

Speld NEWS

QLD



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The Term Wrap

Welcome to the end of term Speld Qld magazine. We have left winter behind, so soon enough we will be shedding our coats as we prepare for some warmer weather.

To meet the growing demand for our services, we welcomed three new psychologists to our team: Rachael Davis, Michelle Martin and Anna Klar. Together they add great depth and experience to our amazing team of psychologists.

The second half of the term at a glance:

- We have received 167 applications for assessments
- Our team of psychologists have conducted 112 assessments
- 295 tutoring sessions happened at the Speld office
- 3 Sounds Write workshops were run, each for 4 days in duration, attended by 75 teachers and Speech Pathologists

Our presenters delivered the following Professional Development:

- Accommodating Dyslexia in every classroom, Palm Beach Currumbin State High School, Gold Coast
- Assistive Technology, Brisbane Girls Grammar
- Executive Function, Centenary Heights

State High School, Toowoomba

- Sounds Write snapshot, Kuraby State School

We would like to extend thanks to Nick Parker, Kylie Power and Teresa Daniel for delivering these Professional Development sessions.

Held at the Brisbane Conference & Exhibition Centre on 26-27 August 2022, Speld Qld were an exhibitor at the P&Cs Qld Annual State Conference. The two-day program was based on the theme of "People, Purpose, Passion". There were over 500 P&C members in attendance and a lot of interest was shown in the products and services that Speld has to offer.

Enjoy the third term school holidays. Stay safe and I look forward to providing you all an update next term.



David Oliver, Chief Executive Officer



A Map to Effective Sight Word Acquisition

Have you ever mentioned the term 'sight word' to a parent/carer of a child in their early primary years? Did they shudder? For many students and their families, 'sight words' (words that are instantly and automatically recognisable without conscious effort), have been the cause of much stress and anxiety. As an early-years teacher I have witnessed the struggle many students face, not only to develop automaticity of sight words in the short term but to commit sight words to long-term memory and transfer their knowledge beyond the pages of a list or book.

There is another group of students who suffer the same frustration as those who find sight word acquisition a laborious process. I'm referring to those students who seem to memorise the words easily, but when revisiting words from previous weeks, or seeing the words in a different context, have no recollection. An explanation for this may be an over-reliance on visual memory, more specifically, students memorising the word as a whole picture in their mind, which is stored as a symbol that cannot be altered; capitalisation, size, italics, or for some students even position on the page can render that word unrecognisable. I can see how it might appear that we recognise words as whole units. Proficient readers automatically recognise patterns in words and put them together

to decode. The process is so instantaneous that we don't even think about it.



If you've memorised a long list of grocery items, you'll know that relying on visual memory alone often results in multiple trips to the shop. What if I asked you to repeat the shopping list a month later? Not an easy task! Students relying on visual strategies alone are attempting the same feat, often with 100- 200 words, keeping in mind there's generally no pattern or theme accompanying sight word lists. What about the half a million or so words left after memorising the first 200? It's safe to say that visual memory alone does not result in fluent reading.

It's important to note that I am using the term 'sight word' as those that are instantly recognised without conscious effort. The term can be misleading, as 'sight' is associated with visual memory. If you've had experience with sight



words in a school context, you may also associate it with the process I've described above; 'memorising' an exorbitant list of words.

If words are not memorised, how do we automatically recognise so many? The process of permanently storing words for immediate, effortless retrieval is known as Orthographic Mapping.

"Orthographic mapping is a process which involves making explicit the connections between the graphemes (letter or letter combinations) in a written word and the phonemes (sounds) in its pronunciation." (Kilpatrick, 2015)

ORTHOGRAPHIC MAPPING HAS THREE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS:

