

## **A Closer Look at Spelling in the Primary Classroom**

### **Authors**

Grace Oakley & Janet Fellowes

In this book the authors take a closer look at spelling, the teaching and learning of which is considerably more complex than is often assumed. Research indicates that the ability to spell does not develop naturally through immersion in writing and reading experiences (Farrall, 2012), nor can it be effectively acquired through the rote learning of words. In order to spell well, children need to learn how to strategically use knowledge about phonology, orthography, morphology and etymology. It is also a visual activity that involves the laying down and retrieval of visual representations of words and word parts in memory. Children also need to learn how to use the metalanguage associated with spelling – words like phoneme, syllable, affixes and morpheme – as this will help them talk and think about spelling strategies. Thus, spelling is a language activity and also a thinking activity. Ideally, it should also be a meaningful activity that is engaged in with a positive attitude.

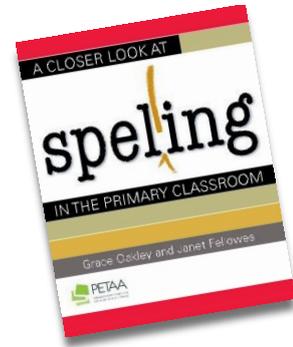
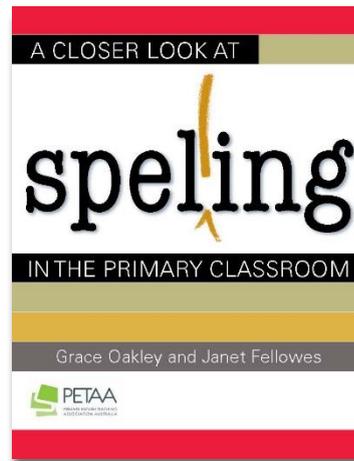
The authors draw on the theoretical and research literature, as well as classroom examples, to explain how to teach primary school aged children to use multiple strategies to spell. They also consider the assessment of spelling, as well as how to assist those who have difficulties in learning to spell. In doing this, the authors question the notion that spelling always develops in a predictable, hierarchical sequence, starting with the use of phonology (sounds), through to the use of morphology and etymology (word meanings and origins).

One size does not fit all in spelling instruction. Each class includes children with a diversity of needs, abilities, dispositions and interests. The notion of differentiated teaching that is centred around children's individual needs is outlined in this book. While well-grounded in research, this book also includes many practical strategies in helping children continue their development in spelling, beyond the beginnings. In support of the classroom focus of this book, a number of case studies are presented that highlight experienced teachers 'work in practice'.

The authors also review a variety of assessment strategies, pointing out some of their advantages and limitations.

The work makes links to the *Australian Curriculum: English*

This book would help primary and preservice teachers by providing them with understandings, based on research and theory, which would help them choose and use appropriate pedagogical strategies (also provided in the book) to teach spelling to children with diverse needs, including children from EAL/D backgrounds and those with difficulties and disabilities that impact on spelling.



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