

DONALD L. POTTER'S NOTES ON

The Gillingham Manual

Introduction to the Notes

I purchased a copy of *The Gillingham Manual: Remedial Training for Students with Specific Disability in Reading, Spelling, and Penmanship* on February 27, 2012. I bought it for an introductory course on teaching dyslexics. I had been trained in three Orton-Gillingham programs before: *The Herman Program*, *Project Read: The Language Circle*, and *The Spalding Writing Road to Reading*. I taught the Herman and Spalding programs. It was very easy to see the family resemblance between the programs, especially *Herman* and *Project Read*. Spalding is generally considered an O-G program, but it follows a significantly different path than that mapped out in the *Gillingham Manual*. *Herman* and *Project Read*, on the other hand, were practically equivalent to the original *Gillingham Manual*.

I read an older edition of the Manual probably 15 to 20 years ago but at that time lacked the years of experiences in the classroom necessary to under the full implications of the manual for my day-to-day teaching.

I was very impressed with the information in the *Gillingham Manual*. I consider it an essential reference book for anyone interested in teaching read effectively and especially for teachers of dyslexic students. My notes are designed to highlight some of the information that I consider most valuable. I hope those who read these notes will consider purchasing the book for themselves. It will become the standard reference source on phonics in your library.

Everything is quotes except the notes in [] brackets which are my thoughts. Page numbers are in parenthesis (). I have been highly selective in my quotes; only a close reading of the entire sections will enable the reader to gain a just appreciation of the richness of the program.

NOTES

Evolution of the Language Function

The left hemisphere controls language, speech, and arithmetic in most right-handed people. In left-handers, the brain's organization varies.

Both reversals and confusions are familiar to teachers. In the visual field, for example, the word *go* may be read *og*; *was* may be called *saw*. A well-educated woman glanced at *eat* and read it *tea* in the auditory field one may hear *loop* called *pool*. As a five-year-old passed by a pasture in which black-and-white cattle grazed, she remarked, "Those are Steinhols." Tired of a prolonged ordeal, a little boy asked querulously, "How last will it long, Daddy?" In the kinesthetic field the same cause probably underlies the much-discussed mirror-writing.

People with specific reading difficulties, in whatever country they live, probably cannot learn to read successfully by "sight-word" methods, even when these are later reinforced by "functional," "incidental," or "analytical" phonics, based on 150-200 learned words, or by tracing procedures. The techniques in this book are based on the constant association of all the following: how letters or words look, how it sounds, how the speech organ or the hand feels when producing the letter or sound in writing. (8) [Another word for "analytical" phonics is "whole-to-part" phonics, as presented and defended by Margaret Moustafa in her books, *Beyond Traditional Phonics*, and *Whole-to-Part Phonics*, and promoted by the Fountas & Pinnell *Guided Reading Method*.] (8)

Evaluation/Diagnosis

When a child of normal or superior intelligence with intact sensory perception has been instructed in reading by the whole-word/sight-word method by a competent teacher for months or years and has not acquired adequate reading skills, it is time for a radical change in approach. Anna Gillingham's approach to teaching students to read offers "solutions and not just sympathy." [When parents bring children to me to tutor, they often think I am going to help them with their school's reading program. I tell the parents that if the "school's program" was working they would not be coming to me for help. I first teach the students to identify and write the letters fluently. I also teach them the 44 English speech sound and their major spelling correspondences with the Phonovisual Charts. I then teach them to sound out a couple thousand simple words and read simple decodable stories. Next I teach the advanced morphology by Language of Origin. Next I introduce them to fine literature focusing on George Gonzales 8 Comprehension Skills. Finally I teach they how to parse words and diagram sentences.] (11)

Remedial Lessons

In recent years we have come to believe that all children could benefit from the Alphabet/Phonetic Approach. Instead of providing a systematic highly structured, and multisensory approach to only a *select* group of students (constituting 10 to 20 percent of the population), the techniques in this program can benefit *all* beginning readers. [This is the crowning proposal in the book. This exactly what Dr. Rudolf Flesch suggested in 1955 in his bestselling *Why Johnny Can't Read: and what you can do about it*.] (12)

Changing Times

About one hundred and thirty years ago two events took place that had a marked effect on the lives of many people. These events had nothing to do with each other, but they took place at the same time.

First laws were passed in various states in our country and in Europe compelling parents to send their children to school up to a certain age, fifteen, sixteen, or perhaps seventeen.

