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## A Study of Spelling Programs in the Intermediate Classes for the Educable Mentally Retarded in the Granite and Salt Lake City School Districts

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A STUDY OF SPELLING PROGRAMS IN THE INTERMEDIATE  
CLASSES FOR THE EDUCABLE MENTALLY RETARDED  
IN THE GRANITE AND SALT LAKE CITY  
SCHOOL DISTRICTS

by

LaDawn L. Keith

A seminar report submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

in

Special Education

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY  
Logan, Utah

1970

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## INTRODUCTION

The curriculum for the educable mentally retarded is based on persisting life problems and one of these, as identified by the Cincinnati Public Schools (1964), is learning to communicate ideas. To be able to communicate effectively your ideas in written form, it is necessary to know how to spell.

In order to operate effectively within a school and community, the slow learner will need to complete his development of communicative skills by learning to write and spell. While it is true that his needs for written expression are considerably less than they are for oral communication, he will, nevertheless, need to acquire some skill in writing and spelling in order to meet daily situations. He will need these skills to write letters, record messages, compile shopping lists, and complete applications and forms. Writing and spelling skills are closely tied to the development of all other communication skills. For the learner, writing and spelling are not ends in themselves, but merely tools for communication and self-expression. The purpose of teaching writing and spelling in the program for the slow learner is to provide him with an easy, effective way he can communicate. This can be accomplished by developing his ability to write legibly and to spell correctly in meeting ordinary demands of living. (Cincinnati Public Schools, 1964, p. 169)

Horn (1968) notes that spelling errors are distracting and take away from the effectiveness of any written work. They can also be embarrassing in personal as well as in business letters, and perhaps crucial in letters applying for work. Because of the advantages of good

spelling ability, it is important for a spelling program to be carefully and systematically planned so the student will learn how to spell correctly. Spelling is a part of life. It is a skill which, if properly mastered, will facilitate written expression and make living more pleasant and adequate.

Fitzgerald (1951<sup>b</sup>) points out the importance of choosing spelling words for the educable mentally retarded. The words chosen should be carefully evaluated. Some teachers have taught as spelling the words which are used by the children in unit studies. Although it is helpful for the student to be able to recognize these words in regards to meaning and use, he should not always be required to spell them. These words will probably never be written again by many of the children. However, the words in the unit which are needed frequently in writing should be a part of the spelling curriculum.

According to Fitzgerald (1951<sup>b</sup>, p. 13), "A slow learning child should master a small core of basic words rather than dissipate his energy by attempting to learn a large number of words, many of which he will never use."

Johnson further supports this theory:

Spelling instruction should deal with those words the child uses in his written material, such as answering questions in relation to other academic areas, writing letters, and so forth. These are the words the children use and will be using. These are the words they should know how to spell. Many words contained in any arbitrary list are not designed for any specific child

or group of children living in a particular environment and having unique needs. These lists will, consequently, contain many words of little or no value while omitting some of relatively common usage. It is known that a relatively small number of basic words (between two and three hundred) comprise approximately 50 per cent of all written communication. Every child should learn how to spell these words. Beyond this, much of spelling instruction becomes a problem of determining individual need. (Johnson, 1963, p. 218)

The writer through past observations of classes for the intermediate educable mentally retarded and through past experiences in teaching these classes has noted that there seems to be no consistent rationale for determining the list of spelling words for these children. Some teachers use conventional textbooks, others use important unit study words, while some use survival or environmental words, or a combination of the above, to constitute the spelling program.

Since the purpose of this study was to gain information about the spelling programs in the intermediate classes for the educable mentally retarded, the writer sent a questionnaire to the teachers of these classes. The data received was charted in order to show the various approaches to spelling being used by these teachers.

#### Statement of problem

Because of the various means teachers have in choosing their spelling words, the writer is concerned about investigating the present spelling programs for the intermediate classes for the educable mentally retarded.

The specific purposes of this study were:

1. To determine through the use of a questionnaire sent to teachers of intermediate classes for the educable mentally retarded in the Granite and Salt Lake City school districts what kinds of spelling programs are being conducted.
2. To determine from the questionnaire how teachers select spelling words for their students.
3. To select from the literature a list of the most essential spelling words, group these words according to their linguistic pattern (phonetic families) where possible, and list them according to difficulty.

#### Definitions

1. Functional spelling vocabulary - words used in highest frequency in written vocabulary now and in adult life.
2. Spelling - a systematic method of learning how to spell words.
3. Formal spelling program - any spelling program which occupies a specific allotted time each day in the total curriculum.
4. Educable mentally retarded (EMR) - the educable mentally retarded are generally classified in the intelligence quotient range of approximately 50 to 75. They usually attend a special class within the public school organization.



The terms "slow learner" and "intellectually handicapped" refer to the above definition and will be used interchangeably in the paper.

5. Intermediate educable mentally retarded - children who would normally be in the fourth, fifth, or sixth grade. Their age would range from nine to twelve years and their mental age would be approximately from six and one half to eight.

#### Limitations

1. Research will be confined to the intermediate classes for the educable mentally retarded in the Granite and Salt Lake City school districts.
2. Questionnaires (Appendix A) will be sent only to teachers of intermediate classes for the educable mentally retarded in the Granite and Salt Lake City school districts.

The questionnaire consists of questions derived from specialists in the field of spelling and mental retardation. Carmody (1952), Fitzgerald (1951) and Ingram (1960) advocate the use of a specified time each week based upon a grade level spelling text. The first three questions reflect the experts' concern.

Curriculum guides for the educable mentally retarded (Cincinnati Public Schools, 1964; Denver Public Schools, 1961; Duval County Schools, 1966 and Illinois State Department of Public Instruction, 1958) usually

contain specific suggestions for a spelling program based upon the needs of the students who are educable mentally retarded. Questions four to six reflect these concerns of specialists in the field of spelling.

