

# Robert Price

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## Spelling

Spelling is a skill, which requires a small amount of teaching and lots of meaningful practice within the whole learning classroom, in a non-threatening environment. Learning alphabetic writing provides a foundation to understand patterns easily. Much of my experience with spelling is based on the work of Helen Brown, and Marlene and Robert McCracken. I highly recommend the McCracken's book Spelling Through Phonics available from Peguis Publishers (www.peguis.com or 800.667.9673).

### Phonemic Awareness

To develop an understanding of speech connecting with print children need to be aware of language being broken into words and working with similarities among words (sounds and patterns).

### Practice comes from:

- Writing at least several times each day including journals, math logs, pattern writing, original writing, science, and other writing experiences in the classroom.
- Initially practicing letter formation. Children should be concurrently practicing letters they are learning in spelling.
- Learning to work independently.
- Using word cards for word banks regularly. Have student draw images on the word cards to provide visual cues.



### The *small amount of teaching* spelling includes:

- Five minutes (important to be short and intensive in an exciting energetic manner) daily using the chalkboards to teach a skill.
- Using transitions (approximately two to four minutes in length) to elicit and visually record reoccurring phonetic elements and patterns.
- Students collaboratively recording reoccurring phonetic elements and patterns in their group books.
- Oral language as a foundation for written language.
- Model letter formation to the whole class and individually as needed during practice.

### Writing Tools

- Use a normal size pencil
- For art large paper is great, but for writing use paper children can efficiently work with. If the paper is too large children will have difficulty printing the letters easily.
- Use decent quality paper if possible, so children don't focus on holes from erasing.

The success with spelling is best evaluated through observing real life practice with their pattern, journal, and original writing.

### Introducing the Letter

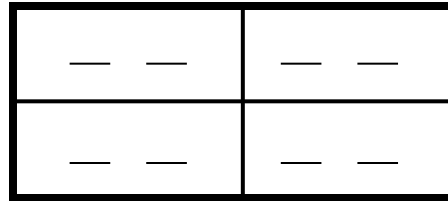
Letters are taught one at a time. In addition to the small groups with chalkboards, the students will practice in sand, chalk outside, and on paper. The students will practice the name and sound of the letter, how we use our mouth to form the sound, and what the letter represents. The students will write the letters on the chalkboards to build an understanding of the letter. This can be done in whole or small groups. After the students have been introduced to the chalkboards, they will usually work in small groups (6-10 children). The small groups would do their five minutes of spelling while the whole class is doing writing (e.g. pattern writing, journal, original writing, etc.)

### Sequencing

These lessons will provide an opportunity for the students to use and understand the letter(s) at the beginning and end of a word. When introducing the letters with words on chalkboards the students will:

- Hear the word (e.g. learning the letter f the students hear the word fabulous)
- The students will say the word together
- The students will be modeled how their mouths work
- The students will write the letter (e.g. *f*) in the correct location
- They will self correct if they need to relocate the letter

The boards will be divided into four sections with two lines in each quarter section for beginning and ending sounds.



### Words

The students will learn six consonants – *m, s, f, b, t,* and *c*. They will then learn the short *a*. They will now learn to form words (e.g. bat, cast, act, fact, sat, cab, fast, mat, mast, bats). To write words the students will divide their boards into four sections. They will:

- Hear the word
- The students will say the word together
- They will hear a sentence
- They will say the word together
- They will sound and write the word
- They will self correct when needed to correct a spelling



When all four words have been completed, they will be asked to point to any word but the last word. A student will be randomly selected to say their selected word. All students will point to the word, and they will repeat the word. I would suggest that the manner of repeating the word vary in times and delivery to enliven the experience and interest. The teacher will also have a chalkboard as a modeling tool used appropriately when needed.

## Multiple Syllable Words

Students will work with multiple syllable words that fit into the foundation of what they have learned (e.g. forget, habit, exit, nutmeg, upset, panic, antic, hotel, etc.). They draw a line under each syllable. This will be modeled.

The children will:

- hear the word
- say the word together
- clap the syllables
- hear a sentence
- say the word together
- clap the syllables
- sound and write the word in  
in syllables (clapping and separating as needed)
- write the complete word below the word written  
in syllables
- self correct when needed to correct a spelling

_____	_____
_____	_____

This will also help students chunk words with their regular writing, especially when they are approximating the word based on the sounds and patterns they know.

It is important for the sequence of introducing and learning the sounds and patterns to be foundational. They need to build on what they know when learning and working with new sounds and patterns. A suggested sequence of teaching letters and patterns is:

Six consonants

Short *a*

Six more consonants

Short *o*

The *s* as a plural

Six more consonants

Short *i*

The remaining consonants except *x* and *qu*

Short *u*

Using *x* and *qu*

Short *e*

The endings *s*, *ing*, *y*, and *er*

Multiple syllable words

The *er*, *ar*, *or*, *ir*, and *ur* sounds

The *ck*, *ic*, *le* sounds

The *g*, *ge*, *dge* sounds

Double consonants including *ll*, *ss*, and *ff*

The *ng* patterns including *ng*, *ing*, *ong*, and *ung*

The *oi* and *oy* patterns

The *ow*, *ou*, and *ous* patterns

The long vowel patterns for all five vowels

The *d* and *ed* patterns

The *oo* patterns

Changing *y* to *ies*

The *tion* pattern

Prefixes and suffixes





### **Self-correcting**

The student(s) will learn to recognize and self correct their writing and spelling. When a student incorrectly spells a word on the chalkboards they will be asked to say (sound) what they have written. They must be looking at the word and sounding what they see, not what they remember hearing. It is important to occasionally ask students what they have written when it is correct to assure students are checking themselves and not only responding because the teacher asked. Some exceptions when assistance should be provided include:

- A student writes a k for a c (or visa versa) and they have not learned about this particular usage. I would positively recognize their proper usage of the 'c' sound and provide them with the correct letter usage.
- Reversals if the student has the proper sound (determined when they shared the word) and have reversed the letter (e.g. d & b). I would quickly model the correct orientation.

### **The Chalkboard Tools**

The chalkboards can be of various sizes. I have found 12" x 18" to be the most effective for spelling and other learning experiences. Since chalkboards can easily and inexpensively be made, I welcome the opportunity to have the students make the boards to create ownership and pride. The materials are slate and chalkboard paint (brush or spray). After painting and drying, the boards should be rubbed down with chalk, then erased, before using. For erasers, I ask the students to bring in old socks, again providing ownership in the process. Slate and chalkboard paint can be found at most hardware stores.

### **Spelling at Home**

If the parents wish to work with their children at home on spelling, I request they visit the classroom where we (the child(ren) and myself) can model how we practice spelling. I want the parents to assist on creating good habits instead of routines that could make spelling more difficult for the child.

