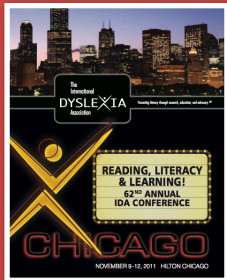
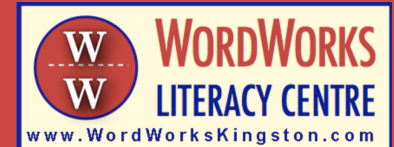
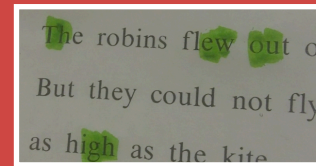


WORDWORKS NEWSLETTER #64

A glance at spectacular learning at the end of another school year & getting ready for the next one!



Pete presents with Marcia Henry & Gina Cooke at IDA!



3-Day Summer Course!

July 5-7 or July 26-28

Wolfe Island, ON

See details [here](#).

[Email](#) to book a spot.

Upcoming Workshops

- July 5-7 and July 26-28: 3-Day [Wolfe Island Summer Workshops](#)
- Oct. 6-8: 3-Day Workshop with [Chapters International](#) hosted by the [Anglo-American School of Sofia, Bulgaria](#) (See description [here](#).)
- Oct. 9-11: [Istanbul International Community School](#)
- October 20-21: [The Innovative Learning Conference](#) -- The [Nueva School](#) Gifted Conference Series (San Francisco Bay area)
- Nov. 12: [International Dyslexia Association 62nd Annual Conference](#): 3-hour session *Morphology: How Writing/Spelling/Orthography Take Shape* co-presented by [Marcia Henry](#), [Gina Cooke](#), & [Peter Bowers](#)
- November 16-17, 20-21: [American Community School of Abu Dhabi](#)
- Nov. 18-19, 2011: 2-Day Workshop with [Chapters International](#) held at the Holiday Inn Al Barsha, Dubai, UAE. (See description [here](#).)

Contents

- [The “donate” button on WW homepage](#) (p. 2)
- [Understanding by Design: Backwards Design & Structured Word Inquiry](#) (p. 2)
- [WW News & upcoming workshops/conferences](#) (p. 4-6)
- [Sneak peek at The Word Microscope!](#) (p. 4)
- [Structured word inquiry episodes, including:](#)
 - ★ [Numerous investigations on \[www.realspellers.org\]\(http://www.realspellers.org\)](#) (p. 3-4)
 - ★ [New videos of classroom lessons](#) (p. 8)
 - [Introducing the word sum and matrix to a Kindergarten class](#)
 - [Investigating digraphs and trigraphs in text from a “Big Book” in a Grade 1 class](#)
 - ★ [Lesson plan and slide show of an activity in which Grade 2 students in Sophia teach their parents about spelling](#) (p. 9)
 - ★ [A Grade 7 assignment/assessment using orthographic analysis to deepen understanding of humanities](#) (p. 9)

What's been happening and what's coming!

The new "donate" button on our [homepage](#)

Regular WordWorks visitors may have noticed the new "donate" button on our homepage. For years we have received friendly emails recommending that we charge a fee for our website or for the Newsletters. The sentiment is appreciated, but we are determined to keep these resources free.



Our website is a tool for developing a community of seriously curious scholars committed to accurate understanding and teaching of the written word. Keeping the website free is not really a selfless decision. It is a means of generating word of mouth about WordWorks. It allows us to build the community that sees the need for [resources](#) and [services](#) for which we do charge (e.g., workshops, on-line tutoring, and books). After long debating, we decided to add a donation option so that users of our free resources who have the means can support WordWorks if they wish. As you will see in this Newsletter, our community continues to grow in a healthy manner. However, as I near the end of my PhD, that source of funds has dried up. We do need to grow to manage the financial balancing act that allows WordWorks to sustain our family.

There are still many non-financial ways to support WordWorks. People regularly ask if it is okay to pass on Newsletters or links to our work. The answer is always the same: not only is it okay -- ***please do!*** Recommendations for conferences, workshops, on-line tutoring, etc. are particularly helpful.

Our business is via word of mouth. Frequently it is the smallest initial encounter that leads to the most important connections. Who could have predicted that sitting next to Lisa Hannum for

lunch at a SSSR conference in North Carolina would lead to such a rich connection with the O-G Children's Dyslexia Centers in Illinois and beyond?