Questions seven and eight were designed to allow the teacher an opportunity to be more specific regarding her spelling program.

Because this study was conducted during the summer, the writer realizes that the responses were limited. However, the writer feels assured there was enough of a response to gain valuable information about the problem.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Objectives and purposes of education  
for the mentally retarded

The Educational Policies Commission report (NEA, 1938) stated four groups of objectives for American education which are widely accepted. They are as follows:

- I. The Objectives of Self-Realization
- II. The Objectives of Human Relationship
- III. The Objectives of Economic Efficiency
- IV. The Objectives of Civic Responsibility

These objectives, in general, are applicable to the mentally handicapped child.

In contrast to goals and objectives of the more quantitative type, those that suggest primarily qualities of behavior or traits, attitudes, and dispositions that all the members of a democratic community must possess in some degree should be the same for all children, regardless of ability. Any good formulation of such goals, such as the one by the Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association, entitled The Purposes of Education in American Democracy, can be used by teachers of slow learners as a guide quite as readily and as validly as by teachers of other pupils. It is not an easy matter, of course, to state precisely what degree or standard of behavior one may expect at any given age, or to find out whether pupils are actually growing in the direction of these qualitative goals, but the task is no more difficult for teachers of slow-learning pupils than it is for others. Nevertheless, it will be helpful to point out some of the special interpretations of objectives a teacher of slow learners will need to follow with respect to the major types of "competences" the curriculum should cultivate. (Featherstone, 1951, p. 36)

The outstanding objectives to be sought in educating the mentally retarded as listed by Ingram (1960, p. 97) are:

1. Mental and physical health
2. A practical working knowledge of the tool subjects
3. Worthy home and community life
4. Worthy use of leisure time
5. Adjustment in occupations

The following authorities in the field of mental retardation, Garton (1964), Ingram (1960), Kirk and Johnson (1951) and Kolburne (1965), all have stated that the main purpose of education is to help prepare the child to meet sufficiently the needs required in daily living. The objectives for the retarded differ from those for the average child only to the extent that they are narrower in scope. They are narrowed down to prepare him to fulfill specific adjustments in a limited occupational and social sphere. In order for such an aim to be realized for the slow-learning child, it is particularly important for the curriculum to be adjusted to meet his daily needs. It is necessary that the application of all his learnings to simple life situations be made clear and that all practice tends to promote functional learnings. Or as Kolburne (1965, p. 157) states, "The more functional the application, the greater will be their understanding and ability; the probability of their achieving success in life will be enhanced."

The curriculum for the educable mentally retarded

The Illinois State Department of Public Instruction (1958) points out that children with intellectual disabilities require a special curriculum with the objectives stated in terms of persisting problems of daily living. They specified ten functions which persist throughout the life of an individual in a democracy. These were listed as functions in:

- Citizenship
- Communicating
- Home and Family
- Leisure Time
- Management of Materials and Money
- Occupational Adequacy
- Physical and Mental Health
- Safety
- Social Adjustment
- Travel

The Life Functions lend themselves to a further breakdown within an educational frame of reference. Identifiable within each Life Function are the behaviors and skills necessary to their performance. These behaviors and skills can be viewed as proficiencies in subject matter to be acquired in a developmental progression ranging from the comparatively simple and concrete at an early age to the quite complex and abstract at maturity. (Illinois State Department of Public Instruction, 1958, p. 1)

The Duval Board of Public Instruction, Jacksonville, Florida, (1966) perceives the curriculum as a vehicle. Ideally, this vehicle should take the intellectually handicapped child from where he is developmentally when he enters the daily life of the school community to where he needs to be when he merges with the daily life of the

adult community.

The essence of a curriculum (Cincinnati Public Schools, 1964) for these children is the promotion of their proficiency in the functional skills.

The curricular construct selected should:

1. emphasize the slow learning child's nature and needs.
2. take account of the demands society places upon each of its members as expressed in problems associated with daily living.
3. provide opportunity for scope and sequence for those skills, understandings, habits, and attitudes to be learned.
4. provide for the development of an instructional program which has purpose, meaning, and utility for children at each stage of their development.
5. provide concrete help for teachers in identifying needs of children, setting instructional goals, and developing meaningful learning experience. (Cincinnati Public Schools, 1964, p. 7)

Similarly, Ingram (1960, p. 98) lists six criteria by which each educative experience should be measured. Does it promote

health, both mental and physical?  
 a practical application of the tool subjects?  
 better home membership?  
 better group and community living?  
 a better use of leisure time?  
 desirable working habits and attitudes?

In view of the above, the writer concludes that adequacy in daily living is the desired outcome and purpose of the school program for the educable mentally retarded. To achieve this goal, the curriculum must be adjusted to meet his needs in order to provide school experiences which are meaningful and functional.

Spelling objectives and spelling curriculum  
for the educable mentally retarded

The most commonly accepted single objective for the teaching of spelling is to enable pupils to spell the words they need to write now and in the future. It is clearly impossible for pupils to learn in school all the words which they may at some time have occasion to write. It has been well said that the English language has a well-designed center but no discernible circumference. It is the central words, that is, the words most often needed in writing, that pupils should learn to spell. (Horn, 1968, p. 3)

Fitzgerald (1951<sup>b</sup>) believes children with little competence as well as those with great capability must be taught in accord with their needs and abilities. A spelling goal for the slow learning child would be to master a small core of basic words. It would be ridiculous for him to dissipate his energy by attempting to learn a large number of words, as many of these he would not ever be required to write outside of school.

Carmody (1952) is in agreement. She states that the goal for all children should be the mastery of a minimum basic list. However, recognition of differences in rates of development and abilities indicates the necessity of setting up differentiated goals. The slow children certainly will not be able to master as many words as the more accelerated children. Extremely slow learning children will probably do well to be able to spell the most essential 500 to 800 words at the completion of elementary school.

