President’s Report

SPELD Executive Meets Our new Patron
Earlier this month our Executive Officer, Treasurer and I were invited to Government House to meet with our new Patron, Mrs. Linda Hurley. The brief meeting was most enlightening and friendly. We discussed what SPELD NSW is doing and is attempting to put into place. Mrs Hurley, who has been a teacher, expressed an appreciation of our efforts and offered an invitation for SPELD to use Government House for SPELD functions. Her warmth and openness expressed a desire to be much more than just a name on our letterhead.

A New Constitution
Initial efforts have proceeded and we are hoping to have a Final Draft ready to present to the membership in the coming months. Of course we will need a Governance Policy to define the relationships between staff, Executive Officer and the Board.

The change of constitution to a Board structure will be beneficial when applying for more Grant funding as well as for a smoother day to day operation. I trust that you will support this change. If not, please contact the office to discuss your concerns as we do not wish to spend time needlessly and we want all issues addressed before any vote.

What we need
The government we have now is crying poor when it comes to helping those that we are most concerned about, i.e. those with specific learning difficulties. Therefore we must find more and better sources of funding. Any help in this area will be greatly appreciated. We need to generate more money from our present sources and more sources of consistent funding. While we have many dedicated people that help in many different ways, we cannot do all that is being asked, we need more help.

You do not need to be an educationalist!
PLEASE CONSIDER CALLING TO SEE HOW YOU CAN HELP!!

Ken Washburn
President, SPELD NSW

Contents:

Page 1 President’s Report
Page 2 Hello from the EO and Book Review
Page 3 TEMAG – A brief overview by SPELD NSW
Page 6 Parents’ Corner: Spelling Homework – Part 2
Page 15 What’s On in 2015

SPELD NSW aims to present information that is current and relevant, without necessarily implying endorsement where the supporting evidence is not yet all available.
Hello from the EO

It has been a busy time again with our Certificate Course for Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties weekend 3 on Reading and weekend 4 on Comprehension. It is really pleasing when the students come back so enthusiastic about what they have learnt; put into practice and begin to see results. Smiles all around!

On the 14 & 15 May I attended our annual meeting of SPELDs followed by the AUSPELD AGM. Rhonda Filmer, is the representative for SPELD NSW and joined me for the AGM. It is a way to see how other SPELDs run their organisations and to hopefully find a good idea or two.

Melinda Matthews, Referral Officer and Tutor, ran our first parent workshop for the year on how to help children with their spelling homework. Please see the second part of Melinda’s article on spelling. The next workshop will be held on 22 August, 2015 please see details below.

Book Review:

NEW!
EXPERT PERSPECTIVES OF INTERVENTIONS FOR READING
(By Louisa C. Moats, Karen E. Dakin & R. Malatesha Joshi)

This new book brings together for the first time the most requested and timeless articles on key literacy related topics over the past decade from the International Dyslexia Association’s Perspectives on Language and Literacy. Inside you will find a solid foundation of research-based, classroom-tested principles in a practice-ready format that is ideal for teachers, administrators, graduate and undergraduate students of education, and policy makers who are seeking gold standard solutions to the intractable problems of illiteracy.

Price: $60 plus P&H $15
Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG)

ACTION Now: Classroom Ready Teachers

The Federal Minister for Education, The Hon. Christopher Pyne, established the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG)\(^1\) to provide advice on how teacher education programs could be improved to better prepare new teachers with the right mix of academic skills needed for the classroom.

In December 2014 the report was released, written by Professor Greg Craven, with all stake holders unanimously agreeing to all 38 recommendations, and the Federal Government agreeing to support implementation of 37 out of the 38 recommendations. Recommendation 4 was not adopted by the Government because it planned to establish a new national initial teacher education regulator. Instead the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) will be given greater authority to ensure that initial teacher education is improved.

There were 179 submissions from a wide range of organisations, including parent groups, input from Mandy Nayton, President of AUSPELD and Executive Officer of Dyslexia SPELD Foundation WA and Sandy Russo, Director of SPELD SA. There are three major areas in the report which will be continued to be discussed which are:

- Selection
- Accreditation
- Practicum

**SELECTION:**

Prof. Craven stated that one of the main points of the selection criteria for entry into a teacher training degree was the ATAR. However, the Advisory Group could not find one longitudinal study that recommended what the ATAR should be for a person starting their Undergraduate Teacher Educational Degree\(^2\). Student selection is much more than the ATAR and there should be a more sophisticated and transparent selection process for entry to teaching. The recommendations are that the Higher Education providers should be more transparent on how they select the best candidates and that they use the national literacy and numeracy test to demonstrate that pre-service teachers are within the top 30 percent.