We have many reasons to be optimistic that the WordWorks community is strong enough to keep going. Spreading the word and the new donation option are just ways to make us stronger.

July 5-7 and July 26-28 WordWorks Summer Courses



While I have your attention on this front, please pass on this [information](#) about our Summer Courses. Click [here](#) for images and stories from last summer including a video of one of those sessions. See Sus' amazing menu and recipes [here!](#) Email [Pete](#) to reserve your spot soon!

Backwards Design & Structured Word Inquiry: Developing enduring understandings about English spelling

I have been consistently impressed with the learning I have seen in schools that employ the principle of backwards design through working with *Understanding By Design* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). According to this principle, the necessary first step of planning a lesson or unit is not to focus on what the *teacher will do*, but instead to plan what *children should learn*.

In backwards design, teachers first decide a) what *enduring understandings* (the central, transferable concepts for an area of study) students should learn and b) what would constitute evidence that children have achieved that desired result.

To adhere to this principle, teachers must have resources and training that accurately represent how English spelling works. Teachers cannot identify the core concepts children need to understand about the written word unless they themselves understand how English spelling works.

As you study the wide variety of spelling investigations coming up in this newsletter, consider how they support these central, transferable [concepts](#) (enduring understandings) that are targeted by structured word inquiry:

1. *English spelling is a highly ordered system for representing meaning that can be investigated and understood through scientific inquiry.*
2. *Scientific inquiry seeks the most elegant solution -- the deepest structure that accounts for the greatest number of cases. (See this [example](#).)*
3. *Analysis of word structure for meaning cues can be used to deepen understanding of concepts and terms in any subject area. (Science [example](#), Humanities [example](#)).*

Note that I did not point to an example for the first statement. That is because I view this as an explicit learning goal for *any* instruction about spelling. The importance of applying the inquiry principles of the UBD and PYP to instruction of the written word has long been a feature of my workshops. Applying backwards design and the UBD to structured word inquiry will be a particular focus in my upcoming workshops with [Chapters International](#) in [Sofia](#) and [Dubai](#) next fall. (More detail on those workshops on page 7)

Click [here](#) for a new document that goes into more detail on backwards design and structured word inquiry.

Some Examples of structured word inquiry investigations from recent additions to the WordWorks community

Much has happened since our last [WW Newsletter](#). We are delighted with the sudden burst of orders for our [book](#) Australia. We also had a rush of orders from participants in Rita Cevasco's on-line [Brave Writer](#) course. People were clearly energized by Rita's work. Her recommendation for our book obviously carried weight. Sandie Barrie-Blackley and Kimberly Murphy at [Lexercise](#) also discovered the WordWorks and Real Spelling websites. Sandie wrote this very clear introduction to our work on this [post](#) on her website.

Im + press + ive gener + ate/ + ive learn + ing:

More and more, I am hearing stories from tutors and home schoolers who have been enthusiastically diving into our resources. I am delighted with the reports of great success from O-G trained tutors. For example, a while ago I received this increasingly typical description in an email from our friend Gina Cooke. Gina is one of my co-presenters at IDA in Chicago, Director of the O-G based [Children's Dyslexia Center](#) in Peoria.

I am observing lessons at my center today.... One child, who said "yeah!" when told she would get to work with a matrix in her lesson, figured out that the base of <finish> is <fine>, and articulated her reasoning beautifully. Another was dealing with bound bases like <dent> and <flor> with aplomb.


I was pleased to note that this wasn't a lesson Gina was teaching, but one led by a tutor that Gina was training.

Gail Venable is another O-G trained tutor in California who has been digging into WordWorks and Real Spelling. I got to observe marvelous sessions by Gail with some of her students

via Skype. It is so encouraging to see a tutor who had only recently encountered these resources guide students' learning so effectively with matrices and word sums.

