

WW Newsletter # 86, April 14

Headlines

- **WordWorks News & Workshop Updates**
 - Learning from Etymology V in Chicago
 - Guest presenters for SWI Nueva Institute
 - Maryanne Wolfe visits Nueva to see SWI in action
 - Great video and new website from Sue Hegland
 - Learning from colleagues on SWI FB page
- **SWI in Research**
 - New article by Pete and his brother in [Educational Psychologist](#)

Details

Etymology V in Chicago w Gina Cooke & Doug Harper

The recent gathering of the orthographer tribes in Chicago for the 5th annual “Etymology Conference” with Gina Cooke ([LEX](#)) and Douglas Harper ([Etymonline](#)) was as inspiring as ever. A packed house with educators from around North America descended on Chicago to nerd out together and deepen our understanding etymology and its influences on English orthography. It is such a joy to get to learn with Doug’s and Gina’s insights about language.



Doug & Gina (centre) with Pete and Lisa Barnett (SWI FB page host) sneaking into the shot at the end of a great weekend of etymology in Chicago.

This gathering always offers such a rich yearly marker of the deepening understanding of this audience and these presenters continues to deepen. That’s what happens in a scientific community.

One of the many little gifts of learning for me this time around was that after over a decade of looking, I found evidence of the

Upcoming Public Workshops

April 24– May 5: Dyslexia Training Institute's 1st Annual Dyslexia Virtual Conference - Education Changes Everything. Sixteen presenters on a range of topics including three specifically on SWI ([Pete Bowers](#), [Gina Cooke](#), [Mary Beth Steven](#)). Information and program [HERE](#). Registration [HERE](#)

June 26-30: SWI Nueva Institute near San Francisco. Information and registration [HERE](#). Note: In addition to Pete, Nueva teachers will be presenting on topics targeting early literacy, elementary and middle school. Current SWI coach at Nueva, [Rebecca Loveless](#) will be presenting and supporting learning during activities as well.

July 18-21: First 4-day WW SWI Summer Course on Wolfe Island. This year to be hosted at Pete and Sus’ home. Limit 10 people. [Email Pete](#) for details. (Sorry, waiting list started)

August 17-18, Edmonton: 2-day SWI workshop hosted by [Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium](#). Details and register [HERE](#).

August 21-25, Edmonton: 5-Day SWI university course at the University of Alberta. Open to undergrad, graduate students and non-students. Details to be announced. [Email Pete](#) to inquire about this exciting opportunity.

<-ne> suffix in a new word family! This is in addition to <go + ne → gone> and <do + ne → done> that I often cite. Yes, we are proud word nerds! More profoundly, a conversation I had with relative SWI newcomer, Scott Mills, has already borne fruit in his classroom (that I got to witness via video conference!). He has already adapted and put into brilliant practice an idea I’ve been toying with for representing the journeys of an etymological family. Scott’s work drew from our conversation and ideas Ann Whiting shared in [this magnum opus](#) of a post titled “Refugees and Arrivals” at her [blog](#) (must read!). My own thinking on this has been burbling ever since a conversation with Douglas last year. (See video of that conversation [HERE](#).)

I was trying to sort out the different meanings he was trying to convey in his dictionary entries that used “*related to*” instead of “*from*.” Part of his response was that, “etymology is more of a bush than a tree.” I’ve been chewing on that ever since. Recent conversations with Gina about “deep structures” and physical realizations of abstract concepts informed my thinking on this as well. Details on this story will have to wait for another time. For the moment, I wanted to celebrate the amazing learning this collaborative scientific community sparks. While this learning is on-going, the tradition of a large group meeting with Gina and Doug once a year serves to mark the learning that has occurred -- and also to fuel bursts of new learning.

SWI blossoms in Toronto!

I was delighted to be able to conduct my first [full-day public workshop](#) in my own backyard, Toronto! With minimal notice we had 24 participants join us at the [Al Huda Elementary School](#). Director, Cheryl Urbanczyk, attended a one hour SWI presentation I did years ago at the Ontario Branch of the IDA and has been digging in ever since -- including taking [Spellinars](#) and [LEXinars](#) to deepen her own understanding. That IDA workshop was organized by Liisa Freure who attended my Summer course years before that. Liisa has studied extensively since then and has started doing her own SWI PD. Much more SWI learning has been going on under the surface in Toronto than I knew. Watch this space!