The other event was an unexpected return to the old method of learning to read and write by ideographs. People began to say, "Why not have children learn to recognize the whole word without bothering about individual letters?"

There are some people today, however, who have the same type of mind as those in ancient China who found the ideographs difficult.

The following words are not actually ideographs (as are the Chinese characters previously mentioned) because they are made up of letters, but if a child does not know the name or sounds of these letters, to him the whole word is the same as an ideograph.

mother	girl	nutmeg
father	boy	sandal

When trying to read these ideographs, some students may turn the word around: "Is this word *was* or *saw*? "Is this *tea* or *eat*?" "Is this *stop* or *spot*?" Many children completely misread the ideogram, so the boy's name *Jack* is read as *Tom*.

To children taught by the whole-word recognition, or "sight" method, words become just things, and a child has to try to remember what they are just by looking at them. One girl looked at the word *garden* and called it *basket*. She did that because both words had been in the same story she read the day before. Another child saw a picture of a bird with the word *robin* beside it. But when *robin* occurred in a story, he called it *bird*. Another boy, asked to write the word *addition*, wrote *arithmetic*.

You, like these children and a great many intellectual people, some of them very famous, are one of those who do not learn ideograms easily. That is the reason that reading and spelling have to be so hard for you.

Now I am going to begin to teach in an entirely different way. We are going to use the Alphabetic Method. You are going to learn the sounds of the letters and then build them into words. You will find it fun and it will be good for you to attempt something which you can do. (23-24)

Phonics Teaching

In response to the present widespread controversy over literature-based programs versus a phonetic approach to teaching reading one might be inclined to say, "No one way is the right way!" However, given the extent of research, and the educational philosophies and practices on which this manual is based, we remain confident that a strong foundation using a multisensory approach to reading is one that can be accomplished only through an alphabetic/phonetic approach. [Multisensory is often thought as something new and esoteric. Actually it is just the traditional method of teaching that was used since the days of the Greeks. It is a return to the Old Paths that worked well for thousands of years.] (29)

Anna Gillingham's philosophy emphasizes the importance of individual lessons and daily sessions. Phonics should not be perceived as the "grunt and groan" method. Lessons can be fun, alive, and activity-based, while helping children and adults learn the structure of language for reading and writing. For example, a teacher can ask his students to read a list of fruits or sports, and write the items in alphabetical order. Creating lists of "nonsense" words can also be a fun activity, as well as a helpful tool in detecting weaknesses in reading and spelling.

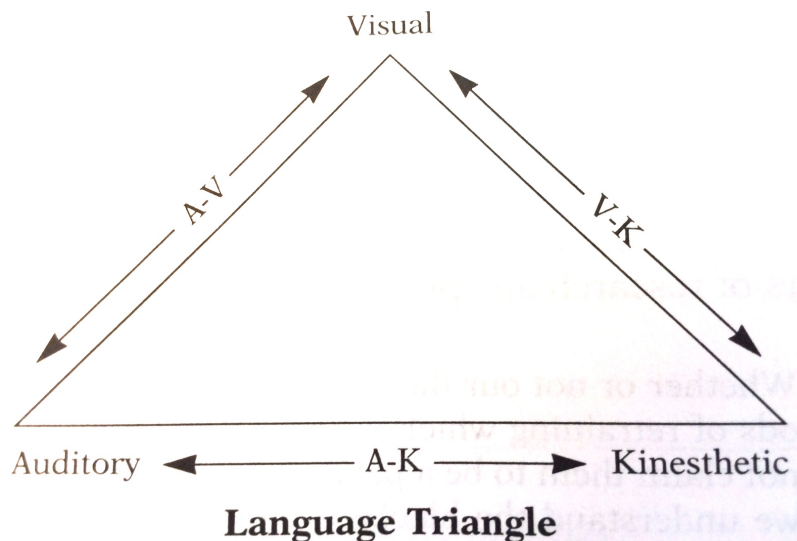
Occasionally we hear about a student whose reading is *spoiled* by knowing "too much" phonics. The student's reading may be halting or labored, or meaning may be ignored. His ability to blend sounds and spell words may be hampered because he has not learned how to make sounds correctly. Teachers need to pay careful attention to the way in which they present sounds, carefully "clipping" the sound without adding an additional vowel sound, /t/ and not /thu/.