The Illinois State Department of Public Instruction (1958) indicates the need for the spelling vocabulary to be functional. The spelling words should be confined to those the child needs to know for everyday living situations. This list will consist of basic words needed by all and additional words selected on an individual basis according to interest and capacity. The child should be not required to learn to spell words that are not in his sight vocabulary, or words that he cannot comprehend or pronounce accurately. The number of words to be learned will be determined by the capacity and interest of the child.

The Seattle Public Schools (1958) describes the spelling program for the primary grades (this would be comparable to the spelling program for the intermediate EMR). The initial experiences in spelling are functional and are provided as the need arises throughout the day. There is also direct or formal teaching of spelling, where definite periods, each day, are devoted to teaching spelling.

Throughout all phases of the program, writing and spelling skills should be related to a purpose which the learner perceives as meaningful to him. The development of these skills should be functional. It should cut across all aspects of the school program and be an integral part of all learning activities. While a major portion of the development of writing and spelling should be of a functional nature, regular practice periods may be provided to help eradicate specific difficulties which individual pupils are having. (Cincinnati Public Schools, 1964, p. 171)



Ingram (1960) notes there is generally little carry-over of words memorized from the weekly spelling list to actual spelling situations. The real challenge of learning to spell comes from being able to spell the words needed to do one's work. Also it helps to know how often one can make use of the words he is learning to spell. Real needs for spelling will be realized in writing information and stories, listing games learned, formulating rules for conduct in certain situations, writing letters, directions, and so forth. A basic core of the most-frequently-used words should be supplemented by words the children require in their written work. The teacher should be on guard against teaching the unusual words that the child will need for only a particular activity.

Ammon (1969) states some facts about the predetermined class list. He thinks it is ridiculous for all children to learn to spell every word on such a list. Some he may already know how to spell; some may be too difficult and others will not have any personal or significant meaning. The best list of spelling words for a child contains words which are taken from the misspellings of his own writing. Words which Ammon thinks should be given to the class are words from subject areas which need to be learned and words that lend themselves to phonetic generalizations, as this helps the child gain independence in spelling. Also particularly troublesome words such as homonyms and those that are phonetically irregular may be added.

Similarly, Christine (1966), Ediger (1967), Hughes (1966) and Simjack (1967) question the use of the arbitrary spelling list. Individual differences need to be considered. No child should have to learn to spell more words per week than his ability level would indicate. However, a good spelling program would definitely have as its purpose the goal of interesting pupils in words for their own sake.

Bingham (1969) says spelling to be functional must serve the individual in natural situations. He thinks spelling lists should be more meaningful to the children. This can be done by creating word lists which reflect individual needs as indicated by the writings of the children and vocabulary usage.

Kirk and Johnson (1951) also state that the mentally handicapped child should learn the spelling words he will be using in everyday life, or those that he will need in adult life. His spelling vocabulary should be confined to the vocabulary used by the child at his level of development.

The writer notes that all the readings have indicated the need for the spelling of the student to be functional. This can be accomplished when the occasions for writing in school resemble the occasions for writing outside of school. Through this means the learning of the most important words will be facilitated.

Selection of spelling words for the educable  
mentally retarded

The Cincinnati Public Schools (1964) compares the spelling program for the intermediate educable mentally retarded child to the spelling program for the regular primary grades (first, second and third grade). He spells the words most commonly found on this level, plus the most common abbreviations.

The Denver Public Schools (1961) outlined a similar spelling program for the intermediate educable mentally retarded. He spells words most commonly used on the primary levels and also is taught the words on the Dolch 220 basic word list.

According to Horn (1968), there are two types of evidence of basic importance in selecting spelling words for the spelling curriculum: first, evidence on words most frequently written by adults; and second, the evidence on words written by children in the various grades of school.

It is essential to understand clearly the different functions served by the data on the writing needs of adults and the data on the writing needs of children. The data on the writing needs of adults show which words children should be able to spell when schooling is over. The data on the written vocabularies of children show which words are most often written by children in various grades. Especially significant are the data on the words most frequently written by children outside school. Their usefulness is not limited to the selection and gradation of words in spelling books; they are perhaps even more useful for schools which derive their own lists. (Horn, 1968, p. 5)

Fitzgerald (1951<sup>b</sup>) notes that often spelling lists contain words which are useful in reading, history or arithmetic. These words are not necessarily proper for a spelling curriculum. Research shows that the overlap of reading and spelling vocabularies is not at all complete. The practice of using reading words as the basic source of spelling words cannot be justified.

The spelling core should be compiled from valid writing sources, principally investigations of vocabulary of the real writing of child and adult. The child writing investigations are necessary to identify words the child needs most in writing in the initial stage of learning and at various stages of his development. The adult investigation designates the permanent words basic to adulthood. (Fitzgerald, 1951, p. 13)

Lists of words most commonly used in the writing of both children and adults have been determined with considerable accuracy from extensive investigations by Ayres, Buckingham and Dolch, Fitzgerald and McKee, Gates, Horn, Rinsland, Thorndike and others.

The data indicates the importance of a relatively small core of words for writing. Data compiled by Horn (1924) indicated that the one hundred most used adult writing words and their repetitions represented 59 per cent of the total running writing of a sampling of approximately one million running words, and the thousand most used words made up with their repetitions about 90 per cent of the total of the running writing. Rinsland (1945) determined a list of 2909 words which accounted for 90 per cent of the total usage in all the writings of children. Dolch (1942) recommended a list of 2000 words. This

list represents 95 per cent of the words used in adult writing.

Fitzgerald (1934) also emphasized the need for a basic core of words for children beginning to write.

