

HOW TO TEACH SPELLING

© 2008

The
MASUTA[©]
sequence
for teaching spelling.

MASUTA gives the teacher control over the teaching of spelling.

*“To successfully apply the spelling of a word to memory
the word must be meaningful to the learner.”*

THRASS[®]
TEACHING HANDWRITING READING AND SPELLING SKILLS



Is your school not getting the expected results in spelling on a state or national basis?

THE EXPLICIT TEACHING OF SPELLING

Many children can wrongly be regarded as ‘good spellers’ because they are able to achieve 20/20 in a class spelling test. Unfortunately, many of these ‘good spellers’ get these same words wrong in their everyday spelling. Thus, as they pass through the grades, on one hand they are regarded as ‘good spellers’ because of results gained from weekly testing but looking at their spelling in everyday application and when tested using a standardised spelling test, their actual spelling looks as though it is going backwards.

The problem is they actually don’t know ‘how to spell’. They have a bank of words they can spell by rote but don’t know how to actually spell them. They do not have the strategies needed to successfully apply this information in everyday work or to encode newly encountered words.

The MASUTA spelling sequence ensures that learners are taught the skills and understandings of ‘HOW TO SPELL’ words as opposed to the many ineffectual methods including the ‘look-cover-check’ model of rote learning spelling.

The MASUTA spelling sequence ensures that spelling becomes the foundation of comprehending all learning that the learner encounters throughout the day.

The MASUTA spelling sequence ensures that both teaching and learning time is productive and valuable for further learning.

The MASUTA spelling sequence develops competent and adventurous spellers.

SPELLING WORKBOOKS AND WORKSHEETS FAIL LEARNERS

Giving learners an abstract spelling list of words that have no meaning or link to everyday work is an ineffectual use of both the teacher’s and learner’s time. To become a good speller, the words chosen to be learnt must be meaningful and useful to the learner if they are going to be applied to memory. The spelling of a word must be practised in context to develop applied comprehension.

Purchasing expensive spelling workbooks which give the learner an unrelated list of words to learn weekly by rote is ineffective and detrimental to the learning process. This type of work does not transcend into reading comprehension and thus the time spent working in these spelling workbooks is detrimental to both the learning process and to the school’s or parent’s budget. Many of these books provide ‘page turner, fill-in sheets’ which only require the learner to write, ‘fill-in’ a missing grapheme, colour a grapheme or link words with the same pattern. They do not provide the explicit strategies and skills needed to successfully encode newly encountered words.

Many learners become ‘form-fillers’ and cannot spell a word because they do not have sufficient knowledge of all the phonemes and graphemes that make up a word or how they ‘link’ to the big picture.

Not exploring words for meaning, phonetic structure, writing words as a whole or working with words within context (constructing and writing a complete sentence), is detrimental to the writing, spelling and the reading comprehension process.

A SCHOOL BASED SPELLING PROGRAM

Spelling should be a standardised whole-school program. It should be centred around a consistent spelling sequence that can be implemented from the start of the learning process and applied at each level of learning. It needs to be easily monitored using standardised tests to check progress at each level. Standardised testing should be done twice a year, in approximately, May/June, to check that progress is being made and December to show yearly growth and provide a benchmark for the next learning year. Spelling progress should not be reliant on weekly testing of words. Spelling should be monitored for application in every day work. This cannot be done if the spelling teaching relies on a set of unrelated words which do not provide for the applied process of spelling, in context.

PHONICS AND SPELLING

Phonics is the understanding of how the units of speech, phonemes (speech sounds we produce) are represented in the written form. Phonemes are the smallest units of sound we use to differentiate the meaning of words. For example, each of the following words has three phonemes: cat, mat, chat, that and pat - the last two phonemes in each word are the same - the first phoneme in each word is different. Each phoneme change, changes the meaning of the word. In the words map, man, mat, mad and match, there are three phonemes in each word. The first two phonemes are common but the last phoneme is different - each phoneme change, changes the meaning of the word. In the words set, seat, sat and sit there are three phonemes, two in common but the middle phoneme is different - each phoneme change, changes the meaning of the word.

Children **MUST BE TAUGHT** to clearly distinguish phonemes in words. With this knowledge they are more able to check that each phoneme is represented when writing a word. Understanding phonics patterns, graphemes for phonemes, gives the learner greater confidence when experimenting with spelling and enables them without contradiction, to more quickly and accurately apply the correct grapheme (spelling choice), for each phoneme in a word.