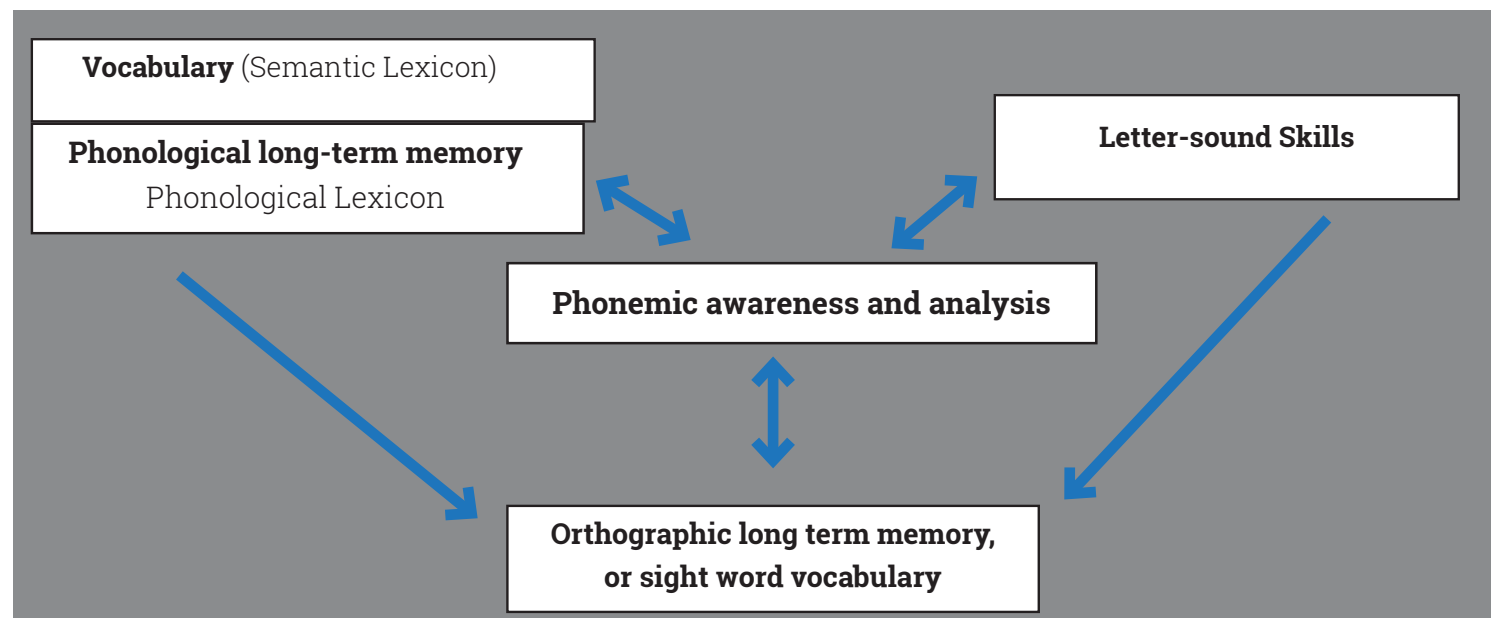
1. **Automatic letter-sound associations** – correctly identifying letter names and the phonemes they represent;
2. **Proficient phonemic awareness** – automatic

access to the sounds in spoken words and being able to manipulate those sounds;

3. **Word study** – making the connections between the phonemes/sounds in oral words and graphemes/letters in written words to eventually secure them for future fast retrieval.

Words are individually mapped when the reader makes the connection between the graphemes seen in a word's written form and the phonemes that are heard when the word is pronounced. A word is 'mapped' once there is no need to sound the word out or pause for analysis, and its meaning is immediately available.

For 60% of students, the process of orthographic mapping will occur after a few exposures to the word. 40% of students will require explicit instruction, guidance and repetition.



Five from Five, 2022



HOW CAN WE SUPPORT ALL STUDENTS TO MAP RATHER THAN MEMORISE?

- Talk about the meaning and use the word in context. This might seem obvious, however students who comfortably read sight words from a list still may not know what these words mean.
- Are there parts of the word that can be decoded using the students' letter/sound knowledge? There's a misconception that you can't sound out sight words. The end goal may be automaticity, but to get there sounding out is an important step.
- Is the word beyond the student's letter/sound knowledge? Irregular high frequency words, eg said, are not words that can't be sounded out. They are words we see frequently but we don't know the sounds for yet. Limiting the amount of irregular high frequency that children encounter in the beginning stages of reading and discussing the regular and irregular parts of the word is a helpful process
- Systematic phonics instruction and phonemic awareness are vital!

