

This is the SECOND of two presentations on Biscriptal Learners of English.

There are very few specific resources available for teachers of these students.

Most ELT methodology and teaching resources have been developed for otheralphabetic learners (from Europe in the UK, and from Hispanic America in the USA).

Biscriptal learners are already literate – and first-language materials on phonological and morphological skill-development are often 'too young' and/or they assume a huge vocabulary.

*This presentation has some overlap (regarding writing systems) with the first presentation.

IMAGE: http://whatknot.tripod.com/knots/Rope.htm



Some non-alphabetic welcoming words.

There are many "Welcome" and "Thank You" graphics like this on the internet, but most of them use alphabetic scripts.

Perhaps this represents a kind of *alphabetic bias* – on the internet and in other, social spheres.

Our world, however, is overwhelmingly non-alphabetic – as the following map will attest.

IMAGE: source unknown



This map from Wikipedia clearly shows the broad swathe of countries that use non-Latin alphabets. **This is where MOST of the current learners of English are based.

[North and South America have pockets of syllabaries – Inuit and Cherokee - but otherwise, they are overwhelmingly "Latin alphabet" users.]

- 1. The ARABIC family of scripts are called **ABJADS** a type of alphabet that emphasises consonants vowels can be indicated by diacritics, but usually are not. (This group includes Persian, Hebrew and Urdu.)
- 2. The INDIAN family of scripts are called **ABUGIDAS** scripts that are based on (usually) consonant-dominated syllables. These include Thai and some other scripts in SE Asia, such as Balinese. This group also includes Ge'ez, an Ethiopic script.
- 3. Chinese scripts have many labels "logographic" is inadequate a better term is **MORPHOSYLLABIC**, as each character represents a syllable and a unit of meaning.
- 4. Japan uses a **mixture** of three scripts: some of the Chinese script (Kanji), and two syllabaries (one for borrowed words and one for grammatical words).
- 5. Korea has its own unique script, **Hangul**, based on blocks of 2-5 letters that represent syllables. 6. To the north and north-west are the Cyrillic alphabets and other alphabet-type scripts.
- 7. A close look at the map reveals pockets of other scripts, many of which have been developed locally (often by missionaries).

MAP: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:WritingSystemsoftheWorld.png

Different writing	represent linguistic units	are laid out on the page	make use of symbols
systems vary in the ways that	meaning	vertically	26 letters
they:	syllables consonants	horizontally directionality	3,000 characters
	vowels	spaces between	mixed systems
		'words'	e.g. Japanese
are taught in national schools	represent syntactical	represent vowels and consonants	vary in their 'transparency'
memorisation	differences	(alphabetic scripts)	(alphabetic scripts)
role of classics large classes testing regimes	verb tenses contextual clues cause and effect	e.g. Arabic, Persian & Hebrew scripts	e.g. Cyrillic scripts Italian
competition textbook-use	gender word order	emphasise consonants	Indonesian English
teachers	word order	Consonants	Eligiisti

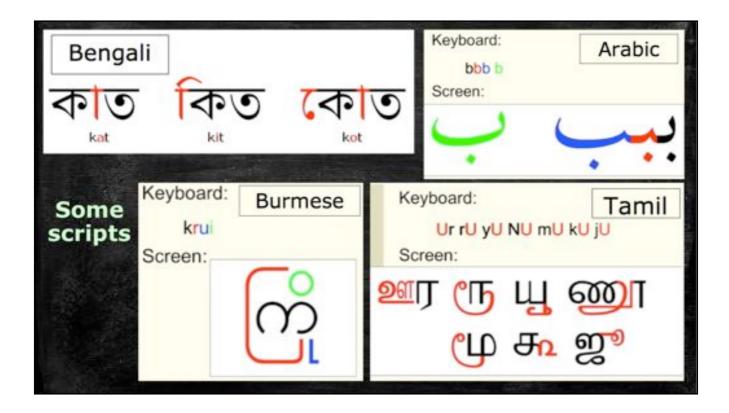
Here are some of the many ways in which different scripts can operate.

[We do the same thing when we erroneously refer to "letters" and "words" in other scripts.]

Learning a new script is a very significant cognitive challenge – far more than we probably realise.

