

Sept 17, 2020

WordWorks Newsletter #100!

Headlines for this special 100th WW Newsletter

- ❖ The [Real Spelling Tool Box 2](#) now On-Line!
- ❖ Upcoming on-line workshops
- ❖ Special publication on the “inquiry” of structured word inquiry

It is hard to believe this is our 100th WW Newsletter.

WordWorks started in 2006 when I was at the beginning of my PhD at the Faculty of Education at Queen’s. This was long before the phrase “structured word inquiry” was used to describe the instruction in our vocabulary intervention ([Bowers & Kirby, 2010](#)).

The very first act of WordWorks was to bring Real Spelling to Kingston for a workshop and model lessons in local schools. When we started with my wife Sus, and good friend fellow grad student Leah Roth, the only resource I knew of that presented a linguistically valid understanding of English orthography was Real Spelling. Think how many people around the world today provide professional development and resources to support this kind of orthographic understanding!



Upcoming Public On-Line SWI Workshops

Click [HERE](#) for a document with a description of all the courses I currently offer. The times and dates (for EST in North America) are below. Prices in USD. Click the links to email me to register.

- 🕒 **General 5-session SWI Course** (\$200, Register [HERE](#))
(Click [HERE](#) for detailed description of this course.)
Oct 7, 14, 21, 28, Nov 4
7:30 - 9:00 pm EST (1.5 hour sessions)
- 🕒 **Early SWI 5 Session Course co-led by Pete Bowers & Carolee Fucigna** (\$300 Register [HERE](#))
Oct 8, 15, 22, 29, Nov. 5
7:30 - 9:30 pm EST (2 hour sessions)
- 🕒 **2-session course: Etymological/ Morphological families, Reading Etymonline & Constructing Matrices** (\$100 Register [HERE](#))
Oct 9, 16
7:30 - 9:30 pm EST (2-hour sessions)
- 🕒 **Spelling-Out Orthography: Writing-out-loud, spelling- out-loud and how SWI draws on instructional recommendations from Cognitive Load Theory** (\$60 Register [HERE](#))
Sat Oct 17
2:00 - 5:00 pm EST (3-hour session)
- 🕒 **Working with Teaching How the Written Word Works** (\$50 Register [HERE](#))
Oct 19
7:30 - 9:30 pm EST

It was in 2001 that I first encountered Real Spelling at an education conference in Bangkok. That 45-minute session turned my understanding of English spelling and how to teach the written word upside-down. When I used the lessons from my intervention study for the first version of my teacher resource book, [Teaching How the Written Word Works](#) in 2006, my main goal was to provide a teacher-accessible resource that would provide understanding needed to motivate deeper study with Real Spelling Tool Box. Each of my lessons pointed to Tool Box Themes with more detail on orthographic conventions raised by my lessons. The page at right from my book points to 6 Real Spelling Themes that address orthographic concepts related to this investigation.

Around 2010 Real Spelling revised the paper version of the Tool Box with "Tool Box 2." This was a multi-media resource on disk. In addition to the new technical features, each theme was significantly revised in line with the evolving understanding of Real Spelling, and with the awareness that there was now an audience with far more sophisticated orthographic understanding than in 2001. Eventually, the technology used to build Tool Box 2 stopped being reliable and Real Spelling took it off the market. It was so frustrating knowing this understanding existed out but unavailable.

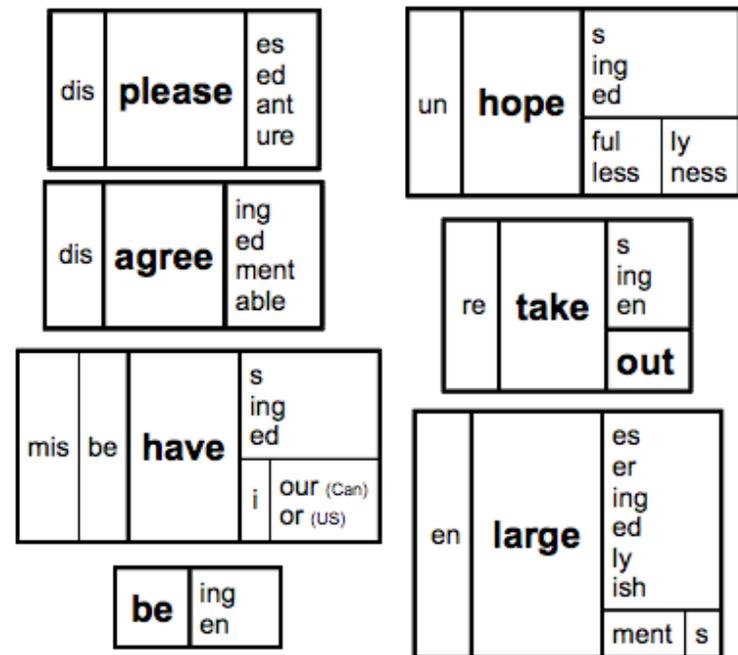
Finally, with the blessing of Real Spelling, Matt Berman of [Real Spellers](#) and the person who first connected me with the [Nueva School](#), began the enormous task of transferring Tool Box 2 to an on-line version. Today I get to announce that the initial version of this amazing reference is now available again.

Activity #2 Continued...

B) Testing our Hypothesis:

These matrices build on *base words* (a one *morpheme* word - no *prefix* or *suffix*) that end with the letter <e>.