Current Practices in Teaching Phonics

Many schools teach phonics, but only after the student has mastered one hundred to two hundred sight words. Once these words are mastered as "whole units," the words are broken down into individual letter sounds. However, this approach is problematic. Without a systematic and sequential approach to reading, the student has no firm foundation. He cannot read many words because their phonetic elements may not have been taught or reformed frequently enough for automaticity to result. [It is important to understand the difference between *whole-to-part phonics* (phony phonics) and *part-to-whole phonics* (real phonics).]

Our Approach

In direct contrast in current practices, the Orton-Gillingham-Stillman approach starts with individual sounds, and then uses the sounds to build words. This "word-building method" also builds a close association or link between what the student sees in print (visual), what the student hears (auditory), and what the student feels as he or she makes the sounds of the letters and writes (kinesthetic – large muscle movements, and tactile – sensations in the mouth and on the fingertips). This technique is referred to as the "language triangle" or multisensory approach. (29)



Phonetic Associations

Every phonogram (representation of a sound) is presented through each association (visual, auditor, and kinesthetic), and each association is linked and presented simultaneously. The individual pathway makes an imprint on the brain and thus strengthens the learning process.

This is the process of translating *seen symbols* into *sounds*, which is the basis of oral reading.

Association I

This association emphasizes combined use of all three senses.

- a. Associating the symbol (visual) with the name of the letter.
- b. Associating the symbol with the sound of the letter (auditory)
- c. Associating the symbol and the feel of the letter in the mouth as the student produces the name or sound of the letter (kinesthetic – the motion felt in the large arm muscles as he writes or traces the letters.

Step 1: (V-A) Present card; Step 2: (A-K) Teacher makes sound, student repeats.

Association II

This association provides audio training for oral spelling

- a. Associating auditory to auditory
Step 1: Teacher makes sounds represented by letter;
Step 2: (A-A) “Tell me the name of the letter that has this sound.”

Association III

This association is the basis of written spelling

- a. Associating the symbol (visual) with how it feels to make the letter as the writes (kinesthetic)
- b. Associating the feel of the letter (kinesthetic) with its symbol (visual)
- c. Associating the sound of the letter (auditory) with the feel and letter form (kinesthetic)

The teacher should refer to the chapter on handwriting during this association.

This is the procedure when a new symbol is introduced.

Step 1: Teacher models making the letter for student, explaining letter form and orientation.

Step 2: (V-K) The student traces over the teacher’s letter.

Step 3: (V-K) The student copies the letter.

Step 4: (K-V) The student writes the letter from memory.

Step 5: (K) The student writes the letter while looking away from the paper.

Step 6: (A-K) The teacher makes the sound and says, “Write the letter that has this sound.” The student forms the cursive letter on paper, or rough board, or in sand.

In each of these three associations, the goal is automaticity. The teacher holds up the card or says the sound, and the student produces the correct response without prompting. (31-32)

Important Points

[This is a summary]. 1. Make sure the student says the name of each letter as he write it (except when tracing and copying). 2. If a student is not able to form a letter without looking at it as she writes, then automaticity has not been reached and fluency of expression will be affected. This includes starting at the correct point, and moving the pencil in the correct direction. 4. Since the core of this alphabetic approach is to establish the concept of words built out of phonetic units, the first essential step is to change the student’s attitude toward words as ideographs *to be remembered as wholes*, and to eliminate all guessing. 5. Each phonogram is introduced by a key word that triggers the correct letter sequence. [The Phonovisual Methods does this with two scientifically organized charts.] 6. The teacher should familiarize herself with the correct pronunciation of each sound before introducing a new letter; remember to keep sounds “clipped” and “pure.” [This is very important. Many teachers are very faulty here. I have videos on YouTube teaching the Phonovisual sounds properly.] 7. The student should be taught to recognize and to explain the difference between vowel sounds and consonant sounds. Vowel sounds are produced by the breath passing freely through the vocal cords and the mouth. Each can be prolonged indefinitely. When the consonant sounds are produced, the breath is obstructed by lips, tongue, or teeth. A few of the consonant sounds can be prolonged indefinitely, e.g., /f/, but the breath is obstructed slightly by placing the lower lip between the teeth. [The brilliant scientific organization of the Phonovisual Charts is the optimal presentation, in my opinion, of the phonetic facts.] 8. To maximize kinesthetic and tactile reinforcement, the muscles in the upper arm need to be involved. [I highly recommend that early instruction in cursive be taught at the chalkboard. That is my practice, and it has proven highly effective.]