IMAGE: P.Bunce

^{**}Each script sets up 'expectations' in the minds of its readers.

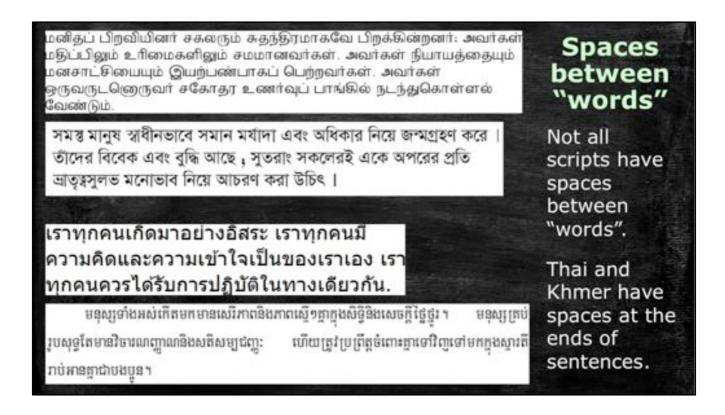


- 1. Arabic consonants change their form, depending on whether they are at the beginning, middle or end of a word. They are different again when single.
- 2. Bengali is an ABUGIDA these are consonant-strong syllables. Look at how the vowel sounds move around.
- 3. Burmese, also an abugida, wraps sounds around each other.
- 4. Tamil here are 7 different ways that the /u/ sound is attached to the dominant consonant.

And – we think that learning to write English is difficult!

IMAGES: http://scripts.sil.org

(there are some animations on this website that show the formation of these scripts) (these are 'stills' from those animations)



What is a "word"? It is actually quite difficult to define.

Their separation by spaces is important in English.

Spaces – may or may not be used in similar fashion in other scripts.

Thai and Khmer use them sparingly – at sentence ends and around numbers (Khmer).

All of these scripts carry the same text – Article 1 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

In English, it has two sentences:

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

IMAGES: www.omniglot.com

(this huge website has this same text written in almost every known script)

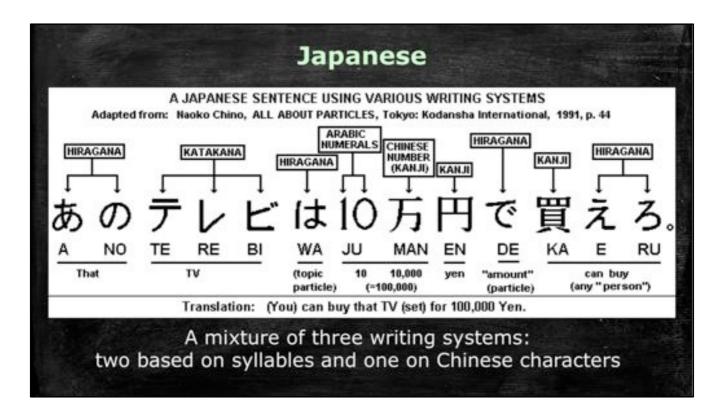


- Most Chinese characters are combination of two elements (compounds), some are single characters. The two elements provide suggestions (only) of semantics (meaning) and phonetics (sounds). They are combined in different ways. Each is based on a square shape, representing ONE SYLLABLE with meaning.
- Each character has a particular stroke order (the one provided says "love") that must be learned.
- All characters fit inside a sub-divided square. This affects the "saccade width" of Chinese readers' gaze as they scan across a line of text.
- Direction: now mostly R to L, but vertical is still used, especially for literature.
- Simplified and Traditional: sometimes hard to see the "simplification"! The PRC and Singapore use Simplified. Taiwan, HK and overseas communities use Traditional.
- STROKE ORDER this may affect the order in which alphabet-letters are written (e.g. the letter 't' is often drawn crossbar first by Chinese learners of English)*

*An excellent reference on such transfers of scriptal characteristics is: Rosemary Sassoon's "The Acquisition of a Second Writing System" (1995, Oxford: Intellect) (This is still the ONLY practical book on aspects of teaching and learning a new scriptal system!)

