

| are not big | enough yet. But | some day | they | will be big | enough to |
| *ar* | *enuf* | *sum dae* | *thae* | *wil* | *enuf* |

fly up	here.	Then we can sit in the	sunshine and	watch all the
flie	*heer*		*sunshien*	*woch*

other	ducks	swimming merrily."
uther	*duks*	*swiming*

Interlining a page (perhaps with a red pen) enables a child to sound out the nicknames of difficult words, to memorize irregular spellings, and to read words well beyond those generally found in books for children.

"BEFORE teaching the ABC'S" is not intended to be used by uneducated parents, It is addressed to pre-school teachers and to parents who are confused by the Phonics vs Whole Language controversy in our schools, and fearful that their child may be a victim of this furor. It enables an educated parent to give a child a running start regardless of the method of teaching that will be encountered in school. For the cause of spelling reform, it sows the seeds of a logical, simplified spelling not only in youthful minds, but also in influential parental minds — without confrontation. It is another devious but exemplary way of getting the spelling reform door opened.

The reverse side of the tape is independent of the booklet. It is labeled "A Close Look at English Spelling" and discusses the whole problem of spelling mismatch.

5. SoundReeder books.

This is the interlined format described above, applied in a more sophisticated way. The fonetic line is printed in red, with schwa letters in a lighter type-face, and underscores inserted below the stressed syllables of multisyllable words. The complete text appears in both t.o. and fonetic. A sliding mask enables the reader to block out either the t.o. lines or the fonetic as desired. Thus the pupil may read the complete text in either t.o. or fonetic, or may resort to the fonetic only when needed.

Tlus far only one book has been published in the SoundReeder format; "The Gift," based on O'Henry's "Gift of the Magi."

6. The Fonetic Translator.

This is a computer program that presently has a corpus of 44,500 words. It includes all lowercase words (except highly scientific or medical terms) in the Brown University list of a million words of running text (Kucera & Francis 1968), plus an additional 13,000 from other sources. Automatic homonym translations are based on context with a present accuracy ranging between 70 and 90 percent. During translation the original and the translation appear on screen in parallel lines. Either or both may be printed out on standard printers. On 1993 IBM or IBM compatible PC the translation takes place at a speed of about 55 words per minute. More recent improvements in PC hardware should double or triple the output speed.

These Trojan Horse tools are now available (see inside front cover). Readers are encouraged to experiment with them and will, no doubt, find new ways to use them effectively in reducing the scourge of English illiteracy and sowing the seeds of spelling reform — for the lasting benefit of humanity.

3. IDEOLOGY AND EMPIRICISM IN SPELLING INSTRUCTION
Patrick Groff

Professor of Education Emeritus San Diego State University (USA)

Editor's note: Groff here refers to "Whole Language Exclusivists" but not to "Whole Language Plus Phonics" advocates. "Whole Language Exclusivists" often are reacting to "Phonics Exclusivists" who taught over 100 skills in isolation, with much dull drill and little or no spontaneous writing. Literacy instruction will likely continue to swing from one of these extremes to the other until we get many regularized spellings accepted and used in schools.

A "great debate" over spelling instruction has intensified in the past generation. With the advent of the remarkable popularity of the "Whole Language" approach to literacy development in schools in the English-speaking nations, particularly in the United Kingdom, and the USA, Australia, and New Zealand, views as to the best way to promote students' orthographic skills have split into opposing camps. The Whole Language position is that spelling should be learned "naturally" in school, that is, in much the same way that preschool children learned to speak.

Literacy experts who base their judgements about spelling instruction on relevant experimental evidence disagree. They can find no empirical support for the ideological stand that Whole Language advocates take on this issue. Cognitive scientists offer support, noting that learning to speak and to literate are remarkably different processes (Liberman, 1989). Spelling reformers cannot escape being caught in the middle of this controversy.

Introduction
Experimental research on the relative effectiveness of differing ways of teaching the correspondences between speech sounds and letters on students' ability to spell words in conventional ways offers some insights into what would happen if reformed spellings were used. It is logical to presume that the efficiency of any method of spelling instruction would be enhanced if this teaching were conducted with a reformed spelling system.

Rules in Reformed Spelling and Phonies
How would instruction in spelling "rules" differ, depending on whether reformed or conventionally spelt words were used in teaching? The reformed spelling of words is analogous to what are called "regularly" spelt words in the experimental research. In both reformed and conventional spelling, these regular" words are spelt according to predetermined "rules."

These rules in reformed spelling can be arrived at quite differently, it is clear, than the rules devised for teaching conventional spellings. For example, in certain reformed spelling systems, such as *__New Spelling 90__* (Fennelly, 1991), the learner would have to master only a single spelling rule in order to spell correctly the high front vowel in stressed and open syllables that is called in "phonics" instruction the "long" vowel sound as heard in **feed.**

In school phonics programs that deal with conventionally spelled words, however, the student must become proficient in the application of at least four rules in order to spell the long sound in **feed.** The long sound in **feed** usually is taught first with the spelling in **Pete**. The spelling of the sound in **Pete** is part of the "mat-mate" problem, which some spelling reformers consider to be "at the very heart of the spelling problems of the English language" (Groff, **1993/2**, Item 5).

This phonics instructions then is continued by teaching children the spelling of the long sound in question in **feet** and **feat.** Finally children learn how this long vowel sound is represented by letters in **be** and **any,** for example.

A Modern Study

The effect that direct and systematic teaching of these phonics rules has on beginning speller's acquisition of conventional spelling ability has been examined extensively in experimental studies over the years (**Groff, 1994** Item2). Their general findings have been replicated by recent, highly-regarded research by professor Barbara Foorman and her colleagues (1991) at the University of Houston (USA). They were concerned with how intensive versus nonintensive teaching of letter-speech sound correspondences relatively affects the reading and spelling progress of first-grade students. Sponsored by a grant from U.S. National Institute for Child Health and Human Development.

Following their extensive review of previous related experimental evidence, Foorman, et. al. began their investigation under the presumption that the relationship between students' application of phonics to spell words conventionally, and their application of word meaning for this purpose, was bidirectional. nat is, the researchers found previous empirical evidence that indicated phonics teaching for spelling development need not preclude word meaning as a medium for developing spelling skills. They also located evidence suggesting that stress on word meaning in spelling programs should not do so to the exclusion of the teaching of phonics information.

Spelling programs that emphasize word meaning (more than they do the development of pupils' phonics knowledge) typically make spelling errors that reflect the sensitivity to word meanings that these children have been taught to express. However, spelling programs that emphasize phonics teaching (and de-emphasize teaching the effect of word meaning on spelling) produce pupils whose spelling errors reflect their acquired knowledge of the phonics rules of spelling. In short, different spelling programs actually do produce the kind of spelling behavior that students have been taught.

Which Is the Better Product?

Whether these two kinds of spelling behavior, (a) as produced from word meaning training, or (b) as the result of mastery of phonics rules, are of equal value to beginning spellers trying to learn how to spell conventionally spelt words, is quite another matter, however. The findings of the Foorman, et. al. (1991) research makes this clear. They discovered in their year-long investigation of first-grade children in public schools that:

1. Phonics-trained children spell both spelt words (e.g. had), and irregularly-spelled words (e.g. <u>have</u>), significantly better than do meaning-trained pupils.

2. All the children in the study spelt regularly spelt words better than irregularly spelt ones. nis is one of the most common findings in experimental spelling research. While unfortunately not so far the case, this finding by itself should be enough to attract educators to the spelling reform movement.

3. The phonics-trained pupils made fewer errors in their spellings that were nonphonetic, i.e., that did not follow phonics rules, than did the word meaning-trained pupils. As noted, children's spelling behavior is malleable. It will conform to instruction.

4. All the children in the study made errors that indicated their efforts (more by the phonics-trained group) to regularize the spelling of the irregularly spelled words. In short, these young children often were behaving like spelling reformers. The best spelling reformers among these pupils were

the ones who have been phonics-trained. This finding implies that young children shown how letters regularly can represent speech sounds likely are more hospitable to spelling reform than are adults. This attitude in children also suggests another reason why simplified spelling in school probably would promote the goal of students' competence more readily than conventional spelling programs have been able to do.

5. Students' abilities to segment the phonics of spoken words were good predictors of their spelling abilities at the end of the experiment. This conscious awareness of the phonemes in spoken words is measured, for example by having students count the number of sounds in words, repeat the speech sounds they hear, listen to isolated speech sounds said serially, and pronounce the word involved (e.g., /h/-- /i/--/t/ = hit), and to tell how the pronunciation of a word changes when speech sounds are added to it, removed from it, or substituted in it.

6. The relationship of children's conscious phonemic awareness and their spelling ability was found to be bidirectional. That is, capacity in one of these components was predictive of capability in the other. Not resolved by the Foorman, et. al., study, however, was the validity of the position held by some literacy experts that pupils' knowledge of how words are spelt precedes their ability to segment the phonemes in spoken words. Some of these authorities contend that phonemic awareness actually is caused by pupils learning to spell, rather than vice versa. They therefore question whether phonemic awareness is predominant prerequisite to learning to spell (Ehri, 1992).

7. The ability of the children in the study to spell predicted their reading ability. The better readers that the pupils were, the better they could spell. This finding confirms the earlier evidence that one of the best ways for children to reinforce their ability to recognize a written word is to learn to spell it. While this is a commonsense idea, as well as one supported by the empirical data, educators commonly ignore it. For example, one is likely to observe children in school learning to read one set of words, while learning to spell a separate, nonoverlapping list.

8. Foorman, et. al. found a "snowball" effect of knowledge of spelling. The children who made exceptional gains in spelling early in the course of the investigation maintained this differential in skill over their slower achieving cohorts as the school year progressed.   An achievement gap in beginning spelling, for whatever reasons, is likely to persist.

Stanovich (1986) calls this common learning phenomenon the "Matthew Effect," referring to the Biblical revelation in the book of Matthew that the rich usually get richer, while the poor get poorer. This finding of the Matthew Effect in the study underscored the vital importance of the selection by schools of an empirically verified superior approach to spelling development in grade one. Only in this way is it possible for all school beginners to become "rich" in spelling skills, and then to retain their "affluence" in this respect in later grades.

Opposition to Phonics for Spelling
The findings of the Foorman, et. al. study are useful as a summary of the effect on young children's conventional spelling skills of teaching them phonics information in a direct and systematic way. Foorman and her colleagues thus found it important to reveal some evidence, uncovered in the course of their study, of the shocking unwillingness of school officials to respect these historical empirical findings.

For example, Footman and her team identified some teachers in the school districts they contacted who taught phonics information for spelling in a direct and systematic way. However, the study was denied access to these teachers as participants in the investigation because, school officials unabashedly told the researchers, these teachers' spelling instruction practices were in violation of

school district teaching policies. In other words, the school districts here had banned the kind of spelling instruction that Footman, et. al. (and many other similar previous investigations) had found to be the superior approach to first-grade children's spelling development.

Equally distressing in this respect was the observation by Footman and her fellow researchers that schools that enrolled upper-income students were more likely to employ direct and systematic phonics teaching in their spelling programs than were schools that enrolled lower-income students. Thus, the students who typically have the greatest difficulty in learning to spell were taught by what Footman, et. al. found to be the less efficient approach for delivering such skill.

Eminent critics of literacy research (e.g., Stahl & Miller, 1989) have not been able to find a single experimental study in which the word meaning approach to promote spelling, used with students classified as in a lower socioeconomic status, produced for them higher achievement scores than did the direct and systematic teaching of spelling. The fact that some school districts that Foorman and her cohorts contacted for possible inclusion in their study were perpetuating the continuation of the disastrous "Matthew Effect" on the spelling growth of young children from low-income families does not appear to be an exclusive Texas phenomenon. My extensive visits to public schools on a regular basis lead me to believe that many children in San Diego, California also are victims of this unintended result of spelling instruction.

The Whole language Barrier
Ile oppostion to experimentally verified spelling instruction stems basically from the adoption by school districts across the nation of the Whole language "philosphy " (as its founders call it) of literacy teaching.

The guiding principle of the Whole language approach is that any aspect of literacy. spelling for instance, is best learned by students in school in the same informal manner that they acquired speech as preschoolers. Therefore, direct and systematic instruction in spelling is sharply de-emphasized in Whole Language classrooms.

Altho the great majority of school districts and state departments of education in the USA today strongly endorse the Whole Language style teaching of spelling, the experimental reserch findings on it consistently "are at variance with the major theoretical premises on which Whole Language approaches are based" (McKenna, et. al., 1994, p.34). Whole Language leaders are not discouraged nor embarrassed by this fact, however. "We do not wish to deal with hard data", they readily admit. One of the founders of the Whole Language movement explains why. To be a bona fide advocate of Whole Language one must believe that "only one kind of research has had anything useful to say about literacy," he claims, "and that is ethnographic or naturalistic (i.e., anecdotal) research."

Whole Language leader Shelly Harwayne (1994, p.116) concurs. Whole language teachers "are not asking for more systematic investigations" into literacy, she avers. "They don't need any outsiders collecting data. They don't need to see more charts, matrices, and tables. They don't need to hear more about statistical analysis, control groups, and variables. They don't, for example, need batteries of standardized assessment test to tell them whether their students are growing" in literacy. Last, Whole Language demands that it be accepted as a nonfalsifiable hypothesis or process. At least that it be allowed to shield itself fully from the potential ravages of scientific evidence.

Conclusions

The Whole Language point of view of spelling instruction thus may create a love-hate relationship for spelling reformers. One the one hand, they doubtless will be favorably attracted to the Whole Language practice of allowing students to "invent" spelling words. In such spellings children tend to regularize orthography in ways that often are similar to reformed spelling patterns.

On the other hand, there appears to be nothing in the literature on spelling reform that would endorse Whole Language's rejection of the experimental research findings on spelling instruction. Also, reformed spelling is characterized by system, analysis, and gentility, characteristics notably missing in Whole Language.

In this regard, Whole Language leaders' reactions to negative criticisms of their ideological stance often are frantic, unduly suspicious, and/or outright hostile. To a researcher who would examine experimentally their practices, their response is: "Who the hell are you? You come into my classroom with a briefcase; you don't know anything about the children I teach" (Ohanian, 1994, p. 61). Experimental investigators merely "pretend to a role of neutral statesmen," it is charged (Edelsky, 1990 p. 7). It is seen as "outrageous" that they supposedly attempt to impose their whole-language violating agenda on them [WL educators] while expecting those educators to cooperate in the violation" (p. 7).

As I have argued previously in these pages, endorsement of reformed spelling by the hugely popular Whole Language movement would accelerate greatly the progress of the campaign to rationalize spelling. The association of spelling reform and Whole Language nonetheless would make strange bedfellows. This odd cohabitation would not be absurd, however, if it resulted in widespread acceptance of regularized spelling. There also is a consoling element in this matter. Reformed spelling, once established, doubtless would prove itself indispensable. Whole Language, to the contrary, inevitably will fade away, as have all the inviting, yet ultimately disappointing educational concoctions of the past.

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4. "Teach yourself to read at home by video" problems and promises
Valerie Yule

ABSTRACT
An account of an experimental video exploring the potential for adult literacy, and calling for further development. Video and CD-ROM make possible a new cognitive methodology linking the written and spoken language in a half-hour overview of learning to read and spell, for home use. It has a sound basis in reading theory and research.

If people could help to teach themselves to read by video at home, the consequences include:-
- The possibility of an educated population, capable of facing the challenges of the next century.
- Teachers would have a clear field for their role of teaching and inspiring, unhampered by the problems of so many students who cannot read properly.
- The public would understand the nature of English spelling, and so be able to demand its improvement. They would not be awed by apparent mysteries, to feel that even changing 'commission' to 'comission' might pull the plug on something essential to civilisation.

However, the difficulties faced by a project to develop an experimental video for home literacy mirror the difficulties faced by current attempts to improve English spelling. Vast and dedicated industries teach, remediate and research reading in English, but there is ambivalence about universal literacy, particularly about making it easier to learn to read and write.

For the individual learner, learning to read well requires motivation, effort and understanding, as much as any other sport. Yet there is public uncertainty about whether the effort is worthwhile — after all, do not computer games develop the intelligence, and databases supply the information, that is required for the next century? The correct answer to this supposedly rhetorical question is NO, but it is an answer often ignored in the rhetoric.

If understanding how to read could be simplified, motivation could be improved. This article describes a video project that would be a good complement to Rondthaler and Lias' *Sound-Speler* computer program. It makes clear that reading and writing would be easier if English spelling were cleaned up, and gives clues about how this cleaning up could be done.

A 'Teach yourself to read' home video, for learners to find out how to read and for failing readers to 'find out where they got stuck!
The experimental video encourages self-help. Its half-hour's overview and demonstration of how to learn to read include an exposition of the English writing system, with animated computer graphics that give an overview of 'what it helps to know' about the writing system for reading and spelling. Students relate each point of their learning to reading that is provided in Script and Picture Manuals which confirm and complement the content, and to reading of their own choice, rather than being directed to activities'. The video is designed to be watched and re-watched at least three times, so that what seems at first complex and packed becomes simple and unpacked, and students can concentrate on the sections which they feel most need their attention.

Computer animated graphics can be designed to teach reading at an adult level of understanding, altho they are so intrinsically simple that children can follow the major teaching points. Children from three upwards also enjoy the intrinsic entertainment of animated cartoon on screen and have a preview of what lies ahead in preparing to read. There is no live film or extraneous content for extra entertainment. *It is not like television literacy programs, seen 'one-off', which by their nature must be diffuse and serialised.* It caters for individual differences since the watcher is in control, to skip or repeat . On first watching, there is an overall view of the whole reading process. Then the learner can go back and watch more carefully for the detail, or pass over sections according to personal needs.