With the knowledge that sight words are not learned by sight empowers us to support students to map regular and irregular high frequency words into long-term memory and hopefully reduce the stress and anxiety associated with memorisation.

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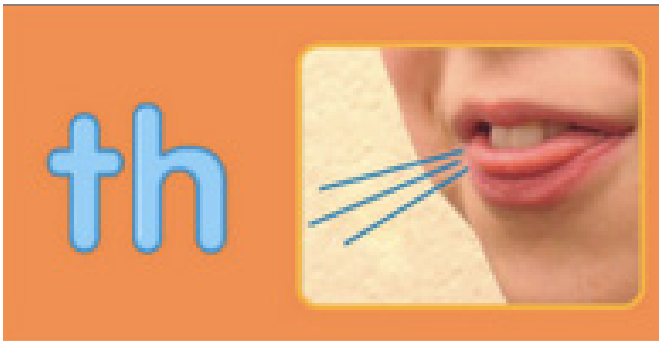
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How Speech & Language Impact on Literacy

A person's speech (articulation) and language (both receptive and expressive) can impact their development and use of literacy skills. This article will provide definitions of speech and language, how deficits in these areas can affect a person's ability to acquire and use literacy skills and describe how assessment of these skills can provide valuable information to educators, parents and students to support their literacy acquisition.



SPEECH (ARTICULATION)

Articulation refers to **making sounds**. The production of sounds involves the coordinated movements of the lips, tongue, teeth, palate (top of the mouth) and respiratory system (lungs). There are also many different nerves and muscles used for speech. Some common articulation errors in young children include gliding, e.g., wabbit for rabbit, lisp, e.g. thun for sun and fronting tat for cat.

Poor articulation (speech clarity) skills can

also impact literacy development. Disorders of articulation or speech-sound disorders (SSD) are common in early childhood. Children with these disorders may be at risk for reading difficulties because they may have poor auditory, phonologic, and verbal memory skills. (Sices, Taylor, et al., 2009) Some children can encounter issues with spelling in the early years when they write what they say, e.g., "wif" for with etc. Spelling can also be impacted by poor phonologic skills underlying these articulation errors.

LANGUAGE

Language can be broken down into receptive and expressive language skills.

Receptive language refers to how students understand language. Expressive language refers to how students use words to express their ideas or answer questions. The integral parts of oral and written language are:

1. **Morphology** (the way words are formed) – Morphology is the study of the smallest meaningful units in speech and writing. Morpheme relates to the smallest unit of meaning. e.g. morphemes in; come; ing can be blended to form words like incoming.
2. **Phonology** (basic sound) – Phonology relates to the relationship between letters and



sound. A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound
e.g. the phonemes in cat are /k/ /a/ /t/.

Being able to manipulate sounds in words orally is a prerequisite skill to being able to blend and segment sounds for spelling and reading.

3. **Syntax** (grammar) – the set of rules that describe and explain the ways in which words are related in a sentence, e.g. how commas and semicolons are supposed to be used.

Errors in grammar in spoken language can translate into written language, e.g. if a child doesn't know irregular verb tenses such as ate or drove, they may write sentences with the language they use verbally, e.g. I drived to the Gold Coast.

4. **Semantics** (the way language conveys meaning), e.g. A toy block could be called a block, a cube, a toy. A child could be called a child, kid, boy, girl, son, daughter.

5. **Pragmatics** (appropriate word choice). The study of the relationships between signs in the context and the text, e.g. Will you crack open the door? I am getting hot.