IMAGES: http://girlmeetsformosa.com http://aboutworldlanguages.com/mandarin http://scripts.sil.org/cms/scripts

Bassetti, B. and Cook, V. (2009). Second Language Writing Systems.



What a sentence! This one has all three scripts together (plus Arabic numerals)

Two syllabaries: Katakana for borrowed/foreign words and Hiragana for grammatical words

Kanji: borrowed Chinese characters

There may also be some use of words written in the English alphabet, e.g. brand names.

SOURCE: on the graphic

IMAGE:

http://www.spokaneschools.org/cms/lib/WA01000970/Centricity/ModuleInstance/26530/How%20It%20Works.pdf

What's involved in learning a new script?

Physical Adaptations

- hand movements
- eye movements
- hand-eye coordination
- directionality of perception

Linguistic Adaptations

- new ways of indicating sound
- new ways of indicating meaning
- new vocabulary and grammar

Connecting to Prior Learning

- concepts
- skills e.g. maths
- layout of pages
- word formation & word retrieval
- aids to memory

There's a lot to learn – not so much to unlearn, but to CONNECT the older learning with the new learning. Connections may not be readily made, as the two scripts may involve very different neural pathways. Learners need time to accommodate BOTH scripts.

"Retrieval" from memory may be performed quite differently – it can be visual, sound-based or kinesthetic. Hong Kong Cantonese-speakers often write characters on their palms with their fingers, when double-checking with another person the correct way to write unfamiliar characters.

With biscriptal readers of English, it is no longer correct to claim that "we only learn to read once" (Saville-Troike, 1976) or that reading skills can "easily transfer across languages" (Cummins, 2000). Those claims refer to the learning of same-scripted languages, and were made in an era in which other-scripted learners were not so common in English classes.

Knowing one script does, however, establish the broad notion of **literacy** – that scripts represent spoken language.

By definition, "biscriptal learners" are already literate in another language.

Let's see what it feels like

Reverse spelling - try it from both sides of the paper

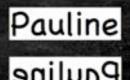
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- which side is easier?

Reverse spelling test – write the name of this school using reverse spelling

Write with your non-preferred hand

Mirror writing – start from the right-hand side of the paper



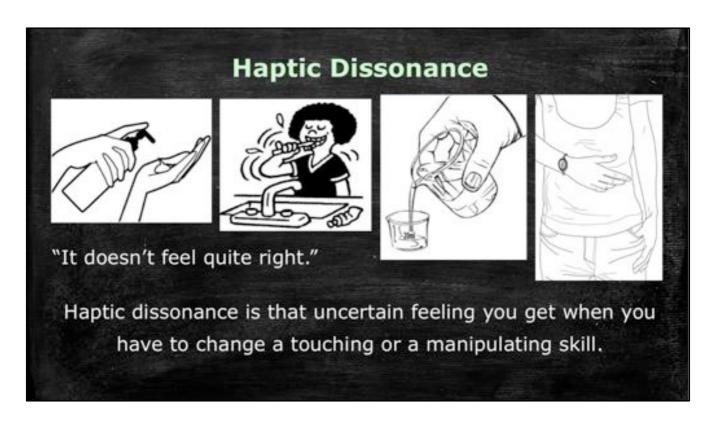
* You may experience something called haptic dissonance.

This activity is NOT designed to trivialise other scripts – not at all - but to give people a feeling of the "haptic dissonance" involved in changing direction and letter formation.

Such activities are hugely demanding and can be very tiring.

Mirror-writing is extremely difficult, because every individual letter is reversed. (Leonardo da Vinci used this 'code'.)

("Cognitive dissonance" is felt when one is carrying conflicting beliefs e.g. no animal killing but liking to eat meat.)



We have all had to use our non-preferred hand at some stage. It takes a while to adapt.

Our brains may need to make new connections and forge new pathways.

We feel a kind of frustration in knowing what to do, but not being able to do it easily. Some say that this is good for us – e.g. the proponents of "Brain Gym".

