

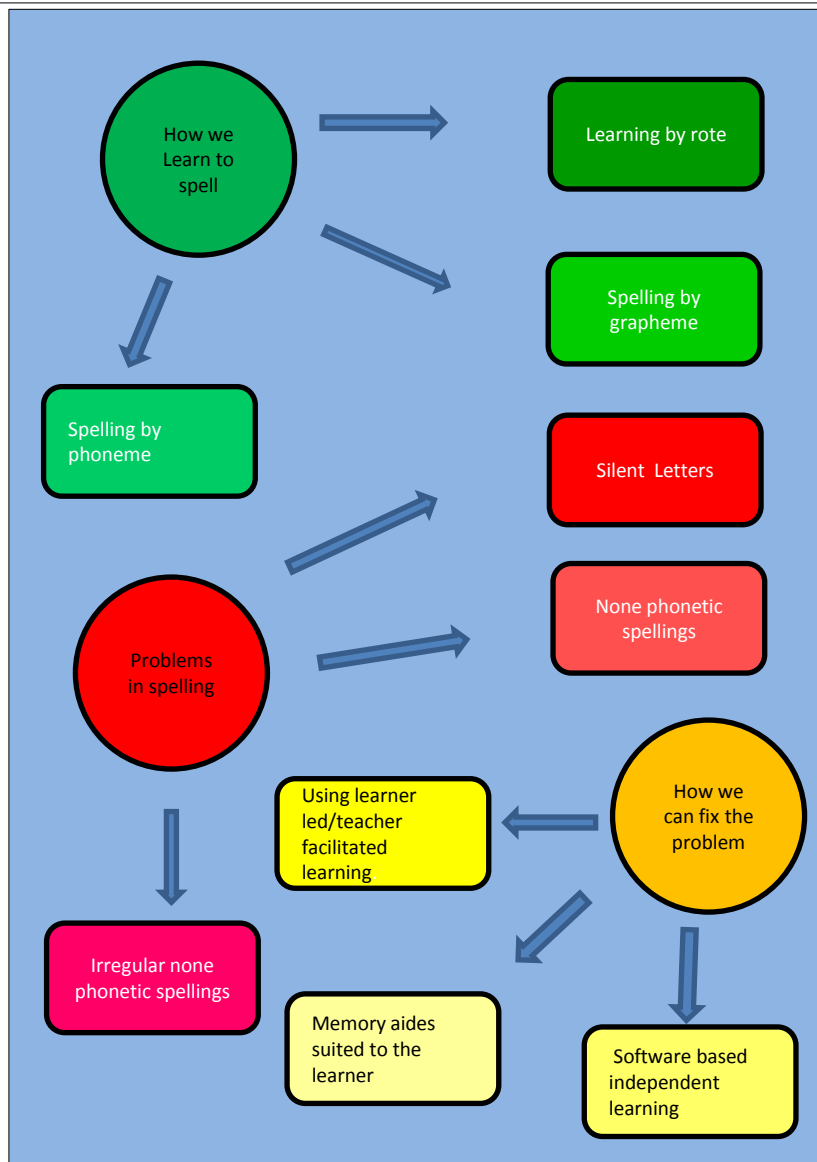
I can hear what you say but I can't see what you mean! Improving English spelling for non native speakers.

Why did I conduct this research?

I have encountered many students on English for speakers of other languages courses that have progressed well with speaking and listening skills but have not been able to progress with writing. A noticeable issue is their ability to spell common words correctly or even be consistent in their errors.

The current qualification framework requires that students' progress simultaneously level by level with speaking, reading and listening and writing qualifications.

Such students often become trapped at the entry one level. Lack of writing skills also means that they are unable to enrol/complete vocational courses that would allow them to progress.



Research findings

Some of the students seem to react more positively to visual memory aids while others seemed more engaged by those that were based in phonetics. Problems such as the recall of silent letters seemed to be better tackled by phonetics than visual cues.

Some students may have motivation issues attached to solving these problems. I have found that students do not always act positively when they find the barriers to education being lowered. This may be as a result of them being unwilling to leave their psychological comfort zone.

Opening up a mental picture of the successful future self could change students self images.

Subjects may feel empowered by the sessions and begin to take ownership working towards their own employment goals.

When one of the subjects found his spellings skills improving he began skipping classes and attendance became an issue.

Recommendations from this research

Students in Skills for Life funded ESOL classes often come from very different cultural backgrounds such as Eastern Europe. I have observed that these students end to progress evenly in speaking, listening, reading and writing. It may be necessary for students who have spelling difficulties to be taught in smaller, separate classes. Traditional additional learning support takes place in the same room as the mainstream class and this location may be inappropriate.

It may be necessary to amend the qualifications framework to be refocused from accuracy in writing skills, towards reading, speaking and listening skills.

Project strengths

The project is dealing with an inability of people known to me to obtain employment and if the project is successful it could enable them to get a job.

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