



A whole class intervention (No Nonsense Spelling) has a significant impact on children's spelling scores in a suburban English primary school

Purpose of the research:

Spelling in KS2 has been identified as a priority on our school development plan. We wanted to see the impact of introducing a whole class spelling programme on the children's spelling within independent writing. We have previously used home learning along with spelling interventions for specific children who are lower attaining. We identified that spelling was a common barrier to children achieving the expected standard in writing, where other areas of the curriculum had been achieved.

The study was conducted with the support of the Pickwick Learning Alliance through the Targeted Leadership Programme.

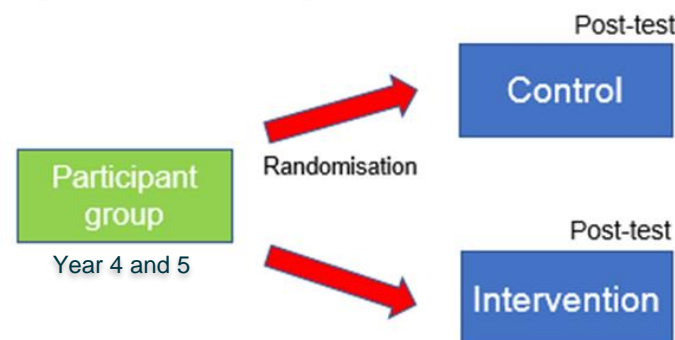
The research design:

A post-test only, within participant design with counterbalancing was used. To address the aims of the research the independent variable was operationalised by creating two conditions; a control condition and an intervention. The two conditions were counterbalanced so that each group experienced both conditions with a washout period in between.

- IV level 1 (control condition) – home learning
- IV level 2 (Intervention) – No Nonsense Spelling program used alongside home learning

The dependent variable was the spelling score out of ten in a tests involving dictated sentences.

Figure 1: Research design



Methods:

Participants, sample size and randomisation

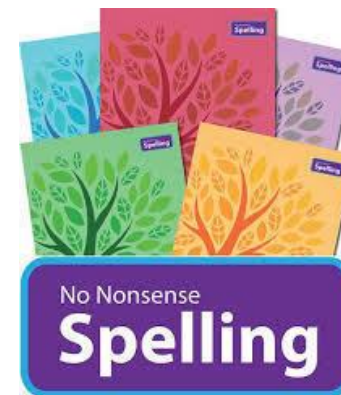
Two classes (Year 4 and Year 5) from Sarum St Paul's Primary School participated in the study. Pupils were randomly allocated to a group using stratified randomisation to allocate children to each group according to year group and ability in order to achieve balance within the two conditions. In total, 43 children (22 from Year 4 and 21 from Year 5). In total 15 boys and 28 girls took part in the study. We excluded the children that take part in a targeted spelling intervention as this would have skewed the results due to the additional support they receive each week compared to the rest of the class.

Procedures

The randomly allocated groups were assigned an age related specific spelling rule in both the control and intervention conditions. The control group were given ten spellings to learn at home. The intervention group were given ten spellings to learn at home and were taught three sessions of 20 minutes of 'No Nonsense Spelling' based on the spelling rule. Both groups were then tested in dictated sentences including words that focus on the specific spelling rule.

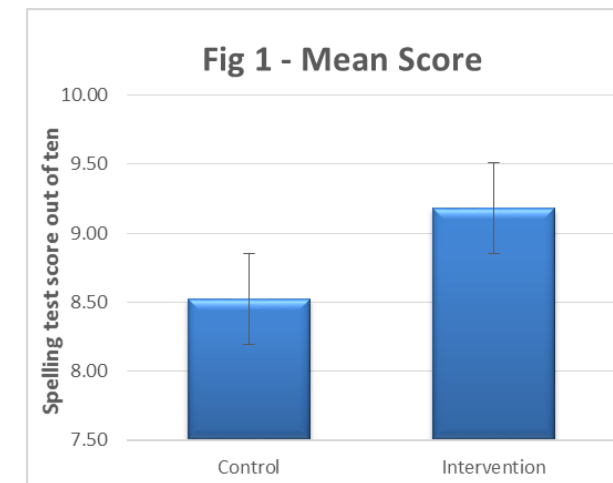
Materials (and apparatus)

- No Nonsense spelling programme
- Accompanying resources No Nonsense spelling
- Curriculum spellings/spelling rules



Results

A one-tailed Wilcoxon signed-ranks test indicated that the intervention had a significant ($p=0.006$), moderately small positive effect ($r= 0.169$), compared to the control group on pupil's spelling attainment.



Limitations

Although the results showed a small positive effect this could have been a result of many children scoring ten out of ten in both the control and the intervention group.

The sample size was relatively small so results should be interpreted with caution. The sample was made up of two classes, however, we excluded children who were part of a targeted intervention group.

Conclusions and recommendations for future research

The study found that using the 'No Nonsense Spelling' whole class spelling intervention had a positive impact on spelling attainment in conjunction with home learning. All children who participated in the study benefited from the intervention. Future research may wish to explore the impact of the spelling intervention over a longer period of time.