On to Bangkok and Melbourne

For my next set of WW Workshops I get to get to collaborate with two brilliant SWI scholars. First for a [3-day workshop](#) that is the inaugural event for Fiona Hamilton’s new SWI based professional development initiative based in Bangkok “[A Place for Words](#)” April 20th - 22nd. Then I return to [Wesley College](#) in Melbourne for our annual 2-day public workshop with the exceptional Lyn Anderson (sold out). The two of us then get to work together at area schools for 5 days afterwards.

Notes on some upcoming workshops

On-Line Conference with The Dyslexia Training Institute: April 24th – May 5th

I’m excited to have been invited along with [Gina Cooke](#) and [Mary Beth Steven](#) to present on SWI for this conference that includes speakers on a wide variety of topics (see screen shot below). SWI has become central to DTI’s practice ever since a chance encounter at an IDA conference in 2012 that led to a matrix scrawled on a napkin. See that story by DTI co-founder Dr. Kelli Sandman-Hurley in [THIS](#) article she wrote for the International Literacy Association.

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Dr. Kelli Sandman-Hurley</i> , Spelling, Advocacy | <i>Mary Beth Steven</i> , Structured Word Inquiry |
| <i>Tracy Block-Zaretsky</i> , Dyslexia, Advocacy | <i>Brandi Jordan</i> , Social Media |
| <i>Dr. Michael Hart</i> , Assessment | <i>Deborah Lynam</i> , Advocacy/Legislation |
| <i>Dr. Richard Selznick</i> , Assessment | <i>Robbie Cooper</i> , Advocacy |
| <i>Dr. Schreuder</i> , Dyscalculia | <i>Jamie Martin</i> , Assistive Technology |
| <i>Dr. Jennifer Petrich</i> , Executive Function | <i>Joan Sedita</i> , Reading Comprehension |
| <i>Dr. Pete Bowers</i> , Structured Word Inquiry | <i>Brittany Martinez</i> , Orton-Gillingham |
| <i>Gina Cooke</i> , Structured Word Inquiry | <i>Ameer Baraka</i> , Keynote Speaker |

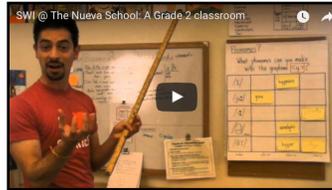
Information and program [HERE](#). Registration [HERE](#)

June 26-30: SWI Nueva Institute to feature Nueva teachers as **guest presenters**. Information and registration [HERE](#).

We are very excited about this upcoming Institute. Last year’s group was by far the largest yet. This year we are building on last year’s special guest presentations that were extremely well received. Given the level of SWI understanding and experience Nueva teachers have attained, we started to invite them to make special presentations to share their own learning and experiences in the classroom.

We formalize these presentations more this year. Teachers have already signed up to present on early SWI instruction (pre-school to Gr. 1) elementary (2-4) and upper-elementary/middle school. Nueva SWI coach, Rebecca Loveless, will also present a special session on Real Script.

Some of these sessions (in the advanced part of the 5-day course) allow us to divide into smaller groups who want to focus more deeply on their own context of instruction. In particular, pre-school teacher extraordinaire, Carolee Fucigna will be able to present a special session on SWI in the early years. This will allow me to do a special session at the same time digging deeper into investigations more relevant to teachers in the elementary/upper grades. See examples of what is going on in Carolee's class in the images on this page.



Sam Modest was just one of last year's special presenters at the SWI institute. See [this video](#) of some of the structures and practices he has developed for his every day practice.

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1. L-R: Carolee Fucigna, [Maryanne Wolfe \(Proust & the Squid\)](#), [Rebecca Loveless](#) discuss SWI learning in her pre-school classroom.
2. Grapheme-phoneme correspondences in the context of words encountered in class.
3. See how Carolee embeds signals of morphological structure in words addressed in class for any reason. Why not play with the language by following a student's idea that a "knight" is one who does the things a knight does! Making the implicit structures of words explicit makes learners more likely to notice them in any context. We provoke kids to ask questions about the structures we want them to learn about.
4. - 5. - 6. These are images from a lesson I led in Carolee's class to introduce the convention that vowel suffixes replace final, non-syllabic <e>s. With these cut out morpheme pieces, children could practice "spelling-out" the underlying structure represented by the left side of a word sum, and the surface realization on the right -- without the children needing to be able to have facility with script to write their own word sums yet. Image #4 is the one I constructed with them as a model. Image # 5 is one a student did later on. Image #5 shows the context of an activity the students had been working on that we used as the jumping off point for these words.
7. This is just one of the morphological word webs in Carolee's class that reflects the interrelated spelling-meaning structure of a family of words that share a base. Not only is the base <clean> highlighted, but now commonly occurring affixes are highlighted to provoke still more noticing in other contexts.