These phonics patterns then have to be applied to memory for correct use within context. A child must be able to differentiate when to use a particular spelling of a phoneme. For example, see or sea, be or bee, bean or been. The spelling of these words relies heavily on both meaning and knowledge of phonics patterns and can only be done within context. Understanding phonics patterns, gives the learner greater confidence, choice and the ability to confidently analyse and use environmental print when experimenting independently with spelling in the writing process.

BEING TAUGHT to distinguish and synthesise phonemes in words helps the learner when spelling words and when checking the spelling of a word, that is, that each phoneme must be represented by a grapheme. For example, many children will write 'hse' instead of 'h ou se', 'fshng' instead of 'f i sh i ng', 'junt' instead of 'j u m p ed'. They are not synthesising and representing all the phonemes. If the child is taught to read back and synthesise the phonemes represented in their spelling, they will be more confident to independently check the accuracy of their own spelling.

In the Synthesis level of the MASUTA Spelling Sequence, phoneme deletion and manipulation exercises provide teaching strategies to develop this skill.

Knowledge of phonics helps in both the encoding and decoding of words. Having a good visual memory of phonic and orthographic patterns, frees up cognitive space allowing for more resources to be used to integrate information when reading and writing.

PHONICS MUST BE EXPLICITLY TAUGHT

Phonics is a learned skill therefore phonics must be explicitly taught. That is, learners will enter school with little or no knowledge of phonetics and it is the job of the teacher to teach them how to hear individual phonemes in words, how to synthesise phonemes to make words, the graphemes that represent each individual phoneme and the orthography of English.

MOST IMPORTANTLY,

the teacher must have a solid understanding and sound subject knowledge of the phonetics of English for them to successfully teach their learners.

IMPORTANT

Without this working knowledge, teachers cannot successfully teach the phonetics necessary for spelling, writing and grammar. As in maths, it is not just the correct answer that is important, the working memory and understanding of how to achieve the correct answer is vital to the cognitive process for future learning.

LEARNING INTELLIGENCES FOR MEMORY

Each of us learns in an individual way. The more of the learner's senses we use to carry out a teaching task the more chance we have in working to each learner's learning 'style'. Many of us use combinations of learning styles, that is why it is important to plan lessons to cater for these differences.

It is important to remember that when using the term 'learning styles' it is not to be confused with learning content. It is not about teaching different information but what intelligences we use to acquire particular information. In maths, 3×4 will always make 12, but how we acquire that information will depend on our learning intelligence.

LEARNING INTELLIGENCES used when teaching with THRASS

1. *Auditory: Speaking, listening and hearing.*

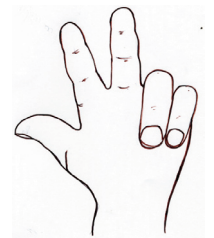
The THRASSCHARTS provide a physical reference to teach letters, phonemes, graphemes and words. The THRASS Raps & Sequences CD, Rap and Tap DVD and THRASS IT computer program provide the auditory activities to acquire phonetic knowledge within context.

2. *Visual: Seeing and identifying.*

The THRASSCHARTS provide a visual reference to teach letters, phonemes, graphemes and words. The THRASS Rap and Tap DVD and THRASS IT computer program provide the visual activities to acquire phonetic knowledge. The Magnetic Grapheme tiles, Phoneme-Grapheme Cards and Hotwords Cards provide a visual reference when teaching phonics in context. The THRASSWORDS boardgame and Jigsaw provide reinforcement and revision.

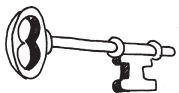
3. *Tactile: Feeling and writing.*

Fingers are used to physically identify, count and order phonemes in words. The Magnetic Grapheme tiles are used to physically show the number of phonemes in a word and the grapheme choices. The Magnetic Grapheme tiles can be written on with a dry marker. The THRASS handwriting activities teach and practise the physical skill of writing letters, graphemes, words and sentences. The THRASSCHARTS provide a physical reference to write over grapheme choices. The THRASS-IT computer program provides tactile activities to acquire phonetic knowledge in context. The THRASS Jigsaw provides a tactile manipulation of the THRASSCHART.



COUNTING PHONEMES

Use your fingers to identify and count phonemes in words. This we refer to as 'our phoneme fingers'. It gives a physical reference to each phoneme in a word. It is an important reference for early learning and ensures that the teacher is catering for all learning styles.



