

How Well Do You Spell? Spelling Proficiency of Foundation Phase Student Educators

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ABSTRACT Due to the focus on literacy and literacy levels in South Africa, the spelling proficiency of student educators has come under scrutiny, as educators exert an influence on the learners and their academic performance in class. Spelling proficiency forms an integral part of academic achievement. The research was prompted by the attention paid to literacy and low literacy levels of learners in the Foundation Phase. The quantitative method of investigation was implemented to cast light on the real state of affairs with regard to the student educators' spelling proficiency. Results proved that student educators tend to overestimate their levels of spelling proficiency. The findings highlight the crucial focus of paying attention to spelling even at the university level, especially in the light of the fact that student educators will be teaching the Foundation Phase learners how to spell once they are appointed as educators in the schools.

INTRODUCTION

Kahn-Horwitz (2015: 612) highlights the tendency of educators to have grappled with the problem of correct spelling over the past decade and claims that research on spelling has shown that spelling development plays a central role in developing literacy skills. Misspelled words can affect the quality of the author's message (Graham and Santangelo 2014). Khaliliaqdam (2014) observes the importance of commencing with proper literacy education at a very young age. Appropriate scholastic input in teaching the language should be part of the language teacher's focus in the Foundation Phase (Joubert et al. 2013: 225).

South African schools are in the news for being criticized due to delivering illiterate learners who cannot spell, read or write (Masondo 2013). The learner achievement results tended to be below expectations, revealing a serious problem with literacy in South Africa (Mulkeen 2004:1). The Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS) 2010-2014 was introduced in schools of South Africa as response to the poor ANAS results pointing out

the low literacy levels among township learners to raise literacy and Mathematics levels (DoBE 2014). Spelling is considered to be the bedrock of literacy development and focusing on the spelling of student educators can facilitate a more literate society (Heald-Taylor 1998).

Student educators are trained at the tertiary level and their language preparation to teach learners should therefore incorporate a focus on proper spelling of educators as part of their training. South African educators are deemed to lack the responsibility to face the language-related needs of the learners and they display poor methodological skills to promote effective academic training to teach a language effectively (Uys et al. 2007). Reutzel and Cooter (2012) emphasise that quality educator knowledge directly impacts learner achievement, since the more the educator knows, the more equipped he/she can share correct information and spell correctly as part of literacy development.

Objectives

This paper is an endeavour to focus attention on the spelling proficiency of the Foundation Phase student educators. From now onwards the word "students" should be seen as a reference to student educators at the university level. The idea is to make the student educators aware of their poor spelling ability and to decide on measures to take with regard to improving their spelling, by doing research on possi-

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ble spelling research methods and practical steps to promote better spelling.

Literature Review

The Importance of Proper Spelling

Thurairaj, Hoon Roy and Fong (2015: 302) underscore the profundity of taking cognisance of the students' spelling especially in the light of modern technology and social networking sites. Students opt for English vocabulary that stultifies Standard English. "Leet" derived from "elite", a word recently coined, is a word denoting the "English" language used in chat rooms and on the Internet. This interference of the Internet language underscores the importance of entrenching correct spelling of words.

English has an orthography (spelling system), which is not typical and is deemed less transparent. This characteristic of irregularity of orthography has caused researchers to rather focus on reading development and hence spelling is neglected (Dich and Cohn 2013: 218).

Correct spelling is part of audience courtesy, taking into consideration the reader of the text at hand. Society values correct spelling, and spelling mistakes are often interpreted as a lack of diligence and mental effort. Writers who know how to spell correctly are competent and good at communicating when using the written word. Good spelling is also linked inextricably with good reading. It goes to show that spelling is central to language development (Fellowes and Oakley 2013). Both learner and teacher spellings are crucial to proper communication. Spelling forms an integral part of CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) and spelling comes into play when the student educator is editing written work and checking if the work is written correctly (Van der Walt et al. 2010).

According to Masondo (2013: 10), the South African environment is not that different either. The system of education is challenged and accused of delivering incompetent learners who are not performing at the required levels. Spelling of learners is a much talked about aspect. Educators need to be able to help their learners even at the Foundation Phase level to spell properly. It is at the lower grades that the emergent learner is most susceptible to influence and acquisition of new knowledge. An educator's incorrect spelling on a poster in a classroom can

leave an indelible imprint that will stick. If the words are incorrectly spelled, the period of remediation and rectification is going to be time consuming demanding serious effort. Consider the following statement concerning the situation in South Africa: "The release of a new shock report by the basic education department reveals that South African school children in grades 3, 6 and 9 are functionally illiterate" (Masondo 2013: 1).