The video demonstrates the clues that good readers and spellers discover by intuition if not by direct teaching, but poor readers have missed out on. Since so many adults have become lost to literacy during their first year at school, the experimental video starts from scratch, so that failing learners can check out their gaps and confusion, which so often go unrecognised. Everything included is something I have found as a teacher that many adult learners have not known, or have been confused about — even such basics as how to hear sounds in words, or that there are only twenty-six letters, not thousands.

A further advantage of a half-hour meta-cognitive overview of the task is that it sets out a cognitive map for learning, with 'advance organizers', so that at all times the learner can see how immediate learning fits into the total picture of what has gone before and what is to come (Piaget 1959, Bruner 1960, Dowing 1979, Vcnezky 1970, Tzeng 1983). Video-graphics are superb as visual 'maps' which are economical summaries of processes and knowledge, to present complex information in a condensed form. They can chunk and link information (Miller 1956), using 'one way to teach a thousand things'. The mapping strategy also takes advantage of masculine visual-spatial abilities. As both surface structures and cognitive structure are presented simultaneously, multi-level, without distracting diversions for entertainment', the viewer can take in what she can at each viewing, and deepen and extend it on repeat viewing. Its presentation avoids current trends of film and television to flash at speed and exaggerate visuals, preventing intelligent reflection.

Content of the video
Songs and a story demonstrate features of letters, words, sentences and text, with cartoons and graphics pyrotechnics that make the print intrinsically interesting.

- How to learn to read by reading text, from the first day.
- How to hear sounds in words.
- The alphabet letters and sounds chunked with song and chart.   Each letter is made memorable by morphing into an animated picture with the same shape and initiate speech sound, then reverting. This technique also helps to prevent letter reversals.
- Different visual forms of the same letters, as represented in letter-cases, handwriting and font varieties.
- The first song is a text-base to demonstrate the importance of initial letters, the ten short and long vowel sounds and some of the way to spell them, how sounds can be blended, and how letters can be substituted to make new words, with analogical 'spelling families'. Reading know-how and strategies are further illustrated, using a second song as a base.

The songs also show:
— How words and sentence structures are built up, and how to begin reading words.
— Nonsense word-plays show how to use analogies and rimes in word recognition, and highlight the importance of meaning.
— The basic underlying English vowel spelling system and consonant-vowel combinations.

- Many failing readers and writers think they must be stupid for failing to make sense of English spelling. Morale rises when they are shown that the fault lies in the spelling, not themselves, why and how English spelling appears silly, and how to cope with its unpredictable deviations from an underlying system.

They are shown the useful spelling strategy of observing whether words have 'too many letters', 'too few letters' 'the wrong letters' or 'just right' spellings. Common and uncommon spelling patterns are shown, and elaborated in manual. Some teachers condemn the video for giving away this information about English spelling, as being 'demoralising'. However, students, and the general public, have a democratic right to know. It also lays the ground-work for expectation of reforms in spelling.

- An overview of linguistic origins of English spellings, and imported spelling patterns.
- Animated graphics show how to segment long words and use the clues to meaning of classical roots, prefixes and suffixes.
- *The most* common *one* hundred words *are* set *in a* simple story. Learners cheer *up on* finding *that if they can* read *one* hundred common words, *they can* read half *of almost everything they want to* read — half *the* task. *When they* test *this* claim *out with a* blue pencil *on a* page *of* print*, what* remains to learn appears quite small *and* achievable. Setting *the most* common words *within a* story chunks *the* information, *and its* meaningful context *makes the* corpus easier *to* remember *than if* set *out in the* usual way in list. It *is also* strategic *to* group *them like this, as a* high proportion *of these most* common words constitute the *most* irregular spelling.
- The video concludes with a demonstration of combining strategies in reading for meaning.

Rationale
The innovative possibilities of take-home video and CD-ROM for teaching literacy, and in particular, adult literacy.

A hundred years ago my grandfather taught himself dozens of skills from Do-It-Yourself books, but he could not have taught himself to read from a book. In the past, it has not been possible to 'teach yourself to read' at home, because learners could not read the books to teach them.

Many literacy programs using video are now being developed, but except for this innovative 'TYTR' (Teach Yourself To Read) project, they rely on principles developed before video. Yet there is opportunity for revolutionised teaching principles that take advantage of the direct link of speech and the written word, the potential of animated computer graphics, and the learner's control over viewing, reviewing and application to real reading, so that no time is wasted.

Videos for Do-It-Yourself, from assembling domestic gadgets to brain surgery, show how well animated graphics can explicate complex concepts and present them in visually fascinating form. Videos that teach foreign writing systems show how to read English written language too. Adult literacy programs already use the electronic technology of computer software, audiotapes, and

live-film video. Television literacy programs for adults such as the British BBC *On the Move,* and the Australian ABC *Between the Lines* try to encourage adults to want to read and to take courses. The approach is deliberately low-key, in view of the sensitivities of poor readers and non-readers in literate society.

> *'I dream a lot. I dream about people and about reading. I think it would be great to read, you know, to read something, a book or even about something that was in the newspaper'.*

(Theme words for initial reading in the adult-literacy audiotape produced by the Australian Broadcasting Commission for International Literacy Year.)

Animated graphics are used in computer software that teaches and tests on specific aspects of reading and writing, and in children's television such *as Sesame Street.* However, as far as I know, the experimental video here described, started in 1981, is the first to take up the concept and challenge of teaching older learners 'how to' from the very beginning, by a single-session overview video-graphic for take-home adult literacy in English.

Users of a take-home literacy video
A half-hour video can be cheap and accessible at local video-libraries, public libraries and shops, work-places, schools and courses.

Ex-literates and poor readers. This concept of 'take-home' literacy video-graphics is primarily but not only designed for adults who are completely or functionally illiterate in English, to use individually at home because they are unable or unwilling to attend courses. The video makes learning possible without social embarrassment, and it is so different from previous experiences that it can avoid activating the old anxiety responses.

The video takes account of the cognitive and motivational resources and needs of adults and teenagers who have been thru the school system without learning to read, or who have become ex-literates, or remain very poor readers. Typically they have missed out on essential clues, have developed habits and strategies that handicap them, have a morale block about reading that is more disabling than their original childhood weaknesses, find formal learning situations difficult, do not know how to put their own effort into learning, their early experiences deter them from classroom situations, and they watch television casually with scattered concentration. They may have learned expectations to be pushed in their lessons, with the teacher doing the work, since, as in sports training, work that is essential can be exciting, satisfying and delightful. Sometimes their learning problem turns out to be only some simple gap or confusion that has never been recognised, such as *'Are there only 26 letters? I thought there were thousands!'* 'The basic cause of reading difficulty is confusion' was the finding of M.D. Vernon's pioneering research in 1957.

Former Child 'dyslexics'. Adults who have been thru the school system without learning to read have outgrown the immaturities that handicapped them between the critical ages of five to eight. They now also have adult abilities to compensate for any continuing weaknesses, and can direct their intelligence independently. The novel approach of an entertaining video can step around their emotional block about reading.

In my professional work as a clinical psychologist, when I was asked to diagnose the intrapersonal defects of possible 'dyslexics', I found that taking them thru a single session of 'what they need to know to learn to read' was a 'teaching by testing' method that often made further assessment superfluous. This gave me the impetus to construct an experimental video that started from the very beginning, to clear up all the confusions and gaps that I had observed. Someone told to 'LOOK at the word' may not have known *how* to look. Inability to hear sounds in words is more

often a cognitive matter of not knowing <u>how</u> to discern them than due to a neurophysiological defect.

Distance learners. A use-at-home literacy overview could be invaluable for all distance learners who want help with reading and spelling at a basic level.

Poor readers and poor spellers often improve when they are given a way to understand the orthographic task and how to change to better strategies than their ineffective rote-learning.

Complete novices can learn to read without incurring confusions or gaps in information.

Immigrants and other learners of English as a foreign language may be illiterate in their native tongue as well, or they may speak English but not read it, Or read it but not to speak it adequately. Immigrants busy establishing themselves can benefit from a half-hour program as a starter, before they are able to take on a full course. Others may be isolated from mainstream of contact for reasons of culture, work-involvement or shyness, and learning in their own homes or workplaces may be the only way that they can move out of their isolation.

Adolescents still at school who begin to realise their handicap if they cannot read, can be motivated to work at learning to read in private, tho they are embarrassed and reluctant in public.

Children. Children as young as three can enjoy cartoon episodes in the video and this initial learning can build up understanding and knowledge for the task ahead.

The role of teachers.
Many adults who prefer to watch at home because they are as yet unwilling to attend classes, could be given the confidence and motivation to join in further courses, to learn more. The video thus gives opportunities for teachers to do what teachers do best, in developing full literacy, while the video does the 'hackwork' for students at home. Teachers can use the video to complement courses, and as a forum or platform for lessons, after all students have watched and rewatched individually. It can be a base for instruction about the writing system and reading strategies, in schools as well as in adult and remedial courses. It can serve a diagnostic function for learners and teachers to find out what students have not known.

The video is not suitable for initial class viewing, except in some primary grades, where young children will join spontaneously in the songs and word-play The social dynamics of a group prevent most people with literacy problems being able to attend to content of a video rather than fidget, particularly if they are under any formal supervision.

The assets of adults learning to read
Most English-language knowledge of reading and learning to read has come from research in reading and learning to read in the English writing system, using personal contact, print, pencils and computer worksheets. Only recently has significant Anglo-American research attention begun to turn to reading and learning in other writing systems, and the potential of multimedia is still not really understood.

Most teaching of reading is based on research into how children learn, since they are the most usual beginners and the most accessible subjects. There is little research and evaluation of successful teaching of adults, due to the late entry of adult literacy into the educational field and also to the sensitive issue of subjecting adults to assessment. Adult learning differs from how children learn in some important ways, and apart from the build-up of longstanding emotional blocks, the adult beginner and the failing adult reader have advantages over child learners.

Video-graphics can exploit adults' greater cognitive maturity, knowledge, accumulated linguistic skills, experience and the ability to orchestrate efficient strategies. Adults can learn 'top-down' from an overview more easily, with less need for small sequential steps. They can learn more independently and use resources with less need for other help, self-pacing their own learning — once they realise they can. Adults are more capable of holding several things in mind at once, and so can integrate reading strategies more easily. They can work harder than children. Adults can telescope into days or at most weeks learning that takes children months or even years. So an understanding of reading can be gained quickly, and then fluency results from long practice in *reading,* 'reading what you want to read'. After two hours' work, further exercises with segregated words and sentences are unnecessary except for writing skills.

Adults with cognitive understanding of a task are more motivated can learn more readily, and can reason about it. They have a democratic right to understand the writing system that they must use, rather than simply rote-memorise and guess. But, treated as a children, adults respond like children.

Criticisms of the video
However, the concept of a take-home video for adult literacy has been criticised, even for use as an adjunct to formal courses. A Victorian government agency for Adult Literacy and Basic Skills rejected it out of hand on the grounds that it is undemocratic and authoritarian to tell adults what others think could help them to learn to read and write; the students should tell their tutor what they want to know, and then they negotiate how they can find it *out (vide* attitudes reported by Morris, 1994).

Another criticism is that it is immoral to raise students' hopes that they might be able to teach or help themselves in learning to read, because they are bound to be disappointed. Perhaps the tactless title 'Teach Yourself to Read' should have been 'Help Yourself to Read'.

But the usual objection is that the video sets out to explain the writing system and how to decode new words. In the past, normal classroom methods have not been able to teach reading easily or with guaranteed success rates using the alphabetic principle, chiefly because of the deviations of English spelling from its basic underlying system and so this approach has become condemned in many educational circles. Dr Joyce Morris (1994) gives an excellent account of how 'Phonicsphobia' and the present politicised situation came about. Yet now in video we have a medium that *can* teach the alphabetical approach quickly and effectively, relating the written language directly to the spoken language — which after all, was the original revolutionary principle taken by the trading Phoenicians and the knowledge-loving Greeks because it leads into independent reading and writing more readily than logographics and hieroglyphics.

When the basic learning is only 15–40 letters, and connecting them to hearing the speech sounds in words, the alphabetic principle is 'Easy as ABC'. However, once an alphabetic writing system starts to deviate *inconsistently* from its relationship to the spoken language, this is more problematic. That is why phonics in English has always been difficult for poorly trained teachers to teach successfully to a significant proportion of children. However, the new technology has the capacity to demonstrate those principles concisely and clearly, and so can avoid the difficulty for which phonics is condemned. This is ironic when there now is an ideal way to teach it.

The theory of reading underlying the video
("Cut Spelling" used from here on.)
A criticism of th video is that it teaches th alfabetic principle It is stil widely claimd that good readrs do not use or need th alfabetic principl in reading; therefor it shoud not be taut, as it diverts lernrs from developing th strategies of good readrs. (See Morris' acount of th influence of Smith et al, 1994.) This is also mistaken, as reserch evidence shows that good readrs ar betr able to use th principl togethr with othr strategies. Good readrs can identify words as wholes *and* from asociations of letrs, and this helps them to scan (not the same as skim) whole paragrafs or even pages.

At a central processing levl they also 'hear' what they ar reading, and carry it in short-term memry on an abstract auditry basis, so that they can remembr the beginning of a sentence by th time they get to th end, to follo th continuum sens. They use what they hav red and what they also see coming later to help predict th word that wil come ... *('next')* is th word that I woud predict). And they automaticly chek that th word they expectd is correct. Goodman (1976) adoptd th description of reading in English as a *'psycolinguistic gessing game.* but *'th good readr need not gess; the bad shoud not'* (Gough 1976: 532).

That is, skild reading is both *'top-down',* which has been termd 'process-functionl; and *'bottom up'* or mecanistic-behaviorl. Th video teaches both. However, popular education filosofies hav tended to polarise on this issue.

'Top-down' theories of reading emfasise non-fonemic sorces of information in reading, and that meaning is an activ reconstruction by th readr. Inference or gessing from context is promoted as th key to fast reading and lerning in many teachrs' coleges and Adult Literacy corses, and biasd. Australian Internationl Literacy Year projects, with oftn explicit dismissl of any need for orthografic strategies to undrstand print. Goodman (1982) and Smith (1985) saw no problem in skipping words that cannot be identified from context, configuration and initial letters, on th grounds that is posibl to comprehend a text even if one word in five is obliterated. [1] Howevr, this is risky advice, and can realy only refer to very simpl text. Efectiv context use also depends on th experience th readr brings to th print. Hence th risk of misinterpretation, with th yung and ignorant being th most handicapd. Th mor weity and complex th message, th mor risky it is to gess from context.

This is a major issue for th teaching of Adult Literacy. A populr instruction to teach adults to read is by 'linguistic gessing', that is, rote-lerning of words from a few memrabl grafic fetures and gessing from context. Words can be lernt as wholes or from 'distinctiv fetures' and initial letrs and context used to identify them, but all words need not be red (cf. th Australian ABC TV and video series and workbook *'Between th Lines, 1991).*

'Bottom-up' processes in reading. Th readr sounds out th letrs, combines th sounds, identifies fetures of sound-symbl relationships and orthografic sequences th result is a word, and from th combination of words, transformd mentaly into speech, which is th readr's first language, discovrs th meaning intended by th riter. (See, e.g. Perfetti 1984 and Tarnopol & Tarnopol 1976). From th traditionl asumption that riting is a system of visual signs to symbolise th spoken language, teachers traditionly instructed lernrs how to segment ongoing speech into fonemes, and so to reconstruct speech from fonografemes. It was then expected that th meaning of th ritn words woud be automaticly comprehended, and for most peple it has workd thus — altho not for all.

> 'It may make no sens to ask whethr a readr goes directly to meaning, because a readr has to, directly or not, go to words, that is to lexicl entries, and th gramaticl relationships between these words...' (Stuart & Coltheart 1988: 184, and Spochr, 1978: 17).

Most of th generations who hav lernt to read using fonic decoding hav not been fixated at 'barking at print' like th unfortunat few. They read for meaning, from th start. Skild readrs hav a wide repertoire of strategies, deriving meaning from th ritn word thru flexibl use of all sorces of information, fonologicl, grafemic, syntactic and semantic, but without incurring information overload (See Downing & Leong 1982).

It woud be imposibl to design a half-hour video, howevr animated, to teach anyone to read independently using 'top-down' and whole-word recognition principls only!

Th literacy video TYTR demonstrates how to integrate both 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' reading strategies, as skild readrs do. These strategies enable lernrs to work out new words independently and acuratly without th comon Adult Literacy tutors' recomended recors of 'asking someone'!

Animated grafics can provide almost one-trial undrstanding of how to go about using fonics to lern to read, and aftr a basic levl, students do not need further direct fonics instruction. (See th US Federal survey of 'practices in th most successful classrooms' *in Becoming a Nation of Readers,* Anderson et al, 1985.)

Awareness of speech sounds is necessary for decoding
Animated grafics with sound can teach lernrs th fonologicl awareness esential to be able to aply fonics and lern how to decode successfully. There ar certinly intrinsic difficulties in conscius foneme discrimination for children. Cuntries with almost idealy fonemic spelling systems stil find that most children aged four to sevn can hav dificulty analysing or blending fonemes unless givn suitabl preparation and teaching. (Fowler, Shankweiler & Liberman 1979: 29, Mattingly 1987: 260). Th study of literat Portuguese adults by Morais, Cary, Alegria & Bertelson (1979) is also a standard citation on this point.

But in ordr to speak and hear, all children discovr how to discriminate th speech fonemes of their nativ language, without deliberat tuition or aparent conscius awareness, so obviusly they hav a capacity there. Fonologicl awareness can be taut in simpl ways, as shown by th work of Lynette Bradley and othrs. (See Downing 1987, Liberman, Shankweiler, Fisher & Carter 1974, Bradley & Bryant 1983, and th video Anderson et al 1985, Bryant & Bradley 1985, Nicholson 1978, revews by Chall 1983, and th video *Preparing to read through play,* Yule 1981.) TYTR's cartoon grafics and songs show simpl teeniqes for lernrs to become aware of th fonemes in their language, and how to relate these to grafemes. Th problem of dificulty and tedium of fonic drils is removed.