Thelonious, one of her young students, proudly produced the great word matrix and word sums for the <press> word family with the help of Gail's expert guidance and the a new software program called the "Word Microscope."

de air	com	press	ant ed ing ion or	
anti	de		ive	ly
ex op re	ure		ize	ing



A matrix for <press> by Thelonious built on the *Word Microscope*

Gail Venable and her students have been experimenting with a pre-release version of the *Word Microscope*. This computer program is designed to support investigations of the structure and meaning connections within morphological families. Thelonious constructed word sums with his target base <press> on the Word Microscope and then pushed a button so that the program could use that information to form the matrix above. Once a user creates a matrix, they can go back and expand or refine it if they wish. A log marking the trail of an individual's investigation including the word sums they used is automatically updated with each refinement.

Neil Ramsden (creator of the [Word Searcher](#)), his wife Louise and I have been working on this project for years. It seems to be nearing completion. Gail and her students have been trying out the software to help us work out the kinks. Her post on the construction of a matrix for <act> does a good job of explaining some of the ways she uses this tool in her tutoring practice.

Using that same software Gail and her students have posted an ever growing number of amazing investigations on [Real Spellers](#) including these recent favourites of mine: <memorable>, <investigate>, and <guesstimate>.

Email [Pete](#) if you are interested in learning more about this software.

See the full [post](#) on the <press> matrix by Thelonious and the discussion that follows on Real Spellers.

Gail also shared [this](#) wonderful investigation she started with another student when their interest was captured by a misspelling of <memorable>. Using the Word Microscope, they began to consider related words to understand the source of the error. They made word sums and a matrix to generate an evidence bank to guide their thinking. With this start, they were able to share their learning and some focused questions with the Real Spellers community.



I have learned a great deal as a result of the investigations and discussions posted on [Real Spellers](#). You don't need to log in to read the posts. It is, however, easy to log in and post comments to add to the wisdom of the group!

In general, I can't recommend rummaging around Matt Berman's [Real Spellers](#) site highly enough. This website has fostered an incredibly rich community of scholars.

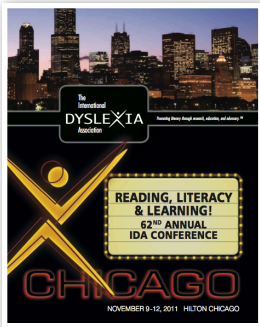
There are many fascinating new posts just since I started this newsletter! My friend Skot Caldwell (whom you'll hear more from soon) posted the start of an investigation about the words <elder> and <older> and the term "umlaut" that he assures me has nothing to do with German heavy metal band names! Skot has already made some fascinating discoveries, but he (and I) are looking for further insight on this one too.

I also just found a new "matrix forum" that has collected 10 matrices offered by users, including an [interactive matrix](#) by a student at the [Nueva School](#). Expect to see more of these!

Examples of structured word inquiries from long-time members of the WW community including videos and slide shows after updates on upcoming workshops...

Upcoming workshops/conferences

I am pleased to announce a number of exciting workshops and conferences at which I will present this fall. Please spread the word to any colleagues who may be interested.



Nov. 9 -12

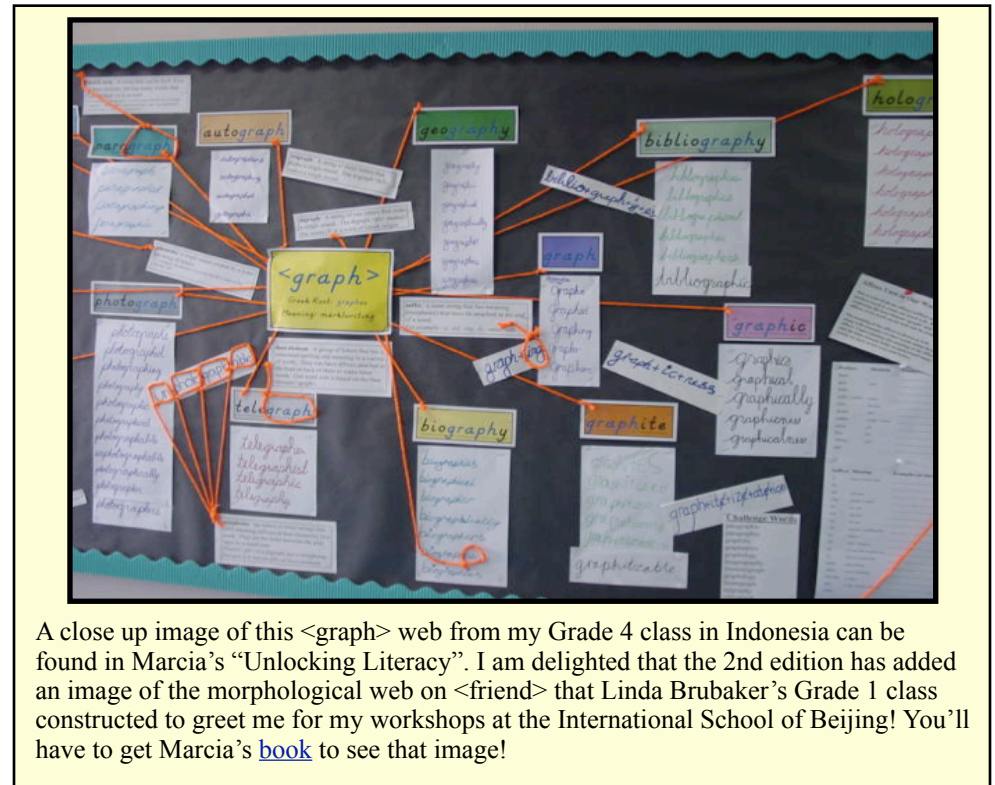
International Dyslexia Association 62nd Annual Conference:

*Morphology: How Writing/Spelling/
Orthography Take Shape with Marcia
Henry, Gina Cooke, & Peter Bowers
(A 3-hour session)*

Download the conference program [here](#).

I hope you'll pardon me as I use the honour of getting to co-present at IDA with Marcia Henry as an opportunity to gush a bit about Marcia and the role she has played not only as major figure in the literacy research, but also in my personal and professional life.

I was introduced to Marcia through Real Spelling when I was teaching Grade 4 at an overseas school. An picture of a web my class created on the base <graph> (above, right) reached Marcia's attention. She wrote to see if she could include an image and description of that web in her then upcoming 2003 book "Unlocking Literacy." I was flattered to be asked, even though at that time I had no idea about the role Marcia's work had already played in the research.

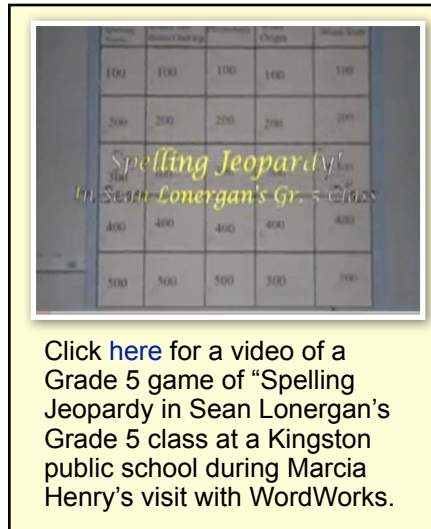


A close up image of this <graph> web from my Grade 4 class in Indonesia can be found in Marcia's "Unlocking Literacy". I am delighted that the 2nd edition has added an image of the morphological web on <friend> that Linda Brubaker's Grade 1 class constructed to greet me for my workshops at the International School of Beijing! You'll have to get Marcia's [book](#) to see that image!

Over time I got to know Marcia and her work much better. She supported my application to graduate school and visited Kingston during the second year of WordWorks. One of the first [videos](#) I ever posted had Marcia and me in the back of Sean Lonergan's Grade 5 class in Kingston observing a game of "Spelling Jeopardy." You can hear Marcia and me giggling in the background as kids joyously answer detailed phonological, morphological and etymological questions.

Early in my studies at Queen's I devoured Marcia's seminal intervention study, "Beyond phonics: Integrated decoding and spelling instruction based on word origin and structure" that

came out in *Annals of Dyslexia* in 1988. This and her other work just kept popping up more and more as research on morphological awareness started to rev up. Marcia was way ahead of the curve in terms of the importance of teaching the linguistic structure of words. By 2003 the research was starting to catch up.



Click [here](#) for a video of a Grade 5 game of "Spelling Jeopardy" in Sean Lonergan's Grade 5 class at a Kingston public school during Marcia Henry's visit with WordWorks.

I can't resist adding that as far as I know, Marcia's [Unlocking Literacy](#) (2003/2010) and my own [intervention study](#) (Bowers & Kirby, 2009) remain the only published citations of the Real Spelling matrix I have seen. I expect this will change, but I'm proud to be in line just behind Marcia Henry on this count!

