

## **Gillingham and Stillman Approach\***

According to Gillingham and Stillman (1973), “spelling is the translation of sounds into letter names (oral spelling) or into letter forms (written spelling)” (p.52). Spelling is taught by using the following procedures:

1. The teacher says the word very slowly and distinctly and the student repeats the word after the teacher. This is referred to as *echo speech*
2. The student is asked what sound is heard first. This process continues with all of the letters in the words. This is referred to as *oral spelling*
3. The student is asked to locate the letter card with the first letter of the word on it and then write the letter. The student continues with this process until the cards for each letter are found, placed in order, and written. This is referred to as *written spelling*.
4. The student reads the word.

When writing the word, the student orally spells the word letter by letter. This establishes visual-auditory-kinesthetic association.

Correctional procedures in the Gillingham and Stillman approach include:

1. The student checks his or her own written work and finds errors.
2. If a word is read incorrectly, the student should spell what he or she said and match it with the original word.
3. If a word is misspelled orally, the teacher writes what the student spelled and asks him or her to read it, or the teacher may repeat the pronunciation of the original word.

## **Constant Time Delay Procedure**

The time delay procedure is a method to reduce errors in instruction. Stevens and Schuster (1978) applied the procedure this way:

1. The verbal cue, “Spell \_\_\_\_ (target word)”, is immediately followed with a printed model of the target word to be copied by the student.
2. After several trials in which there is no time delay between asking a child to spell a word and providing a model of the word, a five-second delay is introduced. This allows the child to write the word, or part of the word, if he or she knows it, but does not require him or her to wait very long if he or she is unable to correctly write the word.
3. The amount of time between the request to spell the word and the presentation of the model can be increased after several more trials.

The time delay procedure has been effective with students with learning disabilities and has several advantages as a spelling instructional method. It is a simple procedure that is easy to implement. It is for the student because it provides for nearly errorless instruction.

\*Bos, C. and Vaughn, S. (1998). Strategies for Teaching Students with Learning and Behavior Problems: Fourth Edition.

## Common Spelling Rules

**1. Use *i* before *e* except after *c* or when sounded like “ay” as in neighbour and weigh.**

*i* before *e*: relieve, believe, sieve, niece, fierce,

*e* before *i*: receive, deceive, sleigh, freight, eight,

exceptions: seize, either, weird, height, foreign, leisure

**2. Generally, drop a final silent *e* when adding a suffix that begins with a vowel. Keep the final *e* if the suffix begins with a consonant.**

desire, desiring; remove, removable, achieve, achievement; care, careful

exceptions: words such as changeable, judgment [can also be spelled judgement], argument, truly

**3. When adding *-s* or *-ed* to words ending in *y*, ordinarily change *y* to *i* when the *y* is preceded by a consonant but not when it is preceded by a vowel.**

comedy, comedies; dry, dried monkey, monkeys; play, played

**4. If a final consonant is preceded by a single vowel and the consonant ends a one-syllable word or a stressed syllable, double the consonant when adding a suffix beginning with a vowel**

bet, betting; commit, committed; occur, occurrence

**5. Add *-s* to form the plural of most nouns; add *-es* to singular nouns ending in *-s*, *-sh*, *-ch*, and *-x*.**

table, tables; paper, papers

church, churches, dish, dishes

## Spelling Techniques

### 1. Traditional

- Look it up
- Learn the rules
- Study a list of commonly misspelled words
- Write out troublesome words over and over

### 2. Latent Study (Visual)

- Write the word in the centre of a card
- Highlight the troublesome area by using another colour
- Put the card in your line of vision for at least a week

### 3. Nonsense Words (Auditory)

- have someone dictate a list of nonsense words -- or unfamiliar words -- to heighten your awareness of the relationships between spelling and sound

### 4. Phonics (Auditory)

- Learn basic sound-spelling patterns of English
- Break words into syllables and “sound out” each syllable

### 5. Delayed Copying—SEE, SAY, HEAR, AND FEEL (visual, auditory, and tactile)

- Look at the correctly-spelled word
- Look away and pronounce it
- Write it from memory, noticing how your hand moves
- Visualize a blackboard and you writing the word in white chalk
- Check the original to see if you are correct

### 6. Tracing (Tactile)

- Trace the word with your fingertip in various mediums (sand, dirt, on sandpaper, etc.)