When adults ar nervus about litracy, and may hav had a traumatic histry of being set to blend sounds in words when this was a mystery to them, whole-word gessing or paird reading may seem kinder than trying to teach them to help themselvs using sound/symbl relationships. But they can fail to progress to skild reading by these unstructured aproaches. Rathr, they need clarity of exposition in permanently available form. Once lernrs hav th 'aha' experience of how to decode print for meaning, they can then race ahed to independent reading.

Singl-word decoding skills, mor than use of contextual information, diferentiate good and poor readrs. (See Perfetti & Hogaboam 1975, Stanovich & West 1979.) Spelling is also helpful in lerning to read, thru use of analogicl spelling patrns and th analysis of onsets and rimes (Goswami 1988, Bryant & Bradley 1985, Stuart & Coltheart 1988, and Treiman 1985). These fetures are demonstrated in th video by word-play with songs.

Th actual process of fonemic segmentation assists rapid development of word recognition units, facilitates imediat visual recognition, so that as reading vocabulry grows, lernrs rely less on conscius pre-lexicl fonologicl coding (Stuart & Coltheart 1988, Doctot & Coltheart l980). Successful decoders thus become good readrs with fastr access to th lexicon, th 'language processr in heds' (Foster 1979) with its semantic information about words. Lerning to read itself helps th development of fonologicl processing, and th relationship of linguistic awareness and litracy aquisition apears to be spiral, with each enhancing th othr (Downing 1987. See also Barr 1974–5, Leong 1991, Stuart & Coltheart 1988: 147.) and revews of reserch in Bertelson 1987, Fowler, Shankweiler & Liberman 1979, and Beech 1985, 1987.) Th theoretic basis of th contents and structure of th video is thus grounded in th findings of over two decades of practicl experience and empiricl research on efectiv reading and lerning.

To develop th most efective reading strategies and lern quikly, lernrs need to know letrs, orthografic patrns, how to mach th spoken and writn language, hav some undrstanding of th nature of English spelling, be able to use context in reading with undrstanding of fonics (oftn aquired today thru lerning to rite rathr than being taut to read), can decode an unfamiliar word for meaning thru strategies of fonic decoding, visual analogy and context, and then only a few recurrences, or even one-trial lerning, sufices to incorporate th word into automatic visual recognition of its meaning, so that 'barking at print' does not ocur.

Th valu of th video
There is evidence of th valu of th video already even in its present low-cost experimentl form, in th enthusiastic responses of many students, oftn to th surprise of skepticl tutors. **[2]** (See Table 1.) Th experiment version has weaknesses of presentation, thru miniml-cost exigencies that hindr its sales apeal. Howevr, an assessment of th valu of content rathr than surface-form woud also be an inexpensiv and in practicabl test of th conflicting theories about th valu of th writing system for readers, and of th strategies advocated to obtain meaning from print.

An upgraded take-home half-hour computer-grafics video costing £15,000 that gives an overview of the writing system and demonstrates how to learn to read would surely be an inexpensive aid to add to adult literacy resources. It can lead into interactive CD ROM (estimated cost a further £15,000–£50,000) for full development of reading and writing skills. It can be adapted for needs of specific age-groups and ability levels. It would be particularly useful for distance learning, home-bound learners, and those disaffected from formal learning and courses. There is sound theory and research to back its concept and content. The experimental English-language version already exists. This innovation deserves attention and evaluation for its international possibilities. Millions are still being spent on literacy projects and courses — but nothing on investigating this method. It is disappointing that 14 years on from its inception, there is little if any educational interest in a 'cheap-reusable-half-hour-computer-grafics animated-take-home' video/CD ROM to help teach yourself to read at home, costing $34.95.

We can now welcom the 2-tape video litracy program for child lerners based on *The Phonics Handbook,* marketed by Jolly Learning — but there stil needs to be a short overview of reading and spelling aimed at older beginrs who hav faild in the past.

NOTES

One section of this article is written in 'surplus-cut' spelling, with omission of clearly superfluous letters in words, plus <f> replacing <ph>.

The structure and details of the video are copyright, but the author would be delighted to hear from others who would like to develop these principles in their own or similar way — so that finally there would be widely available video and CD productions that were the best possible in user-value. Some commercial interest are now taking up the idea of literacy video and CD but there is a strong risk that they may produce whatever has maximum sales appeal in slickness, entertainment ant that matches teachers' expectations of conventionality.

[1] A neglected but probably important reason for modern deconstructionist literacy theories is that readers who cannot decode cannot read accurately, and so learners by 'whole word' methods are more likely to be inventing their own text.

[2] Nothing is a panacea. There will be some learners who do not benefit or who dislike this approach — but they will feel they have failed if the video fails them — unlike the sense of personal failure when other teaching approaches fail. However, if even 10% of failing readers are helped from 90 minutes watching at home, the video is worth production — and so far 95% of viewers' responses show that they have learnt something from it.

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Viewers' learning from a 30 minute literacy video
Valerie Yule

Findings from a small sample of users of the video who completed questionnaires, with or without help, about what they found out from watching it, and what they knew already.

- The adults and teenagers, including ESL students, had had difficulty in reading and/or spelling.
- The children were aged 9–12 learning in normal classrooms. Some were immigrants.

Table 1: Percentage of viewers who had *not* known or understood the information before

Summary description of literacy information and understanding obtained from the video	Adults	ESL adult	Teenage	Children	Total
Vowels *ar er air or aw* and their spellings	100	50	66	58	66
Vowels *ow oy oo ou* and their spellings	100	83	100	33	66
Old English spelling patterns	100	100	100	50	77
The 19 English vowels sounds	88	100	100	33	66
French spelling patterns of imported words	88	100	100	58	77
Basic English spelling system	75	83	66	42	60
Singing slowly to hear sounds in words	75	100	66	75	77
Re-reading practices important for fluency	75	66	-	17	40
Classical Greek spellings in words	75	50	66	67	63
Spelling long vowels *A E I O U*	63	50	66	47	50
Latin prefixes and segmented long words	63	66	66	58	60
Latin suffixes	63	83	100	50	60
Latin roots can show meaning of unknown words	63	83	66	42	57
Silent <e > for long vowels	38	83	100	25	46
Spelling analogies; switching letters to make words	38	83	-	25	36
How to look at spellings of the regular words	38	50	66	58	50
Two letters spelling one sound — *ch sh ng nk* etc.	25	-	33	58	33
Reading and spelling regular words	25	33	33	50	36
The 26 alphabet letters in sequence	8	-	33	42	23
Distinguishing upper and lowercase letters	8	33	33	33	26
How to join sounds to make words	8	50	66	50	40
How to integrate strategies to read for meaning	8	17	-	58	33
How to make sense of spellings that seem silly	8	50	66	58	44
The hundred most common 'sight' words	8	17	-	58	30
C G Y letters with alternative pronunciation	8	50	66	67	63
Basic sounds of the alphabet letters	-	50	-	42	26
Letters can have different shapes and sizes	-	-	33	25	13
The five basic vowels, *a e i o u*	-	17	33	25	17

Analysis of the checklists demonstrates the value of a 30 minute video in helping unskilled readers and spellers to find out what they may not have known or understood:

i. There are was no information in the video about reading and spelling that all these viewers already knew — 8% of the adults did not know even the complete ABC, and there was key information that none of them had known.

ii. Adults and teenagers were shown to have gaps and problems even at a very basic level, that can easily be remedied.

iii. Primary school children may be better informed about important aspects of how to read and spell than adults who have left school still with difficulties, but they also benefit from the clarification and further knowledge.

5. Spelling Reform and Turkish
Nur Kurtoğlu-Hooton

Nur Kurtoğlu-Hooton has taught English in Turkey in language schools, secondary education and at university, including four years teacher training experience in TEFL. She is currently a teacher of English and Turkish at the Brasshouse Centre and a part-time teacher trainer at Aston University (Birmingham).

This paper aims to inform the reader about the historical evolution of the Turkish language. Reference is made to the Spelling Reform and to the rules of grammar with a view to providing the reader with an insight into the Turkish language itself.

1 CHARACTERISTICS OF TURKISH

"Turkish" is the official spoken and written language of the Republic of Turkey. It is an agglutinative language, uses a Latin alphabet, conforms to the rules of vowel harmony, and has a phonetic orthography. One needs to look at these characteristics separately to be able to understand the Turkish language in more depth.

1.1 The Orthography
1.1.1 Agglutination

Crystal (1991:13) states that different languages display the characteristics of agglutination in different degrees and gives Turkish as an example of a language that displays agglutination to a great extent. Agglutination in Turkish is due to the wide use of suffixes which are affixed to root words to form nouns, adjectives and verbs. The following examples show how new words in Turkish can be obtained from root words which can themselves be adjectives, verbs or other nouns:

koş - mak = to run	the root word *koş* is a verb; *-mak* is a suffix which denotes the infinitive form of the word. Verbs in Turkish either take *-mak* or *-mek* when infinitive, and any root word that is a verb is used on its own as the imperative mood of the second person singular.
koş - u = race (running)	*u* is one of the suffixes which change some verbs into nouns.
koş - u - cu = runner	*-cu* is a suffix which denotes profession.
koş-u-cu-luk = racing	*-luk* is a suffix which denotes the formation of an abstract noun.
ev = house	
ev - li = married	(literally translated as 'with house')
ev - li - lik = marriage	(state of being with a house) *-li* = a suffix which means 'with'; *-lik* = a suffix which denotes the formation of an abstract noun.
acı = bitter, sour, (spicy) hot / pain, ache, sorrow	this root word is on its own an adjective and also a noun depending on the context.
acı - ma = the state of pitying somebody	(used as noun or adjective).
acı - mak = to pity	*-mak* denotes the infinitive form.
acı - lı = having a bitter taste; (spicy) hot; sorrowful	*-lı* = a suffix which means 'with'.

1.1.2 Vowel Harmony

The above examples not only show how agglutination works in Turkish, but also indicate that there is vowel harmony in the language. Vowel harmony works on the back vowel-front vowel criterion. When the first syllable of a word in Turkish contains a back vowel (see table below for Turkish back vowels), the syllable/s — suffix/es that follow are expected to have a back vowel, too. When it contains a front vowel, however (see table below for Turkish front vowels), the rest of the word is expected to have a front vowel as well. The words *acılı* /adʒələ/ and *evli* /evlɪ/(both mentioned above) are examples of vowel harmony. *Acılı* contains the back vowel A in its first syllable and is followed by two suffixes which both contain the back vowel 1. *Evli* contains E in its first syllable, so the suffix which follows it contains another front vowel. There are only a few exceptions to the rule of vowel harmony in Turkish. However, loan words used in Turkish do not necessarily conform to this rule.

Table 1.

	Unrounded				Rounded
	Open/	Half-open	Closed	Half-open	Closed
Back	A /a/		ı /ə/	O /o/	U /u/
Front		E /e/	i /ɪ/	Ö /œ/	Ü /y/

1.1.3 The Alphabet

A Latin alphabet was adopted by the Republic of Turkey with the Spelling Reform in 1928. A great majority of the population at the time was illiterate, owing to the difficulty of the Arabo-Persian alphabet that was previously used. Between 1927–1928, language experts gathered to discuss what letters in the Latin alphabet were in accordance with the rules and the structure of the Turkish language. The following alphabet of 29 letters was announced to the public on 9 August 1928. To show their sound values, the letters are given with their equivalences in the International Phonetic Alphabet or IPA.

Table 2.

		IPA				IPA
A	a	/a/		M	m	/m/
B	b	/b/		N	n	/n/
C	c	/dʒ/		O	o	/o/
Ç	ç	/tʃ/		Ö	ö	/œ/
D	d	/d/		P	p	/p/
E	e	/e/		R	r	/r/*
F	f	/f/		S	s	/s/
G	g	/g/		Ş	ş	/ʃ/
G	ğ	*		T	t	/t/
H	h	/h/		U	u	/ʋ/
I	ı	/ə/ (as I in *cousin*)		Ü	ü	/y/
i	i	/ʊ/		V	v	/v/
J	j	/ʒ/		Y	y	/j/
K	k	/k/		Z	z	/z/
L	l	/l/				

15 + 14 = 29 letters.

* Discussed in this section below

Most of these letters are easily pronounced by foreign learners of Turkish but several can cause problems. Of the eight vowels in Turkish (A, E, ı, i, O, Ö, U, Ü), the pronunciation of ı, for example,

can be very difficult, though not impossible, for foreigners to distinguish. Foreign speakers tend to pronounce this vowel like an 'U' /ʋ/ in some words. This makes the unrounded vowel sound rounded, as in the following examples: *acılı* /adʒələ/ (spicy hot) becomes /adʒʋlʋ/, *ayıp* /ajəp/ (shame, shameful) becomes /ajʋp/. The vowel ı may also be pronounced by foreign speakers as a sound between an i /ɪ/ and an Ü /y/ (thus becoming a front vowel) as in the following examples: *pahalı* /pahalə/ (expensive) becomes /pahalı/ or /pahaly/. The pronunciation of the front vowel Ü /y/, as opposed to its back vowel counterpart U /ʋ/, is also not very easy. Most foreign learners, especially those whose languages do not include the letter Ü, tend to pronounce the word *üzüm* (grapes), for example, as /ʋzʋm/ instead of its correct pronunciation /yzym/.

Among Turkish consonants, the so-called soft G (ğ) and R cause the greatest difficulty in utterance. The soft G has been the centre of debates among linguists as to whether it can be counted as a separate letter. For example, Hildreth (1972:71) comments on the Turkish orthography stating that ğ

> has no sound at all between certain vowels or may have the sound of 'y' between certain vowels, and after some vowels before a following consonant.

However, it would be wrong to say that ğ has no sound at all between certain vowels, as this letter has a specific function each time it is used. Lewis (1991:5) states that ğ

> is a concession to the traditional spelling of Turkish in the Arabo-Persian alphabet, G and GH. Medial or final GH becomes ğ…. This ğ whether in borrowings or in native words, though audible as a 'Northumbrian burr' of varying intensity in dialect, serves in standard Turkish to lengthen the preceding vowel, a following vowel being swallowed up.

He goes on to say that between O and A, or O and U, it may be heard as a weak 'v' or 'w' and adds that ğ in conjunction with front vowels is heard as a weak 'y'. While all these statements do have a grain of truth in them, the letter ğ does more than serve to lengthen the preceding vowel. The following list of examples of words with ğ aims to clarify the function of ğ in each case:

Table 3

Word without ğ	Word with ğ	How g% changes sound of word
arı /arə/ (bee)	ağrı (pain)	/aːʰrʰə/ — A lengthened, R aspirated, while upper and lower lip move toward one another
erik /erɪk/ (plum)	eğri (crooked, bent)	/ejrɪ/ğ heard like weak Y. With g% in the word, E becomes half-open front vowel rather than half-closed front vowel.
	eğe (file — kind of tool)	First E aspirated, thus /eʰe/.
ılıman /ələman/ (mild)	ığrıp (kind of fishing net)	/əːrəp/: first ı is more voiced followed by ğ.
il /ɪl/ (city)	iğne (needle)	/iːʰne/ — i is lengthened and aspirated.
	oğlak (ram)	/oːlak/ — O lengthened as lower lip moves forward.
	oğul (son)	/oːʰʋl/ — O lengthened and aspirated as lower lip moves forward.
öksüz /œksyz/(orphan)	öğretmen (teacher)	/œːretmen/ Ö lengthened and R after ğ more voiced.

un /ʌn/ (flour)	uğultu (humming noise)	/u:uʰltʌ/ — second U lengthened and a kind of following aspiration.
	uğraş (a struggle)	/u:ʰraʃ/ — U lengthened, lips rounded.
ün /yn/ (fame)	züğürt (spendthrift)	/zyyʰrt/ second Ü with following aspiration.

Last but not least, the consonant R can also cause problems for learners of Turkish. In initial position the letter R has the sound /r/, in medial position it produces a rolling sound. When R is in final position, foreign learners hear it as /ʃ/. It is, however, not a /ʃ/ sound but an R that produces a heavy aspiration or even a whisper — more like a fricative or even a 'laryngeal'.

1.2 Intonation and Stress

In Turkish, "most words of more than one syllable are stressed on the final syllable, but there are exceptions to this generally accepted rule" (Bayraktaroğlu & Bayraktaroğlu, 1991:8). While 'intonation' is of the utmost importance in many languages like Chinese or Russian, in Turkish, it is more important to pronounce the stressed and unstressed syllables with equal intervals. For example, the question *Nasılsınız?* (How are you?) is pronounced with equal intervals, no matter where the stress is placed by the speaker:

> *NA - sıl - sı - nız?*
> *Na - SIL - sı - nız?*
> *Na - sıl - sı - NIZ?*

This brings us to what Lewis (1991 : 24) rightly states:

> Sentence-accent or intonation is partly emotional, depending on the feelings and emphasis which the speaker wishes to convey, and partly syntactical and automatic. The general rule is that a rise in pitch denotes that the thought is not yet complete, whereas a fall in pitch marks its end.

The Meydan Larousse Encyclopedia (Vol. 12: 350) states that Sentential Intonation is usually on the verb of the sentence. It would go without saying, however, that the context plays a determinant role in intonation.

1.3 Pronunciation in Turkish

Turkish has its own grammar rules and orthographic system. Nevertheless, many foreign loan words have become part of the Turkish language, too. The two lists below provide the reader with examples of loan words from English and French together with the way they are spelt in Turkish. Their 'Turkish' versions are in accordance with the Turkish spelling rules; thus they have a *phonetic orthography* and are easy for Turkish language learners and users to master.