It was such a pleasure to get to have Maryanne visit Carolee and her classroom at Nueva along with Rebecca Loveless and Lower School principal, Emily Johnson. Given Maryanne's work with the double deficit hypothesis and naming speed with my mom (Bowers & Wolfe, 1993; Wolfe & Bowers, 1999) I've known Maryanne for some time. As Maryanne shared when the group of us met after school, she has been pointing to the importance of morphology for some time with her Rave-O work and elsewhere. But she was truly excited to see the level of instruction and learning going on at Nueva.

My most recent trip to the Bay Area included a public workshop and visits to 6 schools including the Athena Academy -- a school for dyslexic students. I'm looking forward to Maryanne's response when she gets to return to see more of this instruction in action at Nueva and at a school for dyslexics.

Given the type of instruction that normally occurs in pre-school, the reader has a right to be skeptical about the images on the previous page with word sums showing vowel suffixes replacing final, non-syllabic <e>s. I'll just share one story on top of the student work shown there. A parent who attended the workshop at Athena Academy happens to be a mother of a child in Carolee's class. She told me that when she picked up her child that day from school, the this investigation came up right away. "Mom, do you know how to spell out the word "making?" the child asked. I'm sure a confused but curious mother responded that no she didn't. "It goes like this -- m - a - k --- NO <e> --- ing"

We need to be careful about deciding what young children can or cannot learn before we've given them an opportunity to respond to our instruction. Carolee would be the first to tell you how much is going on in her classroom than she never would have thought possible a few years ago.

Carolee has been leading SWI workshops herself now and is determined to let the world know what is possible and how important this has been to the learning in her classroom. See more stories of this learning with Carolee on page 4 of [this WW Newsletter "Structure is Freeing"](#). (It's one of my favourites.)

I'm so excited that Carolee will be presenting at this upcoming [Institute](#). Join us if you can!

Workshops in Edmonton this Summer

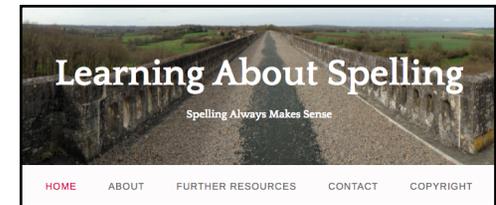
Edmonton and Alberta are rapidly becoming the next hub of SWI learning. With the [long time support](#) or [Dr. Rauno Parilla](#) things have really started to grow. There are two options for workshops this summer including a 5-day full university course for undergraduates, graduate students and non-students who wish to join.

August 17-18, Edmonton: 2-day SWI workshop hosted by [Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium](#). Details and register [HERE](#).

August 21-25, Edmonton: 5-Day SWI university course at the University of Alberta. Details to be announced. [Email Pete](#) to inquire about this exciting opportunity.

Sue Hegland's new excellent SWI website and webinar

If you follow any links from this newsletter for further study, I recommend that you make it these two links from Sue Hegland. Sue is a trained OG tutor who has studied SWI and Real Spelling in a deep way for a long time.

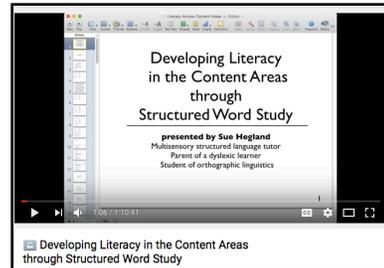


Her new website, [LearningAboutSpelling.com](#), is an enormous gift to the SWI community. In particular I want to highlight her first post "[Spelling Myths and Truths](#)". Sue's description about understandings and misunderstandings about spelling is so powerful. Sue explains complex issues in such straightforward and clear language. I've often tried to make the analogy she does about the earth centred vs. sun centred planet system, but Sue just does it so much better.

SWI webinar for the Upper Midwest Branch of the IDA

Click [HERE](#) to go directly to Sue's truly excellent webinar.

Click [HERE](#) for handouts for this webinar as well as other webinars posted by the Upper Midwest Branch of the IDA including one I did some time ago and one from Gina Cooke.



In that same simple, direct way, Sue brings such clarity to a number of key topics that are so important for those beginning their investigation of SWI and those who have been working with this understanding for years. One aspect that I particularly appreciate is the way Sue embeds the orthographic learning she discusses in the context of content area study. I've been emphasizing this more and more lately. This was a key topic in my last [WW Newsletter](#) which included [this document](#) for a lesson I created to investigate the relatives and meanings of the words <media> and <advertising> in the context of upper elementary / middle school studies of social justice.

