

Suggestions for Implementing Research-Based Spelling Instruction In the Language Arts Curriculum



Phonology-based spelling instruction

- The goal is to foster awareness of sounds in words with the understanding that letters are used to represent sounds in words.
- Encourage students to sound out phonetically -spelled words and write the letters as they say each sound.
- Introduce sounds in a sequence that reflects perceptual and linguistic complexity.
- Control the complexity of other sounds and letters in the word when introducing a new spelling pattern.
- Ask students to create new words by adding, omitting changing one of the sounds in a word.



Phonics-based spelling instruction

- The goal is to teach the different letters and letter combinations that can represent a sound.
- Display the alphabet on the classroom wall; establish key words for alphabetic letters.
- Encourage letter hunts for all the letters in a list of words that have the same sound.
- Use word sorts to sort words according to different spellings of the same sound.
- Ask the student to create and keep a list of allowable spellings for each sound.



Pattern and rule-based spelling instruction

- The goal is to develop knowledge of patterns and rules for combining letters to spell words.
- The most important rule is – Don't teach the rule! Create opportunities for students to discover the pattern or rule and to use their own words to describe the pattern or rule.
- Contrast the correct spelling of a target pattern with another familiar word (e.g., rate vs. rat); guide students through explaining how and why the words *look* different.
- Teach spelling patterns in a sequence that reflects orthographic complexity.
- Address phonetic context, and syllable and word position constraints on spelling.
- Group weekly spelling words together according to target pattern; add words to the list so that each target pattern is represented by at least 3-4 words.



Semantics and morphology-based spelling instruction

- The goal is to use the meaning of words and parts of words to spell.
- Discuss meaning of words and identify relationships between and among words.
- Teach correct spelling of prefixes and suffixes along with the meaning of these word parts.
- Create opportunities for students to discover rules for modifying words when adding affixes.
- Teach words that do not involve a modification to the base word when adding an affix before teaching words that involve a phonological and/or orthographic change to the base word.



Mental orthographic image-based spelling instruction

- The goal is to develop clear and complete mental images of words in long-term memory.
- Always encourage students to print the word rather than recite the word's spelling.
- Discuss characteristics of the printed word; visualize the word.
- Present intentional misspellings for correction by students; encourage students to try the different possible spellings to see which one "looks right".
- Encourage students' self-monitoring and proofing of their own work.
- Allow students with poor penmanship to use a word processor for their writing work.