English loan words	Turkish spelling	Turkish pronunciation
bluff	blöf	/bılœf/*
boxer	boksör*	/boksœr/*
bulldozer	buldozer*	/buldozer/*
cocktail	kokteyl	/koktejl/
court (tennis)	kort	/kort/
detective	dedektif*	/dedektıf/*
dock	dok	/dok/
dominion	dominyon	/domınjon/
dumping	damping	/dampıng/
effect (as in sound effects)	efekt	/efekt/

exhaust (pipe)	egzoz	/egzoz/
express	ekspres	/ekspres/
ferry boat	feribot	/feribot/
film	film	/fılm/ or /fılım/
football	futbol	/futbol/
gangster	gangster	/gangster/*
gin	cin	/dʒın/
goal (in football)	gol	/gol/
golf	golf	/golf/
hobby	hobi	/hobı/
inch	inç	/ıntʃ/
jazz	caz	/dʒaz/
leader	lider*	/liːder/*
magazine	magazin	/magazın/

*These spellings and/or pronunciations appear to be based on French rather than English usage.

French loan words	Turkish spelling	Turkish pronunciation
autobus	otobüs	/otobys/
bicyclette	bisiklet	/bısıklet/
boulevard	bulvar	/bʊlvar/
camion	kamyon	/kamjon/
cinéma	sinema	/sınema/
culture	kültür	/kyltyr/
hotel	otel	/otel/
musée	müze	/myze/
musique	müzik	/myzık/
objet	obje	/obʒe/
pardessus	pardesü	/pardesy/
restaurant	restoran	/restoran/
service	servis	/servıs/
système	sistem	/sıstem/
tour	tur	/tËr/

1.4 The decision-making authority on language matters
Grammar and spelling rules in Turkish are determined by an authority called the 'Turkish Language Society'. The Turkish Language Society (Türk Dil Kurumu) was established by Atatürk (founder of the Turkish Republic and the first president of the country) on 12 July 1932 under the name 'Turkish Language Investigation Association' (Türk Dili Tetkik Cemiyeti). The Association changed to its present name in 1936.

At the time it was established, its aim was to bring out the richness of the Turkish language itself and to give it its due standing among the languages of the world. In order to achieve these aims, firstly all the elements foreign to the Turkish language were to be eliminated. Although loan words (from Persian and Arabic) were and are still widely used, their alternative 'pure' Turkish words were introduced as well. These words, as Lewis (1991: xxi) puts it, …were old words that survived in spoken Turkish; some were obsolete words resurrected, some were borrowed from other Turkic languages, some were deliberate inventions.

Thus one has the choice between using loan words or their pure Turkish alternatives. One might want to use the word *tayyare* (aeroplane) — an Arabic word — or its alternative *uçak* — a pure

Turkish word derived from the word *uçmak* (to fly). The choice is solely a matter of preference although younger generations have a much stronger tendency to use the 'pure' Turkish words.

Another aim of the Association was to eliminate the discrimination between the language used by the ordinary people in the street and the language used by the administration and the intellectuals. The third aim was to announce the necessity for the creation of a national language whose elements were Turkish.

The Turkish Language Society regularly publishes an official dictionary called *imlâ Kılavuzu* (Spelling Guide). Kuşcu (date unknown) in his *Türkçe Sözlük ve Yazım Kılavuzu* (Turkish Dictionary and Spelling Guide) provides a list of Turkish spelling rules that was published by the Association in 1985. Some of the 75 articles are now discussed for their potential relevance to spelling reform in other languages.

- The N that precedes a B or P in a foreign loan word is changed into an M. For example, the Arabic word *anbar* (storehouse) becomes *ambar* in Turkish; the Persian word *Perşenbe* (Thursday) becomes *Perşembe*. [N.B. *Istanbul* is an exception to the rule although in spoken Turkish it is not uncommon to come across *Istambul / istambul*.]

- No vowel is placed between the two consonants whether at the beginning, middle or end of some Western loan words, although Turkish speakers often insert an unstressed vowel sound between the two consonants. The examples below show that it is customary, though there may be exceptions, to pronounce Western loan words with consonant strings with an /ı/ in the middle. For example: *pro-fe-sör* /pırofesœr/, *tren* /tıren/, *gram* /gıram/, *gra-mer* /gıramer/, *stres* /sıtıres/, *psi-ko-lo-ji* /pısıkoloʒı/, *lüks* /lyks/ or /lykys/, *film* /fılm/ or /fılım/, *e-lek-trik* /elektırık/, *or-kes-tra* /orkestıra/. All such loan words, however, are written in such a way that the consonant strings remain together and are not separated. [N.B. The word 'stres' is an interesting example in that it contains a three consonant string.]

- It may here be added that the only consonant strings in native Turkish words occur syllable-finally after a vowel, as in the examples *üst* (upper surface, top) and *Türk* (Turkish). These are not pronounced with an intervening vowel.

- A vowel is placed between the two consonants which exist at the end of some words borrowed from Arabic or Persian (e.g. the word *şehr* which means 'city' in Persian is written in Turkish as *şehir*). However, if Turkish suffixes are added to these borrowed words the vowel is not written (e.g. *şehir / şehre* — to the city). [N.B. This rule does not apply when the suffix to be added is in the locative or the ablative case. The word *şehir* becomes *şehirde* (in the city) in the locative case and *şehirden* (from the city) in the ablative case.]

- Western loan words that have a widespread use in Turkish are spelt in accordance with the Turkish orthography (e.g. *doktor* /doktor/, *kovboy* /kovboj/, *radyo* /radjo/, *şoför* /Sofœr/ or /Sœfœr/, *trajedi* /tıraʒedi/, *komedi* /komedı/, *televizyon* /televızjon/, *rektör* /rektœr/).

- Terms used in science and specialized fields keep their original spelling (e.g. *adagio*, *andante*).

- Foreign loan words that contain different Latin letters to those in Turkish keep their foreign spelling. [N.B. This rule is not in common practice, however. Many examples that do not conform to this rule can be found. The letters Q, W and X are not used in Turkish, nor are they spelt in their foreign forms. *Maske* (masque), *sandviç* (sandwich), *egzoz* (exhaust), *ekspres* (express).]

1.5 Other Characteristics

Due to the constraints of this paper, only some of the other distinctive characteristics of Turkish will be mentioned here. There are no articles in Turkish. There is no gender distinction, i.e. the word *o* is used to mean 'he', 'she' or 'it'. The context usually helps the 'addressee' to understand for whom or what the word *o* has been used. The agglutination described above is due to the wide use of suffixes. Prefixes only exist in some borrowed words. The word *namerd* borrowed from Persian (used in Turkish as *namert*, for reasons explained below) is such an example. *Na* indicates a negative prefix (like the prefixes 'non-', 'un-', 'dis-', 'mis-' in English). *Mert* means 'brave'; thus *namert* means 'not brave, coward/cowardly'. The word *biçare*, borrowed from Persian, is another example which contains a prefix. The prefix *bi-* means 'without' and the word *çare* means 'help', 'remedy', 'cure'; thus *biçare* meaning 'helpless'. The Turkish form of the same word is constructed with the Turkish suffix *-siz* which has the same meaning as the Persian prefix *bi-*. Thus the same word becomes *çaresiz* in Turkish and is used much more commonly than its Persian form.

One needs to look at the historical development of the language to see how Turkish was influenced by other languages and cultures, to what extent foreign loan words are used in Turkish, and to what extent they can be considered as part of the Turkish language.

2 A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LANGUAGE

As stated in Lewis (1991: xix), Turkish is

> a member of the south-western or Oghuz group of the Turkic languages, the others being: the Turkic dialects of the Balkans; Azeri or Azerbaijani, spoken in northwest Persia and…Azerbaijan; the Quashqai of south Persia; the Turkmen or Turcoman of…Turkmenistan.

In the tenth century the Turkish people began to migrate into western Asia and it was in this century, too, that they started to convert to Islam and adopt the Arabo-Persian alphabet.

Lewis (ibid: xx) goes on to describe the historical changes in the eleventh century when the Turkish people were under the leadership of the Seljuk dynasty:

> …when…they overran Persia, Persian became the language of administration and literary culture. Persian had by this time borrowed a great many words from Arabic. These, together with a host of Persian words, were now at the disposal of educated Turks who felt free to use any they wished as part of their vocabulary. The bulk of these Arabic and Persian borrowings were never assimilated to Turkish phonetic patterns. More, with the foreign words came foreign grammatical conventions.

By the eleventh century, the development of Persian literature had slowed down because of the spread of Arabs into Persia. However, it soon regained power as the Turkish sultans attracted the well-known Persian poets and writers to their palaces and protected them. Turkish poets and scholars, too, used Persian in their works of art, thus contributing to the development of Persian literature.

By the end of the twelfth century, the Arab influence in the fields of science and literature gradually lost its power, giving way to Persian which spread over Anatolia (roughly the territory of modern Turkey). In the thirteenth century Persian developed as the language of the administration and of science and literature.

In 1299, when the Turkish *Ottoman Empire* was established in Anatolia, 'Turkish' became the language used by the New Troops, or Yeniçeri Corps/Janissary (Yeniçeri Ocağı — 'yeniçeri'

meaning 'foot soldier') and by the Convent Sect/Chapel of Dervishes (Tekke). The administration, however, supported the development of classical literature and used an artificial language mainly influenced by Arabic and Persian. This language soon became so distinct from the spoken language that even those people who knew Turkish, Arabic and Persian had great difficulty in understanding it. Turkish, however, continued to develop as a spoken language and was also used in the literature written for the ordinary people rather than for the administrators, i.e. the sultans.

The beginning of the 19th century saw the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. This led to the *Tanzimat Movement* (the political reforms of Sultan Abdülmejid in 1839). It aimed at re-establishing an administration and also becoming westernised. Even before the Tanzimat Movement, towards the end of the Ottoman Empire period, a cultural relationship between the Turkish and the French had started. With the Tanzimat, western ideas developed more quickly. Levend (1972: 80) states that young people who travelled to France or who learnt French in their home country, learnt the principles of the French Revolution and wanted to spread these in their home country. Using the Arabo-Persian alphabet, however, was the biggest obstacle to intellectual development. Many attempts were made to simplify the Turkish language and the press played a crucial role.

A letter written at the beginning of the 19th century by a Turkish captain to his wife deserves mentioning. As stated in (*Türk Dil Kurumu'nun 40. yılı* — 40th anniversary of the Turkish Language Society — 1972: 29), the letter consisted of an end note which was written in Turkish, with Latin transcription, rather than in the Arabo-Persian alphabet. To quote from that source: "'düşünmelidir ki' was written as *duchunmélidir qui*; and 'heyeti umumiyesinden' was written as *héiéti oumoumiyésindène*..."; this showed strong French influence.

Another incident worth mentioning dates back towards the end of World War I, when Mustafa Kemal (who in 1935 assumed the surname 'Atatürk' — 'Father of the Turks') came across a Turkish grammar book written by the Hungarian linguist Németh (*Türkische Grammatik,* Leipzig 1916). The Turkish texts in the book were written in a Latin alphabet. The same source pointed to the existence of three types of Turkish: one used in official matters and in literature, another used by the Turkish middle class, and thirdly, the language of the ordinary people and villagers. When Atatürk read this information, he was infuriated and stated that this discrimination had to end and thus enable everybody to understand the language of the press.

3 THE SPELLING REFORM
The Ottoman sultanate was formally abolished in 1922. A year later, on 29 October 1923, Turkey was declared a secular republic. The debates concerning westernisation and the adoption of a Latin alphabet had already started much earlier at the beginning of the twentieth century. Those *against* a spelling reform argued that Koran could not and should not be written in Latin letters. They feared that the adoption of a Latin alphabet would soon wipe away and bury all past achievements. They also considered the adoption of a Latin alphabet as the adoption of a French alphabet, and they objected to it.

The main objective of those *for* the spelling reform, however, was to construct a Latin alphabet in line with the structures of the Turkish language. They argued that the Arabic script was not suitable for Turkish. They also maintained that the illiteracy rate was very high due to the difficulty of learning the Arabo-Persian alphabet.

Despite all the debates for and against the spelling reform, the National Assembly (established on 23 April 1920) agreed on 3 November 1928 to carry out the Reform. Soon an 'alphabet mobilisation' was started. Schools were set up to teach the new alphabet; language lessons were broadcast on the radio; Turkish grammar books were published. At the time many sceptics

believed that the adoption and correct use of a new alphabet would take many years. Atatürk, however, argued that the people had to do their best to learn the alphabet so that the literacy rate would increase rapidly. Laws were passed to ensure that companies and public and private institutions used the new alphabet in correspondence. The deadline for the elimination of the Arabo-Persian alphabet was announced to be 1 January 1929. This meant that all the legal documents written after this date would have to be in the new alphabet. Books that had been in use until the Reform were all abolished and books that used the new alphabet were published. The result of the official adoption of the new alphabet and orthography was, as Hildreth (1972:71) states:

> Whereas, up to 1928, only 9% of the total population were literate, far more men than women, by 1935, the overall literacy rate was 20%, males 30%, females 10%. By 1940, literacy thruout the country was 22%; by 1960, 59% (women 43%, men 75%).... the large gains with modernization are directly attributable to Turkish spelling reform.

4 CONCLUSION

The development of the Turkish language has over the centuries been mainly influenced initially by Arabic and Persian, and later, especially after the Tanzimat period, by French. Although the Spelling Reform was carried out in 1928, the foundations of reform date back to the Tanzimat period. The implementation of the Spelling Reform and the achievements of the Turkish Language Institute have been a catalyst in drastically improving the literacy rate and in giving Turkish its due standing among the other languages of the world. The vowel harmony of the language serves to provide a melodious effect, agglutination enhances the creation of new words and the orthography enables learners and users of the language to spell any Turkish word *known* or *unknown* correctly.

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6. Graphology and Writing Systems:
the case of the Shaw Alphabet
Alice Coleman, King's College London

1 The Shaw Alphabet Competition

George Bernard Shaw was critical of the illogicalities of written English, not only of the vagaries of spelling but also of the time needed to write necessary letters as well as unnecessary ones. He wrote his plays in Pitman's shorthand and left money in his will for the development and publication of a "proposed new alphabet" with the following attributes.

There were to be at least forty letters to enable "the said language to be written without indicating single sounds by groups of letters or by diacritical marks". One sound, one symbol.

The new symbols were to be streamlined, both to occupy less space than traditional orthography and also to reduce the time taken to write them. They were to be simple and easy to write, with a distinctness and legibility that would increase the speed of reading.

The search was to be conducted by the Public Trustee who, at the end of 1957, announced a competition for the design of a new alphabet to comply with the provisions of Shaw's will. During 1958 some 450 entries were received from all over the world, but no design was considered sufficiently outstanding to win outright. The best was by Mr. Kingsley Read, but amendments to it were made with the help of three other contestants, Mrs. Pauline M. Barrett, of Canada, Mr. J. F. Magrath and Dr. S. L. Pugmire. All four shared the prize money equally.

The Shaw Alphabet consisted of 48 symbols arranged in pairs to facilitate learning. For example, there were eight unvoiced consonants each matched by its voiced equivalent which used the same symbols rotated through 180 degrees. The former were described as tall letters, using ascenders from the middle zone into the upper zone, and the latter as deep letters, using descenders from the middle into the lower zone. The sounds of /j/ (Y) and /w/, and /ŋ/ (NG) and /h/ were also represented by bizonal symbol pairs. There were no trizonal letters.
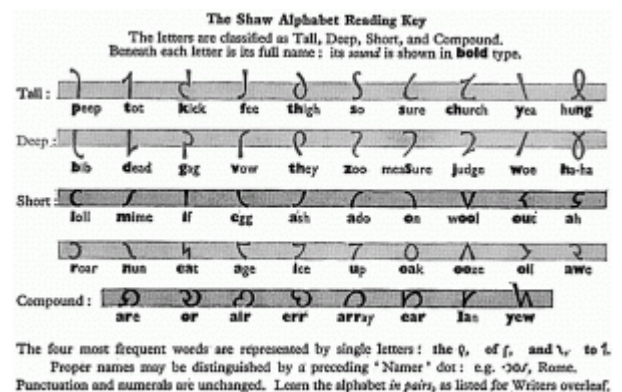

Fig. 1 The Shaw Alphabet Reading Key

Of the 28 letters remaining, 20 were described as short, i.e. confined to the middle zone. Four were pairs of consonants, L, R, and M, N, represented by pairs of mirror image symbols. The rest are vowels, paired off in a variety of logical associations.

The last group of eight letters are described as compound. Six were triphthongs with the final R (or schwa) sound represented by the shape of a closing round bracket. The last sound 'yew' was a bizonal combination of the symbols for Y and /u:/.

The copyright of the Shaw Alphabet was made public property, to encourage people to use it. Two versions of the key were published on the two sides of a 'bookmark', both reproduced here, together with a page from *Androcles and the Lion*, which Shaw directed should be published with the existing alphabet in parallel with a transliteration into the new one.

The Shaw Alphabet is undoubtedly ingenious. No symbol takes as long to write as its equivalent in traditional orthography, and it was estimated that speeds of 60 to 100 words a minute could be attained. Writing would be 80 to 100% faster and reading 50–75% faster. Even these immense gains could be exceeded by using single letters for the most common words in the English language, *the, of, and, to*, which together account for 17% of words, on average.

Another advantage is space saving. The Shaw Alphabet occupies about 36 per cent less page-area than the traditional equivalent, with a corresponding economy in paper, ink, etc. Further savings are suggested in the form of one or two letters for 18 other commonly encountered words.