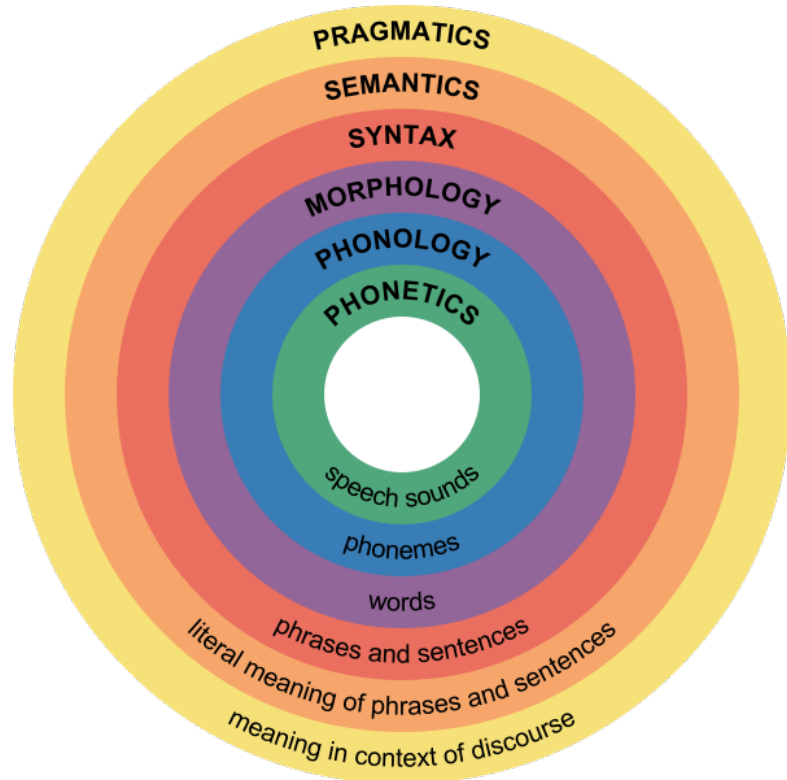
Semantically, the word "crack" would mean to break, but pragmatically we know that the speaker means to open the door just a little to let in some air.

THESE THEN RELATE TO WRITTEN LANGUAGE THROUGH:

6. **Orthography** (spelling pattern system)

e.g. the sound 'oh' can be represented by different spelling patterns <oa> <ow> <oe> <o> etc

7. **Lexicology** (the study of words) – the study of morphemes combined to form words, e.g. Unhappy is composed of the stem word "happy" and the derivational prefix "un-"



<https://nerissaryan5.weebly.com/references.html>

Reading is a language-based skill. The relationship between oral language and reading is reciprocal (Catts, 1989), with each influencing the other to varying degrees as children progress through school. You must be able to understand language at an oral level in order to be expected to understand it at the text level.

Learning to read words is difficult if you do not know what they mean. Children with weak oral language skills risk having difficulty learning to read and comprehend.



Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in Children

SYMPTOMS OF ADHD

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is characterised by a pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity and impulsivity that persists and interferes with functioning or development (American Psychiatric Association, 2022).

Children with ADHD frequently act before thinking, experience difficulties sitting still, are often easily distracted by other things going on near them, and experience challenges with following directions. These difficulties can cause problems for these children in the classroom and with friendships (Australian Psychological Society, 2022).



HOW DOES ADHD DEVELOP?

A number of factors are thought to relate to the development of ADHD including genetics, neurobiology (the way the brain is structured and functions) and the environment (Australian

Psychological Society, 2022).

ASSESSMENT FOR ADHD

Assessment and treatment for ADHD often includes a team of professionals including a Paediatrician, Psychiatrist and/or Psychologist, and perhaps other professionals such as a Speech Pathologist and Occupational Therapist (Australian Psychological Society, 2022).



TIPS AND GETTING HELP

Some tips that can be helpful for children with ADHD include using praise to reward wanted behaviours, using eye contact and responding in a caring manner, using simple and clear commands when necessary, using quiet places away from distractions for the child to work in, breaking tasks into smaller chunks, including breaks while



working, and using reminders to help the child learn organisation skills (Australian Psychological Society, 2022).

If your child has ADHD or you suspect your child may have ADHD you can access support and help from your doctor, your local health service, specialists who work with children including Paediatricians, Psychologists and School Guidance Officers, ADHD Australia and the ADHD Foundation (Healthdirect, 2022).

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New Speld Qld Professional Development!

The Challenge of Learning to Read



- The changes that have been made to the Australian Curriculum (Version 9) mean schools need to consider how they are teaching students to read.
- We have designed a one-hour workshop to assist educators to understand the research and theory behind learning to read and spell and how they can implement best practice in their classrooms in light of the recent curriculum changes.