B. Four-Points Program or Simultaneous Oral Spelling (S.O.S.)

This is the naming of letters aloud as each is written, firmly establishing the visual-auditory-kinesthetic linkages or associations. Making connections is very important for children who have integration, processing and/or attention problems. These steps will provide the practice and remediation necessary to improve spelling and the retention of information. ((In this revision, we have retained the traditional “Four-Point Program” name, thought there are actually five steps, including the teacher saying the word.)

Step 1: The teacher says the word. The student hears the teacher’s voice – auditory.

Step 2: The student echoes the word. This allows the student to hear his own voice and feel his own speech organs – auditory-kinesthetic. Teacher and correct and check auditory processing.

Step 3: The student segments the sounds and then names the letters. This step gives the teacher an opportunity to correct any errors before writing. It is important to imprint the word correctly in the student’s “mind’s eye.” [Ignorance of this obvious truth is why “invented spelling” has devastated spelling and reading skills in America today.]

Step 4: The student writes the letter, naming each letter as it is formed on the paper or rough surface. The student sees the letters and feels his hand for the letters – visual-kinesthetic.

Step 5: The student reads what he has written. The student sees, hears, and feels (in his vocal cords) the word – visual-auditory-kinesthetic. This encouraged the student to become his own proofreader.

Sometimes the student should write with eyes averted to focus attention on feeling and form his hand is following. (35-36)

[The Four-Points are: Step 1: auditory; Step 2: auditory-kinesthetic; Step 4: visual-kinesthetic; Step 5: visual-auditory-kinesthetic. In behavioral terms, they are called “associations.” Edward Thorndike would have called them “links.” The modern term is “connections” as in The Connectionist Model.]

C. Handwriting:

Cursive writing is the preferred form. It helps to reduce the likelihood of letter reversals. Production is quicker and copying from the board is easier since each letter is lined to the next one. (36)

Handwriting is a separate subject and should be taught as such. The student should not be concerned with spelling, reading, or comprehension. The primary purpose of handwriting is to establish and reinforce automaticity of letter formation. The most difficult part of handwriting is learning the connectors between letters. The goal is legibility. [I pay particular attention to “connectors between letters” in my *Shortcut to Cursive*. I worked with comprehensive list of connecting strokes sent to my mentor Randy Nelson of *Peterson Directed Handwriting*.] (36)

Schools that begin teaching manuscript and change to cursive in the second or third grades cause irreparable harm. Dr. Orton repeatedly asserted that impressions made on nerve tissue are never wholly eradicated. They are only whitewashed over. They linger on, confusing later impression. This change in penmanship may often be seen in high school papers, where the manuscript form asserts itself in the middle of cursive words. [This is bold, yet undeniable observation.] (36)

D. Dictation

As introduced here, S.O.S is a linkage of sound with letter form. In time we shall depend upon it more and more for impressing letter sequences in nonphonetic words. The natural speller can trust his visual memory of a word. The student with confused visual memory cannot. His greatest help in studying a difficult word is to associate the *names* of the letters in correct order with their kinesthetic records as his hand forms them and his voices speaks them one by one. It is essential that the teacher pronounce and the student repeat each sound distinctly, and that these sounds be instantly translated into letter names. The mistake is sometimes made of allowing the student to write the letters without naming them. The result will be correct in these simple phonetic words, but confusion will occur later. This is a period in which habits are to be fixed, and spelling must mean *naming* letters. [This paragraph is filled with wisdom. It is absolutely necessary to teach letter names first so the student can use them to orally spell words. The popular idea that students should not spell word with letter names is the source of great confusion. Just consider the word “write.” The letter name “w” must be used to spell the word since it is silent. I ALWAYS use oral spelling by letter names when teaching *Alpha-Phonics* and *Blend Phonics*.] (37)

When the student names the letters as he writes them, he is establishing a useful habit, and the teacher is able to observe and correct his individual difficulties and confusions as they occur. (37)

Work from the larger muscles to the smaller muscles to gain “muscle memory.” For example, start by writing on the chalkboard, then large-lined paper, and finally regular size paper. Use the following form to help the students form letters correctly:

- *Teacher makes the letter
- *Student traces the letter
- *Student copies the letter
- *Student write the letter without the copy
- *The student writes the letter with the eyes averted [I have the student write with their eyes closed to help them develop the muscle memory for the letter form and spelling.] (38)

Specific Points for Group I and Group II Letters.