- Create word sums from a variety of the matrices to test our class hypothesis. (Only build a few words from each matrix.)
- If you are unsure of the spelling of a word, check with a dictionary or ask for help.
- Be ready to share interesting discoveries with the class. Any surprising findings or pronunciation changes when you add affixes?
- No matrix is comprehensive. Can you think of other prefixes or suffixes these matrices could use?



Real Spelling Tool Box™ Connections

- 1D - The effect of suffixes on a single silent <e>
 1B - Making plurals - l- whether to use <-es> or just <-s>
 3G - The end of base words <dge> or just <ge>? the suffix <-age> (Understanding the silent <e> in <large>.)
 1G - 'long' and 'short' vowels and the single silent <e>
 1I - Homophones - l- (Make sense of the silent <e> in <please>.)
 1H - Compound words - l- (Does <takeout> break suffixing conventions?)

Without Real Spelling there would simply be no WordWorks, no structured word inquiry, nor would there be any similar form of orthographic understanding/instruction in schools. I've been holding off on publishing this 100th WordWorks Newsletter until I had something that felt sufficiently celebratory to share. I can think of nothing more appropriate than the the announcement of the resurrection of this invaluable reference for generations to come.

Click [HERE](#) for the announcement Matt sent out to subscribers of his [Real Spellers](#) website a few days ago. It provides more detail about this amazing new resource. You will see that 100% of the funds from subscriptions go directly to Real Spelling. Matt refuses to take any funds for the countless hours of work he has put into this and the many hours he still has to put in.

I can't convey how much I appreciate the work of Real Spelling and Matt Berman to make this resource available. The community of scholars around the world today is so far ahead of where we were in 2001, or 2010. Now, the community of people providing and learning from courses, school workshops and resources is only going to grow faster.

- ❖ Click [HERE](#) for more information and to sign up for an annual or life-time-of-the-site subscription.
- ❖ Click [HERE](#) for the free model theme "Learning from Love" to get a sense of how this resource works.

Upcoming on-line workshops

On the previous page you can see the new on-line courses I am offering. The learning in these courses has been inspiring. The opportunity for participants to have a fairly short session and then time to try things in class and come back is such a powerful model. I've been running workshops and working with schools on Zoom for years, but this pandemic has made me move all my work onto this medium. I've expanded the number and types of courses and direct workshops with schools. I've particularly enjoyed the [free weekly "SWI Digital Drop In"](#) Zoom sessions I've been doing on Mondays (5pm EST).

These courses include educators totally new to SWI, and those who have taken these an other courses over and over. Parents with no educational background, let alone SWI experience regularly join as well.

Consider a couple of recent emails I've received from participants conveying how it is changing their practice.

From a teacher in a small public school in Australis who has been a common presence in these courses:

Well, I have some very satisfying news. I work in a small school with only 50 students and 3 teachers. I have been talking incessantly about SWI all year and the teacher in the lower class has been caught up in my enthusiasm and also begun implementing it in her classroom. The head teacher has fully supported my efforts but been somewhat baffled by the whole thing. This week we had external reviewers assess the school and of course I regaled them with my love of SWI, but more importantly, so did my students. In their recommendations they suggested SWI become a whole-school focus and my principal has agreed. Hooray! As we frequently collaborate with other small schools in the region, my quiet hope is that other schools will catch the SWI bug as well.

From a teacher in a small public school who has been a common presence in these courses:

Hi Mr. Bowers,

Thank you, for everything you do to help teachers, teach in a scientific way. After being introduced to the SWI method of teaching, I feel that I now know the authentic truth. My students, young and old, love learning real facts that govern the English language. They have begun to love the discussions about "Plural canceling e", "Complete, native English words can't end in an <i> or a <v>," "A grapheme can represent multiple phonemes" and "How the meaning of words in a family is connected to the base". They get excited when they see a familiar base like "gymnasium" in a book they read or find a familiar suffix around them. My students feel awestruck and amazed. Things have started to make sense!

Thank you, also for being so generous with your time and scheduling free SWI sessions on Mondays. Those are a treat! Each time, I learn a few amazing SWI skills and facts.

One more from last year...

Hello, Dr. Bowers!

Since my last course with you in October-November, I have been diving into SWI with my tutoring students and my struggling readers in my 6th grade classroom, all learning together. I cannot explain eloquently enough how much my students have grown and how much I am still discovering.

My Tier 2 readers took a 2nd grade class science words, studied them in partner-pairs and invited all second graders to a SWI show and tell day. My kids were teaching 2nd graders baseboards, affixes and the history of their words—it was a lovely sight!

Special publication on the “inquiry” of structured word inquiry (Click [HERE](#))

Finally, for this 100th Newsletter, I didn't want to distract from people diving into the Real Spelling Tool Box 2, but I did want to share one recent publication.

A while ago, I happened across a wonderful discussion between two teachers, Jenna and Lisa that I've worked with in the past on one of the SWI Facebook groups. Jenna asked a rich question about the word “omnipotent” and potential morphological and etymological relatives. The response from Lisa was a brilliant example of provoking the kind of inquiry that I try to facilitate with SWI. I wrote my own response to both of them not to address the orthography of their discussion, but the process of inquiry that they were modeling so well.

With their permission, I have put all of that together so that I had a document to point to over time to try and address the crucial nature of “inquiry” in structured word inquiry. I include a bunch of resources to guide further orthographic inquiries as well.

But before you go there -- I recommend you go over to this link: <https://www.tbox2.online> to explore and subscribe to this remarkable new treasure trove of orthographic understanding!

Sincerely,

Pete Bowers