HANDWRITING

Handwriting is the key to spelling. Until a learner can automatically identify letters by name and write letters the learning process for spelling will be inhibited.

Handwriting is a skill and as with any skill it must be practised. The more the learner is encouraged to write the more competent they become at writing. The more the learner is able to practise writing the spelling of words the more competent they become at spelling. The more the learner is able to practise the structure of a sentence the more competent they become at sentence construction.

Using phonic and spelling worksheets and workbooks where learners are asked to fill in either only parts of words (unrelated graphemes), missing words in a sentence instead of writing a sentence as a whole or colouring a group of related words/graphemes, instead of writing whole words etc, is an ineffectual use of both the teacher's and learner's time.

DICTATION, SPELLING AND SENTENCE STRUCTURE

Dictation is essential to the spelling process. It helps the learner with word meaning, spelling and sentence structure. It is essential to listening skills, ordering skills, memory skills and handwriting skills. Dictation should be a daily task and used as a revision activity for previously learnt words.

MASUTA[©] is a teaching sequence used to successfully teach spelling and word comprehension.

Meaning

Orally articulate the word. Explore the meaning. Articulate the meaning.
Explore alternate meanings. Explore homophones of the word.
For example, see or sea, be or bee, bean or been, their, there.

Analysis

Identify and segment the individual phonemes in the word.
Identify the graphemes that represent each phoneme.
Identify graphemes/ syllable sets that may need particular attention.
By analogy, link words with the same grapheme/s.

Synthesis

Say/synthesise the phonemes in the word in the correct sequence (synthetic phonics).
Explore phonetic understanding and synthesis using phoneme deletion/manipulation activities.
For example, f r o g, without the 'r' would be 'f o g', s t r e e t without the first 't' would be s r e e t.

Using memory

Identify and synthesise phonemes in spelling words from memory.
Identify graphemes in spelling words from memory.
Link words with like phoneme patterns from memory.
Link words with like grapheme patterns from memory.
Link words with the same rhymes from memory.
Spell graphemes/words from memory using letter names.

Testing

Test List Words to assess that the learner is able to:

1. Articulate the word.
2. Articulate the word in a sentence to show meaning.
3. Identify and synthesise the phonemes in the word.
4. Isolate and write particular graphemes related to the word.
5. Spell the word correctly using letter names.

Standardised Testing to be undertaken twice a year to accurately monitor progress.

Applying

Apply skills and strategies to correctly spell words in everyday writing and dictation activities. Using learned skills and strategies to encode unfamiliar words.

MASUTA gives the teacher control over teaching spelling.

BUILDING YOUR SPELLING LISTS

THRASS: WORKING FROM THE KNOWN TO THE UNKNOWN

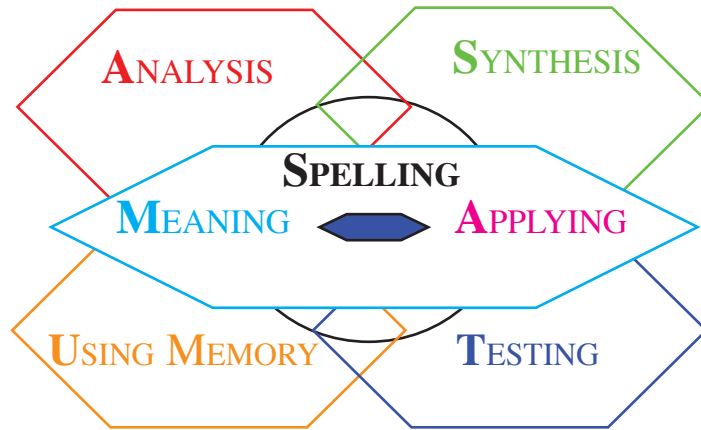
* denotes THRASSWORDS and THRASS Hotwords

Term 1

SAMPLE THEMES

<p>HIGH FREQUENCY WORDS Hotwords</p>	<p>said* was* to*, do* find* what* why* which* that* how* many*</p>	<p>because* come* some* came* now* so* when* has* draw my*</p>
<p>MATHS Numbers to 10 Shapes</p>	<p>one* two* three* four* five* six* seven* eight * nine * ten*</p>	<p>circle* triangle* square* rectangle*</p>
<p>LITERACY Books The Mouse In My House</p>	<p>read write key* moon* night* giant* treasure* took* sleep* creep</p>	<p>house* mouse* light * book* bridge* over* next* station* door*</p>
<p>GRAMMAR plurals adding 's' and adding a second syllable with the phoneme change for 'es'.</p>	<p>key*, keys moon*, moons night*, nights house*, houses bridge*, bridges ear*, ears</p>	<p>nose*, noses eye, eyes</p>