I am also honoured to be co-presenting this session with Gina Cooke. Gina is a long-time friend of WordWorks and Real Spelling. A linguist who was trained in O-G by her mentors David Winters and Marcia Henry (!), Gina has run Dyslexia Centers in Chicago and Peoria, and has trained hundreds of O-G tutors herself. Gina has attended both WordWorks and Real Spelling workshops. She is now working on her PhD and writes the excellent [LEX blog](#).



The fact that we are presenting at the IDA conference in Chicago after having run so many workshops with [Children's Dyslexia Centers](#) in the Midwest makes this a particularly exciting conference for me.

There is a great deal on the IDA [program](#) that I am curious to learn from. In line with a trend I see more and more, spelling, morphology, and orthography are major topics. If you attend, please come and say hello. We should plan for some kind of a gathering for those working with WordWorks and Real Spelling to meet up and chat over a few drinks!



L-R, Gina Cooke, Lisa Hannum, Marcia Henry, Pete Bowers at Pete's 2009 IBIDA workshop

October 20-21, 2011: *The Innovative Learning Conference* -- *The Nueva School Gifted Conference Series* (San Francisco Bay Area)



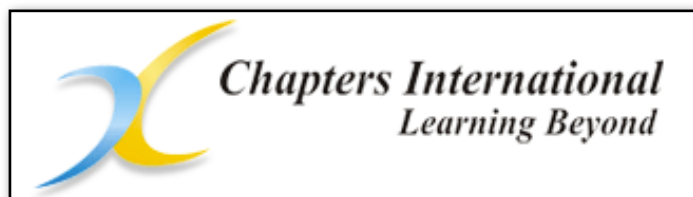
I will also be presenting at the the [Innovative Learning Conference](#) with this amazing [group of speakers](#). Not only does this look like a fascinating conference, I also get to collaborate in this presentation with Matt Berman, creator of the [Real Spellers](#) website.

When you look at the discussions on Real Spellers it hard to believe that at this time last year, Matt was an elementary school teacher who had never encountered the idea that English spelling is an ordered system that can be investigated through scientific inquiry. It will be such a rich opportunity to work with Matt and his students at the Nueva School and share this work with the participants at the conference.

See this description of the [Nueva School](#) from the [Innovative Learning Conference website](#):

The Innovative Learning Conference is hosted by the Nueva School, a three-time winner of the U.S. Department of Education National Blue Ribbon Award, and winner of the American Institute of Architect Award for School Design and Sustainability, and the Presidential Award for Teaching.

...In addition to providing a unique education for gifted students in the San Francisco Bay Area, Nueva is a world leader in the development and dissemination of innovation in learning for a broad range of students.



We now has two workshops booked with *Chapters International* (Stay tuned for more!)

- **Oct. 6-8, 2011: 3-Day Workshop**
hosted by the Anglo-American School of Sofia, Sofia, Bulgaria
- **Nov. 18th - 19th 2011: 2-Day Workshop**
Holiday Inn Al Barsha, Dubai, UAE

See the workshop description for Sofia [here](#) and for [Dubai](#) here. Please share these links with any educators you know who might be able to attend.

Teaming up with [Chapters International](#) is an exciting development for WordWorks for a number of reasons. A quick visit to their website shows the quality of conferences they organize around the world. Most importantly, this organization

makes it possible for me to conduct 2- or 3-day workshops in overseas locations. Also, when these workshops piggy-back on other school visits (as these do with in Turkey and Abu Dhabi), those schools can send a team of teachers for extra intensive training right at the time that I'm working at their school. Those teachers are then equipped to provide even more effective support for their schools after I leave. Keep in mind that schools like the [Anglo-American School of Sofia](#) who host these workshops can send teachers to an intensive workshop at a far reduced cost. (See the next section for a spectacular example of the work already going on in Sofia.)

Five Structured word inquiries from experienced users of WW & RS

The videos, images, blogs, and resources this section links to illustrate the engaging, generative experiences learners have with *words* and *ideas* when teachers are supported with resources and training that reveal how English spelling works.

These K-7 students and their teachers draw on scientific inquiry principles to test ideas about the logical structures of oral and written words. Across these grades, the reliable linguistic tools of the *word sum* and the *matrix* are used to develop and test ideas about how the sub-structures of oral and written words work. These students and teachers are learning how those structures leave “[footprints](#)” of meaning that can be uncovered through scientific [investigation](#).