To avoid the classic mirror reversals of letters b, d, and p, q, the OGS method teaches the writing of these letters in such a way that kinesthetically one does not suggest the other. Children should never be allowed to start a d or b with a vertical line and then lift their pencil to add a circle on one side or the other. This frequently results in a mirror image. Confusion can be avoided if the d is started with a circle to the left as in making the letter a, the upstroke extended to the top and retraced downward. [At this point, an illustration shows how to form the manuscript b correctly starting with a line.] (42)

It is not an accident that d is introduced some distance from the letter b in the handwriting page and that q is separated from p. Under no circumstance can this postponement do any harm. If a young student is being introduced to reading and spelling by this procedure as a preventive measure, the teacher may partially avoid trouble by firmly establishing one symbol before teaching the reverse form. If, however, the student has already used the two symbols interchangeably, this delay will be valueless. The picture of d imprinted upon his memory will be recalled sometimes as d and sometimes as b. The only help, besides the different kinesthetic implant, is to teach some arbitrary device to be remembered quickly when visual memory fails. In the room used for teaching, b and p should be turned toward a picture of a plate of bread, d and q toward a picture of a quacking duck, or towards one’s wristwatch or the door, or any other convenient object. **These difficulties can also be avoided by teaching students to use cursive writing.** [The emphasis is mine. Every student, without exception, coming to me from the Ector County ISD, TX, writes the d with a down stroke, and most other letters with an upstroke. None write cursive at any age. The last sentence is intriguing because it gives the real solution: teach cursive first! Interestingly, the only students learning cursive in said ISD are in dyslexia classes, but ironically many are not allowed to use it when they return to their classroom.] (42)

[On page 44, the authors recommend teaching /w/ and /hw/ together] However, many people have difficulty pronouncing the *h* in /hw/ and so pronounce both symbols alike. This is especially common in America today. We say, “The wind wistles,” The snow is wite” The ears of children accustomed to such pronunciation do not perceive any difference. To them /w/ and /hw/ sound alike. If they are good visual spellers, they will spell whistle and white correctly, while saying both with initial /w/. The training here is not to overcome visual confusion, but to develop keenness of auditory discrimination. We repeat, one cannot distinguish between one sound! It is therefore essential that the two symbols be placed side by side and their differences brought out. [This is very well done on the Phonovisual Charts, which I use everyday for teaching the symbol-to-sound relationships.] (44)

Introduction of Diphthongs

The most superficial glance into the primer of any series of readers will show the investigator that diphthongs are introduced in the very beginning of the student's learning to read. This is done because the focus of these books is on learning words that fit into the story.

The entire plan of this manual rests upon an exactly opposite concept: the logical development of the construction of words.

Being permitted, even encouraged, to guess a word that "will fit into the story," is one of the most devastating experiences encountered by the language disabled student. [I saw guessing encouraged continually in *Whole Language*, *Reading Recovery*, and *Guided Reading* classrooms. And, yes, I saw it devastate students. I tutor *Guided Reading* failures everyday of the week.] (96)

Motivation – Gain in Skill

Most remedial programs stress finding books that will appeal to the personal interests of the student. [There is much good information here. Tell the student they were probably taught in ways that were not appropriate for them, etc. They will be successful now because we are going to teach them the way THEY learn.]

Handwriting

We continue to emphasize that an act is not properly learned as long as it requires visual supervision. A good rower can row just as well in the dark; her eyes merely direct the course, not the dip or pull of the oars. Knitting is not mastered as long as one must watch the needle draw the stitch through. Any really skilled knitter can watch television while doing simple knitting. In the same way the writer's thoughts should not be hampered by attention to the form of letters. (282) [I am an Amateur Radio Operator, NG5W. I can copy and send high speed Morse Code. I even taught it for seven years in the public schools. I know several operators that can copy and send accurate code while holding a conversation or watching TV.]

There is much controversy over whether students should be taught to write using print or cursive – to much for us to address here. However, the case for cursive is strong.

There is no reason why cursive writing should not be taught from the beginning to all students. However, in the case of dyslexics, there are several reasons for insisting on cursive. To begin with, in cursive writing there is no question where each letter begins – it begins *on* the line. The confusion with forms is not merely a left and right reversal as with b/d/ and /p/q; it is also a up and down reversal as with m/w and u/n; hence the uncertainty as to whether a letter begins at the top or bottom, Second, spelling is fixed more firmly in the mind if the word is formed in a continuous movement rather than in a series of separate strokes with the pencil lifted off the paper between each one. (Diana Hanbury King, *Writing Skill for the Adolescent*. Cambridge, MA: Educators Publishing Service, Inc., 1985, p. 3.) (282)

In *Writing Skills for the Adolescent*, Diana Hanbury King states:

