



Critical Appraisal Form

Date:20-Jan-21

Members in Discussion: 5

Article: Moxam, C. (2020). The Link Between Language and Spelling: What Speech-Language Pathologists and Teachers Need to Know. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 51, 939-954.

Summary:

This tutorial details how speech and language skills are closely linked to the process of learning to spell. The complexities of English spelling are described, including domains that are linked to spelling (i.e., speech, phonological awareness, morphological awareness, alphabetic knowledge, motor skills, semantics, phonics, and visual and auditory skills). A breakdown of the spelling process is described in terms of transparency of orthography, and a variety of spelling theories are explained (i.e., the stage/phase models, cognitive neuropsychological theories, a constructionist view, and a triple word form theory). The linguistic domains of difficulty implicated in spelling errors are outlined: Alphabetic, morphological awareness, orthography, phonological awareness, and semantics. A 9 year-old male case example is provided, and his listed errors are interpreted in terms of linguistic domains of difficulty. For example, “*Target word: stories; Spelling: storys; Linguistic domain of difficulty: Morphology; Interpretation: Is aware of how to signal plural in spelling; Is aware of use of s but not of alternative options; Intervention Suggestion: Morphological Awareness -focus on teaching inflectional morphology.* In this case, plural forms and how to signal them in spelling –s or –es endings (change *y* to *i* then add es)” (p. 947). The tutorial proposes that the SLP’s knowledge base places them in a well-suited position to support learners by applying a linguistically informed approach to assessing and teaching spelling.

Strengths and Limitations of research article:

This is not a research article and is a tutorial

	Compelling	Suggestive	Equivocal/Uncertain
Validity		n/a	
Clinical importance		n/a	

Clinical Implications/Discussion:

Members agreed that the content of this article was informative. Members questioned the amount of focus schools currently place on spelling and whether or not an increased focus on spelling was a priority for them given their current caseloads. Members were mixed on whether they would consider incorporating more focus on spelling remediation into their current practice. An identification of spelling error types and related consultation with teaching staff was what one member suggested she could potentially apply moving forward in her school setting. Opening up a spelling focused conversation with teaching staff was discussed as a way to feasibly integrate this material into practice. Generally, members did not plan to incorporate direct spelling treatment into their sessions, and described involvement in the evaluation aspect as being more realistic moving forward.