

## Spelling Self-Correction Methods

Goddard, Y.L., & Heron, T.E. (1998, July/Aug). Please teacher, help me learn to spell better – Teach me self-correction. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, (38-43).

These spelling strategies are centered around self-correction techniques requiring students to check and correct their own work; focusing directly on the task at hand. They are learner centered, and have been validated and replicated empirically.

### Letter-by-Letter Proofing

- Emphasizes the orthography (sequencing) of letters, and students use common proofreading marks to check their work.
- A five-column paper, oriented sideways, is provided to each student (see **Figure 1**).
  - 1<sup>st</sup> column – stimulus words written by teacher, parent, or scribe
  - The other 4 columns are blank, providing spaces for students to write words from dictation, proofread, and rewrite.
  - Before dictation, students fold the Word List column under so that the stimulus words cannot be seen.
- As words are dictated, students write them in the second column (Column 2, **Figure 1**).
- After all words in the spelling list have been dictated and written, students unfold the Word List column to check each word and to correct misspellings with one of four proofreading marks (^ = add; O = omit; ~ = reverse letters; and / = wrong letter that they have learned and practiced beforehand).
- Then they either write the corrected words in the third column (Column 3, **Figure 1**) or place a checkmark (✓) to signify that the word was spelled correctly on the initial trial.
- This sequence is repeated for the final two columns (4 and 5) until the 15 – 20 minute spelling period is over.
- **Figure 1** shows an example of how this process is done
- Words can be personalized, or adapted to curriculum.
- Students can be paired to dictate to each other, or by tape recording.
- Spelling lessons take place daily (Monday through Thursday) for the same amount of time each day (15 – 20 minutes), and tests on Friday.
- Each Monday through Thursday students receive a new sheet with the same words in the Word List column (words may be shuffled).
- Any words misspelled on Friday are carried over for the next week.

## Whole-Word Proofing

- This is similar to Letter-by-Letter Proofing, except that students use a different process that doesn't involve proofreading marks.
- The same five-column format is used, but each cell in columns 2-5 is divided in half horizontally (see [Figure 2](#)) and students use one column for writing and proofing, as opposed to two columns in the Letter-by-Letter method.
- When the students write the words initially in the second column (column 2, [Figure 2](#)) they use the bottom half of the cell, below the dotted line, for that word.
- When they unfold the Word List column to check the words, they place a checkmark (✓) in the top half of the cell, above the dotted line, for the words that were spelled correctly.
- For misspelled words, they write the entire word above the misspelled one; no proofreading marks are used.
- Again, this procedure continues throughout the 15 – 20 minute spelling period.
- [Figure 2](#) shows an example of how this process is done.

Figure 1  
Letter-by-Letter Proofreading

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3	COLUMN 4	COLUMN 5
	r			
horse	house	horse	horse	
better	better	better	better	√
			a	
passage	passage	passage	passge	passage
brain	brian	brain	brain	√
	e		e	
forget	forgot	forget	forgt	forget
	a		a	
measure	meesure	measure	mesure	measure
target	target	√	target	√
activate	activate	√	activate	√
	r		y	
forty	foty	forty	forti	forty
	na e		n e	
pinnacle	pineccal	pinnacle	pinacal	pinnacle

Figure 2  
Whole-Word Corrections

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3	COLUMN 4	COLUMN 5
	horse	✓	✓	✓
horse	house	horse	horse	horse
	better	✓	✓	✓
better	bettter	better	better	
	passage	passage	passage	✓
passage	passgae	passige	passge	passage
	brain	✓	✓	✓
brain	brian	brain	brain	brain
	forget	forget	forget	✓
forget	forgot	forgit	forgt	forget
	measure	measure	measure	measure
measure	meesure	mesure	mesure	measure
	✓	✓	✓	✓
target	target	target	target	target
	✓	✓	✓	✓
activate	activate	activate	activate	activate
	forty	✓	forty	✓
forty	foty	forty	forti	forty
	pinnacle	pinnacle	pinnacle	✓
pinnacle	pineccal	pinnicle	pinacal	pinnalce