[Find Out More](#)



Homework Tips for Children with Learning Difficulties

Homework can be a source of stress for students with learning difficulties and their parents. For many students it is not only the homework task itself that can be hard, these children can also experience difficulties with organisation, concentration and short-term memory. Another factor to consider is it takes longer for students with Learning difficulties to complete tasks.

Dyslexic students are often mentally and physically exhausted from the school day due to the additional cognitive load required to produce the same work as their peers. Adjustments to homework for these students need to be made. To not consider this can result in a refusal to attempt the work, harm family relationships and lead to poor self-confidence.

This article will detail effective strategies to help parents, teachers and older students with meeting homework expectations while supporting for a student's individual learning needs.

BENEFITS OF HOMEWORK

Research shows that homework provides all students the opportunity to consolidate classroom learning, involves family members with their learning and develops behaviour for lifelong learning.

Homework that enhances student learning

should be purposeful and relevant to student needs and capability, develop their independence as a learner, be varied, challenging, related to class work and allow time for family activities. Homework should be achievable and lead to an increase in student's self-confidence. It should allow for some flexibility and options to cater for different student's circumstances.

EDUCATION QUEENSLAND POLICY

Every state school in Queensland is required to develop a homework policy in consultation with the school community, particularly the P & C.

The Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and the Standards of Education (2005) require schools to make reasonable adjustments so that students

"If a child cannot complete their homework without significant help, then that task needs to be adjusted."

are provided opportunities and choices on the same basis as students without a disability. Schools are required to make reasonable adjustments in consultation with students and/or their parents



Failure to adequately modify homework tasks and assignments may lead to increased stress on a child with Dyslexia, Dysgraphia or Dyscalculia. Research by Willcutt and Gaffney-Brown in 2004 shows that 20% of children with Dyslexia suffer from depression and another 20% suffer from an anxiety disorder.

TIPS FOR PARENTS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS



- From an early age, parents should create a homework routine, with the emphasis of “little and often”, rather than leaving the weekly homework to complete in one long session.
- Consider after school activities when developing a homework plan that works for your family. Don’t overschedule after school activities, but also ensure that your child has the opportunity to participate in activities they particularly enjoy and increases their self-esteem.
- Work out the best time to schedule homework – your child may need to have a break before beginning homework.
- Don’t do the homework for your child – it

is your child’s responsibility for the work itself and your job is to guide, support and motivate your child.

- Don’t get into a fight with your child over homework, resort to threats or punishments. Set clear boundaries e.g. say, “Once your homework is done, the weekend fun can begin”.
- Provide positive feedback – acknowledge that your child is trying their best.
- Go over homework instructions together to make sure they understand what they are supposed to do.
- Whenever possible, make homework a fun experience, for example, use games to practice maths facts rather than completing a worksheet.
- A child with learning difficulties can be discouraged easily when facing a large amount of work, so break homework down to smaller tasks to make the job more manageable.
- If they have difficulty writing homework down or remembering tasks, talk to their teacher to see if the homework could be accessible via the school’s website.
- Help your child to check their work.
- Assist your child to revise work before tests or exams – encourage them to draw pictures, underline key words or make brief notes to aid their memory.

TIPS FOR PARENTS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



- For an older child, technology such as a mobile phone can be a useful tool – they can take a photo of any important information, set reminders of important events or deadlines and record voice messages as a reminder.
- Help secondary students keep track of their upcoming due dates for assignments – use of a calendar/homework diary may help.
- Break assignments down into smaller, manageable tasks.
- Always inform the teacher if the homework is too difficult for your child to complete without substantial assistance from you or if it is taking an unreasonable amount of time to complete.
- Encourage your child to advocate for themselves. Give them the tools to be able to ask for modifications to be made or remind teachers they may need to present assignments in a different format.

TIPS FOR OLDER STUDENTS THAT ENCOURAGE INDEPENDENCE

- Study at a desk/table with all necessary equipment (stapler, pens, pencils and highlighters etc) easily accessible.
- Have no distractions in your study area e.g. mobile phone/tv.
- Use flashcards and study notes to revise facts and information for exams.
- Studies show that writing notes by hand instead of typing them helps students retain information.
- Get up early on the morning of an exam to

revise – this will keep the information fresh in your mind.