Teachers teach these learners who scored so poorly and their language and spelling proficiency is thus also important. Richards (2011: 1) emphasises the language teachers' knowledge as a matter of exigency as linguistic proficiency is a fundamental ingredient to effective teaching and language teacher education. Proper language use is a part and parcel of the nature of competence, expertise and of necessity professionalism when it comes to language teaching.

According to Nel and Muller (2010: 637), teacher training programmes need serious reconsideration as the tempo and complexity of educational change and pre-service training programmes display serious limitations. These abovementioned concerns raised provide ample evidence of the need to focus on improvement of the courses at the university level in order to produce students who are capable to teach and are linguistically proficient. Nel (2011: 41) asserts that: "Pre-service educator training programmes play a significant role in the preparation of a highly qualified teaching workforce."

If the situation concerning the learners is so grave it is really time to shape up and focus not only on their language proficiency but also that of the students at the university level, as they will be teaching the learners at school. The Foundation Phase is the developmental stage when emergent learners are equipped, and to assume that the Foundation Phase student educators are just going to need simple vocabulary does not hold water. The Foundation Phase educators will have to write letters to the parents, fill in report cards on the learners' achievement and progress, and address their colleagues on pertinent issues. The Foundation Phase educators will be required to spell properly and use the English language correctly.

Wium and Louw (2011: 4) note that poor literacy levels are the result of impoverished backgrounds and limited access to learner support materials. De Vos and Van der Merwe (2012: 1)

maintain that literacy is a predictor of success and it is a central component of the economy and transformative democracy. They highlight the fact that literacy provision remains an enormous challenge in South Africa.

Templeton and Morris (2001) comment on the tendency to minimise the importance of correct spelling to be less worthy of investigation and a tendency of public schools to regard spelling with a limited amount of enthusiasm. Spelling should not be deemed as a simple tool for writing but a window on what exactly the learners know about the language.

Despite the fact that spelling should not be taught in isolation only and the fact that it should be part of the language programme (Wessels 2010), focusing on incorrect spelling and spelling proficiency can cast light on problems to address with regards to language proficiency as incorrect spellings do create the impression that the language user is incompetent. As the educators' tasks are linked with language use daily, focusing on correct spellings can contribute to raising awareness for doing so.

A Framework of Spelling Methods

Schlagal (2002: 44) discusses the incidental approach, which encompasses learning spelling by exposing the learner to opportunities to read and write. Learners compile word lists including the words they battle with and spelling is seen to become relevant to students. Another approach to follow is the developmental process according to which students learn by developing a sensitivity to acquire more words and spelling develops systematically. This systematic approach to spelling equips the learner to develop by consulting basal textbooks compiled to address a certain level of spelling (Schlagal 2002: 45).

It was in the 1930s that educators started teaching spelling according to lists, giving prominence to words used most frequently in writing and reading. In the 1940s, new memory-based strategies evolved to deal with learning of new words. Words were observed, pronounced, visualized and written down (Henderson 1990: 24). In the 1950s, word lists were supplied to teach spellings but these word lists did not group together certain words spelled according to patterns. The phoneme grapheme (a letter or num-

ber of letters that represent a sound) was neglected and the discovery was made that there was a degree of consistency in spelling that extended beyond the basic frequency of vocabulary suggested by spellers (Schlagal 2002).

Theorists have been at loggerheads about whether the top-down (focusing on the learners' knowledge about his world) and his interactive approach to spelling or whether the bottom-up approach (focusing on letter-sound correspondence) to spelling should be followed (Sawyer and Joyce 2006: 75).

Van Staden (2010:14) mentions that the endeavour of educators who focus on direct spelling instruction as part of their curricula to teach high-frequency words yielded positive results in the past. She however mentions that instructors should heed against using only letter-sound combinations to aid spellers. The tendency to break up words and making use of visual imagery can be very successful in spelling correctly.

The most recent research on spelling done by Daffern et al. (2015: 72) promote the CoST (Components of Spelling Test) method of testing spelling development. This method involves the testing of words from a pre-decided list. Common spelling errors are identified and they are then entrenched and included in a spelling test. The words can then be grouped according to TWFT (phonological, orthographic and morphological) components or types of errors committed. The researchers promote the use of additional qualitative interview questions to engage respondents and to find further answers to their spelling behavior.