A SAMPLE MASUTA TEACHING SEQUENCE



WEEK 1, List 1

Lists compiled from:

Health – Theme - My Body

Science – Theme - Space

S.O.S.E. – Theme - People

High Frequency words

Mathematics

Literacy

Grammar

Plurals

head*

mouth*

tongue*

taste*

crater

air

asteroid*

fly*

what*

why*

which*

that*

how*

square*

rectangle*

blue*

moon*

night*

giant*

treasure*

Meaning

Explore the meaning of the word.

Teacher: Who knows what a head is? Where on our body is our head?

Is it on the top or bottom of our body? What are some of the things on our head? *Distinguishing where the head is - e.g top of body, helps the learner discover other uses of the word 'head' e.g. Headmaster, masthead, head of the table, ahead etc.*

Teacher to write the word on the board.

head

Analysis

Analyse the word

Step 1

Teacher: The phonemes we can hear in head are (h) (ea) (d)

Use your 'phoneme fingers', altogether, (h) (ea) (d)

Learners reply: (h) (ea) (d)

Repeat a number of times

Step 2

Teacher: Let's match it to our THRASSWORDS. Listen -

(h) as in hand, (ea) as in bread, (d) as in dog.

Now let's match head to our THRASSWORDS together.

Learners reply: (h) as in hand, (ea) as in bread, (d) as in dog.

Repeat a number of times

Step 3

Teacher: What letters do we use to write (h) in hand?

What letters do we use to write (ea) in bread?

What letters do we use to write (d) in dog?

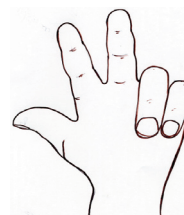
So how do we spell head?

Learners reply: 'h' 'e' 'a' 'd'

Teacher to write the graphemes on the board.

h e a d

Use the **MAGNETIC GRAPHEMES** to show the individual graphemes.



Note: When doing these activities you are not just working with one isolated phoneme/grapheme. All the phoneme/grapheme links for a word are being dealt with in the same lesson.

Synthesis

Synthesise the phonemes in the word

Step 1

Teacher: Use your 'phoneme fingers' to indicate the number of phonemes in head in the correct order, (h) (ea) (d)

Step 2

Phoneme/grapheme depletion/manipulation

Teacher: What would we say if we left off the 'h' in head?

Teacher: What would we say if we left off the 'ea' in head?

Teacher: What would we say if we swapped the 'h' and the 'd' in head?

Note: Phoneme deletion/manipulation activities help the teacher to assess if the learner is hearing all the phonemes correctly in a word and is able to correctly order phonemes for spelling and speech.



Using memory

Memory activities must incorporate tactile, auditory and visual skills.

Memory activities should cater for individual work and the collaborative interaction of social learning.

Develop collaborative learning by playing fun games in pairs, groups or teams.

The THRASS Resource Kit contains a number of sheets that have been designed for this purpose. The THRASS Magnetic Graphemes are also designed to be used daily to develop memory skills. Use a board and markers for team games to test analysis and synthesis. To test for meaning and understanding play guessing games such as 'What Am I?', 'What do I do?', 'Where would you find me?', 'How am I used?'

Testing

Testing should be carried out at the end of each week.

It is not only the spelling of a word that is important. Meaning and grapheme understanding is vital to developing good spelling skills which will be sustainable and allow for further development of spelling writing and comprehension skills.

Lists should be tested to assess that the learner is able to:

1. Articulate the word.
2. Put the word in a sentence to show meaning.
3. Be able synthesise the phonemes in the word.
4. Isolate and write particular graphemes related to a word.
5. Spell the word correctly using letter names.

Note: As in maths, it is not just the correct answer that is important. The working memory and understanding of how to achieve the correct answer is vital to the cognitive process for future learning.

Applying

Dictation - Assessing that the learner can write the word in context.

The ability to use this knowledge in everyday writing.

For example in a Health/Phys Ed. lesson - applying the spelling word head.

Teacher: 'We learnt the word head in spelling today. Why is our head important? What is inside our head? What are some of the things on our head? What are they used for? How should we protect our head? Where is our brain? What does it do? Write some notes about our why our head is important'.