- When preparing for tests or exams, ask your teacher to specify which particular topics you will be tested on so you can target your time on the correct areas.
- Use your strengths, interests and assistive technology to find alternative ways to present assignments.

“Daily reading is essential – consistent practise is required for students with Dyslexia to develop and master literacy skills.”

- To assist with organisation, colour code each subject and make sure all notes for a particular subject are kept together in folders.
- Create visual reminders/to do lists.
- Use audio books for novel studies.
- Watch videos for information and research on science/history topics.

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

- Priority should be given to the student's weakness – this should include focussing on individualised homework set by a Dyslexia specialist and learning support teachers.
- It is important that reading is a priority for students with Dyslexia. Children should read aloud



to a parent for 10 minutes and then spend 10-15 minutes (depending on age) of silent reading. Parents of younger students can model reading with the child by reading pages/paragraphs alternately.

- While time constraints can limit the opportunity for teachers to prepare individualised homework tasks, it is possible to differentiate a generic class homework sheet to cater for the student with Dyslexia or another learning difference. This could be as simple as placing a star next to the necessary tasks to indicate the most important tasks that should ideally be completed by the student.
- Be prepared to accept verbal descriptions as an alternative to written completions of tasks.
- Never expect a dyslexic student to present/read in front of the class – perhaps have the oral presentation recorded at home and viewed by the teacher privately

“It is more valuable for a student to be given less homework that can be completed well than to burden them with excess homework”

- Be aware that Students with Dyslexia take more time to complete tasks – cater for them by requiring they only complete a reduced number of tasks within a set time, rather than expecting them to complete all tasks, regardless

of how long it takes.

- Class teachers need to be flexible in their approach, so they can find a method that suits the student, rather than expecting all students will learn in the same way
- If students are already having tutoring



with follow up “homework”, be mindful of this and understand the student may not have time to complete classroom homework on those nights.

- Homework needs to be thoroughly explained, to check that the student really understands the task.

PARENTS AND TEACHERS WORKING TOGETHER

- Developing and maintaining a good relationship between a family and classroom teacher is essential in order to make homework for a student with learning difficulties as stress free as possible.




- Parents often don't know how to talk to their child's teacher about homework - they feel anxious about the amount of homework given to their child, particularly if they already have tutoring, therapy or other commitments.
- The amount of homework set for students with Dyslexia or other learning difficulties need to be set in consultation with the teacher, parent and student.
- Ideally, parents should make a 15 minute appointment to speak with the classroom teacher about homework concerns, rather than trying to "catch" them before or after school. Be prepared to share what you know about how your child learns best and explain the impact of your child's learning difficulty on completing homework. Also include your child's strengths and interests.
- When children begin high school, there is the added complication of the student having many different teachers. Emailing each teacher is one way to open communications, alternatively, organising a meeting with the head of Learning Support, who can share your child's specific needs with their teachers can be beneficial.
- Teachers work best with parents who want to be part of the solution. Developing a positive relationship with teachers demonstrates to your child that you are working together to provide them with the best support possible, which is what every child deserves.

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<https://www.empoweringparents.com/article/child-refuses-to-do-homework/>



A close-up photograph of a person with long, straight brown hair, wearing a white t-shirt, sitting at a wooden desk. They are holding a black pencil and writing on a white, spiral-bound notebook. The background is slightly blurred, showing a window with natural light. In the foreground, the corner of a white laptop and a tablet are visible.

Upcoming Workshops

Term 4 2022

**13
Oct**

[Embedding Grammar Across the Curriculum](#)

Presented by Dr Lillian Fawcett

Time: 7:30 - 8:30pm (online)

**24
Oct**

[Dyscalculia](#)

Presented by Judy Hornigold

Time: 6:30 - 8:30pm (online)

**Speld Qld 2023 Workshops
Coming Soon...**



CONTACT US

Office Address

Speld Qld, 141 Merton Road, Woolloongabba, Qld, 4102

Contact

speld@speld.org.au

07 3391 7900

www.speld.org.au

Business Hours

Monday - Friday

8:00am - 4:00pm



Supporting people experiencing
learning differences