---


The Hon. Christopher Pyne stated that the Government will work with universities to make a national literacy and numeracy test available for teacher education students graduating from 2015, and from 2016 all students will be required to pass the test before they graduate.

ACCREDITATION:

One of the interesting findings of this report was that a very large percentage of initial teacher education courses were accredited, and it was rare to find a course that hadn’t been accredited. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), which has played a major role in the development of professional standards, has been asked to manage the accreditation of initial teacher education programs. Prof. John Hattie, Chair of AITSL, is well aware that it will be a long journey towards having students taught by well prepared, inspiring and inspired teachers.

AITSL will be looking at the following areas:

- Strengthened Quality Assurance of teacher education courses.
- Rigorous selection for entry to teacher education courses.
- Well-structured practical experience for teacher education students.
- Evidence from teacher education providers that their graduates are classroom ready.
- Credible research and workforce planning.

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Skills (PIRLS) assessment is an international study of reading achievement completed by fourth year students every five years. Australia has participated in this testing program since 2001 with 300,000 Year 4 Australian students sitting this reading assessment in 2011. The results? Australia ranked 27th out of the 45 countries which participated. The next PIRLS assessment will be carried out in 2016. Did Australia receive the "wake up" call in 2011 to provide better funding and education for our children in reading? If so, has anything been done about it? The TEMAG report included only one small paragraph related to reading. In addition, Recommendation Number 18 of the TEMAG report states that Higher Education providers equip all primary pre-service teachers with at least one subject specialisation, prioritising in science, mathematics, or a language. The important question now is, Should reading be included as one of the specialisation subjects, or should it be a mandatory subject for all primary and early childhood pre-service teachers? Without improvements in reading, it will be hard to advance our standing on the international stage.

---

PRACTICUM:
How do we put theory into practice? To do this we need schools willing to help, instruct and provide a good quality assignment for the novice teacher to receive hands-on experience in classroom teaching. At the present time Universities are not working with schools on setting up a placement for the novice teacher to do their practical work. Can we learn from the Nursing profession? This profession has over the years transferred from a total hands on learning environment, to mainly theory, and now has a balanced mixture of both. Prof. Craven states that all universities are to guarantee a quality experience practicum to a student and this is not going to be negotiable. There are bound to be many more conversations on how best to get the education providers to work with the school systems and school communities so that strong outcomes can be achieved in the development of the new teacher.

As reported in the Sydney Morning Herald on 11 May, there needs to be 386 classrooms built in NSW each year for the next decade to cope with the new intakes. This means that there will be a need for more primary and secondary teachers. Part of the TEMAG report is very critical that there is no national, or even state, data relating to the teaching profession workforce. How can any organisation plan when there is no raw data as a starting point?

SUMMARY:
It is pleasing to note that the Minister for Education NSW, Adrian Piccoli, has already put into place reforms to improve the quality of teaching – Great Teaching, Inspired Learning (GTIL). These reforms which are underway and continuing include:

- HSC students will need three band five results, including in English, to enter a teaching degree from 2016 onwards;
- From 2016, teacher education students will have to pass literacy and numeracy tests before they undertake their final practicum in order to be eligible to teach in NSW schools;
- A new framework for professional experience has been developed to strengthen this aspect of the preparation of new graduate teachers;
- Identifying ways to strengthen the teacher education program accreditation process arising from a review of key aspects of a graduate’s preparation (literacy education, special education and classroom management), and a review of online teacher preparation;
- The creation of specialist strands in primary school teaching qualifications; and
- From 2018 all teachers will need to be accredited and undertake regular professional development.

Using this knowledge of morphemes helps a student to identify base words, prefixes and suffixes. They can use analogy to help spelling by exploring word families or groupings according to spelling rules.

SPELD NSW endorses all recommendation of the TEMAG report and looks forward to further input from the main parties. We hope that this report 101 on education over the last 30 years will not end up like the others, with no progress being made. We believe that there is enough influence now to continue the fight for better educational standards and thus, further down the track, better help for children with specific learning difficulties.

Carolyn Washburn
Executive Officer
May, 2015

Parent’s Corner

By Melinda Matthews,
SPELD NSW Referral Officer

Spelling Homework – Part 2

This article is a continuation of the Homework Spelling article in E-News March/April 2015.

There are five main areas a student needs awareness in to progress with their spelling. These areas include:

1) Phonological awareness:
This aspect was discussed in part one of Spelling Homework.