Teaching, especially dyslexics, must be multisensory. These days, the word *modality* is in vogue. But, paradoxically, nobody seems to pay much attention to the teaching of handwriting. Rapid, legible, and comfortable handwriting is important for success in school and college. But more than that, it is almost a prerequisite for teaching reading to the dyslexic. It is the kinesthetic sense, the feeling of movement, that fixes the letters in one's memory. Writing is needed to reinforce reading. Maria Montessori noted that young children make attempts at writing before they read – and anybody who has young children can

observe the same thing. Too little attention is paid to the teaching of writing in the early grades, and none at all later on. Few teachers seem to know what to do about it, other than asking students to recopy their work, sometimes repeatedly. Yes – and this is a useful statement to make to students – handwriting affects every grade a student receives, for papers are corrected, not by machines, but by tired teachers, often at the end of the day or late at night, and the illegible or messy paper inevitably receives less credit. (287)

Fourth Group of Topics (High School & Adults)

Older students are familiar with many words. The object of the remedial techniques in this Manual is to acquaint the student with a new way of approaching reading and spelling – several must syllable, letter by letter if necessary. There is no value in his reviewing the many words which he already knows at a glance. (106)

At this point three-letter detached or made-up syllables are introduced. Detached syllables are parts of real words; made-up syllables or nonsense words are not. They should be read so clearly that there can be no doubt regarding any of the sounds. This statement applies to all similar lists of detached and made-up syllables that follow in this chapter. The goal here is *application of concepts*. (106)

When words have been carelessly enunciated for a long time without regard to structure, it is very difficult to correct mispronunciations. The student knows the word and is satisfied with it even though the final consonant is lost or the vowel is blurred. Detached or nonsense syllables in which every letter must be sounded serve a unique purpose in developing precision. (106)

das	zin	hom	hab	bix	jal	dem	vol
des	nup	lis	muz	med	kem	jit	mon
dis	wob	kel	pud	sug	hep	fol	quin
dos	yid	ron	fif	zon	daf	ros	saf
dus	deg	tet	sym	beb	peb	dib	heb
rom	min	vix	dal	vit	biv	reg	yat
bez	siz	hos	quiv	fas	sud	gav	pif
rus	lav	lig	sep	rol	vap	ket	nal
quib	rel	fis	pid	pam	wiz	nym	jus
ped	gom	bak	nov	gat	len	zep	gog

Detached and made up syllables (blends).

Although the student who has been attempting to read for some years has become familiar with the fact that certain consonants blend their sounds at times, he is frequently unable to accurately handle detached syllables in which such blend occur. When he attempts to read words containing blends, a curious situation very often appears. The word is made longer by the additional consonants involved in blends, and he is very apt to mispronounce the vowel sound, which he would not do in the case of the shorter and simpler three-letter word or syllable. For example, he might read correctly the detached syllable *len*; but in the longer sequence of *slend* the vowel might be distorted, his pronunciation *slind*. It is as though his concentration on blending the consonants distracted his attention from the vowel sound. The following list of detached syllables and made-up words contains and illustrates blends: (106-107)

hild	spond	fraz	scond	brock	griz	sorb	blad
flab	grif	reft	lusk	stant	sliv	flam	swiv
cren	plym	trast	stig	sniv	quent	glin	snaf
smol	nist	skag	zond	lect	brun	rupt	fract
dult	drant	prob	glox	pleb	rupt	fract	strem
grap	clin	cremp	prof	brev	drog	trib	sлом

Silent Final e Detached and Made-Up Syllables

pute	lete	nide	labe	tate	sade	vate	bibe
vene	tave	buke	hume	zome	vule	grde	nive
ute	nize	nade	dyte	mide	ane	bule	yune
fide	uve	vive	pede	fute	mune	zene	ume
nate	sote	jole	ole	une	dite	tude	tave
voke	rene	ite	bine	mize	pote	vade	vule

Detached Syllables and Made-Up Words in Sentences

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Flimsate pondeg lant. | 9. Drastoc elbon hep gitlem. |
| 2. Talcig mundit cymbap. | 10. Foltum igsote jum kalmeg. |
| 3. Rindem brid segmel. | 11. Melzim strep lobsig lanreb. |
| 4. Dactus flum ellfic. | 12. Trumpim engant cribe funbot. |
| 5. Judsul gast gatlol. | 13. Hectis quet vindit banbine. |
| 6. Crobe twidlum rindem. | 14. Uglo struct benzam val. |
| 7. Drivlabe glom widrad prave. | 15. Lectem rom sutlib vive. |
| 8. Enmide modraf quen kriskel. | 16. Brant invict hab juncile. |