Nevertheless, the Shaw Alphabet did not catch on. Although as a competition entrant I was keenly interested in the outcome, I did not encounter any lively discussion of it in university circles and my own reaction was disappointment that its radical departure from traditional orthography made it a non-starter. It seemed important to have a new system sufficiently like the old one to make its acquisition fairly effortless, and ensure that future generations trained in it would not be cut from all the wealth of earlier written and printed material. It also seemed important not to divorce ourselves from other languages using the Roman alphabet. The impact on graphology did not, at that time, so much as cross my mind, but in the light of hindsight it appears that the effect would have been disastrous. This seems worth exploring.

Fig 2. The Shaw Alphabet

2 What Is Graphology?

Graphology is the science of interpreting character from handwriting. Early medical observers noted how various brain injuries created specific changes in both personality and writing, and German physiologists proved, a century ago, that the brain and not the hand is the main influence in handwriting's individuality. However, illness and injury leave their mark, and today German doctors are leaders in research into the diagnostic clues to cancer and heart disease that appear in handwriting before serious clinical symptoms emerge, thus facilitating early treatment. In California, W. N. Knowles has devised a graphological method of diagnosing Alzheimer's disease to the same level of accuracy as vastly more expensive medical tests, and other research programmes are in train.

Non-medical graphology developed in mid-19th-century France, where the Abbé Michon studied 40,000 handwriting samples and laid the foundations for discerning abilities, aptitudes and personality traits. Today, 75% of French firms use graphology as an aid to staff recruitment (Peugeot, 1995), and it is widely applied across Europe. In North America Milton Bunker added copiously to its repertoire, and it is now taking root in Russia, China, and Japan. It has become a university subject in Italy, New York and Beijing, and is accepted as character evidence in the law courts of Switzerland and Israel.

In the United Kingdom graphology has been disparaged as a superstition, not least by the purveyors of psychometric tests, who fear that its at least equal accuracy and its substantially lower cost will make it a formidable competitor. It is also less biased than psychometric tests, which the EU rejected in 1994 as not being culture-free. British graphology is now increasing

exponentially for staff selection, team building, career counselling, social work with teenagers and a range of other uses.

Extract from 'Androcles and the Lion'.

ANDROCLES AND THE LION

and sits down contentedly on the ground on her left]. This dirty dog [collaring Spintho] is a real Christian. He mobs the temples, he does [at each accusation he gives the neck of Spintho's tunic a twist]; he goes smashing things mad drunk, he does; he steals the gold vessels, he does; he assaults the priestesses, he does – yah! [He flings Spintho into the middle of the group of prisoners]. Youre the sort that makes duty a pleasure, you are.

SPINTHO [gasping] Thats it: strangle me. Kick me. Beat me. Revile me. Our Lord was beaten and reviled. Thats my way to heaven. Every martyr goes to heaven, no matter what he's done. That is so, isnt it, brother?

CENTURION. Well, if youre going to heaven, *I* dont want to go there. I wouldnt be seen with you.

LENTULUS. Haw! Good! [Indicating the kneeling Ferrovius]. Is this one of the turn-the-other-cheek gentlemen, Centurion?

CENTURION. Yes, sir. Lucky for you too, sir, if you want to take any liberties with him.

LENTULUS [to Ferrovius] You turn the other cheek when youre struck, I'm told.

FERROVIUS [slowly turning his great eyes on him] Yes, by the grace of God, I do, now.

LENTULUS. Not that youre a coward, of course; but out of pure piety.

FERROVIUS. I fear God more than man; at least I try to.

LENTULUS. Lets see. [He strikes him on the cheek. Androcles makes a wild movement to rise and

3 Graphology and Spelling Reform

What is the relationship between graphology and spelling reform?

Graphology is a fairly robust subject. The same meanings emerge from the same penstrokes, even when those strokes are embedded in totally different types of script such as Arabic or Chinese. Cut Spelling's omission of redundant letters would not circumscribe graphology at all, but two other kinds of change could be potentially harmful.

The first would be the total omission of certain graphologically significant strokes, such as C, the circle form open to the right. If C were dispensed with in favour of K and S, a dozen or so important interpretations would be lost. One of these, for example, is the C formation that indicates 'emotional pain', a rare stroke which reveals a writer who has been so constrained and restricted that s/he has suppressed the capacity for feeling and is prepared to retaliate hurtfully against even completely innocent people. This is a vital warning sign which needs to be incorporated in C if it is to be distinguishable from bad temper in general. Spelling reform could avoid this loss if it transferred the redundant C to represent the sound of CH.

Second, spelling reform could be harmful if it introduced the wrong kind of new letter symbol. Back in 1908, the French psychiatrist Bérillon recognised that the link from character to brain to hand to

writing is a two-way process. If there is a constant feedback of either good or bad written forms, there is a gradual orientation of the personality in correspondingly good or bad directions. For example, encouraging children to discipline their handwriting can help them to discipline their behaviour also. This discovery led to the establishment of graphotherapy, which can be used to help people give up their addictions, relax writer's or artist's block, assist golfers to improve their stroke, and so on. It cannot be used indiscriminately, as some aspects of writing style reflect such fundamental parts of an individual's character that asking for a change would be mentally disturbing instead of therapeutic.

It is therefore desirable that spelling reformers seeking to introduce new letter forms should check with a graphologist to ensure that their proposals will not encourage harmful tendencies. It is in this context that the effect of the Shaw alphabet is explored here. The school of graphology used as a yardstick for comparison is PACE (Personality and Character Evaluation) directed by Ness Shirley and Alice Coleman.

4 Diacritics
Shaw specifically wished to avoid the use of diacritics for diversifying existing letters into extra forms, but the Shaw Alphabet goes further and omits diacritics altogether. It dispenses entirely with the existing i-dots and t-bars, which are important graphological indicators. The PACE Graphology correspondence course devotes a whole lesson to diacritics, covering over 70 traits of character and personality. If these were wiped clean out of the graphological repertoire, it would be a severe handicap. A minority of the data might be retrievable from the punctuation and the dot which it is prescribed that the Shaw Alphabet should use as a 'namer', placed in front of initial letters that would formerly have been capitalised, but t-bar data would be irredeemably lost.

5 Initial or Final Strokes
A second set of information lost by the Shaw Alphabet would be those beginning and end strokes which are explained in the second lesson of the PACE course. Again, a whole book of graphological lore would be eliminated — nearly 70 traits. It would no longer be possible to interpret intentions and follow-through.

6 Connectives
The Shaw Alphabet was designed as a print set of separate letters, with no connecting strokes between them. In some cases one letter would end just before the point where the next one was to begin and the two could be joined if desired, but this would be a junction, not a connective. It would be permitted only at the exact level of the baseline or of the mental reality line (the upper and lower limits of the middle zone) and never above, between or below these levels. The link would be a mere absence of space, with no length, depth, shape, direction or position of its own. This rule would eliminate not only the many traits revealed by connectives within the middle zone but also upper and lower zone strokes such as those denoting obstinacy, deliberateness, fantasy or sublimation of energy into scientific or humane endeavours. Furthermore, there would no longer be a reliable way to differentiate left-brain logical thinking from right-brain pattern thinking. All this would nullify another large tranche of graphology.

7 Circle Letters
Our present rich variety of circle letters would be greatly impoverished. Only one true circle would be retained, to represent the long O, but as it would never occur in compounds such AS OI, OR, OU, OUR, OUS, SION, or TION, it would be a rare occurrence, unable to yield proper percentages for the large range of communication characteristics discernible at present. Circles are included in the two Shaw letters devoted to the voiced and unvoiced variants of TH, but only the first of these would give information on talkativeness or reticence, according to whether it is fully closed or left with a gap at the top. If the second variant were left unclosed, the gap would be located on the

baseline, where it would betoken laxity, meaning a weak character who might be easily led into dishonesty.

There are seven quarter-circle signs, five half-circles and six three-quarter circles, of which four have the basal gap of laxity. There are also two double arcs of insincerity. In our present alphabet the laxity and insincerity signs are optional, used only by lax and insincere people, but the Shaw Alphabet would compel everyone to use them. In view of graphotherapy's doctrine that 'you tend to become what you write', this bodes ill for a Shaw-Alphabet society. The change would not only deprive graphology of a substantial part of its subject matter, but would also tend to create cultural damage in society at large.

8 Loops
The Shaw Alphabet has only one upper-zone and one lower-zone loop as compared with the traditional alphabet's possible seven in each zone. It would still be possible to observe abstract imagination, material imagination and the degree of desire for variety, but as their frequencies would be very low, it would be difficult to find enough cases to build up a quantitative picture of variations within each of these three traits. There would be no scope whatsoever for assessing the qualities specifically discernible from D and T loops: dignity, sensitivity, and mild or marked over-sensitiveness. Nor would it be possible to detect any of the numerous traits now reflected in the height and form of lower-zone loops, such as clannishness, a distorted view of the self, latent sexuality, self-punishment or the house-tyrant syndrome.

9 Middle-Zone Thinking Letters
The extreme economy of strokes in the Shaw Alphabet leaves little scope for the varied top and bottom forms of the middle-zone thinking letters. Practical thinking with manual dexterity, keen comprehension, cunning, worry, repression, thinking with imagination and a liking for one-to-one communication are ruled out. It is possible that methodical thinking may be deducible from the symbols for ZH, J, AR, AIR, and the short ER, information-seeking from the long OO, analytical ability from the short OO, and effortless thinking from CH, SH, OR, and the long ERR. In the place of the present simplicity of deriving 13 modes of thinking from just three similar letters H, M and N, there would be only a restricted set of four to be sought from a complex of twelve. The valuable overview of balance in varied thinking patterns would be lost, and quantitative precision impaired for information-seeking, analytical ability and their compound, problem-solving ability.

10 Tics
In the existing alphabet, temper tics and aggressive tics are not built in but added as extras by people of the relevant dispositions. In the Shaw Alphabet, there is a temper tic built in to the T and CH and an aggressiveness tick built into the D and J. Like the built-in signs for laxity and insincerity, these tics could be negative graphotherapy training in the development of disagreeable characteristics, and help reinforce the present trend towards a more violent society.

11 Pressure
The Shaw Alphabet came with Kingsley Read's prescription on pressure: "Avoid cramped fingers and heavy pressure. Only with a light touch will you write well, freely and fast". This is a complete misunderstanding of the nature of pressure. It is not within the writer's power to choose. Energetic people naturally write with a heavier hand, and this particular line of evidence would continue to exist.

12 The Ductus
Kingsley Read also advised the use of a fairly thin ink trail (ductus), as he believed a broad one would blur some of the fine distinctions between letters of similar shape. This would be a serious loss, as ductus width provides a great deal of information on people's preferred lifestyles. Writers

would be most reluctant to give up the type of pen they feel most comfortable with, so in practice ductus information would probably not be lost.

13 Slant

Another prescription of Kingsley Read's referred to slant: "Cultivate an upright rather than a sloping handwriting. It will be more like printed letterpress and more distinguishable". The reason he gave was that certain letters, SH, CH, ZH, J, Y, W, AH, AWE, both forms of TH and 'yew' have a built-in slant, which would have lost its distinctiveness if there had been no vertical standard to judge them by. The varying slants inherent in the Shaw Alphabet give the same sort of visual impression to a Shaw text as the variations that denote immaturity when seen in traditional writing, so immaturity is another trait that could not be graphologically discerned if the alphabet were changed. There are also varying slants in the Shaw middle-zone, but some of them are part circles, and as we are used to circles in this zone, they do not give the same every-which-way impression as the letters mentioned.

In practice, it seems highly unlikely that the advice for a vertical slant would be heeded. Slant, like pressure, is a highly individual imperative, and therefore one of the things that graphotherapists would not try to change, because to do so could cause mental stress.

14 Size

Like pressure and slant, writing size is not a matter for choice or conscious control, but is a fundamental expression of personality. Kingsley Read suggested enlarging one's writing during the initial practice stage and more permanently if needed to offset the tendency of a thick ductus to create confusion between certain letters. More basically, he advocated that the upper and middle zone should both equal the middle zone, thereby achieving a nice balance. In practice, however, writers settle down to their own zonal proportions. Today's children may reduce the letter *t* down to middle-zone height, but it is still recognisable as a T because of its distinctive bar. The same would not be true of the s-shaped S and Z of the Shaw Alphabet, which if compressed into the middle zone could become indistinguishable from the s-shaped letters M and N.

15 Confusion Between Similar Letters

Deviations from a prescribed copybook are the breath of graphological life, and the present 26 letters are sufficiently distinctive to be able to absorb a great deal of variation before becoming illegible. If the one-letter-one-sound principle had been implemented by keeping traditional letters and adding a new range of distinctive forms for the extra sounds, the new alphabet would have retained a high degree of resistance to illegibility. The Shaw Alphabet, by contrast, used such simplified forms that many of them are closely similar. Kingsley Read picks out no fewer than 15 which could easily be confused with others unless written very precisely, and this means that the Shaw Alphabet would have a very low resistance to illegibility.

16 Spacing

Graphology uses five kinds of spacing: letter breadth, letter spacing, word spacing, line spacing and margins. The last three and to some extent the second one, would remain operational in the Shaw Alphabet but the first, letter breadth, would be more affected. Half its letters are so linear in nature that breadth measurement would be impossible. The others would probably suffice, however.

17 Dyslexia

At the time the Shaw Alphabet was produced, dyslexia appeared to be a rare condition, almost always resulting from brain damage. Genetically it was present in many other cases but did not manifest itself as a problem because the phonic method of teaching children to read, which was then in vogue, helped dyslexics to escape becoming 'word-blind'. In recent decades word-

blindness has become much more common, owing to the mass change from phonics to the look-say, whole-world method. Dyslexics, and many others, cannot benefit from look-say, and it is now estimated that some seven million Britons have passed through their whole school career to become adult illiterates. Some very bright dyslexics have learned enough to achieve university entrance, but are still plagued by severe spelling difficulties that continue to blight their lives.

Phonics teaches the shapes and sounds of individual letters and then merges them to become words, and this suits dyslexics far better than look-say which does not even teach the alphabet. The Shaw Alphabet, with its one-to-one sound symbol correspondence, would seem, therefore, to be especially well suited to them. However, this advantage would have been more than offset by several severe disadvantages. Dyslexics need very distinct shapes. They are confused by the same shape occurring in different positions, and even if taught phonically, take time to master the mirror-image letters *b* and *d*. The Shaw Alphabet is full of similar shapes that would be confusing to a dyslexic, e.g. B, F, P and U are represented by the same form in different positions.

These problems would have existed even if the Shaw Alphabet had been taught phonically and would have been far worse if it had been subverted to the look-say steamroller of progressive education. This dogma has been able to ban the teaching of the traditional alphabet, and to take away the ground from under the successful initial teaching alphabet. It would certainly have managed to ruin the Shaw Alphabet in the same way, and while boasting of progress, it would have continued in reality to promote illiteracy in general and dyslexic problems in particular.

18 Conclusion

The Shaw Alphabet is undoubtedly highly ingenious, and capable of effecting large savings of time, space and cost in the hands of printers and very precise writers. Graphologically, however, the verdict must be an adverse one. It is not sufficiently robust to remain legible throughout the immense range of individual styles that we constantly encounter, it would be disastrous for dyslexics, and it would destroy perhaps 90% of the science of graphology. It is far too drastic a change to allow us to keep in touch with the vast written and printed documentation of civilisation up to now, and would divorce us from nations continuing to use the Roman Alphabet. It might, in fact, be a serious blow to the supremacy of English as a world language. In short it is a slimming down of written English to the point of anorexia. This is not to deny the need for some kind of reform, but it should be one that skirts round all these pitfalls, and if seriously contemplated, should recruit a graphologist to any panel of experts set up discuss possibilities.

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[Chris Upward: see **Journals**, **Newsletters**, **Pamflet**, **Leaflets**, **Media**, **Book and Papers**.]

7. SSS Letters to Policy-Makers & Replies
Chris Upward

The English/Welsh National Curriculum is now aiming for 5 years of stability (see the excerpts headed 'Spelling in the National Curriculum' elsewhere in this issue of the *JSSS*) after as many years of turmoil. The Society's Committee decided the time was ripe to make its case afresh to key policy-makers, and on 16 December 1994 wrote as follows:

The Rt Hon Gillian Shephard MP
Secretary of State for Education
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
LONDON SW1P 3BT

Dear Secretary of State

We are writing at the suggestion of Lord Simon of Glaisdale and Alan Howarth MP, in the belief you will wish to be kept informed of fresh ideas on the problem of English spelling.

Our antiquated and inconsistent spelling has long bedevilled education at every level. Children struggle to achieve unsatisfactory standards of literacy, misspelling is common even among the better educated, and educationists cannot agree a transparent policy on teaching methods and assessment.

Following submissions to Kingman, Cox, the NCC, and other bodies, our Society has now evolved a set of 'basics' which we believe should underlie future thinking on literacy policy. They are briefly stated in the attached 'Six Axioms on English Spelling', and some of their implications are explored in the enclosed leaflet 'Modernizing English Spelling: Principles & Practicalities'.

We hope we may persuade you of the importance of these perspectives, and will be glad to advise further.

Yours sincerely
(On behalf of the Society's Committee)

Sir Ron Dearing
Chairman of the School Curriculum & Assessment
Authority
Newcombe House
45 Notting Hill Gate
LONDON   W11 3JB

Dear Sir Ron

The Simplified Spelling Society has followed the development of the English curriculum with keen interest in recent years, making submissions on the problem of English spelling to Kingman, Cox, the NCC, and other bodies. We have now refined our views to a form that we believe offers a basis for long-term policy making, and are enclosing an outline for your consideration.

We start from the observation that our antiquated and inconsistent spelling has long bedevilled education at every level. Children struggle to achieve unsatisfactory standards of literacy, misspelling is common even among the better educated, and educationists cannot agree a transparent policy on teaching methods and assessment.

