

Headlines

- **The SWI Community grows on a Facebook Group**
- **New Real Spellers post “The Science of the Spelling of <said>”** (Click [HERE](#).)
- **WW YouTube video “Understanding morphological and etymological families”** (Click [HERE](#))
- **An excerpt from an SWI FB group discussion of <vocal> and <advocate>**

Hello all,

The stories and resources I’m sharing here are just a taste of what I had intended to have ready for the first Newsletter of the 2016-2017 School year. Since returning from my year-long position as a “visiting scholar” at the [Nueva School](#) life has been busier than ever.

Since September I’ve conducted workshops in Melbourne (with [Lyn Anderson!](#)), Bangkok, Bristol (first trip to the UK), Indiana (with [Gina Cooke!](#)), Calgary, Edmonton, Hamburg and Jamaica. In between, I’ve conducted on-line workshops with students and professors at universities in South Dakota and San Francisco, and video conference workshops with a school in LA, and one in Florida is coming up soon.

The stories and resources in this Newsletter (and the one to come) build on events from some of these trips and the learning going on with our wider community. Let’s start!

Save the Date!

2017 Public SWI Workshops (See “Note” below.)

- **Jan 23 - 24, Edmonton:** SWI workshop hosted by the Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium (Details and registration [HERE](#))
- **Feb 11 (Part 1) & Feb 18 (Part 2), Bay Area:** Public SWI workshop hosted by [Athena Academy](#) (a school for gifted dyslexics) in Palo Alto. Click [HERE](#) for a flyer. Click [HERE](#) for details and registration.
- **April 28 - 29 Melbourne:** SWI Workshop with Pete Bowers & Lyn Anderson hosted by Wesley College. [Email Lyn](#) to inquire.
- **June 26 - 30, Bay Area:** Nueva SWI Summer Institute 26-27 (Part 1 introductory) and June 28-30 (Part 2 advanced). Click [HERE](#) for information and registration.
- **July 18 - 21, Wolfe Island:** Proposed WW Summer Course on Wolfe Island. The Shanti Retreat is unavailable, so we are considering hosting at our house on Wolfe Island again. (We are half way between Montreal, and Toronto, two hours north of Syracuse, NY). This allows us to extend the workshop from 3 to 4 days with a more intimate group. Cost for the workshop would be \$700. We need a minimum of 5 people and the maximum will be 10. [Email Pete](#) to inquire.

ALSO!

Etymology V, March 25-26, Greater Chicago: Click [HERE](#) for more about this brilliant annual event with *Gina Cooke* ([LEX](#)) and *Douglas Harper* ([Etymonline.com](#))

NOTE: Jenelee Jones is one of two teachers from the Calgary Girls’ School who attended the California Nueva Institute this past spring. Then this fall I conducted a 3-Day workshop back at her school in Calgary. Jenelee shared a lovely reflection about the transformational effect this introduction to SWI has had for her understanding and practice -- and the learning of her students. She also articulates how the joy of discovering that spelling instruction can become a driver of the “inquiry model” she and her school were already working so hard to establish in other areas. With her kind permission, I am sharing her letter at [THIS LINK](#) as a window into the type of experiences these workshops can bring in a short time.

SWI Facebook Community?

Some time ago it was brought to my attention that someone named **Lisa Barnett** had begun an SWI Facebook Group. That name didn't seem familiar to me, so I was very curious to see what was going on in this group.

I was delighted to find a marvelous group of scholars working hard to understand orthography by posing and responding to questions that were growing from tutoring and classroom situations. At first many seemed fairly new to this linguistic understanding of orthography. Over time the number of participants grew -- as did the scholarship. It was clear that novices were welcome and energized by the conversation. At the same time more people with a more sophisticated understanding began to join as well. Gina Cooke ([LEX](#)) has become a regular presence which brings so much linguistic precision and understanding to the conversations.

It has been both striking and satisfying to see such a high level of scholarship in an SWI group that began without me, but in which I get to participate. The learning in this forum has become so rich that I asked Lisa if she would share something about her own story of how her FB project came to be. She has written this lovely short piece that I am happy to share at [THIS LINK](#).

It's important to know that this is a "closed group" as a way of keeping out spam advertising and ensuring participants are those seriously seeking to deepen their understanding of SWI. Read Lisa's document to get a link to join!