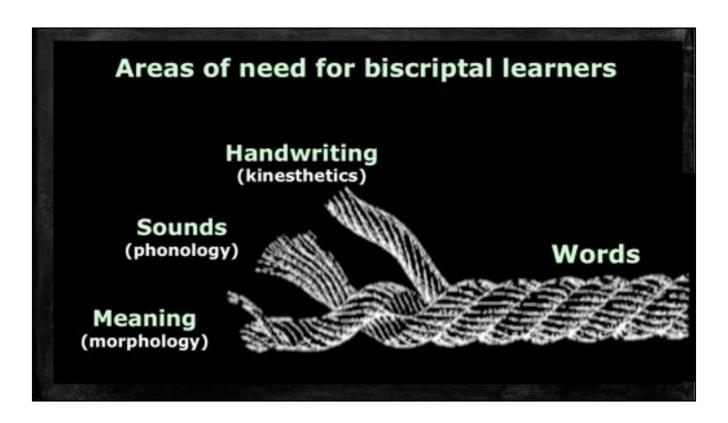
IMAGES:

http://swissarmymom.blogspot.com.au

http://www.debate.org

http://michaelgarberick.com

http://www.panik-design.com



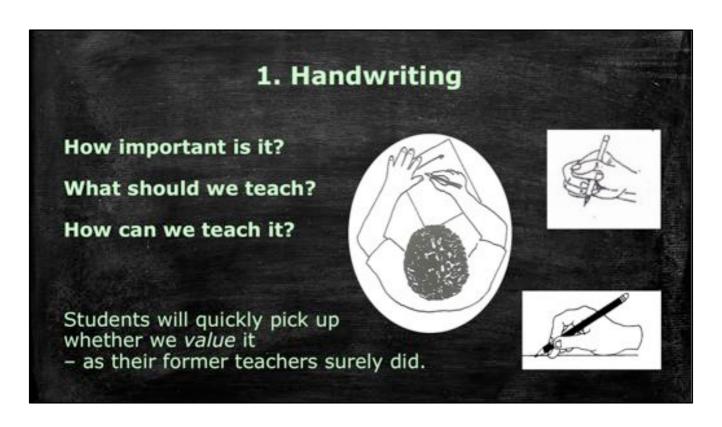
The WORD LEVEL is a vital foundation for further learning. We need to work on three interwoven sets of skills – handwriting skills, phonological skills and morphological skills. We may be inclined to rush into sentence-level work – sometimes overlooking all the word-level assumptions that we may be making. Overlooking the word-level of English too early can lead to the memorisation of spelling and the "look of words" – without any insights into the 'beauty' of their construction.

A deep respect for script will have been laid in students' first-script learning. We owe it to English to make parallel revelations regarding the units of sound and meaning that all words contain. English words are not "empty things" as one of my Hong Kong students told me.

HK learners of English sometimes call its alphabetic script "ugly worms" and "chicken guts". It might even give them "alphabet headaches".

[I have chosen 'Alphabet Headaches' as a title for a lot of my publications and also the name of my website.]

IMAGE: http://whatknot.tripod.com/knots/Rope.htm



The arrangement of the paper on the desk may be different for writing in a different direction.

Pen-holding: the "fist" grip can lead to aches and pains as students are required to write for increasingly long periods (e.g. tests and exams).

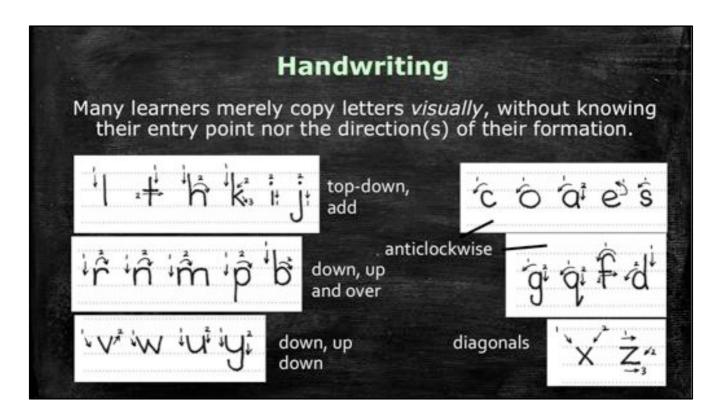
Sure, habits can be VERY hard to change – but they can be. (Some say that it takes 28 days to change a behavioural habit.)