Fitzgerald (1951<sup>a</sup>) has researched child writing and adult writing. Through this investigation the words which overlap in the writing vocabularies of children and adults were identified. His list "A Basic Life Spelling Vocabulary for Child and Adult" consists of 2650 words. It is a basic vocabulary for both child and adult and a writing vocabulary useful to normal individuals for life. This list contains the words most often used by children in and out of school and also words that will be used by them as they develop from childhood to adulthood. This list represents 95 per cent of the running words a person will need in his writing throughout his life.

From this list of 2650 words, Fitzgerald derived two other lists. They are: List A, "350 Most Useful Spelling Words" and List B, "450 Very Useful Spelling Words" (Appendix B). The words selected for List A are the most fundamental and crucial spelling words, and the words selected for List B are second in importance only to List A.

Because of the differences in needs and abilities of children, Fitzgerald (1951<sup>b</sup>) and Horn (1968) do not claim that all children of a grade should learn a certain core of words in that grade. However, they do note that in spite of the fact individual needs do differ, there is a common core of words which they will need. The most important

spelling words--words which are needed in writing all his life-- should be mastered by all normal children sooner or later.

All of the 350 crucial spelling words are found in the McKee-Fitzgerald (unpublished) child vocabulary, in the Rinsland (1945) vocabulary on child writing, and in Fitzgerald's (1931) investigation of letter writing of fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade children. All of the words, except Santa Claus, are in Horn's (1926) A Basic Writing Vocabulary, and all but ten are in Breed's (1930) list. Only twenty-two do not appear in Dolch's (1942) two thousand commonest words and only nineteen are not among the 692 most common words of third-grade life letters researched by Fitzgerald (1938). All but twenty-four are among the 810 commonest second-grade words determined by Brittain and Fitzgerald (1942).

The importance of the 350 crucial words is emphasized by Fitzgerald (1951<sup>b</sup>). The need of these words is indicated by the frequency of their occurrence in writing. These words and their repetitions represent 79 per cent of the running words of Fitzgerald's child letter writing vocabulary and 74 per cent of the running words of Rinsland's list.

The "450 Very Useful Spelling Words" are all in the McKee-Fitzgerald (unpublished) child writing vocabulary, in the Rinsland (1945) vocabulary, and in the Fitzgerald (1931) letter writing list. The only words which do not occur in Horn's (1926) adult list

are valentines and skates.

According to Fitzgerald:

The eight hundred words in Lists A and B comprise with their repetitions approximately 90 per cent of the running words of the Fitzgerald vocabulary of child letter writing, and account for nearly 66 per cent of the spelling mistakes made by the children in writing the letters basic to this study. These eight hundred words and their repetitions include 83.6 per cent of the running words basic to Rinsland's extensive list. In other words, they were written more than 5,025,000 times in a little over six million writings in his basic data. (Fitzgerald, 1951<sup>b</sup>, p. 21)

The importance of these words in child and adult writing is indicated by their frequent occurrence and their cruciality is suggested from the data on errors made in writing them. These lists could serve as a basic core of words to be taught in the early elementary grades and because of their great value these eight hundred words would be an important consideration for the basic spelling list for the slow learner. The slow learner will need and use these words and they will comprise a greater percentage of his writing than they will for the average or gifted child.

List A is considered most fundamental for the retarded child. Words from this list should be learned first, as they will be needed the most. When his needs increase, the words from List B should then be added.

The very slow child who can master five hundred most important words has a useful stock which will supply a large percentage of the running words needed by him in writing. If, in addition to this basic stock of words, he has mastered a method for learning to spell other words which he will require from time to time, he has acquired a valuable writing tool for life. (Fitzgerald, 1951<sup>b</sup>, p. 22)

In view of the above data, the writer has chosen List A by Fitzgerald as the most useful spelling list for the educable mentally retarded. This list represents a minimum of words which all children should learn since they are used so frequently by both children and adults. The writer has also included a few words from List B by Fitzgerald as these words follow the same linguistic pattern as the words in List A.

Recommended spelling list for the intermediate classes  
for the educable mentally retarded

In programmed spelling Buchanan (1968, 1969) and in programmed reading Engelmann (1970) one sound maintains the same letter representation and the sound is maintained until the child has complete mastery of it. In this way he is able to perceive a relationship between the sound he hears and the letters he sees. Engelmann teaches children how to rhyme using phonetic families and substituting the initial consonant. Habit strength is built on this linguistic relationship. Also the words are programmed according to their difficulty. The shorter words are learned before the longer ones.

Hanna and Moore (1953) wrote that words learned in isolation are likely to remain so with no relation to words of the same sound and



construction. They believe children should learn techniques in spelling which will enable them to proceed successfully in making letter-sound relationships.

Hanna and Hanna wrote:

A phonetic analysis of words and an inductive study of the letter symbols used to spell the sounds in words provide a firm base for the spelling program. This new approach, coupled with a word-study plan which uses the visual and the hand-learning for reinforcement, gives us hope of a day when all our pupils can spell correctly the words they need to write. (Hanna and Hanna, 1960, p. 106)

The writer, as previously indicated, recommends List A by Fitzgerald. In listing the words in List A and some of the words in List B, the writer has followed the pattern used in programmed instruction. Where possible the words are grouped according to their linguistic pattern and the one-, two-, and three-letter words are listed before the longer words. (Appendix C).

## RESULTS

Twenty-seven questionnaires were sent. Nineteen were returned, three were returned with "moved, left no address" and five did not answer in spite of follow up (telephone call, if possible, or letter) by the writer.

The following are the results of the questionnaires returned from intermediate teachers of the educable mentally retarded in the Granite and Salt Lake City school districts: (Appendix E, Table I - Results of Questionnaires)

1. Fifteen teachers have a definite time for spelling each day. Four teachers do not have a definite time for spelling each day. (Average time was twenty-two minutes)
2. Eight teachers use a regular grade spelling text. Eleven teachers do not use a regular grade spelling text.