Reading Resumed

The goal of speed is not addressed as part of his program. It is our experience that as skill and accuracy in reading improve, so does speed. In other words, speed will keep pace with increased skill. To set speed as a goal is to place emphasis at the wrong end of the process. Fluency and comprehension increase speed, but striving to read more words per minute does not bring fluency or comprehension. (109)

Teachers should make every effort to prevent the resumption of old habits, such as omitting unknown words or substituting and adding words. The student must make every effort to apply newly learned skills and concepts. He must also recognize that reading, for him, means genuine study. When he says he is ready to read a selection, he must be responsible for correct pronunciation of words and explanation of meaning, and demonstrate use of all tools available to him (such as the dictionary). When possible, most of his early reading should be done orally, so the teacher can assess application of skills. (109) [Notice that *the Hegge-Kirk-Kirk Remedial Reading Drills* recommended that remedial students stop outside reading until they overcame their bad guessing habits. Rudolf Flesch in his 1955 *Why Johnny Can't Read* recommended isolating student from their whole word guessing environment by quitting all outside reading and doing nothing but phonics drills until they stopped guessing. I agree 100%.]

Vocabulary Study Continued

[Here Anna Gillingham recommends the student keeping a loose-leaf notebook to record the new words he is learning. There can be a tap for each letter of the alphabet. The words will be listed as learned, but can be put in strict alphabetical order later. The definitions should be included. I would like to note that I do this with my *Beyond Blend Phonics: English Morphology Made Simple* and my more advanced work, *Wise Owl Polysyllables: Advanced Skills for Young Learners*. My students write the words in a notebook in cursive. They often improve their reading by two, three, or even more grade levels.]

Another section of the notebook may contain notes that in some way describe the relationships of words. Diagramming sentences seems to bring out this relationship more effectively than any other device. [I always teach diagramming to my students. There are many resources for diagramming on my website: www.donpotter.net. The failure to teach sentence diagramming and parts of speech in modern classrooms is a perfect example on the failure of modern education.] (110)

Chapter 5: Acquiring Familiarity with Sound Symbols

Chapter 5 provides the necessary information for teaching and presenting lessons on pronunciation and multisyllabic words.

The techniques in this chapter will aid students in accurate pronunciation by familiarizing them with the sound pictures (symbols) used in dictionaries for analyzing and correctly pronouncing words. Practice in using this symbolism to indicate pronunciation not only fixes the associations between symbols and the sounds they represent, but also sharpens the student's discrimination of sounds; it there provides excellent phonetic training. [This chapter alone is worth the price of the book. It presents seven groups (types) of words illustrating the usage of the Pronunciation Symbols in the *Webster Dictionary* 10th edition. I teach these skills to all my students. A person who cannot use a dictionary cannot be said to be fully literate.] When a student has learned to use these symbols to pronounce the words listed on the following pages, he often becomes quite skillful in pronouncing new words of the same general pattern. (111-112)

Tracing

When teaching letter forms to students and training them away from mirror writing tendencies, tracing is almost indispensable. For older students, it may help with correct letter sequences in spelling. Combined with simultaneous oral naming of letters, it forms a fundamental link in the multisensory approach to integration of the language function. Fernald attributed extraordinary potency to the simple process of tracing. (Fernald, Grace M. *Remedial Techniques in Basic School Subjects*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1943)

Procedures vary among teachers. We usually have the letters of words traced with a pencil on translucent paper. We have also applied the term tracing to the act of forming letters with pencil or paper in the air, in sand, or on roughboard as means of very basic kinesthetic training. Many adults do this spontaneously in order to assure themselves of correctly spelling the word about to be written. Fernald, on the other hand, regarded pencil tracing as of little value compared with having the student's finger move in direct contact with the model, without a pencil intervening.