Technology

According to Thurairaj et al. (2015: 303), language and communication's impact on information sharing and more pertinently, on the use of information technology in education and the Internet slang has become the order of the day. They however note that students admit to learning new vocabulary and that technology enhances their learning (Thurairaj et al. 2015: 304).

The impetus to identify research-based strategies to spell effectively has become even less of a priority. Davis (2013) maintains that with the advent of the spell checker on computers it should be noted that the spell checker's success to correct is limited because the learners must rely on beginning the word correctly and using most of the letters correctly as the spell

checker will not correct if the misspelling is another acceptable word. The students who spell “does” as “dose” will probably not observe the red line underneath the incorrectly spelt word that indicates that the word must be corrected. Homophones are not recognized, and “no” and “know” are both acceptable, and if used incorrectly the computer does not pick that up. The students must also understand the relationship between words, as the use of a correct word in an incorrect relationship is not always identified by the computer’s spell checker.

Moats (2010) asserts that there are conflicting opinions on whether spelling is indeed important or whether it is secondary to communication especially seen in the light of the spell checker on the computer. Learning to spell contributes to cementing the connection between the letters and their sounds, and learning high frequency sight words to an advanced level improves both reading and writing. The spell checker is a very useful tool if a user wishes to check small mistakes such as swopping letters or typographical aspects, yet it has many limitations if it is considered as the only source of the correct option in a sentence. The spell checker used on the computer is mainly a tool for correcting typos. Knowledge in the memory of the computer can most definitely not exclude the human factor of inspiring and showing excitement about certain issues. Moats (2010) also admits that the spell checker does not identify all errors. A spell checker can most probably not develop mental development, but working on spelling as part of the building blocks of language acquisition is imperative to develop solid language skills.

Liua et al. (2014: 9) maintain that students who are engaged in computer-based second language learning opt for the use of a digital dictionary, a method that allows the user to find the spelling of a word by clicking on the word researched with a mouse (that is, click-on dictionary). According to them, their participants preferred the click-on dictionary to the method using typing it on a keyboard (that is, key-in dictionary). After subjecting the participants to a spelling test, the key-in group managed to perform better than the click-on group.

Visual Literacy

The role of visual literacy in the spelling of words should once more not be underestimated

especially in the light of modern visual digital learning (Jackson 2015: 49). Clemens, Oslund, Simmons and Simmons (2014:50) reinforce the involvement of a visual picture when it comes to spelling a word and emphasise the importance of print-related tasks and recurring letter patterns. Manfred, McLaughlin and Mark Derby (2015: 3) introduce the CCC (cover copy and compare) model of teaching spelling. This method emphasise a visual impression of the spelling words. The CCC is used fruitfully with children with reading disabilities and who battle to gain a visual picture of spelling words.

Visual memory is regarded as analogous to spelling as a mental picture is taken of the word when the correct spelling is memorised. Researchers therefore recommend the visual instruction of spelling and emphasise the development of visual memory for whole words.

The use of flashcards has its place in teaching spelling words in conjunction with speech patterns and this method is useful especially when teaching English. It was proven that the spelling of nearly fifty percent of words can be predicted and it is imperative to note that spelling of all words is not completely arbitrary. Reading words are practised on cards as wholes beginning with simple syllables and moving systematically through syllable types to complex syllables (Hook and Jones 2002).

Vocabulary

According to Adams-Gordon (2010), to spell with flair eases the task of producing those spelling words as part of vocabulary. This confidence of knowing the vocabulary frees the writer to focus more fully on organising his ideas, and consequently increases his/her capacity to transfer these words on paper. When engaging in writing, one has to find the needed words and by using them in context and writing them down one is entrenching certain concepts over a period, working on the proficiency without focusing on developing it per se. When one reads, one is in fact engaging in a communicative process with the text.

Davis (2013) discusses the role of core words that can act as a springboard to improve spelling and to build essential skills and concepts. Core words for the unit are identified and taught. These words are introduced in context, which makes the exercise more meaning-

ful and then they are isolated and taught. These core words also involve visual skills, as the learner needs a visual impression of the correct spelling of the words. Spelling must not be done perfunctory but should receive its rightful position in the acquisition of a language.