Texts mentioned were:

- a. BYU Individualized Spelling (1)
  - b. Spelling Goals (levels 2-4) (1)
  - c. Spelling for Word Mastery (2-4) (1)
  - d. Other teachers failed to indicate text used.
3. Fifteen teachers have a weekly spelling list. Four teachers do not have a weekly spelling list.

4. One teacher uses a curriculum guide for the educable mentally retarded.

Eighteen teachers do not use a curriculum guide for the educable mentally retarded.

a. Cincinnati Public Schools (1)

5. Thirteen teachers say the functional spelling needs of the students are being met.

Two teachers say the functional spelling needs of the students are not being met.

Four teachers are unsure.

6. Fifteen teachers would like a functional spelling list for the educable mentally retarded.

Four teachers do not think a list is necessary.

7. The following means are used by teachers in the selection of spelling words:

A. Basic readers

- (1) Eight teachers choose words from the basic readers.

Eleven teachers do not choose words from the basic readers.

Readers used:

- a. Stanwix House readers (3)
- b. Sullivan's Programmed Reading
- c. Other teachers who checked the item did not indicate what readers they used.

## B. Word lists

- (1) Ten teachers use the 220 Dolch basic word list.  
Nine teachers do not use the 220 Dolch basic word list.
- (2) Two teachers use the Fitzgerald list of "350 Most Useful Spelling Words".  
Seventeen teachers do not use the Fitzgerald list of "350 Most Useful Spelling Words".
- (3) One teacher uses other spelling lists.  
Eighteen teachers do not use other spelling lists.
  - a. 100 Emergency Words for the EMR (1)

C. Fourteen teachers use words from the writing of the children.

Five teachers do not use words from the writing of the children.

D. Twelve teachers use words from the environment needed for survival.

Seven teachers do not use words from the environment needed for survival.

E. Thirteen teachers use words from unit studies.

Six teachers do not use words from unit studies.

8. Eighteen teachers indicated there was a need for improving the spelling program for the educable mentally retarded.

9. One teacher indicated there was no need for improving the spelling program for the educable mentally retarded.

(Appendix D - index of teaching materials cited)

#### Summary of results

Although the study was conducted during the summer and the number of responses to the questionnaires may have been affected due to this, still enough responses were received to indicate a general trend in spelling for these classes. It was revealed that practically all of the teachers still prefer a formal spelling program and that they also have a weekly spelling list. Half of the teachers use a regular grade spelling text, while one teacher indicated the spelling program was individualized. Only one teacher noted the use of a curriculum guide for the educable mentally retarded.

All but two of the teachers thought the functional spelling needs of the students were being met and two were unsure. However, all of the teachers except four wanted a list of functional spelling words for the educable mentally retarded.

In the selection of spelling words for these students some of the teachers said they used words from the basic readers. Several chose words from the Dolch list; only two used the Fitzgerald list and one mentioned another list. Most of the teachers chose words from the writings of the children and from unit studies. Some of them selected words from the environment.

Only one teacher was completely satisfied with his spelling program. The other teachers were interested in a better functional spelling program being developed for the educable mentally retarded. At the present time it would seem that each teacher has his own method of teaching spelling and choosing the spelling words.

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary and conclusions

The purpose of this paper was to investigate the spelling programs of the intermediate classes for the educable mentally retarded in the Granite and Salt Lake City school districts. The writer felt (based on past observations and on past teaching experiences in the intermediate classes for the educable mentally retarded) that teachers have no consistent rationale for choosing spelling words. For this purpose questionnaires were sent to the teachers of these classes, to learn about spelling programs presently conducted in these districts. In order to analyze the questionnaire results more effectively, a survey of available literature in this field was made. From this literature a list of the most essential spelling words was selected and these words were arranged in their phonetic families where possible and were listed according to difficulty within that group.

As a result of the information received, the writer concludes that these teachers have shown that current spelling programs for the educable mentally retarded are inadequate, mainly because they are not functional. Practically all of the teachers surveyed still use the weekly spelling list, though studies (Ingram, 1960) reveal minimal carry-over of words memorized from the weekly spelling list to actual spelling situations. Many teachers based word selection on unit

studies. This method too, is inadequate unless words are frequently used by the child in writing. The use of environmental words is also questioned. It is important that the child read and recognize these words, but these are words which he seldom writes.

The study indicated teachers are not familiar with essential writing word lists for children and adults. About half of the teachers noted they use the Dolch 220 basic word list and only two used the list by Fitzgerald, "350 Most Useful Spelling Words".

Ingram (1960) says that the real needs in spelling will be realized by choosing words from the writings of the children. The other authorities in the field of mental retardation and spelling (cited in the Review of Literature) also believe this to be true. Most of the teachers did indicate they selected words from the writings of the children, in addition to other methods of word selection.

It appears that the teachers do have a variety of ways in which they select their spelling words. Practically all of them indicated an interest in improving this area of teaching. Because of this, the writer concludes that there is need for further work in the curriculum of spelling for the educable mentally retarded.

### Recommendations

The writer would recommend the development of a more functional spelling program for the educable mentally retarded. This should include the teaching of the most essential spelling words used by



children and adults as these words will be especially important in the writing vocabulary of the educable mentally retarded. These words should be introduced in a realistic context directly related to daily life, thus motivating the student. List A: "350 Most Useful Spelling Words" by Fitzgerald is the best list presently available. In addition individualized spelling lists should be used, thereby meeting the needs of each child's writing and vocabulary. Group spelling time should be devoted to teaching students words in subject areas that are necessary to know, words that lend themselves to phonetic generalizations and troublesome words like homonyms that the student should know. After the development of such a program, an in-service training for teachers would be beneficial.