But for me, the most valuable part of this presentation by Sue is the way she reveals the harm that comes from instruction that has learners focus mostly on phonology in a morphophonemic system severely. The examples from her own tutoring experiences make it so clear how this hinders the ability to see spelling-meaning connections. See the story about a student's question that misses what seems like such an obvious morphological cue in the word <personification>. But crucially, she then builds on that story by sharing her investigation of another word, where she recognizes herself making the same type of error. There is no need to watch the whole film at once, but I recommend you take your time with this one. It's such a treat to see this kind of understanding being shared by so many in our community.

A gem from the SWI Facebook Group

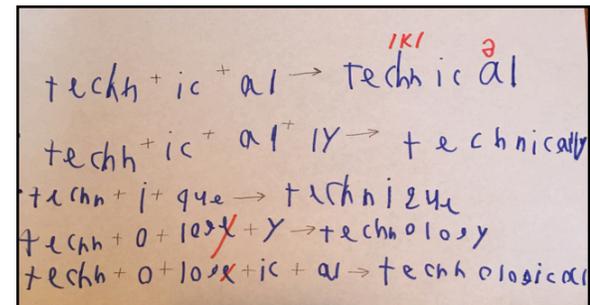
I pointed to Lisa Barnett's Facebook group in [Newsletter # 83](#) that linked to [Lisa's description](#) of this initiative. There are many rich discussions about SWI, some that get into deep orthographic concepts, and some that grow from the questions of beginners. Of course not every string will be of interest, but if you explore, there is much to learn from this engaged group of orthographic scholars. The etymological project by Scott Mills that I described earlier is just one such example.

There are countless posts I could point to, but this recent one by Emily O'Connor, grabbed my attention. I wanted to share it here as a window into some of the learning that is going on in this community. I love the range of SWI topics addressed in this short post. The importance of writing out word sums, real script, etymology, grapheme-phoneme correspondences are just some of the topics Emily touches on here -- and all with such a clear sense of joy of learning by the student and tutor. Great stuff Emily.

Emily Books O'Connor, April 13, 2017...

We did more work with the bound base <techn> today and had a blast. I'm consistently impressed with the fluency my student is gaining as he writes word

sums. Everything is becoming more automatic for him. It's a joy to just watch him go and acknowledge that he needs almost no prompting from me.



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We talked about how often in words of Greek origin the <ch> digraph is pronounced /k/, like in <school>, <ache>, <chrome>, and <technical>. I then asked him, "When one phonetically realizes [tɛknəkəl] what else is happening?" He thought about it. He smiled. Schwa! He exclaimed, happily, and marked one.

Shoutout to **Beth** for organizing a Real Script class for me to haunt starting a week from tomorrow, because I know that if I am able to do that again I'll have the courage to start teaching my student script. I have found in doing this work there are always certain aspects that for me that just take the time they take. Script has been one. Understanding the difference between morphological diachronic (through time) and synchronic (same time) relationships was another big hurdle.

Having the courage to just teach our language, without a program, without anyone's permission or stamp of approval, would be a third. Do I get everything correct? Nope. But all of it is re + al, and realization is joyous.

Things take the time they take. We're going to do script. I ordered fountain pens today: an orange one that made me think of Real Spelling and a multipack of disposable ones. We can do this.

Emily O'Connor, M.A.T.
Educational Therapist & Dyslexia Specialist

Teaching the logic of English spelling in the research

I am happy to be able to announce that an article I wrote with my brother Jeff Bowers, (a cognitive scientist at the University of Bristol) has been published in a major educational journal, [Educational Psychologist](#). In my view this article does the most comprehensive job I've been able to do so far at getting the big picture of the theory and practice of SWI and where it sits in the context of the research literature.

Here is the abstract:

A large body of research supports the conclusion that early reading instruction in English should emphasize phonics, that is, the teaching of grapheme–phoneme correspondences. By contrast, we argue that instruction should be designed to make sense of spellings by teaching children that spellings are organized around the interrelation of morphology, etymology, and phonology. In this way, literacy can be taught as a scientific subject, where children form and test hypotheses about how their spelling system works. First, we review arguments put forward in support of phonics and then highlight significant problems with both theory and data. Second, we review the linguistics of English spellings and show that spellings are highly logical once all the relevant sublexical constraints are considered. Third, we provide theoretical and empirical arguments in support of the hypothesis that instruction should target all the cognitive skills necessary to understand the logic of the English spelling system.

Go to the bottom of the [About WordWorks](#) page for links to this and other research. I'm also excited about a chapter for a book that is in press with my former supervisor, John Kirby.

Things are moving!

Pete Bowers, April 16, 2017