Spelling and Reading

The correlation between spelling and reading comprehension is very high because both depend on a common denominator: proficiency with language. The more deeply and thoroughly a student studies and recognises a word, the more likely he or she is to recognize it, spell it, define it, and use it appropriately in speech and writing. The major goal of the English writing system is to convey meaning, which places a lot of impetus on the relevance of spelling a word correctly Kahn-Horwitz (2015: 611).

Templeton and Morris (2001) provide profound conclusions with regard to the teaching of spelling. Reading and writing must form an integrated part of a programme according to which certain tasks should include significant amounts of exposure. The teaching of spelling according to spelling lists cannot be underestimated as certain patterns are gradually identified and regular exploration of spelling should be done.

Hook and Jones (2002) identify automaticity and fluency as two vital aspects to take into consideration when considering ways to promote good spelling. They mention that the alphabetic approach is more effective than the whole word approach but stress the value of speed and accuracy. They regard speed as the best predictor of comprehension. As for fluency aspects such as application of appropriate prosodic features such as rhythm, intonation and phrasing when busy with word identification are crucial. Fluency also involves what will come next and speed practice is not sufficient on its own.

METHODOLOGY

Quantitative Approach

This particular study uses a quantitative method as questionnaires with closed questions are used to elicit the data. Bless et al. (2013)

assert that a quantitative study involves an objective approach to research data and the use of scores and counts to test the theory. The researcher used a spelling test and a questionnaire to elicit the data. Statistics and numbers were inferred from the tests. The study operated largely within one dominant quantitative design (McMillan and Schumacher 2010:401). The spelling test and the responses to the questions were studied and statistics were arrived at. Data were collected by means of a structured questionnaire with closed questions on the students' attitudes with regard to spelling. These questions appear in Tables 3 and 4. The options were indicated on the questionnaire and the participants had to tick the column of their choice. The procedure was to administer a spelling test and then to check via the chosen questions what the attitudes of the students were concerning spelling behavior.

Schlagal (2002) comments on the tendency of researchers to return to spelling lists to improve spelling. A generated list of spelling words was thus adopted from words often misspelled as listed by Lutrin and Pincus (2004). This method of making use of spelling words to be read and written is also supported by Daffern et al. (2015) but the researcher's method is deviating in that the researcher did not analyse the words in detail according to TWFT (phonological, orthographic and morphological) components, but the researcher merely focused on testing the knowledge of a few high frequency words. Hemmings (2015: 72) promotes the CoST (Components of Spelling Test). These words were then compiled and alphabetically arranged. A formal spelling test was conducted to test the Foundation Phase student educators to see if they score high or low. The list contains high register words and only serves as a spot check on spelling.

Sample Size and Participants

The participants are a mixed group consisting of 50 inexperienced and 50 more experienced Foundation Phase student educators. They all came from townships all over South Africa. Hundred participants were involved. The experienced student educators were all educators who followed an improvement programme to enable them to obtain an improved qualification. They were already teaching and they were thus experienced educators who had teaching experience of more

than ten years. The inexperienced student educators participating attended a tertiary institution and were in their third year as Foundation Phase student educators. The idea was also to compare the results to determine whether more years of experience would make a difference in spelling performance.

Ethics

Ethical aspects are also regarded as key factors pertaining to quality. Conducting research in an ethically sound manner adds to the trustworthiness of the results (Rule and John 2011). Anonymity of participants ensured voluntary participation. Student educators were also ensured that the results would not be used to impact them negatively in any way as the intention was just to alert them regarding their own performance and the scores did not count towards their university marks.

FINDINGS

Findings Concerning Spelling Tests

The words with the lowest scores as shown in Tables 1 and 2 should be entrenched in the literacy class daily to achieve automaticity.

Table 1: Group A 50 inexperienced FP student educators

<i>50 inexperienced first year Foundation Phase students: Spelling scores of correct answers</i>	<i>Total %</i>
Acceptable	74
Accident	54
Accommodate	16
Acquire	56
Beautiful	74
Believe	84
Calendar	30
Category	46
Committed	48
Conscious	12
Discipline	22
Existence	48
Embarrassed	34
Exhilarate	0
Experience	84
Harass	32
Intelligence	30
Humorous	16
Neighbour	66
Pronunciation	12
Average	41.9

Table 2: 50 experienced FP student educators

<i>50 experienced Foundation Phase student educators: Spelling scores of correct answers</i>	<i>Total %</i>
Acceptable	88
Accident	100
Accommodate	28
Acquire	76
Beautiful	82
Believe	90
Calendar	44
Category	74
Committed	48
Conscious	24
Discipline	26
Existence	12
Embarrassed	48
Exhilarate	1
Experience	24
Harass	12
Humorous	16
Intelligence	39
Neighbour	7
Pronunciation	2
Average	42.05