The more functional the spelling curriculum, that is, the more it concerns life situations in which the child is involved, the more meaningful it will be to him. Through this means, the importance of spelling will be realized and one of the persisting life problems--communications--for the educable mentally retarded will be alleviated. He will be able to communicate more effectively in writing.

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## APPENDIXES

## APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

1. Do you have a specific amount of time each day designated for spelling? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ How many minutes? \_\_\_\_\_  
(Spelling - a systematic method of learning how to spell words)
2. Do you use a regular grade spelling text(s) appropriate for the spelling level? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Specify which one(s) and give grade level \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you have a weekly spelling list? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
4. Do you follow a spelling program suggested by a curriculum guide for the EMR? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Specify which one(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Are the functional spelling needs of the students being met by the present spelling program? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
6. Should there be a list of functional spelling words for the EMR?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

(Functional spelling vocabulary - words used in highest frequency in written vocabulary now and in adult life)

7. How do you determine your choice of spelling words? Do you actively and directly seek words from:

(a) the basic readers? yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_ specify which one(s) and give grade level \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(b) the 220 Dolch basic word list? yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_

(c) the Fitzgerald list of "350 Most Useful Spelling Words"? yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_

(d) other suggested spelling lists? yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_ specify which one(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(e) the writing of the children? yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_

(f) the environment needed for survival? yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_

(g) unit studies? yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_

8. The purpose of this questionnaire has been to seek information from professionals who are in daily contact with children who are EMR. We are interested in improving or modifying the functional spelling list appropriate for mentally retarded children. What are your comments on this goal? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B

Fitzgerald's List A: 350 Most Useful Spelling WordsFitzgerald's List B: 450 Very Useful Spelling WordsList A: 350 Most Useful Spelling Words

a	both	does	get	ice	more
about	box	dog	getting	if	morning
across	boy	doll	girl	I'm	most
after	boys	done	girls	in	mother
afternoon	bring	don't	give	interesting	much
again	brother	door	glad	into	my
all	brought	down	go	is	name
along	but	dress	goes	it	near
always	buy	each	going	just	never
am	by	eat	good	keep	new
an	call	eggs	got	kind	next
and	came	end	grade	know	nice
another	can	enjoyed	ground	last	night
any	candy	every	had	left	no
are	car	far	hair	let	not
arithmetic	children	father	hand	letter	now
around	Christmas	feet	happy	like	o'clock
as	class	fifth	hard	liked	of
at	clean	find	has	little	off
aunt	clothes	fine	have	live	oh
away	cold	fire	he	long	old
baby	come	first	head	look	on
back	comes	fish	heard	lot	once
bad	coming	five	help	lots	one
ball	corn	flowers	her	love	or
be	could	food	here	made	other
because	couldn't	for	high	make	our
bed	country	found	him	making	out
been	cousin	four	his	man	over
before	daddy	friend	home	many	pair
best	day	friends	hope	may	paper
better	days	from	horse	me	party
big	dear	front	horses	men	people
black	did	funny	house	might	picture
blue	didn't	game	how	milk	pictures
book	dinner	games	hurt	miss	place
books	do	gave	I	money	play



played	she	sure	to	wash	written
playing	shoes	table	today	water	year
please	should	take	together	way	years
pretty	show	teacher	told	we	yes
program	sister	teacher's	too	well	yesterday
put	six	tell	took	went	yet
rain	small	ten	town	were	you
read	snow	thank	tree	what	your
reading	so	that	trees	when	
red	some	the	two	where	
remember	something	their	under	which	
ride	sometimes	them	until	while	
right	soon	then	up	white	
room	spelling	there	upon	who	
run	spring	these	us	why	
said	started	they	use	will	
Santa Claus	stay	thing	used	winter	
saw	stayed	things	very	wish	
say	store	think	visit	with	
school	story	third	walk	won't	
second	street	this	want	work	
see	summer	three	wanted	would	
seen	Sunday	through	wants	write	
set	supper	time	was	writing	

List B: 450 Very Useful Spelling Words

afraid	ask	bicycle	built	chicken	cousins
age	asked	bird	busy	chickens	cow
ago	assembly	birds	cake	child	cows
air	ate	birthday	called	church	cross
airplane	awful	bit	cannot	city	cut
all right	awhile	board	can't	clay	cute
almost	babies	boat	card	close	dad
alone	bank	body	care	coal	dance
already	barn	bottom	carry	coat	dark
also	basket	bread	cars	color	Dec.
animals	bath	breakfast	cat	colors	December
answer	beautiful	broke	catch	company	decided
anything	began	brothers	caught	cook	deep
apple	behind	brown	cave	corner	desk
apples	being	build	cents	cotton	died
April	bet	building	chair	course	different

dirt	floor	houses	living	only	round
dishes	flower	hundred	looked	open	rubber
doctor	fly	hunt	looking	orange	running
doesn't	folks	hunting	looks	oranges	same
dogs	foot	hurry	lost	outside	sand
doing	football	ice cream	lovely	own	sat
dollars	forest	I'll	lunch	paint	Saturday
draw	forget	important	mad	papa	says
dresses	forgot	inches	mail	park	sea
drink	fourth	Indian	makes	part	seat
dry	Friday	ink	mamma	pass	sell
during	fruit	inside	March	pen	send
early	full	instead	maybe	pencil	sent
Easter	fun	iron	mean	pet	seven
eating	garden	isn't	meat	piano	several
egg	geography	it's	meet	pick	shall
eight	gets	I've	merry	picnic	shoot
else	gives	Jan.	middle	pie	short
enjoy	glass	jump	mine	piece	sick
enough	gone	kept	minutes	places	side
even	grades	kill	Miss	plant	silk
evening	grandma	killed	month	plays	since
ever	grandmother	kinds	mountains	pony	sing
everybody	grass	knew	mouth	poor	sisters
everyone	great	knife	move	present	sit
everything	green	lady	moved	presents	sitting
eyes	grow	lake	Mr.	P. S.	skates
face	guess	land	Mrs.	pull	skating
fair	gun	language	mud	quite	sled
fall	half	large	music	rabbit	sleep
family	Halloween	largest	must	rabbits	snowing
farm	handkerchiefs	late	myself	radio	soap
fast	hands	later	named	raining	someone
fat	hardly	laugh	names	ran	sometime
Feb.	hat	lay	nearly	ready	song
February	haven't	learn	news	real	sorry
feed	having	learned	nine	received	south
feeling	hay	leave	north	recess	spend
fell	hear	leaves	nothing	rest	stand
few	helped	lessons	Nov.	riding	stars
field	hill	letters	number	ring	state
fight	hit	light	nuts	river	stick
finished	hold	likes	ocean	road	sticks
fishing	hole	lines	Oct.	rode	still
flag	hospital	lived	often	roll	stockings
flew	hot	lives	ones	rope	stop