2) Visual awareness:
Students need to be able to identify and write individual letters, sequences of letters and letter patterns within words. Also essential is the ability to identify spelling errors in their own writing as well as other pieces of writings.

3) Morphemic awareness:
Students develop an understanding that a morpheme is the smallest part of speech that has meaning and cannot be subdivided further. Examples of morphemes include; a, the, live, ball, -ed (meaning past tense), -s (meaning plural). Using this knowledge of morphemes helps a student to identify base words, prefixes and suffixes. They can use analogy to help spelling by exploring word families or groupings according to spelling rules.

4) Etymological awareness:
Understanding word origins, their meanings and how they have changed through history equips students with knowledge to build word families, spell words with increasing complexity and give students the skills to attack new and unknown words.
5) Semantic Awareness:
Words do not exist in isolation so they should not be learnt in isolation. The ability to express thoughts and ideas either orally or written requires a reasonable vocabulary. Learning spelling words with activities involving word meanings, using the word in various contexts, knowing synonyms, antonyms and homonyms and understanding the subtlety and layers of English with idioms and proverbs will help increase vocabulary and create a memory for the word.

Multi-Sensory Approach-
Using a multi-Sensory approach will increase the opportunities for your child to learn as they develop auditory, visual and motor memories for the sounds and letters.

1. Auditory path
- Discuss the word and its meaning, rules etc.
- Speaking out-loud when sounding out the words will aid letter/ sound correspondence.
- Use mnemonics to remember rules, patterns in words; e.g. for learning the letters of the alphabet ‘l, m, n, o, p’ becomes ‘like mum’s nice orange pancakes’. See picture

2. Visual path
- Seeing letter shapes and patterns in words allowing automatic identification of letters and sounds:
  - Letter Patterns: CCVCC (C = Consonant V = Vowel)
  - Syllable Patterns: tra di tion
  - Affixes: un happy commer c ial
- Use mnemonics to remember rules, patterns and syllables in words; e.g. for learning the Bossy ‘e’ rule draw the rule with the imagery showing ‘e’ only able to jump back one letter as it has little legs. See adjacent picture.
- Using drawings, shapes and colours to aid learning
- Use graphic organisers to display word study activities

3. Kinaesthetic path
- Handwriting develops a motor memory
  - Rainbow Writing, Ants in the Apple. Practise writing by tracing inside the shape, not tracing over a line.
“Allow movement to help the ADHD child learn and regulate the body; e.g. sit on exercise balls, work while standing on a balance board, fiddle toys, special cushions, tube under table to allow feet to roll back and forward etc.”

- Practise repetitive patterns and write words using coloured lines:

```
   spell
   Sky
   Ground or grass
   Earth
```

- Air writing using a straight arm develops a memory for the shape of the letter or word
- Playing games stimulates learning, connections and memories
- Make-up your own spelling activities/games e.g. memory, snap, Connect 4 or Snakes n Ladders. For memory and snap games write the spelling words on individual cards and play as per the game rules matching pairs. The winner is the one with the most pairs when all cards have been presented or selected. For Connect 4, Bingo and Snakes n Ladders write the spelling words in the individual squares and play as per the game rules.

Variations: When a word is selected to 'win' the square:
- put the word in a sentence
- give the meaning of the word
- give a synonyms or antonyms
- Sentences, definitions, synonyms or antonyms can only be used once for a word

Above is an example of Connect 4 game using affixes and base words. Individual shapes can be won by creating a new word using the affix or base word selected. A word can only be used once during a game. A blank Connect 4 game is in Appendix 2.

- Games can be played by matching:
  - picture to letter(s)
  - letter to letter
  - deconstruct word so matching syllables
  - word to meaning
  - Affix (prefixes and suffixes) to base word
  - Affixes to meaning
  - homonyms, synonyms, antonyms

- Allow movement to help the ADHD child learn and regulate the body; e.g. sit on exercise balls, work while standing on a balance board, fiddle toys, special cushions, tube under table to allow feet to roll back and forward etc.
“If a child has a solid understanding of basic alphabetic letter identification and corresponding sounds and pattern letter recognition then they are able to progress with their spelling and reading abilities.”