**SWI Community
Growing on Facebook**
By Lisa Barnett



Ever have an idea that you see so clearly in your mind? Like the seeds of this dandelion, my thoughts began to break loose and take root in other areas about how to connect with others who were thinking about Structured Word Inquiry.

A few months earlier I'd begun exploring SWI with Gail & Pete, and had taken Real Script with Michel from Real Spelling. I'd met others from around the US but no one from my area. I wanted to find out how others were using SWI in their classrooms or in tutoring sessions. I wanted to find more people who shared this common interest. I am a Special Education Teacher in a public elementary school in Michigan. Since there were no conferences in my state or

colleagues who shared my new passion for the sense and meaning that English makes, I turned to my memories, Facebook to find an online community. But there wasn't one. I already devoted a lot of time to my website/blog & FB page for dyslexia so I tried to ignore this need. But more dandelions kept popping up.

I had started using SWI in my Resource Room during the last 9 weeks of school when most days were interrupted with State and district testing, end of the year assessments, IEP meetings and a host of field trips and other fun activities. I expected low to no gains that last marking period with such a long testing window (new state tests that year) but what I got was just the opposite -- not only did the students make higher gains than expected, but they were also so highly motivated and engaged in these lessons, I was shocked. My 5th grade students even halloped a plan one afternoon to continue their education in my room the following year even though in 6th grade they go to the Middle School. I needed to share this with others to see if they were seeing the same type of things with their students ... another dandelion.

Over the summer, I took more [Spellinars](#) with Michel and watched as many [WordWorks](#) videos of Pete as I could (See the WW YouTube page [HERE](#) and some selected videos and other "getting started" resources on the [About WordWorks](#) page). I was planning to start the new school year incorporating SWI into as many lessons as possible and wanted to see how more people were doing it. I knew I'd have a million questions that would need quick answers without a politely written email to the small community that had formed, but I didn't know how that would be done ... another dam dandelion.

I work with so many teachers who are looking for colleagues to share their learning. The [Real Spellers](#) website remains a key touchstone for our community, but clearly Lisa's Facebook Group is offering another rich forum that I am pleased to recommend for those looking to build their understanding and community of learners.

Another key feature of this group is that people regularly use it to set up [Spellinars](#) with [Real Spelling](#) and [LEXinars](#) with Gina Cooke. You can also find postings for on-line and on-site workshops with [LEX](#), the [Dyslexia Training Institute](#) and others working with scientific investigation of the written word.

New Real Spellers post "The Science of the Spelling of <said>"

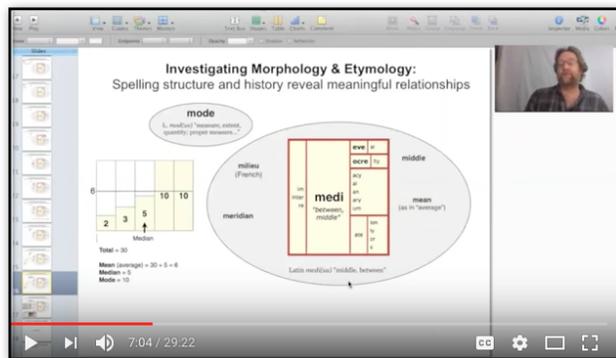
One of the major advantages of Real Spellers as a hub for orthographic learning is that it is a searchable data base of investigations. Just recently I noticed a question about the spelling of <said> that comes up so frequently. I took advantage of that discussion to make [THIS POST](#) to help people learn from this fascinating spelling.

New WordWorks YouTube Video on Understanding Morphological and Etymological Families

It has been some time since I've made the time to post a new video on my [WW YouTube page](#). This medium can be particularly rich for sharing complex ideas compared to reading pages of text. It also allows the viewer to pause and revisit any section they want.

For a long time, I've been intending to create a video to help clarify essential understandings about morphological and etymological relationships. It would be difficult to identify a more crucial topic for those attempting to gain confidence in leading their own scientific word investigations. Over and over I see the confounding of morphology and etymology as one of the greatest barriers to moving ahead with orthographic understanding.

I created a video at [THIS LINK](#) to address this key topic. It is not intended as a "quick study". I use two distinct investigations from my own work in various classrooms as a way to hit similar ideas from different sets of words. I



Click [HERE](#) to see this new video.

specifically selected these investigations because of how effectively reveal central ideas about morphology and phonology, but also because of other fascinating orthographic puzzles these families provoke.