These high register words are words that the prospective educators need to know in order to communicate with colleagues, peers and even parents. The researchers can also not assume that they only have to use the words orally as written communication does take place via letters and reports. By identifying problem areas one can contribute to better spelling among student teachers. Entrenching and repeating certain words are most definitely valuable especially in second language acquisition. A mock spelling test can also raise awareness of poor spelling especially if taking into account that the group of student teachers selected here rated their own spelling above average (Tables 3 and 4) and yet they performed so poorly. The overall average for the inexperienced students was 41.9 percent and the more experienced student teachers had a slightly higher score of 42.05 percent for the words as chosen in the graph (see Tables 1 and 2). One would expect the experienced student educators to have a much higher score, a tendency that might be explained by noting the impact of technology. More experienced educators were not so familiar with technology like the inexperienced educators and this phenomenon can serve as a topic for further research.

“Humorous” and “pronunciation” are most definitely words that are written by the educators when at school. In case of “humorous” one

can see the interference of American spelling and as for “pronunciation” one can see the interference of the verb pronounce. A word that showed significant difference in the student educators’ spelling performance was the word “experience” that was written correctly by eighty-four percent of the inexperienced student educators in comparison with the twenty-four percent of the experienced student educators. A word that was well spelled by both the groups was the word “believe” (84% of inexperienced student educators and 90% for experienced student educators). The word that had the lowest score of accuracy in spelling is “exhilarate”. This low score of this high register word proves that vocabulary branching is still necessary and that new high register words should be taught to these students.

Spelling Behavior: Attitudes Regarding the Importance of Spelling

The overall response to the importance of spelling as featured in Tables 3 and 4 reveals a positive concern for correct spelling. One would however wish for more than a sixty-two percent of the inexperienced Foundation Phase student educators to vote for rating spelling as very important. The more experienced group had a vote of sixty-eight percent showing a greater concern for the importance of spelling. Alarming is the four percent who voted for fifty to sixty-nine

percent of importance and four percent who voted for thirty to forty-nine percent as indicated by the inexperienced student teachers, and two percent and eight percent of the experienced group student teachers. There should in fact be a hundred percent vote for importance and lecturers should influence students towards deeming spelling as very important.

Students’ Own Rating of Spelling

It was very interesting to note that twenty-four percent of the inexperienced student educators rated themselves to be excellent spellers with a ninety to one hundred percent capability. Fifty-eight percent voted for spelling importance between seventy to eighty-nine percent. As for the experienced student educators, thirty-six percent thought their spelling capability was excellent and forty-six percent thought their spelling was more or less at a rating of seventy to eighty-nine percent. When comparing their self-assessment estimate with the results of the test as featuring in Tables 1 and 2, it is clear that they tended to judge themselves much higher than what their average scores reveal. The fact that the student educators seemed to regard their own spelling as much better than it really was, is proof of the urgency of addressing spelling proficiency. If student educators think they are fine with regard to their spelling proficiency of the words in question, they will not question

Table 3: 50 inexperienced FP students

<i>Closed questions</i>	<i>% per 50 participants</i>				
	<i>0-29</i>	<i>30-49</i>	<i>50-69</i>	<i>70-89</i>	<i>90-100</i>
<i>50 inexperienced FP students</i>					
How important do you regard the spelling of words? 50 inexperienced FP students	0	4	4	30	62
How do you rate your own spelling?	0	2	16	58	24
When I do not know the spelling I use a dictionary.	2	6	26	36	30
When I do not know the spelling of a word I ask someone in my group.	14	16	40	14	16

Table 4: 50 experienced FP student educators

<i>Closed questions</i>	<i>% per 50 participants</i>				
	<i>0-29</i>	<i>30-49</i>	<i>50-69</i>	<i>70-89</i>	<i>90-100</i>
<i>50 inexperienced FP students</i>					
How important do you regard the spelling of words?	0	2	8	22	68
How do you rate your own spelling?	0	4	14	46	36
When I do not know the correct spelling of a word, I use a dictionary.	0	8	18	20	54
When I do not know the spelling of a word, I ask someone in my group.	6	16	22	32	24

their own spelling and when they teach in schools, they will be quite confident, although their spelling needs attention. It can also be predicted that if other spelling words are used of the same degree of difficulty, those words might also reveal the same level of performance that is, much poorer spelling than anticipated.