RECORDING PHONEME/GRAPHEME TEACHING

Use either or both of the sheets below from the Reading Section of your THRASS Resource File to record phoneme/grapheme teaching.

Sheet 1

Record the phonemes of English and THRASS graphemes taught on this sheet.

Example: h ea d

- three phonemes
- three graphemes

THRASS

b bb

c k ck ch q

ch tch

✓ d dd

f ff ph

g gg

THRASS

✓ h

j g ge dge

l ll

m mm mb

n nn kn

ng n

THRASS

p pp

r rr wr

s ss se c ce

s

sh ti ch

t tt

THRASS

th

th

v ve

w wh u

y

z zz ze s se

COMBINED SAY, NAME AND OVERWRITE SHEET

COMBINED SAY, NAME AND OVERWRITE SHEET

THRASS

a

a a-e ai ay

air are

ar a

e ea

✓ e ea ee ey y

THRASS

ear eer

er ar or ure a e i o u

er ir or ur

THRASS

i y

i i-e igh y

o a

o oa o-e ow

oi oy

THRASS

oo u

oo ew ue

ure

or a au aw oor

ow ou

u o

52

*GCA SHEET

Can you find a GCA for each of the 44 phonemes?
Add the GCA to the phoneme-box and write an example word.

b bb		y
c k ck ch q		z zz ze s se
ch tch		a
✓ d dd		✓ a-e ai ay
f ff ph		air are
g gg		ar a
✓		e ea
j g ge dge		e ea ee ey y
l ll		ear eer
m mm mb		er ar or ure a e i o u
n nn kn		er ir or ur
ng n	ngue	i y
p pp		i i-e igh y
r rr wr		o a
✓ ss se c ce		o oa o-e ow
s		oi oy
sh ti ch		oo u
✓ tt	te	oo ew ue
th		ure
th		or a au aw oor
v ve		ow ou
w wh u		u ✓

THRASS®

THRASS READING 54

Sheet 2

Record all graphemes taught on this sheet.

Examples:

h ea d

t o ngue

t a s te

WORKING WITH PARENTS TO CONSOLIDATE LEARNING

Many schools are concerned that parents want to have a definitive spelling list for their child. Below is a 'letter to parents' explaining the methodology and philosophy of using the MASUTA sequence for learning spelling. This document can be reproduced in part or whole as an explanation of how to teach spelling. This letter is downloadable from the THRASS AUSTRALIA website, www.thrass.com.au/parentletter.htm.

A LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear Parent

Spelling and literacy as a whole are a priority in this school. If a child cannot successfully spell words then they are less likely to succeed at formal learning. Skills and strategies for learning 'how to spell' are a very important part of the spelling process. Even if a child is able to 'spell a word', if they do not understand the process they cannot use this knowledge to spell unfamiliar words. As in maths, it is not just the correct answer that is important, the working memory and understanding of how to achieve the correct answer is vital to the cognitive process (deep understanding) for future learning.

Scientific research has shown phonics is a crucial strategy in the understanding of 'how to spell'. Knowing the 44 sounds of English and the various spelling choices that represent these sounds enables the learner to understand orthography (the spelling system of our language) and not be confused by restricted phonic patterns. For example, in English the letter 'c' does not just represent the sound (c) as heard at the beginning of words like cat. It can represent the sound (s) as in the words city, cent, Cindy etc. The sound (f) is not just represented by the letter 'f' but can be represented by the letters 'ph', as in photo, Sophie, Philip and Phoebe. The letter 'y' does not just represent the sound heard at the beginning of yawn, but more commonly represents the sound heard at the end of words like city, pony and Kelly, or the sound in the words my, tyre, fly and by. Our school is committed to explicit, hands on phonics teaching. We look at phonics patterns within a whole-word approach. That is, if we are teaching the word fish we focus on all the sounds not just one.

Research has shown that students with a more comprehensive vocabulary and a greater understanding of the meanings of words, will more successfully apply words to memory for spelling and are more competent in comprehension and writing. Spelling must be practised. Writing words in context to show meaning is a vital part of your child's spelling program. The spelling lists that your children will be working on at this school will be compiled by the classroom teacher and will contain words from all subjects focusing on relevant themes. The words will be relevant to their everyday learning, not just an abstract list of words from a commercially produced spelling book. The teacher will be focusing on word meaning, the phonetic structure of the word, links to other words with similar structure and the grammatical use of the word - plurals and tenses.