stopped	surprised	than	toy	valentine	wind
stories	sweet	thanksgiving	train	valentines	window
stove	swim	that's	tried	wagon	windows
straight	swimming	those	trip	warm	without
string	takes	thought	truck	wasn't	women
strong	talk	throw	truly	watch	won
study	tall	till	try	wear	wood
studying	teach	times	trying	weather	woods
such	teacher	tired	turn	week	word
suit	teeth	tomorrow	twenty	weeks	words
sun	tells	tonight	uncle	wet	working
suppose	test	top	vacation	wild	world
					wouldn't
					wrote
					yard
					yellow
					yours

## APPENDIX C

Fitzgerald's List A and selected words from List B grouped according to their linguistic pattern and difficulty

<u>Short A Words</u>	<u>Irregular Words</u>	<u>et</u>	<u>Irregular Words</u>
<u>as</u>	<u>ar</u>	get	<u>er</u>
as	far	let	her
has	car	set	over
	cars	yet	never
<u>ad</u>		<u>en</u>	under
bad	<u>all</u>	men	paper
had	all	ten	supper
dad - 2	ball	then	summer
glad	call	when	dinner
	small	open	corner - 2
<u>at</u>		written	flower
at	<u>Others Words</u>	chicken - 2	flowers
cat	last	chickens - 2	teacher
that	class	children	teachers
	happy		December - 2
<u>an</u>		<u>end</u>	remember
can	<u>Irregular</u>	end	
man	are	friend	<u>Other Words</u>
	saw	friends	yes
<u>am</u>	was		best
am	wash	<u>ell</u>	dress
program	walk	tell	them
	want	well	want
<u>and</u>	wants		help
and	wanted	<u>ead</u>	next
hand	card - 2	head	left
	dark - 2	read	eggs
<u>ank</u>	started	ready	
bank - 2		bread	<u>Short I Words</u>
thank	<u>Short E Words</u>		<u>is</u>
	<u>ed</u>		is
<u>ack</u>	bed		his
back	red		this
black			

(2 indicates words are from List B)

it  
it  
bit - 2  
visit

in  
in  
again  
cousin

ish  
fish  
wish

ilk  
milk  
silk

ive  
give  
live

ing  
bring  
spring  
thing  
things  
morning  
anything - 2  
something

Other Words

if  
big  
did  
six  
him  
miss  
will  
with  
fifth  
think  
which  
until

girl  
girls  
first  
third

Short O Words

ot  
got  
not  
lot  
lots

on  
on  
upon

ong  
long  
along

Irregular Words

other  
other  
mother  
another  
brother  
brothers - 2

Other Words

of  
off  
dog  
doll  
from  
o'clock  
across

Irregular

of  
money

Short U Words

ut  
but  
cut - 2

up  
up  
upon

Other Words

us  
just  
run  
funny  
much  
under  
summer  
supper

Irregular

put  
hurt  
church - 2

Long A Words

ay ey as ay  
day they  
may  
say  
way  
away  
always  
clay  
play  
played  
playing  
stay  
stayed

ade  
made  
grade

ake  
cake  
make  
take

ame  
came  
name  
game  
games

air ere as air  
hair there  
pair where  
chair eir as air  
their

day  
Sunday  
Friday  
Saturday  
today  
birthday - 2  
yesterday

Irregular Words

any  
any  
many

Other Words  
ate (e silent)  
table (e silent)  
baby  
rain

Irregular

said  
have  
aunt

<u>Long E Words</u>	<u>Long I Words</u>	<u>Long O Words</u>	<u>Irregular Words</u>
<u>e</u>	<u>ind</u>	<u>o</u>	<u>ow as ou</u>
be	find	no	how
he	kind	go	now
me		so	cow
we	<u>ite</u>	also	cows
she	white		flower
	write	<u>oy</u>	flowers
		boy	
<u>ee</u>	<u>ice</u>	boys	<u>out</u>
see	ice	enjoy	out
tree	nice	enjoyed	about
trees			
three			
	<u>ive</u>	<u>Long O Words</u>	<u>ound</u>
<u>eet</u>	five		found
feet	live	<u>old</u>	ground
street		old	around
	<u>Other e silent</u>	cold	
<u>ear</u> <u>ere as ear</u>	ride	told	<u>own</u>
dear <u>here</u>	fine		down
near	fire	<u>or</u> <u>our</u>	town
year	like	or <u>four</u>	brown - 2
years	liked	for <u>your</u>	
	while	door	<u>one</u>
<u>each</u>	time	color - 2	one
each	sometimes	colors - 2	done
teacher			
teachers	<u>ight</u>	<u>ore</u>	<u>ome</u>
	might	more	come
<u>Other Words</u>	night	store	comes
<u>eat</u>	right	before	some
read			
clean	<u>Y as Long I</u>	<u>ow as o</u>	<u>ook</u>
people	my	know	look
	by	show	took
<u>Irregular</u>	buy	snow	cook - 2
the	why		book
were			books
heard	<u>Other Words</u>		
	<u>I</u>		<u>ood</u>
	I'm		food
	high		good

oon  
soon  
afternoon

o as oo  
to  
do ou as oo  
two you  
too ue as oo  
who blue  
into

Other Words

oh  
most  
both  
goes  
clothes  
home  
hope  
work  
corn  
corner  
morning  
horse  
horses