Pronouncing the word and naming the letters as they are traced one by one should be followed by writing them S.O.S after the model is removed. It is essential that models be large enough to make a definite kinesthetic picture of the form traced. Students should trace the letters with enough force to involve the muscles of the upper arm. [Rand Nelson of Peterson Directed Handwriting insists that the students trace the letterforms with the index finger, rather than a pencil. I am convinced that chalkboard writing should be used frequently in elementary writing. (122)

Copying

Exercises in copying serve as an informal diagnostics test. They provide the most convincing proof that the trouble is not due to any defect in vision. If the student looks at his copy letter by letter, he may produce perfect results; but if he looks away from the words being copied, he is apt to make errors. [I have noted that students with poor writing fluency have to glance at the word for each letter. I made this discovery when I started giving my “Handwriting Fluency Assessment,” which includes writing the Alphabet from memory and copying a Pangram.] (123)

With practice, the student can lengthen the span of immediate visual recall. Some will find thoughtful copying using simultaneous naming of letters (S.O.S) – an association of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements – helpful in the permanent acquisition of spelling. The student so confused as to copy *go* as *og*, *of* as *fo*, *it* as *ti*, and see nothing wrong in her written produce, may find it especially helpful to name each letter as she writes it. [Rand Nelson says that students who cannot say the letter names as they write the letters have not developed writing fluency. A part of automaticity is the ability to perform an action while doing something else, such as saying the letter name.]

Very few students copy in sensible units. Most of them refer to the book or the chalkboard for every word, or even parts of word, frequently losing their place and omitting important phrases. These faulty practices are time-consuming. For example, a homework assignment may not have been copied with sufficient accuracy to make its purpose clear when the writer attempts to carry it out. Many a lesson has been wrong for this lesson. [I tempted to cry, “Yes!” NONE of the kids coming to me the last ten years have letter writing fluency. My district - perhaps yours, too - has no formal handwriting program. They have what has been termed “embedded handwriting instruction,” a whole-language term for students picking up handwriting on their own without formal instruction.” When the kids cannot pick up the handwriting on their own, they are said to have dysgraphia. When I taught my *Alpha-Phonics Cursive Road to Reading and Spelling* to students with severe ADHD, they got so competent at copying that they could read a whole sentence one time and write the whole sentence without having to look again.] (123)

Word Requiring Individual Attention

We have said that studying lists containing words of miscellaneous spelling patterns is not effective for confused spellers. Some cannot remember the correct spellings even for a day. Others learn and reproduce them in the next lesson, but forget them too quickly to benefit the written work. Furthermore, the attempt to remember a considerable number of arbitrary letter sequences breaks down habits of thoughtful consideration necessary for students with unreliable visual recall. (165)

Nevertheless, some words do not fit any type of generalization but are so commonly used that no one can write freely without knowing them. Some are not phonetic and do not conform to spelling patterns.

Others are phonetic in a sense, but the student may choose the wrong phonogram from several that are possible, e.g., /brād/ braid or brade. /tōn/ tone or toan. How are such necessary words to be learned? Some suggestions follow. (165)

Simultaneous Oral Spelling (SOS)

We have already explained the fundamental procedure. Every poor speller should study spelling this way. ... A study will usually spell words correctly if he says the letters sub-vocally, whereas he would likely miss the spelling if he dashed the words off simply by eye and hand. The threefold association of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic must never be neglected. [This is the way I have always taught spelling.] (165 - 166)

Syllable by Syllable

Another aid to study, mentioned in Chapter 3, is spelling by syllables, instead of a long breathless series of letters. It is much easier to spell a syllable than a string of six or ten letters composing more than one syllable. [This is the way Noah Webster taught spelling. I used the same procedure in my *Wise Owl Polysyllables: Advanced Skills for Young Learners*.] (166)

Exaggerated Pronunciation

It is often desirable to overpronounce or mispronounce an obscure letter or syllable, or a syllable in which a letter has an unusual sound. While this exaggerated emphasis will make the student conscious of the correct spelling, the mispronunciation is not likely to persist. Examples of words that may be treated in this matter include: sep-ā-rate, slep-t, ex-ak-t-ly, ar-k-tic, sar-dīne, automo-bīle, priv-ī-lege, rek-og-nize. [Interestingly, I have used this technique a lot. Just last week, I taught wās, whāt, wānt, etc. The kids like correcting me, and thereby remember the correct spelling.] (166)

Nonsense Sentences and Jingles

[This it is very valuable. I will only include one quote below. Note the long lists of homonyms and words of similar spelling in the back of my *Noah Webster's Spelling Book Method for Teaching Reading and Spelling*, and my *Beyond Blend Phonics: English Morphology Made Easy*.]

Different spellings for the same sound should be related to the context for correct word use and meaning. (166)

Final Note from Internet Publisher: Donald L. Potter

These notes were taken for my own personal benefit. They are made available on my website in hopes of passing on some practical ideas contained therein and encourage the readers to purchase this fabulous reference work.

www.donpotter.net

www.blendphonics.org

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