The attached 'Six Axioms on English Spelling' briefly set out what we consider the 'basics' of this situation. Their implications are then explored in the leaflet 'Modernizing English Spelling: Principles & Practicalities'.
(final paragraph and ending as to Gillian Shephard)

First paragraph variant to:
David Blunkett MP
Principal Opposition Spokesperson on Education;
Don Foster MP
Liberal Democrat Spokesman on Education
The House of Commons, Westminster, SW1A 0PW.

Dear David Blunkett/Don Foster

The Simplified Spelling Society wishes to make a case to you concerning the problem of English spelling. We believe that our perspective is essential for a proper understanding of the problem and for devising effective policies for dealing with it in the future. (cont. roughly as to Shephard/Dearing)

Six Axioms on English Spelling

1 The letters of the alphabet were designed to represent speech sounds; that is the alphabetic principle.
2 The alphabetic principle makes literacy easy, allowing readers to pronounce words from their spelling, and writers to spell them from their sounds.
3 As pronunciation changes through the centuries, the alphabetic principle tends to be undermined; the spelling of words then needs to be adapted to show the new sounds.
4 Unlike other languages, English has done little to modernize its spelling for nearly 1,000 years, until today it only haphazardly observes the alphabetic principle.
5 Neglect of the alphabetic principle now makes literacy unnecessarily difficult in English, and all education suffers.
6 Procedures are needed to manage improvements to English spelling for the future.

Replies

Replies were received as follows:

DFE — Department for Education
10 January 1995

Thank you for your letter of 16 December to the Secretary of State concerning standards of literacy in general, and spelling in particular, with which you enclosed your Society's "Six Axioms on English Spelling" and "Modernizing English Spelling: Principles and Practicalities " leaflet. I have been asked to reply.

I should explain that it is the Government's policy that standards of spelling should be raised through the development and teaching of National Curriculum English. Ministers are firmly of the view that pupils should become familiar with the legacy of our language without changing the language itself. However, we are grateful to you for sending details of your ideas for spelling reform, which we have read with interest.

Yours sincerely
Simon Dawson
English Team, School Curriculum Branch

SCAA — School Curriculum and Assessment Authority
13 January 1995

Thank you for writing to me about the work of your Society.

We too are concerned to raise standards in spelling, and believe that the revised Order for English will improve practice in the general teaching of literacy. The Order sets out clear requirements for teaching and learning about the English spelling system, and emphasises the opportunities which pupils need to have in order to understand and make use of the full range of spelling patterns in English.

As you rightly point out, English spelling is complex and always subject to change.

I am sure that your work will go on highlighting those areas where useful changes might be made on a principled basis.

Yours sincerely
Nicholas Tate (Dr)
Chief Executive

David Blunkett MP

Shadow Secretary of State for Education and Member of Parliament for Sheffield Brightside
I am writing to acknowledge with thanks your letter of 16 December and enclosed leaflet.

With all good wishes
David Blunkett

[John Beech: see **Bulletins**, **Quarterly**, **Newsletter**]

8. Adaptation of Writing to Orthographic Change
John R Beech

We here reprint, with the permission of Dr Beech (Psychology Department, University of Leicester), the abstract of a report that was published in 1992 in *The Journal of General Psychology* (119[2], 169–179.

ABSTRACT. Research about regularizing English orthography (involving a change of 30% of the words in the text) has indicated that adults regain a normal reading speed after they have read 6,000 words of regularized text. The spelling changes mainly involved applying the most common rules of spelling consistently across all text. For instance, the silent-*e* rule was applied consistently on long vowel phonemes in the penultimate phoneme position (e.g., *light* became *lite*). In the present experiment, the effects of such spelling changes on writing performance were explored. During an afternoon session, writing speed when converting text to the new orthography improved significantly, but was still slower than normal. The results for spelling accuracy were more equivocal; however, nearly one third of the subjects were spelling very accurately in the new orthography by the end of the session. Overall, orthographic change has a more substantial impact on writing speed than on reading speed.

9. Spelling in the English National Curriculum
Chris Upward

The Background
The *Journal of the Simplified Spelling Society* (*JSSS*) has endeavoured over the years to keep readers abreast of official education policy in England and Wales where it affects spelling. It has done this by publishing relevant excerpts from official reports, along with the Society's own submissions to the various bodies charged with developing the English language element for the new National Curriculum. Readers wishing to refer to these submissions will find them in back numbers of the *JSSS* as listed below.

The issues and items concerned are as follows:

JSSS 87/3, Item 5, terms of reference of the Kingman Committee, and the Society's submission to it;
JSSS 88/2, Item 8, the Society's comments on the Kingman Report;
JSSS 88/3, Item 7, the Society's submission to the National Curriculum English Working Group (Cox Committee);
JSSS 89/1, Item 11, references to spelling in the Cox Report (*English for ages 5 to 11*);
JSSS 89/2, Item 16, (slightly abridged) joint submission from the SSS and the UK i.t.a. Federation to the National Curriculum Council;
***SSS Newsletter* April 1991**, Item 4, Open Letter from the SSS to the Department of Education & Science (DES;
***SSS Newsletter* September 1991**, Item 2, Reply from DES, excerpts from National Curriculum

Documentation, SSS comments;
[JSSS 93/1](#), Item 2, Submission from the SSS to the National Curriculum Council;
[JSSS 93/2,](#) Item 9, excerpts from the Revised Proposals for English in the National Curriculum, followed (Item 10) by the SSS's response.

In January 1995, a new, slimmed-down document *English in the National Curriculum* (London: HMSO) was produced by the Department for Education (DFE, renamed from the former DES). It is hoped that, after years of vituperation, this may provide a stable basis for the English curriculum that will remain in place until the end of the century. It contains the following references that have some bearing on spelling:

Programmes of Study
p2 **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**
• **1.** English should develop pupils' abilities to communicate effectively in speech and writing. It should also enable them to be enthusiastic, responsive and knowledgeable readers.
b To develop as effective readers, pupils should be taught to: • read accurately, fluently…with understanding.
c To develop as effective writers, pupils should be taught to use: • presentational skills — accurate punctuation, correct spelling and legible handwriting.
p3 • **4.** Pupils should be given opportunities…to recognise that: • standard English is distinguished from other forms of English by its vocabulary, and by rules and conventions of grammar, spelling and punctuation.

KEY STAGE 1
p6 **Reading, • 2 Key Skills**
a …Pupils should be taught the alphabet, and be made aware of the sounds of spoken language in order to develop phonological awareness. They should be taught to use various approaches to word identification and recognition.

p7 **b Phonic knowledge**, focusing on the relationship between print symbols and sound patterns. Opportunities should be given for: • recognising alliteration, sound patterns and rhyme, and relating these to patterns in letters; • considering syllables in longer words; • identifying initial and final sounds in words; • identifying and using a comprehensive range of letters and sounds, including combinations of letters, blends and digraphs, and paying specific attention to their use in the formation of words; • recognising inconsistencies in phonic patterns; • recognising that some letters do not always produce a sound themselves, but influence the sound of others.

Graphic knowledge, focusing on what can be learned about word meanings and parts of words from consistent letter patterns, including:
• plurals; • spelling patterns in verb endings; • relationship between root words and derivatives, *eg help, helpful*; • prefixes and suffixes.

Word recognition, focusing on the development of a vocabulary of words recognised and understood automatically and quickly. This should extend from a few words of personal importance to a larger number of words from books and the environment. Pupils should be shown how to use their sight vocabulary to help them read words that have similar features.

p9 **Writing, • Key Skills**

a Pupils should be introduced to the alphabetic nature of writing and be taught to discriminate between letters, learning to write their own name. Pupils' early experiments…at using letters…should be encouraged.

c In **punctuation**, pupils should be taught that punctuation is essential to help a reader understand what is written…Pupils should be taught to punctuate their writing, be consistent in their use of capital letters, full stops and question marks, and begin to use commas.

d In **spelling**, pupils should be taught to:

• write each letter of the alphabet; • use their knowledge of sound-symbol relationships and phonological patterns; • recognise and use simple spelling patterns; • write common letter strings within familiar and common words; • spell commonly occurring simple words; • spell words with common prefixes and suffixes.

p10 Pupils should be taught to check the accuracy of their spelling, and to use word books and dictionaries, identifying initial letters as the means of locating words. They should be given opportunities to experiment with the spelling of complex words and to discuss misapplied generalisations and other reasons for misspellings. Close attention should be paid to word families.

KEY STAGE 2
p13 **Reading, 2 Key Skills**
a …pupils should be taught to extend their phonic and graphic knowledge to include more complex patterns and irregularities.
p14 **c** Pupils should be taught to: • use dictionaries, glossaries and thesauruses to explain unfamiliar vocabulary.
p15 **Writing 2 Key Skills**
b Pupils should be taught to: • **proofread** — check the draft for spelling and punctuation errors, omissions or repetitions.
c In **punctuation**, pupils should be taught to use punctuation marks correctly in their writing, including full stops, question and exclamation marks, commas, inverted commas, and apostrophes to mark possession.
p16 **d** In **spelling**, pupils should be accumulating a bank of words that they can spell correctly, and should be taught to check spellings and meanings of words, using dictionaries where appropriate. When looking up words, pupils should be taught to apply their knowledge of initial and subsequent letters and the organisation of dictionaries, including headings, abbreviations and other conventions. They should be taught: • the meaning, use, and spelling of common prefixes and suffixes; • the relevance of word families, roots and origins of words; • alternative ways of writing the same sound; • the spelling of words with inflectional endings.
Pupils should be taught to: • spell complex, polysyllabic words that conform to regular patterns, and to break long and complex words into more manageable units, by using their knowledge of meaning and word structure; • memorise the visual patterns of words, including those that are irregular; • recognise silent letters; • use the apostrophe to spell shortened forms of words; • used appropriate terminology, including vowel and consonant.

KEY STAGES 3 & 4
p24 • **2 Key Skills**
c In **spelling**, pupils should be helped to increase their knowledge of regular patterns of spelling, word families, roots of words and their derivations. They should be taught to spell increasngly complex polysyllabic words that do not conform to regular patterns, and to proofread their writing carefully to check for errors, using dictionaries where appropriate. Pupils should be given

opportunities to develop discrimination in relation to other complexities in spelling, including heteronyms, *eg minute, lead, wind*, and sight rhymes, *eg tough, dough*.
• **3 Standard English and language study**
b • punctuation—the use of the full range of punctuation marks, including full stops, question and exclamation marks, commas, semi-colons, colons, inverted commas, apostrophes, brackets, dashes and hyphens.

Discussion

The latest *English in the National Curriculum* document shows a more realistic appreciation of the problems of English spelling than did, for instance, the Kingman Report of 1987, which inaugurated this whole curricular development by baldly stating that "spelling obeys rules". Nevertheless, the SSS may wish to consider how far teachers and pupils are now offered the most helpful guidance that can at present be devised to help them cope with TO. At least the following points may represent limitations in present advice.

Although more than lip-service is paid to phonics, implementation appears half-hearted. Pupils are to be given 'opportunities' for phonic skills, rather than having to be taught them; learning 'sight-vocabulary' is implied as a useful way of mastering regular as well as irregular spellings; and in places phonics appears to be confused with phonology. The skills of reading and writing are treated separately, rather than as mutually reinforcing facets of the overall process of literacy acquisition, and it is not suggested that writing difficult words might be a step towards learning to read them. Repeated references are made to pupils using dictionaries, but it is not clear how far the practicalities have been thought through. Pupils are for instance expected to check drafts of what they write for correct spelling, consulting the dictionary where appropriate, though being able to recite the alphabet is not specified as a prerequisite. Research is needed to see how practicable such recommendations are, when one of the characteristics of English spelling is that errors are often not susceptible to 'checking', and it is impossible to check a word in the dictionary unless one already has at least a rough idea of its spelling.

More generally, we may wish to draw attention to three consequences of the present irregular spelling. One is that it is a deterrent to writing, when pupils are expected to draft their work, and then to correct the mistakes, rather than to be able to write correctly at the first attempt. The second is that, as they progress, pupils are expected to master the spelling only of words with more straightforward structures, but apparently not of more difficult forms; one wonders what effect this may have on vocabulary development. And the third is that even at Key Stages 3 & 4 pupils are still not expected to have mastered the spelling of English.

The SSS's submissions to the English curriculum authorities in recent years may (hardly unexpectedly) have failed to persuade them to consider any simplification to the spelling, but the case for simplification has at least been brought to the attention of educationists who might otherwise have been oblivious to it. The SSS must continue to make that case at every opportunity, and in response to the latest curriculum document it must castigate any expressions of satisfaction with the present situation. It must publicize all research findings that demonstrate how unsatisfactory the situation is, whether they concern teaching problems, low standards of literacy in English-speaking countries, or higher standards in countries with more rational writing systems.

10. *Ofsted* reports on Standards in Education 1993/94
Chris Upward

The 1992 Education Act for England and Wales established the Office for Standards in Education (*Ofsted*), whose first annual report (for 1993/94) was submitted by Chris Woodhead, Chief Inspector for Schools in England, in January 1995. It included the following remarks having some relation to standards of literacy and hence to the present state of British spelling.

p5 **SECTION I** *— COMMENTARY*
§4 …Newly qualified teachers have not in the past felt confident in their ability to teach reading (this issue was raised in *What teachers in training are taught about reading*, NFER, 1991); whether they now do will be revealed by OFSTED's imminent inspection of primary training.

p7 §8 …Why is it that in too many primary schools 'learning by doing' is preferred to 'teaching by telling' to the point where sitting pupils down and telling them things becomes almost a 'marginal' strategy?

§11…Less is expected of pupils in disadvantaged areas. The teaching they experience is more likely to be judged unsatisfactory or poor.

p8 §13 …While it is reassuring to see that pupils' standards of achievement in KS1 (=Key Stage 1, Years 1/2) in English are judged to be satisfactory or better in the majority of primary schools, it is disturbing to note that pupils' standards in reading in KS1 are unsatisfactory in one in twenty schools and that in three in twenty schools pupils have considerable problems with at least one major aspect of writing. These figures mean that a significant number of children are failing to master basic literacy skills. The situation becomes worse, moreover, in KS2 (=Key Stage 2, Years 3–6) where unsatisfactory standards in reading and writing are to be found in one in ten and one in four schools respectively.

§15 …Reading and writing standards remain too low in one-fifth and one-quarter of schools respectively in KS3 (Years 7–9). Such figures indicate that a substantial number of pupils have failed to master basic skills of punctuation and grammar…

§16 Achievements in *literacy and numeracy* are fundamental to all other learning. Looking to the next century, it is evident that higher standards will be needed than ever before. Listening to parents and employers, it is, equally, obvious that standards are not high enough. All schools need to be absolutely confident that they are teaching their children to become literate and numerate in the most effective ways possible.

p15 **SECTION II** *— EVIDENCE*
Standards in English
§46 Standards of achievement generally in relation to pupils' capabilities were satisfactory or better in over eight out of ten Pre-KS1 and KS1 English lessons in the schools inspected. Standards declined slightly in KS2 although they were at least satisfactory in a little over three-quarters of lessons. In KS3 standards were at least satisfactory in more than eight English lessons in ten and good or very good in more than three lessons in ten. Standards in lessons in KS4 were slightly better than in KS3.

§47 In *reading*, standards in KS1 were satisfactory in most of the *primary* schools inspected and good in over a third of them. In about one in twenty schools, however, children made poor progress in their reading. The position was much worse in KS2, where pupils in about one school in ten were in general not making satisfactory progress in reading; for example in their confidence with a wider range of text and use of reference skills with non-fiction books.

§48 When compared with other aspects of English, *writing* was weaker both in KS1 and in KS2. In about three schools in twenty in KS1, pupils have considerable problems with at least one major aspect of writing. In KS2, this is true of one school in four. Many pupils in both Key Stages are capable of achieving higher standards of writing, in particular, in the essential skills of handwriting, spelling and punctuation. They should also be taught to write for a wider range of purposes and readers.

§50 Although standards were at least satisfactory in the large majority of English lessons in *secondary* schools there are weaknesses which persist in both Key Stages 3 and 4. *Reading* standards across the curriculum are too low in one school in five in KS3 and in more than three schools in twenty in KS4. Pupils in these schools ought to be reading with greater accuracy and fluency, approaching new texts with a greater degree of confidence, and undertaking more sustained reading. Standards of *writing* across the curriculum are too low in almost a quarter of schools in KS3 and in one school in five in KS4. In such schools pupils should have a firmer grasp of spelling and punctuation…

p54 **ANNEX 2**
Standards and quality summary tables
Table 2. *Standards in English lessons*
Proportions of English lessons in which overall standards in relation to pupils' capabilities were judged to be good or very good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory or poor by Key Stage (%)

	GOOD OR VERY GOOD	SATISFACTORY	UNSATISFACTORY OR POOR
Pre-KS1	38	52	10
KS1	28	54	18
KS2	21	56	23
KS3	36	48	15
KS4	39	47	14

Discussion
The 1993/94 *Ofsted* report does not tell us about standards in any absolute sense. It tells us that standards were higher in some circumstances than in others, and in what proportion of instances they were judged to be (un)satisfactory. Insofar as the number of 'good/very good' verdicts was higher (except for KS2) than that of 'unsatisfactory/poor', and at secondary level indeed over twice as high, one might almost think the overall situation gave little cause for concern. A normal statistical distribution, after all, ranges from better to worse, with a concentration of results in the middle. When the report calls for an improvement in standards, what is it therefore asking for? That the whole suite of results should improve, or that all results should be above average?

A string of further questions is begged by the *Ofsted* conclusions. What absolute standard does the verdict 'satisfactory' represent? Can absolute standards of literacy be defined? Were standardized literacy tests used to determine the pupils' level of achievement? What level of expectation were the inspectors applying? Were their expectations demanding, or modest, in terms of the literacy potential of learners at different ages? Can, or should, expectations be raised, and if so, how high?