Make time/make excuses to do "our best writing" – filling in forms, sending a card to someone, posters of famous quotes for the wall, name cards, exchanging written pieces around the class (can classmates read it?) etc. Reject badly completed forms.

IMAGES:

Sassoon, R. (1995). *The Acquisition of a Second Writing System*. Oxford: Intellect Books.

Sassoon, R. (2012). Improve Your Handwriting. London: Teach Yourself Books.



Has this kind of information ever been shown to our learners? They could copy such guidelines into their Word Work Books.

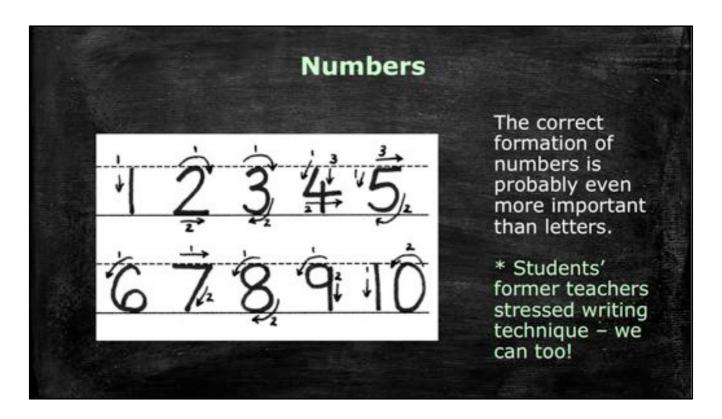
Stroke order is so important in Chinese character formation. Copy one onto the board (without guidance) and ask students why the order is so important.

Ask students to teach you how to write something in other scripts. What's important to remember?

Are they aware of on-the-line, above-the-line and below-the-line strokes? Look for opportunities to "write well" – write something to another class, send Congratulations/Thank You notes to someone.

Invite them to write in BIG letters on the board. Copy something you've written.

IMAGES: P.Bunce



In Arabic, 5 looks like a zero, 4 looks like a three, and 0 is a dot. Decimal points and commas for thousands may be different as well.

Too many 4s look like a U. Fives may lack the vertical stroke. One may look like seven. HK students write 9 backwards.

Numbers can be even more critical than letters – if they are misread. They are frequently required on forms – in small spaces.

When is it appropriate to write in PENCIL/PEN? This may vary across 'school cultures'. (Americans still use pencils in high school writing.)

Forms may even require a BLACK PEN and BLOCK LETTERS.

IMAGE: P.Bunce

Provide and practise explicit handwriting skills

Deliberate, regular lessons

Letters - on, above, below lines + stroke order

Lower- and upper-case

Deliberate lessons on numerals, decimals, fractions

Keep a handwriting notebook – practise with simple riddles, proverbs, names of classmates, names of countries, addressing envelopes etc.

KEEP a notebook for all WORD WORK.

Make time for handwriting. Just allocating time indicates that these skills are VALUED.

Show students anonymous samples of writing from other classes – let them be critics and make suggestions.

FIND sample forms to complete. Life is full of form-filling!

2. Sounds

(We will look closely at this topic in another presentation.)

Phonological awareness = becoming increasingly aware of sentences, words, syllables, individual sounds + tone + mood.

- Phonemic awareness = being aware that all words are composed of sequences of tiny sounds (aural/oral)
- Phonics = linking these individual sounds with letters and letter combinations (reading/spelling)

All written words can "speak" to us.

Refer to the presentation entitled, "Biscriptal Learners of English Part 1 – Phonemic Awareness and Phonics".

That presentation explores this topic at length.

Phonological awareness = the umbrella term of everything to do with sound.

Phonemic awareness = oral/aural sound discrimination skills.

Phonics = understanding how print 'captures' sounds.

English words are NEVER SILENT – they always 'speak' to us.

3. Word-building / Vocabulary / Morphological Awareness

Vocabulary development is the cornerstone of future reading fluency and comprehension.

Spelling - is important - but knowing familiar patterns of meaning within words has even wider usefulness

How much do we teach about words?

Do we do this incidentally - or deliberately?

Spelling – is, too often, seen as an end in itself.

