



Structured Word Inquiry: Developing Literacy and Critical Thinking Through Scientific Inquiry about the Written Word

Facilitator(s):	Peter Bowers
Date(s):	<i>This is a multi-day event.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Day 1: Aug 17, 2017 (9:00 am to 3:30 pm)• Day 2: Aug 18, 2017 (9:00 am to 3:30 pm)
Cost:	\$200.00 (includes lunch, which is not prepared in a nut/gluten-free environment)
Location:	Edmonton (ERLC Office at Elmwood School) Room 17/18, 16325 - 83 Avenue
Session Code:	17-LI-329



Target Audience

Grades K-12 Teachers, Literacy Consultants and Instructional Leaders

About this Learning Opportunity

Have you spent years trying to help kids become proficient spellers with mediocre results? Have you seen kids who are master spellers on the Friday test but who cannot transfer their knowledge to writing? Or perhaps you have integrated word sorts and word families into your lessons, but you still feel like something is missing. Come explore a spelling approach that truly gets at the underlying patterns and reasons for spelling and has been proven to benefit young learners and less able students most of all. This hands-on workshop will guide you to become skilled at “structured word inquiry”. These investigations can be tailored for pre-school to Grade 12 classrooms and they reveal the surprisingly ordered way English spelling links words of related meaning. Right off the bat, you will delve into words traditionally considered irregular and will discover hidden patterns. Likely for the first time, spelling will start to make sense!

This approach is grounded in morphological families and grapheme-phoneme correspondences. We will investigate banks of words using word webs, word sums and matrices to uncover key concepts of English spelling:

- Word families share connections in meaning and spelling.
- Spelling prioritizes meaning over pronunciation.
- Grapheme-phoneme correspondences are constrained by morphological structure and relatives.
- Studying the history of words (etymology) is a fascinating way to understand how and why words

About the Facilitator(s)

Peter Bowers, PhD is the founder of WordWorks Literacy Centre and a passionate educator/researcher from Wolfe Island in Ontario, Canada. Near the end of his 9th year as a classroom teacher he attended a 45 minute workshop by Real Spelling. For the rest of that year and the next he and his Grade 4 students became word scientists who rejoiced in making sense of making sense of the spelling-meaning connections of words. After seeing spelling transform from a frustratingly irregular system students had to memorize into a fascinating domain of scientific inquiry, Pete started graduate work at the Faculty of Education at Queen’s University in Kingston, ON to test the effect of this instruction. He has earned his PhD and since published a meta-analysis of research (Bowers, Kirby, & Deacon, 2010) which showed that teaching about the morphological structure of English spelling benefits elementary students and even more noteworthy -- counter to decades of untested assumptions -- , this instruction brings the largest benefits to younger and less able students. Since 2006, as the founder of the WordWorks Literacy Centre, Peter has worked with teachers and students around the globe to help them bring scientific inquiry about the written word, “structured word inquiry (SWI)” (Bowers, & Kirby, 2010) to classrooms from preschool up.



are spelled the way they are -- and a rich way to deepen understanding of the meanings of words and their relatives.

Over the two days, participants will become proficient spelling investigators and will learn about classroom instruction activities that can be used to investigate any word and be leveraged to deepen understanding of key ideas in any subject area. Participants will learn more about the research behind this approach and will be provided with all the word inquiry tools needed to become master inquirers (online links, linguistic tools and etymological resources).

For an introduction to this work, explore www.wordworkskingston.com where you will find a wealth of resources, explanations, videos and other illustrations of structured word inquiry in action in K–12 classrooms.

This session is being offered on a cost recovery basis.