Beware of the easy assumption that this sounds like a video intended for teachers of older children. If you watch the film, you will see that one of the most "advanced" investigations about the word <medieval> was incredibly generative for a kindergarten class! In the comments of the YouTube page you can find links to resources discussed in the video.

Excerpts from just one of many great conversations on Lisa Barnett's SWI FB Group

To end this Newsletter, I thought I'd share an excerpt from a discussion on the SWI Facebook page prompted by an educator who was brand new to SWI. Thanks to Julee and the student-parent team she works with who were happy to share. [My post includes some light editing for clarity.]

First from Julee...

Super new to SWI so please bare with me. As a deaf ed teacher, I was working with a student on self advocacy and understanding her rights as a student with a 504 plan last Wednesday. She's in high school. She is a great reader and speller but lacks vocabulary. She is typical of hard of hearing students with a moderate to severe hearing loss. Vocabulary is expanded only by the words she's exposed to since there is no incidental learning through overheard conversations. We talked about self advocacy and I was breaking down the word in it's

various forms. She recognized that VOC was part of vocal and so we talked about that as well and how being a self advocate means to speak up for yourself, being your own voice. I only see her once a month for an hour as consult services so I'd like to make sure our December time is well spent. She was very excited to see how words could be built/broken down this way. Can you tell me if I'm on the right track?

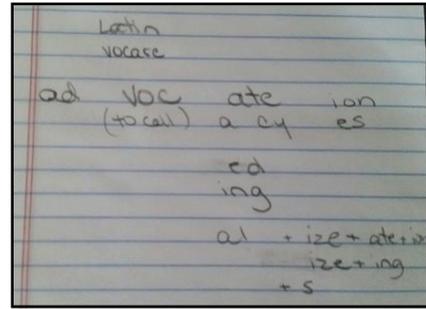
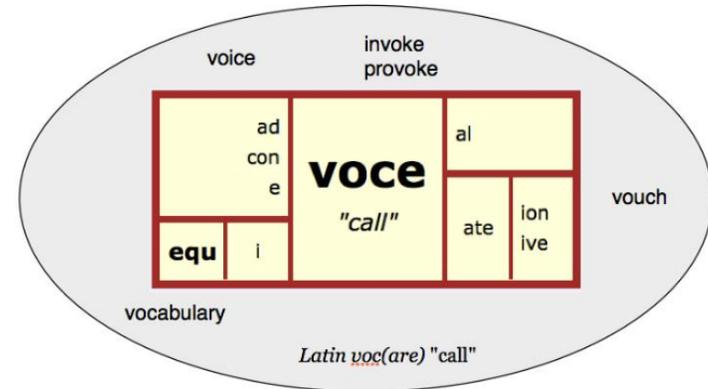


Image from Julee's post



ad + voce/ + ate → advocate
 con + voce/ + ate/ + ion → convocation
 e + voce/ + ate/ + ive → evocative
 voce/ + al → vocal
 equ + i + voce/ + al → equivocal

Lisa was first to respond with crucial advice about the use of word sums for any morphological analysis:

Lisa Barnett: How wonderful that your student connected <voc> between different words! In your next meeting with her, have these <advocate> word sums written out fully with the + signs and --> final word sums as well as a lexical word matrix with <voc> as the base of many words. If you need help building the matrix email me. Great to see this!

After a key brief comment from Gina pointing out that the base is actually <voce>, I added my own comment, along with an image of a document with word sums and the same "oval and square" diagram discussed in the video linked on the previous page.

Wordworks Kingston: Nice, [Gina Cooke](#). I couldn't resist making a little "oval and square" diagram with members of this family. [Since an expanded version [HERE](#).] I think you and

your student will have great fun studying these words and investigating their meaning and structural relationships. Notice that all of the words within the oval (including those represented by the matrix) share this same common Latin root voc(are) that carries the meaning "call" that is echoed in all of these words. The words in the matrix share something *in addition* to the root. To be in the matrix, words must share a common root AND a base element. The words in this matrix can be analyzed with a word sum to reveal that common spelling <voce>. As [Gina Cooke](#) taught me, we can think of the words in the matrix as words that are of the same immediate family, but those words that share a root but not a base are of the same extended family. So <voce> is a "cousin" of a word like <vocal> and <advocate>, while <vocal> and <advocate> are like siblings!

Nothing motivates like Understanding!