It goes to show that lecturers should follow up on correct spelling. It should be suggested that the list of words should even be extended and specifically given to the students to study. Spelling can form a part of the assessment and a part of teaching literacy proficiency in the subject of Literacy. English was seen to be the main medium of instruction in seventy percent of the South African schools in 2011 (Uys and Kaiser 2011). The fact that English features so strongly as a medium of instruction, forces lecturers to focus more specifically on improving the levels of English spelling.

Willingness to Use a Dictionary

Evidence from Tables 3 and 4 prove that the majority of spellers do respect the use of a dictionary and value the use thereof. It is however disappointing to notice that the scores are below sixty-nine percent. Twenty-six percent of the inexperienced student educators and eighteen percent of the experienced student educators thought that the use of a dictionary was not really important (see Tables 3 and 4). There are thus, students who do not make use of a dictionary. Dictionaries are invaluable to aid in finding the needed vocabulary and to assist with spelling. According to Wessels (2010), dictionaries can be functionally applied to teach word skills. They can also be used in games and finding words to create new sentences. With the advent of the click-on and key-in dictionary functions on computers (Liua et al. 2014: 3) it might be interesting to test the use of this method among township educators to see how their performance might be affected.

Willingness to Interact with Regard to Spelling

The score for interactive learning of words also proves that students are not yet at the point of sharing information more readily. The majority of students do not wish to seek help from peers. One can argue that they do not think their

peers will know the correct spelling but peers can for sure give advice or supply a pocket dictionary to assist. As for inexperienced students, a mere sixteen percent were positive to seek help and fourteen percent prove that they would in seventy to eighty-nine percent of the instances, ask help from peers. Only sixteen percent of the students admitted that they would ask for peer assistance. A large group of students were still very reluctant to seek help from peers. Lecturers still need to put in a lot of effort and avail themselves to convince students to learn from and seek advice from more learned peers. As for experienced students, twenty-four percent of the students will in eighty to one hundred percent of the instances, and thirty-two in seventy to eighty-nine percent of the time, seek interaction with peers. It shows that experienced teachers know the value of peer interaction and are more confident and less threatened to ask for help. In order for the student to reach a stage of knowing more than his own area of self-regulated action as part of the zone of proximal development, he/she should interact with a caregiver (Wessels 2010).

CONCLUSION

Lecturers at the university level should focus on promoting correct spelling and use of spelling lists with high frequency words to equip student educators to use correct spellings. Student educators must be aware of the fact that they overestimate their own spelling skills and that they should focus on improving it by reading and responding to language mistakes indicated in their university assignments. They should be willing to use the dictionary online and on the shelf. The task of knowing the correct spelling is indeed not only the responsibility of a single group of people but all citizens should raise an awareness of spelling to support the dream of a literate nation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The level of spelling proficiency among educators does not paint a favourable picture. Educators should face their low level of spelling proficiency and should motivate themselves to spell properly as they would be assessed by parents and departmental officials regarding their level of spelling when writing documents, once

they are employed. If they start using the dictionary they can also expand their vocabulary and can improve their spelling and oral proficiency as the use of dictionaries offers educators the opportunity to develop. If the teachers' spelling is not up to standard, they will have to receive remedial training as spelling affects the impression of the teachers' educational level and competence. Even if the teachers are Foundation Phase teachers, they will be required to use more advanced vocabulary at some or the other time during their academic year at school. Lecturers at the university level should be aware about the spelling of their students and most definitely add a section on their rubrics for spelling as part of language used when giving essays to be done on certain topics. The endeavor to raise awareness of correct spellings should transcend the walls of the literacy classroom to engage all lecturers working with these Foundation Phase students. Core vocabulary lists can be used to make sure that certain words are entrenched and tested as part of literacy training. Teachers who are concerned about their level of spelling proficiency should in fact know that they would impact their learners. They would create posters for their classrooms without glaring errors as learners imitate these.

When students are engaged in their microteaching, specific attention must be paid to sentence construction and spelling. Lesson plans with memos and tests should be scrutinized and a list of common errors must be taught, so that students do not make language errors in their communication. Foundation Phase learners are extremely impressionable and they copy what the educator is saying and doing. Students should also be aware of the value of using the click-in method for using dictionaries, as these electronic sources are invaluable to enhance vocabulary enrichment.

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