No word should really stand alone as just a set of letters to learn. As well as key words, introduce other words that are related – either by **sound patterns** or by the **adding of affixes**.

e.g. if the word 'develop' is on your spelling list, also include developer, development, developing, undeveloped etc. (Perhaps just one of the set could be put into your 'test', but students will not know which one). If 'around' is one of your words, introduce ground, found, pound, sound, hound, mound etc. (But put only one into the test.)

* We need to do more direct teaching **about** words.

A new big word pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis lung extreme microscopic silicum volcano dust disease A lung disease caused by the inhalation of very fine silica dust found in volcanoes

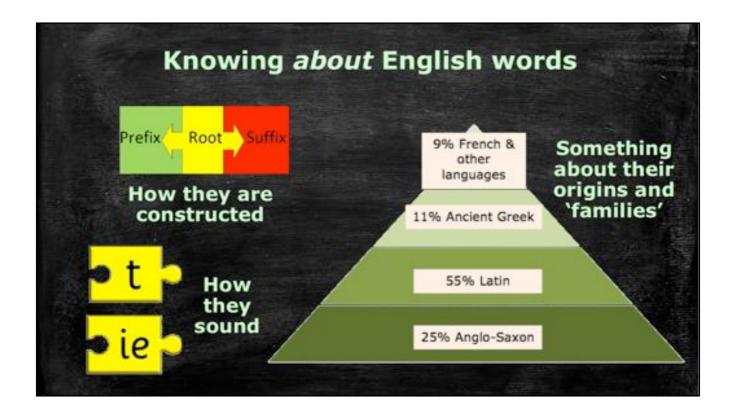
[This word was revealed one line at a time.]

It has beaten 'antidisestablishmentarianism' as the longest, according to Wikipedia.

HOW did we approach this word? What 'chunks' stand out?

We know that 'big words' are **modular**. They are built with meaningful sub-units (morphemes).

Morphemes can be as simple as '-s' or '-es' on plurals or as complex as those in this new word.



We owe words far more than to correctly spell them.

The more they "live", the better they will be remembered. The more 'personality' we can give them, the better.

Words are full of PATTERNS – of letters, sounds and elements of meaning.

Students will have learned the history of many words/characters/symbols in their first scripts. Let them in on the history of English words as well.

IMAGES:

www.sparklebox.co.uk

http://www.pattan.net/Videos (Calhoon: Morphology for the Classroom)

A sequence	of vocabulary	development	
1. Initial	2. Intermediate	3. Academic	
Anglo-Saxon words	Latin and Greek roots and affixes	More Latin and Greek + procedural	
single-syllables	Tools and affixes	words and academic vocabulary	
compounds	building words word families		
some prefixes	word trees	word analysis	
basic suffixes	word matrixes	instructional words	
note patterns	dictionary skills	subject vocabulary	
B.I.C.S.		C.A.L.P.	

AN OVERVIEW FIRST: An instructional sequence. The 'big picture'.

- 1. The INITIAL (Anglo-Saxon) words that beginners encounter are the hardest in terms of spelling and sound. They have the most 'exceptions' because they have been around so long and have been through so many 'revisions' and pronunciation changes over time.
- 2. Longer, multisyllabic words are actually EASIER they have syllables and they have been built with ROOTS and AFFIXES.

As students' METALINGUISTIC AWARENESS grows, share insights into words. Create a sense of wonder. Create a sense of fascination and respect for words.

(Sadly, HK Chinese learners describe English words as "chicken guts" and "ugly.

(Sadly, HK Chinese learners describe English words as "chicken guts" and "ugly worms" that give them "alphabet headaches".)

Many have no idea of even the simplest PREFIXES or SUFFIXES. They see HAPPINESS as completely different from HAPPILY

1. Initial vocabulary

The Anglo-Saxon layer

- everyday words for work, the body, family, animals etc.
- often single-syllabled words
- compounds
- some affixes
- most of the 100 frequent English words

(possibly the hardest to decode – sight words)

and but if to from here there over under this that eat sleep house build head foot ship you bridge brother sister bread milk night rain stand backbone forehead seaweed everyone into -ward -ness -ful -s -ing -ed -less -hood fore- un- over- under-

INITIAL LEARNING STAGE

Most single-syllabled, everyday words have an Anglo-Saxon origin. These are the words that learners first learn.