Your role as a parent is important in this process. Talking with your children about the meaning of words from the relevant classroom themes, using dictionaries and looking at the grammatical changes in words is far more important than 'rote' learning a word for testing at the end of the week. The more the learner can see the word in context, understand the meaning, make phonic links and practise writing words in a fun and meaningful way, the more competent and adventurous speller they will become. You will also be building vocabulary for future learning.

Our school will be using THRASS as the basis for phonics teaching and the MASUTA Spelling Sequence to develop your child's spelling skills and strategies. It is important that your child learns the THRASSCHART, so that they are able to use the phonic information to decode (read) and encode (spell) words. Having this knowledge will allow your child to develop skills in reading, spelling, writing and reading comprehension enabling them to reach their full potential in literacy learning.

WIRE THE MOUNTAIN
Pokemon

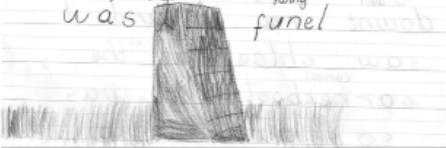
VDOIFWUG
video
fun

**VELS (Victorian Essential Learning Standards)
PREP WRITING SAMPLE EXPECTATIONS FOR TERM 4**

PREP WRITING SAMPLE TERM 4

Emily
It was a sunny weekend.
I went to a giant garden
I got a spari sparkle
braystert my mum said
downt rec it and. I
saw chloe at the
cornerboot it was
so awserm so

after that we went
home. I liked it.
there was a clown
there. @ the clown
was funny



**PREP WRITING SAMPLES
FOR TERM 4, using THRASS
and the MASUTA spelling
model.**

For your school's interest
THRASS has hundreds of
'whole-class' work
samples from
Prep, 1 & 2.
5/6, 6/7, 7/8

The samples shown
reflect the expectations
THRASS has of learners
who have been taught
using THRASS and
the MASUTA spelling
sequence.

It was a sunny and windy
day When I went to
Little athelead. I had to
wear shorts and a green top
because I was windem
vool they where green.
My teachers name was
s Struetm First he took
around the chral so we
kood have a little look
around the chral so w
kood see wat it rily looks
like.

PREP WRITING SAMPLE TERM 4

I had a boring weekend on
sunday. I had to stay inside but
I went outside once to see
wat my dad was doing. I was
inside playing with my brats boks
that I got for my birthday. I
brushed one of my dolls hair
and it went all over my rilly

REFERENCES

Anderson, V., Browney, J., Bretheron, L., Brunson, R., CASTLES, A., Coltheart, M., Coltheart, V., Cupples, L., de Lemos, M Fielding-Barnsley, R., Fletcher, J., Heath, S., Hogben, J., Iacono, T., Joy, P., McAurthur, G., Newell, P., Nickels, L., Smith-Lock, K., Stuart, G.W., Wheldall, K., Byrne, B., Hempenstall, K., Leitio, S., Pammer, K., & Prior, M (2004, March). Reading instruction in Australian schools: An 'open' letter to Dr Brendan Nelson, Australian Government Minister for Education, Science and Training.

Louden, W., Chan, L., Elkins, J., Greaves, D., House, H., Milton, M., Nichols, S., Rohl, M., Riverlanf, J., & Van Krayenoord, C. (2000). Mapping the territory, primary students with learning difficulties: Literacy and numeracy, Canberra: Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

Munroe, J (1998). Phonological and phonemic awareness: Their impact on learning to read prose and to spell. Australian Journal of Learning Disabilities, 3(2), 15-21.

Munroe, J (1999). The phonemic-orthographic nexus. Australian Journal of Learning Disabilities, 4(3), 27-34.

Munroe, J (1999). The phoneme awareness span: A neglected dimension of phonemic awareness. Australian Developmental and Educational Psychologist, 17(1), 70-89.

Rohl, M., & Greaves, D (2004), June). What's happening with pre-service preparation of teachers for literacy and numeracy teaching in Australia? Paper presented at the Sixth British Dyslexia Association (BDA) international conference, London, UK, 14 June 2004.

Rowe, K.J. (Chair). (2005). Teaching reading literature review: A review of evidence-based research literature on approaches to the teaching of literacy, particularly those that are effective in assisting students with reading difficulties. A report of the Committee for the National Inquiry into teaching Literacy. Canberra, ACT: Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training.

Westwood, P.S. (2001). Reading and learning difficulties: Approaches to teaching and Assessment, Camberwell, VIC: ACER Press