Irregular

our  
love  
room  
body - 2  
does  
doesn't  
shoes  
board - 2  
house  
school  
country  
through  
brought

Long U Words

use  
use  
used

ure  
sure  
picture  
pictures

Other Phonograms

ce as s  
ice  
nice  
once  
place  
dance - 2

dy as e  
body - 2  
candy  
ready - 2  
daddy

se as z  
use  
used  
these  
please  
because

ty as e  
party  
pretty

nt  
aunt  
want  
wants  
wanted

ry  
very  
every  
story  
country

rk  
work  
dark - 2

nk  
bank - 2  
thank  
think

sh  
fish  
wish  
wash

lk  
milk  
silk  
walk

ch  
each  
much  
which  
church - 2

rd  
hard  
card - 2  
board - 2  
heard

ter  
after  
water  
better  
letter  
sister  
winter

ther  
other  
mother  
brother  
brothers - 2  
father  
together

n't  
can't  
don't  
won't  
didn't  
doesn't  
couldn't

ing - ending  
going  
making  
coming  
writing  
getting  
reading  
spelling  
interesting  
Thanksgiving - 2

Other Words

their  
money  
second  
Christmas  
Santa Claus  
arithmetic

## APPENDIX D

Index of publisher of reading and spelling programs cited

<u>Reading and Spelling Programs</u>	<u>Publisher</u>
<u>100 Emergency Words for the EMR Curriculum Guide for the EMR. 1963</u>	Salt Lake City Public Schools Salt Lake City, Utah
220 Dolch basic word list	Garrard Press, Publishers Champaign, Illinois
BYU Individualized Spelling	BYU Educational Center Provo, Utah
Spelling for Word Mastery (2-4)	Charles E. Merrill Books Educational Center Columbus, Ohio
Spelling Goals (2-4)	Webster Division McGraw Hill Book Company San Francisco, California
Stanwix House Series	Stanwix House, Inc. 3020 Chartiers Avenue Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Sullivan's Programmed Reading	Webster Division McGraw Hill Book Company San Francisco, California



## APPENDIX E

Table I - Results of Questionnaires

Table I - Results of Questionnaires

Teacher	Formal splg. prog.		Time Minutes	Reg. gr. splg. text used		BYU-Ind splg	Texts Splg. Goals (2-4)	Spelling for word mstry (2-4)	Weekly splg. list used		Curr. guide for EMR used		Guide Cinn. Public Schools	Func. splg. needs are met			Need a func. splg. list for the EMR	
	yes	no		yes	no				yes	no	yes	no		yes	no	yes	no	yes
	A	X		30	X		X			X		X				X		X
B	X		20	X			X		X		X					X		X
C	X		30	X					X		X		X				X	
D	X		20		X				X		X		X				X	
E	X		15	X				X	X		X		X					X
F	X		15	X					X		X		X				X	
G		X		X				X	X		X		X				X	
H	X		20	X					X		X		X				X	
I	X		20		X				X		X		X					X
J	X		30		X				X		X		X				X	
K	X		10		X				X		X					X	X	
L		X			X					X	X					X	X	
M		X			X				X		X		X				X	
N	X		40	X					X		X				X		X	

Table I (Continued)

Teacher	Formal splg. prog.		Time Minutes	Reg. gr. splg. text used		BYU Ind splg	Texts		Weekly splg. list used		Curr. guide for EMR used		Cinn. Public Schools	Func. splg. needs are met			Need a func. splg. list for the EMR	
	yes	no		yes	no		Splg. Goals (2-4)	Spelling for word mastery (2-4)	yes	no	yes	no		yes	no	yes	no	
	O	X		15		X		X		X		X			X			
P	X		15		X				X		X			X				X
Q	X		10		X				X		X			X				X
R		X			X				X		X				X			X
S	X		20		X				X		X			X				X
Tot.	15	4	22	8	11	1	2	2	15	4	1	18	1	13	4	2	15	4

Table I (Continued)

Teacher	Basic rdrs. used		Sullivan's Prog. Rdg. Rdrs.	Stanwix Hse.	Splg. words selected from;														Splg. prog. for Inter. EMR should be improved	
	yes	no			Dolch list		Fitzgerald's list		Other lists		100 Emgncy. words		Children's writing		Environ- ment		Unit Studies		yes	no
					yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no		
A	X		X			X		X	X					X		X		X	X	
B		X				X		X	X					X		X		X	X	
C	X				X		X		X				X		X		X		X	
D		X			X			X	X			X		X		X		X	X	
E		X			X			X	X			X			X	X		X	X	
F		X				X		X		X			X		X		X		X	
G		X			X			X	X				X		X		X		X	
H	X				X			X		X			X		X		X	X	X	
I	X					X		X		X			X		X	X			X	
J		X			X		X		X				X		X		X	X	X	
K		X			X			X	X				X		X	X		X	X	
L	X			X	X			X	X				X		X	X		X	X	
M	X			X		X		X	X				X		X	X		X	X	
N		X			X			X	X				X		X	X		X	X	
O		X			X			X	X				X		X	X		X	X	
P	X				X			X	X				X		X	X		X	X	
Q		X			X			X	X				X		X	X		X	X	
R	X			X	X			X	X				X	X		X	X	X	X	
S		X			X			X	X				X		X	X		X	X	
Totals	8	11	1	3	10	9	2	17	5	14	1		14	5	12	7	13	6	18	1