Many of them are SIGHT WORDS – words that just have to be learned "as they are". That's OK at this stage – but – sight learning must not "take over" all word learning!

These learners will probably still be working on their phonemic awareness (see other presentation) and some very early phonics work.

IMAGE: http://www.medievalists.net

2. Intermediate vocabulary **Prefixes** The Latin and Greek layer pre- mis- con- inter-- multisyllabic words trans- sub- bi- circum-- roots, prefixes, suffixes mal- micro- photo- tele-- families of related words Roots port rupt script ject struct words become dict cred vert more decodable Greek and offer many Suffixes & Latin clues to meaning -ence -ance -ian -ture -cial -tion -ic -al -ous * Take time to explore words. -meter -ology -itis

INTERMEDIATE LEARNERS

There is a big step up here. Learners are moving into more complex PHONICS work. They are conversing and are increasingly able to work with texts.

**Make a deliberate GEAR CHANGE – it's time to learn a lot more about words – PHONICS and ETYMOLOGY.

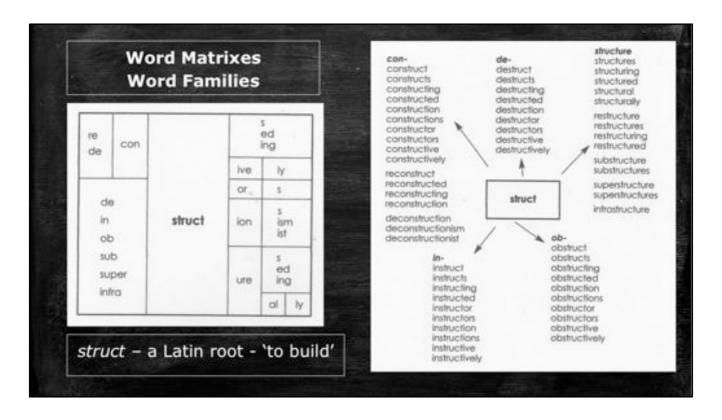
*Gradually reduce any reliance on 'visual learning' of words. It's time to become more analytical. Introduce WORD FAMILIES.

The early words should have become "automatised" by now.

Now is the time to see how words are related and how they are built.

Investigate lists of Roots and Affixes – there are many on the internet. Start using them to see connections between words.

IMAGE: http://www.sightwordsgame.com



Word work should now start to "come together" – the sounds of words, the patterns of word-building, related words etc.

No need to memorise all these as separate "entries"!

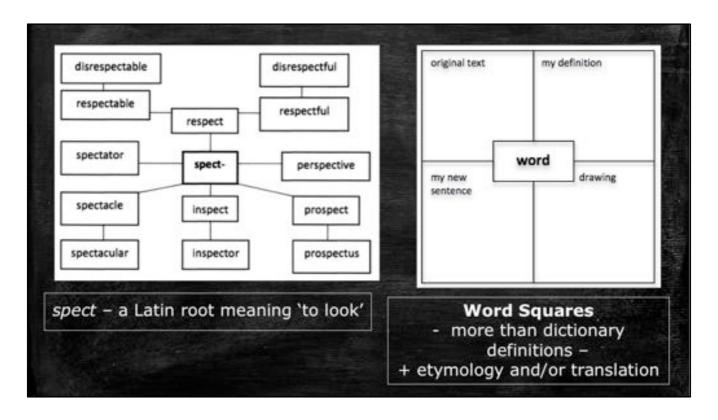
Students like predictability – and it is now starting to happen.

*Can they start to see how English words are 'clever constructions' and not just colourless sets of letters?

IMAGES:

Henry, m. (2006). Unlocking Literacy: Effective Decoding and Spelling Instruction.

