

State Literacy Strategy

Working with

Teaching spelling K-6

Introduction

Teaching spelling K-6 contains information for primary teachers on the teaching of spelling using the four forms of spelling knowledge: phonological knowledge, visual knowledge, morphemic knowledge and etymological knowledge.

This brochure provides ten training and development activities to increase teachers' understanding of the nature of the four forms of knowledge and how they can be used in the teaching of spelling, and the types of classroom strategies that can be used to teach and assess spelling.

Activities 1 and 2 should be completed before any others. The information from these activities will direct participants to activity 3, in which decisions can be made about which of the remaining training and development activities will suit the participants' needs best.

These activities can be used in a number of ways:

- at school level, to address focus areas identified in a whole-school literacy plan
- by groups of teachers e.g. teachers working with a particular stage, for professional development and designing programs
- by individual teachers, to increase understandings of the ways in which spelling can be taught and for developing classroom resources.

1. What are our understandings about English spelling and how competence in spelling is acquired?

At a staff meeting, discuss and collate staff information and opinions on the following:

(a) Understandings about the acquisition of spelling skills

- What is my understanding about how spelling is learnt?
- What skills do students need to be competent spellers?

(b) Difficulties with spelling

- What causes the difficulties that some students have in attaining spelling competence?

(c) Current practice

- How do I currently teach spelling?

(d) Concerns

- What are my main concerns about my teaching of spelling?
- What are my main concerns about my students' competence in spelling?

Keep a record of the issues and concerns which arise out of this activity. This record, combined with the findings from activity 2, will help you in the choice of further activities.

2. How familiar are we with incorporating the teaching of spelling, using the four forms of spelling knowledge, into our literacy sessions?

Number the boxes beside each question using a scale where:

5 = I understand this and how it assists a student's competence in spelling

1 = This is totally unfamiliar to me

(a) Phonological knowledge

- I understand the elements of phonological knowledge and how students' experience with these elements can assist them with their spelling.

(b) Visual knowledge

- I understand how to select words to be taught using visual knowledge and strategies for teaching these words.

(c) Morphemic knowledge

- I understand the focus of morphemic knowledge, the use of morphemes to assist spelling, and how generalisations can be made to assist students to spell.

(d) Etymological knowledge

- I understand how to use the knowledge of word origins to demonstrate to students how this can assist them to spell.

(e) Assessing spelling

- I assess the spelling in a student's writing, identify the strengths and weaknesses, and make decisions about how to cater for the needs of that student in spelling sessions.

(f) Teaching spelling

- I use a range of strategies, which address students' needs in writing across a range of texts and subjects, to teach spelling knowledge.

(g) Spelling in the literacy session

- I teach spelling by using the four forms of spelling knowledge and through guided and modelled reading and writing.

3. What can we do to find out more about the issues raised in activities 1 and 2?

If you wrote mainly 4s and 5s in activity 2, you should feel quite confident in using *Teaching spelling K-6*.

If you would like to investigate some issues further, use the list below as a guide.

For more about:

Phonological knowledge: do activities 4 and 6

References:

Focus on literacy: Spelling, pages 9-11, 114

Teaching spelling K-6, pages 9-17, 42, 58-60

Visual knowledge: do activities 4 and 6

References:

Focus on literacy: Spelling, pages 9-11, 12-14

Teaching spelling K-6, 9-17, 42, 61-62, 65-66

Morphemic knowledge: do activities 4 and 6

References:

Focus on literacy: Spelling, pages 9-11, 12-14

Teaching spelling K-6, pages 9-17, 42, 63-66

Etymological knowledge: do activities 4 and 6

References:

Focus on literacy: Spelling, pages 9-11, 12-14

Teaching spelling K-6, pages 9-17, 42, 67-72

Assessing spelling: do activity 5

References:

Focus on literacy: Spelling, pages 23-25

Teaching spelling K-6, pages 19-41

Teaching spelling: do activities 7, 8 and 10

References:

Focus on literacy: Spelling, pages 9-11, 12-14, 15, 18-22

Teaching spelling K-6:

A systematic approach, pages 18-19

Teaching spelling knowledge, pages 42, 58-76

Using spelling lists, pages 42-58

Editing and proofreading, pages 77-85

Effective classroom practices, pages 92-102

Using authoritative sources, pages 86-91

Spelling in the literacy session: do activity 9

References:

Focus on literacy: Spelling, pages 20-21, 27-29

Teaching spelling K-6, pages 103-110

4. Spelling...a pathway of development

Read *Focus on literacy: Spelling*, p. 9-11, 26.

Scan the wallchart, *Spelling...a pathway of development*, and note the changes across the stages in each of the four forms of spelling knowledge.

Consider or discuss how these changes might be reflected in spelling sessions in successive grades.

Compare the statements across the stages. How could these be used to assist teachers to report a student's progress in spelling?

5. Assessing spelling

Read *Focus on literacy: Spelling*, pages 23-25 and *Teaching spelling K-6*, pages 19-22.

Consider or discuss the ways in which you currently assess and diagnose students' spelling. List the sources of information you use. Describe how you analyse the data and how you record and report your findings.

Scan *Teaching spelling K-6*, pages 23-41, noting the examples relevant to the stage in which you are working. Select one or more assessment activities and try them in your classroom. Discuss the effectiveness of these at a later meeting.

Select a student writing sample and analyse the spelling. List the student's strengths in spelling. List the areas which need to be developed. Compare and discuss your analysis with a colleague. What other information about this student would be useful? List some teaching and learning experiences which would address this student's needs. Consider how you would assess the student's learning.

Activities

6. Teaching spelling knowledge, using the four forms of spelling knowledge

Read *Focus on literacy: Spelling*, pages 12-14 and *Teaching spelling K-6*, pages 42 and 58-76.

Then:

- select a group of words which you would use in a unit of work in your classroom
- determine the forms of spelling knowledge which would assist students to learn these words
- from the teaching and learning activities on the pages listed above, select those which you could use in teaching these words.

7. Using spelling lists

Read *Focus on literacy: Spelling*, pages 15, 21-22 and *Teaching spelling K-6*, pages 42-58.

Then:

- using the list appropriate to a stage group, draw up a list of words which would be appropriate to a unit on which you will be working
- add words appropriate to the reading or writing focus of the unit
- determine how you would support students in the learning of each word by drawing on any of the four forms of spelling knowledge.

8. Effective classroom practices

Read *Focus on literacy: Spelling*, pages 18-22 and *Teaching spelling K-6*, pages 18-19, 92-102.

- Select two or three strategies from *Teaching spelling K-6*, pages 92-102 which could be used to develop spelling skills, using the list of words generated in activity 7.
- Model the use of these strategies with students, and use them in guided practice, before having students use them independently.

9. Editing and proofreading

Read *Teaching spelling K-6*, pages 77-85.

Consider or discuss the implications for teaching these skills within literacy sessions.

Trial some of the activities mentioned in this section and discuss their effectiveness with a colleague. How would you adapt these to suit your students? What other editing or proofreading activities would be useful?

Consider or discuss the development of editing codes that would be suitable for use across the whole school.

10. Spelling in the literacy session

This activity is best undertaken in the process of programming a unit of work.

Read *Focus on literacy: Spelling*, pages 20-21, 27-29, and *Teaching spelling K-6*, page 103.

Scan *Teaching spelling K-6*, pages 104-105, and compare the roles of the teacher and the student in each of the components.

Use the model on pages 106-108, and the proforma on pages 109-110, to develop the initial literacy sessions for a unit of work.