The matrix and word sum guide investigations about how graphemes work within morphemes, how morphemes fit within words, and how morphemes can be arranged into families of words connected in *structure*, *meaning*, and *history*. These concrete representations of how word families are bound by

written structures and conventions facilitate study of the phonological representations associated with these words.

Many will think this content sounds too complicated for young children. But of course, we don't just talk about those concepts; we illustrate them with the appropriate tools. It turns out that all of those complicated sounding concepts are represented by this straightforward matrix and set of related word sums.

do	es	do + es → does	go + es → goes
go	ne	do + ne → done	go + ne → gone
	ing	do + ing → doing	go + ing → going

It should be kept in mind that core concepts like these are not understood quickly. A criteria of *enduring understandings* is that they require “**uncoverage** through sustained inquiry rather than on-shot **coverage**” (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 342). Here are some spectacular examples of students and teachers engaged in just that kind of sustained structured word inquiry...

1. Grade 1 grapheme-phoneme investigation

This [video](#) shows Grade 1 public school teacher, Skot Caldwell use the text of a book his class had been reading to investigate single-letter graphemes, digraphs, and trigraphs within the context of word sums. My favourite bit is at the end when two students come up to me long after the session. They proudly show the new digraphs they identified independently in



their own book and added to the class chart.

This little exchange hours after the lesson is clear evidence that these students understand what a digraph is. More importantly, the fact that they independently and correctly identify and describe a digraph *that they were not taught* is evidence that this understanding is now deep enough that they can apply this knowledge to the process of successful independent reading. We also get to see the joy they get out of this experience of making sense of print.

2. Skype lesson introducing the matrix and word sums to Kindergarten students at the International School of Beijing.

This [video](#) shows a lesson I led via Skype for a kindergarten class. The goal of this lesson was to introduce these students to the word sum and matrix for the first time.

The teacher of these students shared the set of word sums (above, right) one of his students did after our session. They are ready to go!

Note: This video of a Skype lesson also provides viewers with a sense of the PD I am able to offer with Skype. More and more, I am using this technology for individual tutoring as well.

3. ***A [slide show and lesson plan](#) of a Grade 2 spelling presentation to parents from Lyn Anderson and Shelley Dyer at the Anglo American School of Sofia (AAS Sofia)***

Lyn and Shelley have been doing amazing work at AAS Sofia for years. When Lyn shared the images from this activity, I immediately asked for permission to share the images with you. Thanks parents and students for saying yes!

Go to this [link](#) for the slide show and to download the document Lyn and Shelley prepared outlining the activity and identifying their goals for the activity. I hope to see more of these kinds of activities in which students prepare presentations of their learning to other groups next year. It will be great to have work like this at AAS Sofia to illustrate to participants at my workshops at that school for Chapters International.



4. ***Grade 7 humanities assessment via structured word inquiry***

The picture to the right is of long time Real Spelling expert Ann Whiting at the International School of Kuala Lumpur where I visited last year. Recently Ann shared a description of her students' work that I think is extremely important. This [document](#) illustrates so clearly that understanding how spelling works is a *tool* for deepening understanding of the world and our ability to explain that understanding. Here is the [assessment tool](#) she shared as well.

5. ***Teachers teaching teachers***

Visit this amazing [blog](#) from Jen Munnerlyn, literacy coach at the American Community School of Abu Dhabi where I will visit in November. You may remember from a previous Newsletter that after my NESAs workshop in Qatar, Jenn supported her whole staff by teaching a lesson based on the Real Spelling Theme “Learning From Love” in every class from Kindergarten to Grade 5! That [video](#) models a real learner investigating spelling with students of all ages. This more recent [video](#) shows teachers teaching teachers about this instruction in preparation for my visit. This really is an example of a community of learners in action. I can't wait to get there!

Summing Up

As you investigate these examples of structured word inquiry, I encourage you to revisit the statements identified on page 3. These are core concepts worthy of sustained inquiry. I think you will also find plenty of evidence that these students demonstrate understanding of these core, transferable concepts. See this link for an expanded discussion of backwards design and structured word inquiry.

Pete Bowers, May 5, 2011