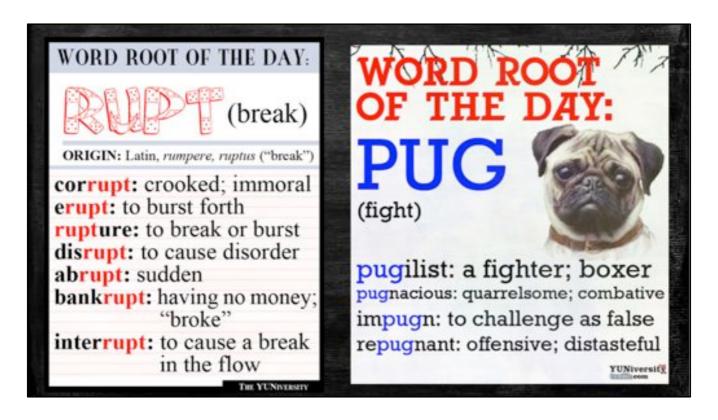
Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.



Make a "fuss" over particular words every now and again.

*Allocate different words to different students to research and present to the class. Word Squares – students can add translation, etymology, related words etc. Students can copy similar diagrams into their WORD WORK books.

IMAGES: P.Bunce



This website is: www.theyuniversity.net -- however, it is 'closed' to visitors.

All these posters can be accessed via GOOGLE IMAGES – search "Word root of the day" – and you'll find some 20 or more.

Make posters. + Students can present them

IMAGES: http://www.theyuniversity.net

3. Academic vocabulary Subject-specific vocabulary analyze approach area assess assume authority available benefit concept consist science context constitute contract data define mathematics derive distribute economy environment social sciences establish estimate evident factor finance literature formula function income indicate individual arts interpret involve issue labor legal legislate General etc. major method occur percent period academic principle proceed process policy require *Take time to discourse research respond role section sector analyse new "the big significant similar source specific terminology. 570" structure theory vary

3. ACADEMIC-LEVEL LEARNERS

These students should have the 'sound system' worked out – so that they **can read** these words, but they may still **need to understand** them.

Academic study does not use everyday language. These words are not to be found in the Top 2,000 English Words.

Even native-speaking students face a flood of new terminology as they move into increasingly academic programmes. They can also benefit from Word Study programmes.

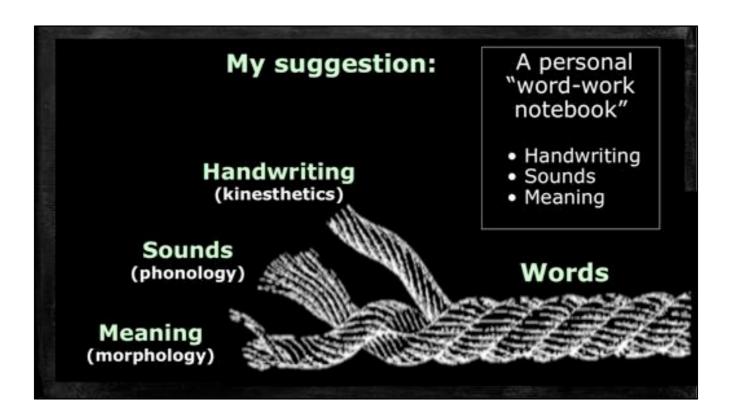
Google search "570 Academic Word List" for various versions of this list – some are alphabetical, some provide all versions of each word (noun, verb, adjectives etc.).

This list is the most frequent set. There are 10 such lists. These can be the focus of regular Vocabulary Work. Find them/Use them in sentences.

This website has various AWL "tools": http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/alzsh3/acvocab/index.htm

This one has a Word of the Day for different grade-levels: http://www.superkids.com/aweb/tools/words/wod.shtml

IMAGE: Coxhead, Averil. (2000). A new academic word list. TESOL Quarterly, 34.



MOVING FORWARD ON THREE FRONTS

STUDENTS really value notebooks that they can refer to. Set one up for vocabulary, spelling, interesting words, word patterns, word families etc.

An "everything words" notebook. The students will keep it for a long time!



Thanks everyone.

* Pauline is currently finalising a Word Study resource book for Intermediate-level biscriptal learners. * It has 60 lessons - each covering elements of: Sounds Handwriting and Meaning/Vocabulary * Check my website: www.alphabetheadaches.com

My website is: www.alphabetheadaches.com My contact details are provided there.

As of April 2014, I have all the 60 lessons and instructors' notes prepared. I am now writing the introduction.