One approach to answering such questions arises from the chief motivation behind the new concern with standards. In this age of the global economy and international economic competition, there is naturally anxiety that perhaps standards of education in one country may be lagging behind those of competitor countries. Some recent comparative studies have suggested that this may indeed be the situation (eg OECD, 1992). More specifically, several more narrowly defined studies (eg Thorstad; Upward; Wimmer/Goswami) have implied that the English writing system imposes obstacles to literacy which are not suffered in, for instance, Italian or German.

The English National Curriculum represents a major effort to put educational processes on a more explicitly thought-out footing, but it is only the start of what will presumably become a permanent feature of British educational planning and administration. Its techniques and procedures are in their infancy, and will undoubtedly be refined and adjusted in the light of experience and changing circumstances. *Ofsted* has not yet got round to asking the really important questions about absolute literacy standards, but we must hope that in due course it will do so. And if it does so, the SSS would predict, it will be confronted with the inescapable effects of the English spelling problem. Then some more serious research into those effects might be instigated than have ever been undertaken before, and conclusions might be drawn that, if standards are to be genuinely and significantly improved in the future, there is no alternative but to grasp the nettle of spelling reform.

That line of argument, at least, must be worth pursuing with education authorities.

11. No ansrs here yet

Christopher Upward revews

Carol Elkinsmyth & John Bynner The Basic Skills of Young Adults

London: The Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU), February 1994, 118pp, ISBN 1 870741 80 3, £6.

This revew has benefitd from discussion with ALBSU and is ritn in Cut Spelng.

1. Th (in-)significnce of surveys

In its 1988/2 issu (p32) th *Journal of the Simplified Spelling Society* revewd th 1987 ALBSU report *Literacy, Numeracy and Adults*, wich was based on a survey carrid out in 1981. Th report anlyzd th deficits in litracy and numeracy of a sampl of evry persn born in England, Scotland and Wales in one week in 1958, and noted that 13% of respondnts stated they had dificltis with one or mor of these basic skils.

Th new ALBSU report, publishd in febry 1994, and based on a 1992 survey, reachs virtuly th same conclusion in its study of peple born in 1970: this time 12% declared they had dificltis. Besides askng respondnts to asess ther own dificltis (self-asesmnt), th intrvewrs set them a 30-minut test to provide an objectiv asesmnt of ther standrds. Th disparitis between th subjectiv and objectiv responses ar th subject of som intrestng analysis, as outlined in §3 belo. Th reports findngs ar presentd in 6 short chaptrs, each with sevrl subhedngs that clearly structur th infrmation. Both litracy and numeracy ar covrd, but in this revew we shal concentrate on th implications of th litracy findngs. Th chaptr titles reflect a strong emfasis on th social dimension of basic skils deficits, and ar as folos:

1 Background to the study,
2 Who has problems?
3 What are the difficulties?
4 Basic skills and working life,
5 Basic skills and personal life,
6 Conclusion.

First impressions of th hole report ar of atractiv layout and admrbl lucidity of presntation, with straitforwrd tables and charts bakd up by discussion of th findngs. Howevr, wethr because of th presnt revewrs obtuseness or because of lak of space in th report for ful explnations, closer examnation did sujest that perhaps not al th detail was quite so tidily workd out. Ther apear for instnce to be som statisticl discrepncis: did th survey hav contact adresses for over 10,000 membrs of th cohort (p11) or only for 8,175 (p68); and if 9% males and 6% females ansr a question rongly (p33), surely th joint figr shud be in th rejon of 7–8%, not 17%? Nor was it always esy to folo th analysis or interpret th data in its finer points, as wen th shocards on pp105–111 wer printd in th rong ordr. But such minor shortcomngs scarcely detract from th overal impact of th report.

With th reports findngs esentialy replicating those publishd in 1987, we ar bound to ask wethr th new survey was justifyd. But obviusly no one cud no in advance that th new results wud be so simlr

to th old, and it was certnly useful to establish wethr a mesurbl improvemnt or decline in standrds had taken place between th two surveys. Th report dos not atemt any deepr, causl analysis of th results, but we may wondr if th 1% improvemnt (13% declaring dificltis in 1981 reducing to 12% in 1992) myt concevebly reflect th quite wide experience of th Initial Teachng Alfabet enjoyd by children around 1975–76, wen th respondnts wer ajed 5–6. But as we shal se in §3 belo, th figrs conceald such a larj grey area that a mere 1% difrnce dos not in fact alow such interpretations.

It is importnt that litracy standrds ar monitrd from jenration to jenration, but also that posbl reasns for any chanje ar explord. It is especialy importnt that simlr surveys ar carrid out in th comng decades, as we need to no whethr th fluctuations in educationl policy and litracy-teachng methodoloiy of th past 15 years in England and Wales hav afectd th litracy standrds of th jenrations concernd. And if chanjes ar identifyd, then it is esential that futur reports considr th posbl reasns. We myt alredy speculate that yung adlts in th year 2000 wil sho a decline in standrds reflectng th fashn for 'fonics-fobic' teachng methods in th 1980s, such as 'real books', 'hole languaj', etc, and that yung adlts in th year 2010 wil sho an improvemnt resultng from th firmr groundng in fonics required by th english/welsh education authoritis today. Syns of a corelation between teachng methods and litracy standrds cud be profoundly significnt, and if they ar reveald by futur surveys, th conclusions they sujest shud help gide litracy policy.

2. Brodr perspectivs

A furthr justification for th 'repeat' survey of 1994 is that th publicity shud help remind public and politicians alike of a continuing problm. Howevr, if we ar proprly to apreciate th significnce of th repeat findngs, we need to take a brodr vew than ALBSU dos, and ask wethr th litracy problms reveald ar repeatd not merely historicly, but also jeograficly. Sure enuf, othr english-speakng cuntris hav simlr worris. New Zealand is welnown for its extravagnt remedial sceme 'Readng Recovry', wich has atractd som politicl suport in Britn (tho recent reports sujest that finance is now being withdrawn); and in th USA litracy standrds ar a matr of extreme concern. A 1983 report ('A Nation at Risk') produced undr th Reagan administration was subsequently ecod by a 4-year study publishd in septembr 1993 undr Presidnt Clinton. Th sampl for th latest americn study was many times larjr than that of th ALBSU survey (26,000 compared with around 1,600), and produced simlr conclusions. Not merely did 10% of respondnts say they had dificlty with readng and riting, but objectiv tests showd mor like 20% functionng at th loest of 5 levls, with anothr 20% at th next loest levl and 30% at th midl levl, with only about 30% at th two hyest levls. Th *New York Times* playd up th seriusness of th problm with th hedline "Study Says Half of Adults in U.S. Can't Read." As in Britn, a particulr cause of concern was that lo educationl standrds wer perceved as a brake on ecnomic performnce, especialy vis-à-vis competitr cuntris.

Particulrly these americn findngs promt th question wethr ALBSU is liasing with othr english-speakng cuntris. If not, it wud seem sensbl that som coordnation shud be developd. Coordnated surveys cud sho how far litracy problms ar comn to th hole english-speakng world, and how far ther ar variations between educationl systms. If ther ar significnt variations, ther cud be importnt lesns to be drawn for futur litracy policy. Just as one of th aims of th EU is to asimlate european standrds to those of th best existng in any european cuntry, so th hole english-speakng world cud with profit lern from th most succesful presnt litracy practis. On th othr hand, if litracy standrds ar found to be simlrly lo thruout th english speakng world (as this revewr wud predict), then conclusions of a rathr difrnt sort wud seem indicated.

For no less importnt than comparisns between english-speakng countris ar comparisns with non-english-speakng cuntris at comprbl stajes of ecnomic and social developmnt. Such comparisns

regulrly sho poor performnce by english-speakng cuntris. Th recent IEA survey (and othrs) sho Finland consistntly hedng th intrnationl litracy tables. Othr studis hav shown italian children making almost eit times fewr spelng mistakes than ther english countrparts, and british students making nearly 7 times fewr spelng mistakes in jermn than in ther mothr tong. Indeed, th aquisition of litracy skils jenrly is not considrd a problm in a numbr of european cuntris. Howevr, not merely do litracy standrds in english compare unfavorably with those in othr languajs, but they also do so compared with beginrs standrds in english wen lernrs aquire ther first litracy skils in a regulrized english orthografy.

Considrng al these findngs togethr, and even alowng for th dificlty of making exact comparisns between difrnt educationl systms, a hyly significnt mesaj begins to emerj: that ther is somthing about litracy aquisition based specificly on traditionl english spelng wich causes problms. Som educationists hav of corse been fuly aware of this for over 400 years. Al lernrs and al litracy teachrs in english com up against it, tho few conciusly anlyz it to th point of identifyng its tru natur. Th 1994 ALBSU report on th othr hand dos not even mention it, indeed th few remarks it dos make about posbl causes of litracy problms sho it to be lookng in quite othr directions. This matr wil be furthr discusd in §6 belo.

3. Limitations of th survey

In adition to this brod limitation on th reports overal perspectiv, certn naroer limitations ar declared in th report itself (p10). One was that it was carrid out by professionl survey intrvewrs workng to a strict scedule of questions, rathr than by adlt education specialists ho cud hav explord individul causes of deficits in a sensitiv but fre-ranjing manr. Th only question in th survey wich tuchd on th litracy teachng recevd by th respondnts was Q163 (p77): "How often did you receive special help at school for these problems?" Th posbility of establishng specific educationl causes for litracy problms was thus larjly excluded from th report.

Anothr limitation was that, altho respondnts wer askd for a self-asesmnt of ther litracy standrds both in readng and in riting/spelng, th results of th objectiv tests publishd in th report only covr readng (and numeracy), and not riting/spelng: "The results of the writing task remain to be analysed" (p12). We must await these results with keen anticipation. Thus th specific role that spelng may hav playd in th litracy deficit has not as yet been elucidated, tho th self-asesmnt figrs sujest (p13) that dificlty with riting/spelng was th most acutely felt Basic Skil problm of al (Figr 2.1 on p18), and Figr 3.4 (p30) tels us that 93.2% of respondnts ho had riting problms of any kind admitd to problms with spelng in particulr.

Not merely ar th results of th objectiv riting/spelng tests not yet availbl, but th readng tests wer desynd in such a way as to minmize th efect of spelng on th results. Al consistd of comprehension questions, and did not involv readng aloud. Qualitis of readng-fluency and pronunciation, wich can be directly afectd by spelng, wer therfor not asesd. Som questions indeed required numeric rathr than orthografic decoding, and sevrl involvd colation and interpretation of data, or som lojicl analysis, in othr words skils over and abov th basic need to identify words from ther spelng (this anomly is aluded to on p34 in terms of "task specific features overriding literacy skills").
Altho self-asesmnts wer found to be a useful diagnostic tool, interpretng them was not straitforwrd. Typicly, respondnts hos work demandd litracy skils myt say they experienced dificltis even if th objectiv tests showd they had a fair levl of competnce; wile those hos work did not require such skils to th same degree myt admit to less dificlty, altho ther objectiv levl cud be much loer. Females wer disproportionatly inclined to minmize ther dificltis, wich sujests that ther overal performnce on th objectiv riting tests may also prove worse than ther self-asesmnt. Poor female performnce in

riting may furthr reduce overal standrds because female respondnts outnumbrd male by a ratio of 53%:47%. (It shud howevr be noted that othr surveys, such as th latest by th Nationl Foundation for Educational Research revewd in **_JSSS_ 93/2**, Item 6, sho females to be betr spelrs than males.) Anothr dificlty in interpretng th self-asesmnts arose from peples reluctnce to admit to th stigma of poor litracy.

Mor serius douts about th validity of th ALBSU results arise from th sampl mesurd, and ther is perhaps reasn to suspect that those results ar significntly overoptmistic. Th report says (p64) that a numbr of membrs of th orijnl cohort cud not be intrvewd because "some disadvantaged young people, such as those whose parents had no fixed address when they were growing up or were homeless when we tried to contact them, are missing" (p64), and that these absntees mean th figrs for poor litracy ar probbly undrestmats. (One wondrs how many of th misng wer in prisn. Ilitracy in th prisn population merits a study in itself, and indeed a mor recent ALBSU report _Basic Skills in Prisons_, June 1994, has now takld this very subject). This caveat howevr hints at a much mor substantial undrestmat. Th foloing calculation sujests th proportion of th orijnl cohort excluded myt hav amountd to 65% of th total: firstly, th 1,650 respondnts wer 10% of th cohort (p9), wich therfor amountd to som 16,500; secndly, it seems only 8,175 wer stil contactbl, leving 8,325 'lost' respondnts; thirdly, of th selectd sampl of 2,359, as many as 30% (709) wud not or cud not participate (som perhaps for fear of being stigmatized for ther poor standrds), so we may asume a simlr proportion of th contactbl cohort (ie 30% of 8,175 = 2,452) wud hav dropd out in th same way; this makes a total of som 10,777 'dropouts', or 65% of th orijnl cohort (a litl less if Scotland was included in th total cohort). If this numbr containd, as we must suspect, a hyr-than-avraj proportion with poor litracy skils than those intrvewd, then th tru statistics cud esily be far worse than those publishd. But we shal nevr no, because, as usul, conditions ryt at th botm of th social heap remain least wel iluminated.

4. Wat standrds shud we expect?
If th nationl sene now apears a good deal cloudir (murkir, even) than implyd by th crisp statistics of th report, th reports asesmnt of th seriusness of th problm may be open to mor than one interpretation. Th reports fundmentl mesaj is clearly that we canot be satisfyd with curent standrds ("Nineteen percent failed to get beyond Foundation level in literacy", p7). And a gloomy enuf pictur is paintd of th efects that litracy deficits hav on peples life-chances in jenrl: they reduce th potential for educationl achevemnt across th bord (poor litracy also undrmines numeracy, for exampl), and for fulfilmnt in evry aspect of life, in employmnt, in th famly, and in th individuls sense of self-esteem.

Less clear is wethr th standrds found represent a serius problm for society at larj. Th report contains statemnts such as: "poor literacy is restricted to a fairly small minority" (p19), "literacy difficulties of the kind assessed are fairly rare among young adults" (p21), and "the very serious problms a small but significant minority have" (p64). Is it therfor posbl that practicl competnce in litracy is inherently too dificlt for that minority realisticly evr to be expectd to acheve? Myt one hav to accept that 10, 12 or 13 percent of th population wil considr it has problms (especialy wen som respondnts ar undrestmating ther own standrds, and som may think they do not 'need' hyr standrds anyway)? Peple hav a ranje of abilitis, and by defnition som wil be weakr than othrs. So how much efrt shud be devoted to tryng to rase th standrds of th weakst?

Ar hyr standrds an achevebl target? Th ALBSU report implys that they ar, but its optmism seems based on faith rathr than evidnce. To beleve improvemnts ar posbl at least requires causes of

presnt lo standrds to be identifyd and shown to be surmountbl. Wat causes ar sujestd by th ALBSU report?

5. Implyd causes of litracy deficits

Th report dos not hav much to say about th causes of unsatisfactry standrds. Social factrs ar presumed to undrlie many of th dificltis, as wen p15 says with regard to furthr reserch: "we shall be able to identify the family background characteristics, earlier experience in the home and the school and current attributes of people lacking skills, with a view to explaining how and where these deficits originate" and p55 says "Poor literacy and numeracy are associated with unskilled family backgrounds in which the parents have failed to gain any educational qualifications." ALBSU is now particulrly concernd to brek this cycl of deprivation and poor litracy, by developng famly litracy programs aimd at parents as wel as children.

But it is not only th social bakground of poor performrs that th report blames for th problm. On p9 th report also refers to "serious failings of an education system which…has failed to impart the most basic of all educational skills to a proportion of children", and ads: "the problem persists, not least because schools have yet to achieve the goal of literacy and numeracy for all children". On p65 it firmly says "the main solution resides with teachers in their responses to the individual child."

Altho it thus implys that society and th education systm ar to blame, th report also admits to not fuly undrstandng th causes of th problm (p9): "Gaining a better understandng of the types of problems adlts have and how these develop are essential to making literacy and numeracy teaching effective".

We shud not for one moment belitl th importnce of social bakground and of teachrs as factrs in influencing educationl standrds. Th 1994 ALBSU report, like its 1987 predecesr, has don a useful job in explorng, with exemplry undrstandng and humanity, th role of social bakground in educationl undrachevemnt. But social bakground and th 'failur' of scools to educate al children to a desired levl ar comn featurs of educationl disadvantaj th world over. Wat crucialy needs to be examnd is th peculir natur of litracy problms specificly in english-speakng cuntris, as shown by comparisn with othr cuntris.

6. Th english handicap — for evr?

If scools ar part of th problm, they ar certnly not to blame for it, for they can only work with th material they ar givn. And that material is severely defectiv. Unlike othr languajs, english has nevr systmaticly modrnized its riting systm, and it has been justly (if with pardnbl slyt exajration) said that, altho english has radicly chanjed its pronunciation since th midl ajes, it has hardly chanjed its spelng at al. Som 320 difrnt spelngs hav been listd for 24 english vowls, wher in norml languajs each vowl has just one spelng, or at most two or thre difrnt posbilitis. Howevr, th real problm is not th numbr of difrnt spelngs that hav to be lernt for each sound, but th fact that lernng th difrnt spelngs dosnt help much in deciding wich spelng is used with wich word. Th eccentricitis of english spelng took over 500 pajes to describe in a recent study, and that was without even mentionng al th anomlis like EA in *speak* contradictd by EE in *speech*. Th spelng of most european languages (french is th big exeption) can by contrast be described comfrtbly in a few pajes.