**Visual Awareness**

English uses more than 250 graphemes to spell the 44 sounds found in English. (Moats 2010). A grapheme is a letter or a combination of two, three or four letters that spell a single sound in English. Appendix 1 shows the consonant and vowel

Consonants in English can be-
- **Single** letters e.g. ‘g’ and ‘t’ as in *get*
- **Digraphs** (two letters for the one sound) e.g. ‘th’ and ‘ng’ in *thing* and ‘ch’ and ‘ck’ as in *check*
- **Trigraphs** (three letters for one sound) e.g. ‘tch’ as in *match* and ‘dge’ as in *bridge*
- **Double** letters f, l, s, z in one-syllable words e.g. *puff*, *fall*, *less*, *buzz*
- **Silent** letters e.g. ‘mb’ as in *comb* and ‘wr’ as in *wren*
- **Blends** are two or three graphemes or letters grouped before or after a vowel in a syllable. Blends are not one sound but retain their original grapheme sound e.g. ‘str’ as in *string*, ‘mp’ as in *jump*

There are 19 vowel sounds in English and can be represented by-
- **Single** letters eg ‘e’ as in *get*
- **Digraphs** (two letters for the one sound) e.g. ‘ay’ as in *day* and ‘ee’ as in *cheese*
- **Vowel-consonant-e** VCe (Vowel-Consonant-e) e.g. *combine*, *cake*,

With 26 letters in the English alphabet, letters can represent several different sounds, while one sound can be represented by two, three and four letter combinations. Learning all the letter/ sounds combinations is progressive. If a child has a solid understanding of basic alphabetic letter identification and corresponding sounds and pattern letter recognition then they able to progress with their spelling and reading abilities.

**Activities:**
The following activities are aimed at developing automatic letter-sound correspondence and pattern recognition.

- **Individual sounds to letters**

  Using multi-sensory activities will assist children if they have difficulties remembering, recognising and identifying letter names and their sounds. Have the child say the sounds as they write or move with all activities to increase the auditory, visual and motor memories for that sound/ letter.

  Examples:
  - Writing the letter / word in sand is a fun way for the child to ‘feel’ the letters.
  - The letter ‘e’ written in sand
  - Write using pipe cleaners or Wikki Stix allows the child to model the individual letters gaining shape recognition.
“solely working on phonemic awareness allows the child to ‘see’ the number of sounds in a word without complicating the sound identification while seeing letters.”

The letters ‘e’, ‘g’ and ‘w’ written in Wikki Stix

Spelling words written in wool and glue to traced letters

- Write the individual letters with Play-Doh. This is similar to writing with Wikki Stix, however the letters have more shape and thickness.

• Colour coding letters/ sounds to aid pattern recognition- Activity 1

A grid or rows of squares are used to identify and visual isolate the individual sounds in a word. Letters representing the each sound are place in the separate boxes corresponding to the number of sounds. This activity can be undertaken in several ways depending on the child’s ability.

With all these activities it is important for the child to say the sounds as the same time as they place counters or write so they are seeing, hearing and moving while matching sounds with either number of sounds or letters.

Game 1:
Use a row of boxes about 2 to 3 cm square.

1. Count the number of sounds in the word
2. Collect the exact number of counters to match the number of sounds
3. Put a counter in a box to represent the sounds in a word

This activity is solely working on phonemic awareness allowing the child to ‘see’ the number of sounds in a word without complicating the sound identification while seeing letters.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Number of Sounds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>thick</td>
<td><img src="counter.png" alt="Counter" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Game 2:
Use a row of boxes about 2 to 3 cm square and have the letters already written in the boxes.

1. Count the number of sounds in the word
2. Collect the exact number of counters to match the number of sounds
3. Put a counter in each box on the letter(s) representing the sounds in a word
To help the child recognise letter patterns within words, colour code the letters to represent the vowels, consonants, digraphs and blends. Use diagonal lines to represent syllable divisions.

**Example:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Individual Letter/Sounds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>thick</td>
<td>th i ck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gardens</td>
<td>g ar d e n s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discover</td>
<td>d i s c o v er</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Game 3:**

Use a grid as shown below with the words written in the left hand column. The other columns represent the number of sounds within a word.

1. Count the number of sounds in the word
2. Identify the letters that represent each sound
3. Write the letters in the appropriate column

**Example:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD</th>
<th>First Sound</th>
<th>Second Sound</th>
<th>Third Sound</th>
<th>Fourth Sound</th>
<th>Fifth Sound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sharp</td>
<td>sh</td>
<td>ar</td>
<td>p</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trench</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>ch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>batch</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>tch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>through</td>
<td>th</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>ough</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Colour coding letters/ sounds to aid pattern recognition- Activity 2**

To help the child recognise letter patterns within words colour code the letters to represent the vowels, consonants, digraphs and blends. Use diagonal lines to represent syllable divisions. Remember every syllable must have a vowel. Appendix 1 lists of single consonants and vowels, digraphs and blends.