Th ALBSU report sees litracy problms in ther social setng, and implys social problms ar at ther cor. It dos not ask how far social problms may be caused or at least exacerbated by litracy problms in th first place, altho it dos note that poor litracy limits yung adlts oprtunitis in society. Th probbility of

a two-way feedbak efect between society and litracy needs to be considrd. Likewise, th report looks to teachrs for a solution, but dos not ask wethr wat pupils ar being expectd to lern is realistic or sensbl. If it is no longr apropriat for pupils to hav to resl with ozs, lbs, stones, cws and tons, wy shud they stil be expectd to mastr th infnitly mor complex vagaris of an antiquated spelng 'systm'? For that is a ke component of litracy problms in english.

It was recognized in Britain and som othr english-speakng cuntris in th erly 1970s that medeval systms of curency and of weits and mesurs wer inapropriat for eficient, educated societis at th end of th 20th century, and th necesry steps wer taken to rectify matrs. Th curency was decimlized, and th weits and mesurs wer metricated (if in th latr case halfhartdly in Britn, by contrast with th overnyt transfrmations carrid out in Canada and Australia). Th same realization has yet to dawn across society as a hole with regard to th presnt medeval riting systm. Educationists canot agree wethr 'look-and-say' or 'fonics' is th one tru way to aquire litracy skils in english, but they fail to notice th futility of th debate, wen a caotic spelng systm dooms both aproachs to unacceptbly poor outcoms. Report aftr report on litracy fails to mention th esential unlernbility of english spelng (th 1989 Cox report was a striking exeption, but it neglectd to draw th obvius conclusions). Th latest ALBSU report is not alone in not mentionng a ke factr undrlyng th problm.

Yet until that ke factr is adresd, ther can be no solutions. ALBSUs brief is to deal with th consequences of th problm, rathr than itself to look for causes. Yet th powrful moral imperativ that drives ALBSUs work shud giv it an incentiv to look beyond th eternl, depresng statistics, and ask: wy is th problm so acute in Britn and America, and why did the recent IEA comparativ study of litracy in 32 cuntris find Finland, with its exeptionly regulr riting systm, th outstandngly best performr, and Hungry and Itly performng betr than ther ecnomic conditions wud lead one to expect? For it is th brodr intrnationl and intrlingul perspectiv that imediatly givs th clu as to wat is going rong in english. Dare we hope that, wen ALBSU delivrs its next report on th (groing? — but that is anothr story) litracy problms of Britns undrclass, it wil hav somthing mor hopeful to say than simply repeatng th dreary mesaj of 1994 and 1987? Meanwile, continuly pointng out that a problm exists is a gret deal betr than ignorng it entirely and leving it to festr out of syt.

7. ALBSUs 1992 spelng test

Ther is a footnote: bak in october 1992 ALBSU askd 1,000 adlts to spel th words *necessary, accommodation, sincerely, business, separate, height*, and found that only 17% of respondnts wer able to spel al of them corectly. Its brief report said "These were not the simplest of words to spell" but, despite that, "We wouldn't wish to claim anything conclusive about the results. Merely they suggest that many people have some problems with spelling." This is like sayng 2 + 2 = , but modestly declining to say anything conclusiv about th ansr, such as '4'. Translated into verbl form, ALBSUs sum reads: "som spelngs ar dificlt, peple get them rong, ergo — blank." Th ansr it shud be givng is: "simplify th dificlt spelngs". QED.

(Cut Spelng, incidently, gos quite som way towards simplifyng 5 of these 6 forms, with *necesry, acomodation, busness, seprat, hyt*; only *sincerely* remains untuchd.)

If in its next report ALBSU decides that it should "claim something conclusive about the results", it myt be setng out on th road to a realy intrestng and useful destnation.

12. Comments on the Everingham project
Robert Craig

In **JSSS 94/2** (Item 5) Australian member Doug Everingham, who has long supported Harry Lindgren's proposal for spelling reform by stages (SR1, Phonetic A, Phonetic B), contributed an article entitled 'A Pidgin-like Bridge to English'. In it, he developed the concept of a form of English designed for international use and simplified in grammar and vocabulary as well as spelling.

Doug Everingham goes to the heart of the matter. We need to give up the pretence that spelling can be isolated. I know of no spelling reform which has not also involved a certain amount of language planning, and in many cases a great deal of language planning.

English is peculiarly difficult. Over time most languages absorb foreign elements. These become adapted by way of pronunciation and spelling to the language in question. The trouble with English is that it is two languages—the original English, and French. Before these two languages were amalgamated, they each had their own written forms and separate spelling conventions. This original dilemma has never been completely resolved. As time has gone by, elements from other languages have been added. Since there was no proper standard to conform to, it has been the practice to leave them much as in their original forms. The whole mess was further compounded by the Great Vowel Shift of the late Middle Ages.

Then came the age of Empire, and English was carried worldwide. Up to the Second World War, Britain was the Mother Country. Even mighty America looked to Britain for Standard English. It was in that period of Empire that New Spelling was born. The way it represented vowels might be pretty eccentric, but the rest of the world could jolly well like it or lump it. Reform has more or less stuck at that point.

The world has moved on. Britain has reverted to being an island off the coast of Europe. American college students are not aware that English is spoken in England. If Great Britain were to sink beneath the waves tomorrow, English would still be the world's leading language. Any changes to English cannot be made in isolation. The spelling conventions of other languages have to be take into account. That was one of the points made by Doug Everingham.

Another of Doug Everingham's points was that the reformed English has to take in an enormous amount of variety. It must encompass everything from the language of Shakespeare to Tok Pisin, Taki-taki, Bislama, Krio, and the mushrooming pidgins of Africa. The current orthography goes a long way to doing just that, because it is so bad at representing anyone's speech.

The trick is going to be to bring order out of great complexity. That will take time. The kind of thinking behind New Spelling will not work. It is simply not possible to wave a magic wand and everything happens immediately (as would be the case with a national language). Norwegian has been 100 years in the planning. The problems of Norwegian are as nothing compared with English. The Norwegian government can actually indicate how it wishes the language to go (and the Norwegians get upset). If the British government tried to do the same, the world would not take the slightest notice. Any changes to English must be adopted worldwide, and they must have advantages for the whole world. The approach taken by Cut Spelling is perhaps a tentative step in the right direction. Planned changes will be introduced gradually, and other changes will follow from them as the language adjusts.

Where English was a language of northern Europe, Neo-English combined it with French to produce a language which in most respects is closest to Italian. Today the language is worldwide. In the past it has been important to preserve those parts of the language which come from Latin in something close to their original form. This represents a certain dilemma. While most of Europe relates to Latin as part of its shared culture, the rest of the world does not. To give an example: while Europe might prefer *science*, the rest of the world would rather see *saiˊns*. This dilemma will not be easily resolved. It could keep the language planners busy for generations.

13. ISSUES IN EDUCATION: Contributions from Educational Psychology. Volume 1, No. 1, March 1995
Reviewed by Kenneth Ives

This new journal will have two issues a year. Each issue will start with a "focus article", with other articles commenting on it, and a "final word' from the author(s) of the focus article.

Reading is the topic for Volume 1 (1995), and Writing for Volume 2 (1996).

Focus article for this first issue is:*Cognitive Processes in Early Reading Development: Accommodating Individual Differences into a Model of Acquisition.* Authors are David L. Share and Keith E. Stanovich. They review literature on individual differences, and developmental patterns in reading acquisition.

They then present the self-teaching hypothesis, and explore its instructional implications. This is important because "school English" contains about 85,500 word families, and the average fifth grader encounters about 10,000 new words. Vocabulary instruction programs teach only a few hundred words per year. They believe that phonological skills are primary, and that orthographic skills are secondary.

They note (p. 35) that "the whole language movement carries... other issues that ... merit serious concern:
(1) teacher empowerment; (2) child-centered instruction; (3) integration of reading and writing. Most educators endorse these three. The other two issues are (4) a disavowal of ... teaching phonics; (5) the view that children are naturally predisposed toward written language acquisition. These two may be historical artifacts, peripheral to their main concerns, tho central to their rhetoric. Whole language emphasis on points 4 and 5 may "place all of its valuable components at genuine risk" (Adanis 1991; 42, 5 *1).*

There are 22 pages of references. Nine "critique" articles follow, with a reply by the two authors.

Judith Bowey writes *on the Contribution of Phonological Sensitivity to Phonological Recoding.* She finds that children's ability to detect the phonological odd word in word triples is more closely related to decoding performance than is phonological memory or rapid naming. It explained more of the variation in pseudoword reading (19%) than either word identification or reading comprehension. The critical difference between good and poor readers may be in the *effortlessness* with which phonological judgments are made.

The normal developmental course may be from grapheme-phoneme correspondences to orthographic onset and rime (and only later to the larger syllable level). Study is needed of the usefulness of early teaching of orthographic onset and rime sequences (cat, cot; hat, hot; pat, pot).

Jeanne Chall notes that the Greeks took a two-stage view of reading, with great success. This view is that beginning reading and later reading are different processes. Beginners first learn letters and sounds, as the connecting link between print and meaning.

Robert Calfee's *A Behind-the-Scenes Look at Reading Acquisition* seeks to bridge the "great debate" between rote phonics and incidental phonics by a *MetaPhonics* program he is co-author of. Thus *p, t, k, m, n,* and *short-a* can make 25 consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) units. There are over 10,000 CVC units in English. Phonemic awareness rather than sight recognition seems the most promising approach.

One of the other articles is *From the Perspective of a More Regular Orthography* by Heinz Wimmer. He reviews studies comparing German and English children. These show that "7-year-old German children at the end of grade one, after only several months of systematic reading instruction were better able to read pseudowords than 9-year-old English children with about four years of schooling." The difference reflects the "inconsistency of ... grapheme-phoneme relationships in English."

14. Litracy Standrds in English/Welsh Prisns & Colejs
Christopher Upward revews

This revew is ritn in Cut Spelng

Adult Literacy & Basic Skills Unit (1993) Basic Skills Support in Colleges — Assessing the Need.
Adult Literacy & Basic Skills Unit (1994) *Basic Skills in Prisons — Assessing the Need*.

In its **1993/2** issu (Item 4), th *Journal of the Simplified Spelling Society* reportd th 1991 findngs of th british Prison Reform Trust that 43% of prisnrs lakd any educationl qualification, with erlir reserch from th mid-1980s shoing that over 6% of prisnrs had a readng aje of 8 or less, and a furthr 9% a readng aje of 10 or less. Th Home Office had estmated about half of prisnrs had functionl dificltis with litracy.

These findngs ar now reinforced by som mor detaild and up-to-date statistics from ALBSU, wich aplyd a cloze test in 16 varid prisns to asess th readng standrd of al new inmates wilng to undrgo th test (numeracy was also testd, but we ar not concernd with that here). In the event 416 inmates did so, and th results showd a much worse performnce than that of non-prisnrs. A 3-way comparisn was made, using results from tests administrd by ALBSU to a sampl of th adult population as a hole (se **JSSS, 88/2**, Item 13) and to Furthr Education (FE) students, as reportd by ALBSU in its 1993 pamflet *Basic Skills Support in Colleges — Assessing the Need*.

Th results wer as folos: 14% of prisnrs performd at loer than foundation levl, compared with 6% of th adult population and 2% of FE students; 39% of prisnrs performd at foundation levl, compared with 10% and 3% in th othr categris; 17% of prisnrs performd at Levl 1, compared with 36% and 37%; and 31% of prisnrs performd at Levl 2, compared with 48% and 58%. These figrs suport th hypothesis that poor standrds of litracy corelate significntly with th amount of crime.

Th purpos of ALBSUs paralel publication, *Basic Skills Support in Colleges — Assessing the Need* (1993), was rathr difrnt. Here it was a matr of demnstrating to FE Colejs th need for aditionl lernng suport in both litracy and numeracy for a larj numbr of students (som suport is alredy provided by many colejs). Over 10,000 students in 12 colejs wer screend; they excluded students alredy foloing basic skils corse, students on Hyr Educaton corses, and adults taking non-vocationl corses. Th test involvd a cloze exrcise performd on almost th same text as used by th prisnrs, but with one aditionl sentnce and som difrnt omissions.

Th text was as folos, with singl undrlinings for words omitd for completion by th colej students, dubl undrlinings for words omitd for th prisn inmates, and words printd in undrlined blok capitls omitd from both tests. Italicized words wer included only in one of the tests.

Safe as houses?
We think of our home as a safe place to be, and are more worried when someone goes out of the house than when they stay at home. In fact, MORE(?) people die from accidents in the home every year than are killed on *the* roads or at work. What are the causes of these accidents in the home? Many people may THINK(?) of fire as the greatest danger, but in fact more people die from falling than from any OTHER(?) cause. *Suffocation, electrocution, burns and scalds cause death or serious injury(?) every year*. Tragic accidents, some fatal, are caused by children and adults running, walking or falling through glass doors and windows. Poisoning can *also* cause *serious* illness or death. This may be from medicines or from household substances, SUCH(?) as cleaning materials. Food poisoning is also a common danger.

15. Death of a Contemporary: *RLP* Dissolved
Chris Upward

Launched in 1984, the Bombay-based *Roman Lipi Parishad* set out to offer the languages of India a uniform writing system based on the Roman alphabet, to overcome the communication problems of today's many incompatible scripts. The movement's leading light and Executive Director, Madhukar N. Gogate, has over the years kept the Simplified Spelling Society informed of *RLP*'s progress and publications, so enabling the *JSSS* to report at intervals to its readers.

For details see:
SSS Newsletter Spring 1986, Item 5,
SSS Newsletter Summer 1986, Item 4,
Journal of the SSS 1987/3, Item 6,
Journal of the SSS 1989/2, Item 7,
Journal of the SSS 1993/2, Item 7.

In January 1995 the SSS was sorry to learn of the imminent demise of *RLP*, which was suffering from the various kinds of exhaustion to which voluntary organizations are prone. It disappearance means the loss of one of the SSS's sister-organizations with which it maintains fruitful links around the world. However, *RLP* was aware of the importance of its work over the previous decade, and was anxious to ensure that a record of its achievements was preserved. It has accordingly donated to libraries and other interested bodies, including the SSS, a 122-page bound retrospective collection of its key documents.

16. Surviving the Storms Over Awful Spelling
Clinton Trowbridge

I am one of those people who cannot spell and often cannot find enough of a word in the dictionary to discover how to spell it. I've improved some, but I still see words misspelled in my mind.

Oh yes, I say to myself, "'til' (instead of "till") and write it down. "Realy" *looked* right. The rules did help. But there aren't that many of them. And how a word sounds helps not at all. So I struggled. I memorized. But by the time I was about to be awarded my PhD (in English literature, of course) my spelling was still so bad that the English department decided it had to do something.

The first requirement was that I learn how to spell every entry on a list of the 650 most commonly misspelled words. That was bad enough, but the second requirement was impossible: learn to spell all the titles and authors in the 67-page index to Albert C. Baugh's "A Literary History of England." Not only Shelley, you understand, but "Halkyut" and "Tieck"; not only "Tristan and Isulet" but "Thyestes" and the "Mabinogion." I pleaded that these last were in foreign languages; that I would have no occasion to refer to most of the works; and finally that the requirement was simply unfair. There were plenty of other graduate students who spelled as poorly as I.

The professors were moved by my arguments. The index was edited. ("LaHa Rookh" was left in; William Maginn was left out). And the other graduate students in English were included.

It did no good to point out that many authors (F. Scott Fitzgerald, for example) were notoriously

bad spellers and that Shakespeare spelled his name five different ways. The professors were adamant. For purposes of writing on the blackboard alone, they argued, an English professor should be able to spell. All right, they had a point. But how would we ever do it? They ran a special spelling class just for us.

Spelling classes consisted of going over the rules, which were sometimes confusingly permissive (the possessive of Keats being either "Keats's" or "Keats'"); drilling on tricky items such as the various forms the sound "there" might take ("their," "they're," and 'they're'); and engaging in spelling bees using words from the list as well as from Baugh's index.

Eight of us met once a week. There would be 10 words. The professor would dictate, we would write them down, he would spell them correctly, and we would grade our own papers. Passing was 70.

"Charlie?"our spelling coach would say, starting at his left. "Ninety."
"William?" "Only 50." And so it went. We permitted ourselves occasional smiles.

Finally the professor would get to Wayne, who almost always scored in the bottom third. On one particular day, his response passed into legend: "Just a little bit wrong in each one, Mr. Dimble."

Eventually, with the help of tutors and pockets full of slowly discarded spelling cards ("proceed" was among the last to go) I passed the final spelling test and received my PhD.

But of course I still couldn't really spell, and once the pressure was off, recidivism set in. It wasn't helped by reading sentences such as the following from a freshman student's book review. The Scarlet Letter was full of horro, subblty, and chuck."

I was out in the real world — grading papers, writing on the blackboard, and responding to class-room questions. So what did I do to avoid embarrassment and possible termination of employment? I kept my spelling aids handy. I developed illegible handwriting:

And just to play it safe, I always had students write my impromptu test questions on the blackboard.

Solving one problem created others, however. I had to read aloud to my students the illegible comments I'd written on their papers. Often I had trouble deciphering them myself. In the case of even more important written communications, such as making out checks, I was forced to print, which my hand did now only with the greatest of reluctance.

I typed personal letters and persuaded my wife to proofread. It was at Christmastime, however, that I suffered my greatest embarrassment. Carefully, I would rubber stamp our address onto each envelope. For the first few cards, I painfully printed my message of good cheer. But then I became more relaxed, and by the time I started to address the envelopes, my penmanship had deteriorated. Each year a third of my Christmas cards were marked "return to sender."

There are was one small benefit, however. Friends we hadn't seen in ages would call up. "You went to *Istambul* last summer?" After disabusing them of that, we would go on to have an extended chat about other things.

[Clinton Trowbridge's article first appeared in the *Christian Science Monitor* for Friday, April 7, 1995. It is used with his permission.]