Suggested colours:

- **red** vowels (long, short and digraphs)
- **green** consonants
- **blue** consonant digraph
- **orange** blends
- **grey** silent letters

**Examples:**

- **spelling**
  - **guard**
  - **spider**
- **memory**
  - **flake**
  - **jumping**

- **Identifying letters/ sounds to aid pattern recognition- Activity 3**

Write the word then:

1. Circle the vowels in **red**
2. Underline the digraphs with a double **blue** line
3. Use a diagonal line to identify syllables
4. Place **orange** dots under the blends
5. Circle silent letters in **grey**
Variation: Write and mark the word without colour

Examples:

\[\text{spelling guard spider}\]

\[\text{memory flake jumping}\]

- Identifying letters/ sounds to aid pattern recognition- Activity 4

Identify what consonant / vowel letter patterns are in a syllable:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V-C</th>
<th>C-V</th>
<th>C-C-V-C</th>
<th>C-C-V-C-C</th>
<th>C-C-C-V-C-C-C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>at</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>stop</td>
<td>French</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bump</td>
<td>C-V-C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>string</td>
<td>C-C-V-C-C-C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patch</td>
<td>C-C-C-V-C-C-C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(V – vowel, C- consonant)

Example:

Variation- Use an analogy where the words sits on the grass (green) with some letter extending down to earth (red) while other letter rise up to the sky (blue).

Remember
As mentioned in Part 1 of Spelling Homework with all the activities mentioned approach them as ‘I do’, ‘we do’ and ‘you do’ so your child has an opportunity to see, hear and have it modelled for them.

If they do not ‘get it’ then how are they going to do it by themselves?
In the next E-News – Spelling Homework Part 3 will be on Morphology and Etymology showing how word structure and origins aides spelling.

Appendix 1
Below are common letter combinations for single and blended sounds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonants</th>
<th>Blends</th>
<th>Digraphs / Trigraphs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Initial</td>
<td>Final</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p b t d</td>
<td>sw-</td>
<td>wh-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k c g</td>
<td>st-</td>
<td>gn-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f v s z x</td>
<td>sc-</td>
<td>kn-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>tw-</td>
<td>wr-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m n</td>
<td>sq-</td>
<td>Initial or Final</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w y</td>
<td>sp-</td>
<td>ch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r l</td>
<td>br-</td>
<td>Final</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>cr-</td>
<td>th (thin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q(u)</td>
<td>gr-</td>
<td>th (that)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sn-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fr-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pr-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tr-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 2
Below is a blank template for Connect 4 or Bingo. Use for creating your own games using your child spelling list.
GLOSSARY

// indicate the sound the letter make e.g. mat is /m/ /short a/ /t/
Grapheme A letter or combination of letters (two, three and four letters) that represent a single English sound or phoneme e.g. e, oi, igh, ough
Phoneme A single speech sound that when individual phonemes combine to make syllables and words
Morpheme Smallest meaningful unit of language e.g. words: one, fish, affixes: un-, -ed
Digraph Two letters for one English sound e.g. ‘sh’, ‘ee’
Trigraph Three letters for one English sound e.g. ‘igh’, ‘tch’
C refers to consonant
V refers to vowel

REFERENCES

Meeks L. (2013) SPED NSW: Certificate Course for Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties
Fawcett L. Dr (2011) Cracking the ABC Code Rules
Need help to put the Spelling Homework activities into practice?

SPELD NSW will present an informal Parents Workshop to discuss and practise how to incorporate the activities mentioned in the Spelling Homework article with the weekly spelling homework lists.

**When:** Saturday 22 August, 2015 from 1.30pm – 4.30pm

**Where:** SPELD NSW offices, Concord

**Audience:** Parents & Carers

**Cost:** $30.00 for Members, and $55.00 for Non-Members

**RSVP:** Tel: 02 9739 6277 or em: admin@speldnsw.org.au

Bookings Essential as we can only cater for small groups of up to 14

---

**What’s on in SPELD NSW in 2015**

Just click on the link below to find out all the details.

12 June, 2015

Mimma Mason – Cogmed – Memory Matters and Ian Luscombe – Behaviour Management.


19 June, 2015

Yarc by Walter Howe


5 August, 2015

Prof. Joe Elliott – The Dyslexia Debate

Implications for educational policy and practice.

**Venue:** University of Sydney 4 – 6.30pm

*In conjunction with LDA and University of Sydney*


14 August, 2015

Dr Lorraine Hammond

What is Explicit Instruction? A practical guide


22 August, 2015

Spelling Homework – Part 2 (Parent Workshop)