

Stage Notes

UNIVERSAL DESIGN ON STAGE

The 25th Annual Putnam County
SPELLING BEE



THE 25TH
ANNUAL
PUTNAM
COUNTY
SPELLING
BEE

Accessible media for this performance produced by Bridge Multimedia, in association with Camp Broadway®. Multilingual translations will be provided by ShowTrans®.

Universal Design on Stage

Every day, theater producers strive to build their audiences. At the same time, many potential ticket-buyers are on the periphery. People with limited English-speaking skills, including tourists, individuals who are deaf, blind, and mobility impaired all experience obstacles to theater-going. School administrators often question whether there are curricular benefits to school groups attending Broadway shows.

Producers want more patrons. Many patrons need accessibility. Universal Design is the key. Universal Design on Stage is a framework for broad-spectrum solutions that help everyone, not just people with disabilities by providing rich content support for experiencing theatre:

- *Everyone* can read the program: a large print version, a foreign language version, a spoken word version even Braille version, are all available.
- *Everyone* can understand the words and lyrics: synopses are provided in advance in foreign languages and in simplified English; pre-show introductions are provided to patrons who are visually impaired or blind; hard of hearing or deaf, or have limited English proficiency.
- An accompanying study guide, aligned to what students are learning, gives school groups a *reason* to attend the theatre.
- Performances with a sign language interpreter, or with an educational associate further extend the theatre experience.

We warmly welcome you to tonight's performance of *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. The show's producers have given us the singular opportunity to present our framework for audience development and for universal access.

Matthew Kaplowitz
Bridge Multimedia

Philip Katz
Camp Broadway

Jonathan Pollard
ShowTrans



Is Just a Littel Litterassy OK for Blind
and Visuually Impared Kidz?

A Note on Spelling and Equal Opportunity

by Corinne Kirchner, Ph. D.

Setting the Stage:

Competitive spelling has moved stage center in pop culture. You've probably seen one of the movies, or the play on Broadway and regional theaters, perhaps read the novel, or watched cable or prime time TV featuring the exciting final rounds of the Scripps National Spelling Bee.

The bright spotlight on a few precocious children -- who generally have extraordinary educational advantages -- contrasts drastically with how little attention is given, even in academic research, to spelling by blind and visually impaired children, and to their education in spelling.

This note will highlight why getting to good spelling is a challenge for children with limited or no visual ability; what's possible; and what benefits come from getting there.

Here's the premise: Teaching reading without teaching spelling is offering just a littel literassy (as one student wrote). The result may make you laugh, but deep down, you know it is not funny. In fact, teaching spelling is part of the broader aim of education generally -- to provide visually impaired and blind children equal opportunity to participate fully in society.

What's the Problem?:

- On average, blind and visually impaired (B/VI) children do not spell as well as their sighted age peers, especially in the earlier grades.



- Some education administrators don't see the value of teaching spelling to B/VI kids. Others don't know how it can be done well, and accept lower standards for those children. Their views affect (some) teachers and parents to lower their own expectations.

Why the problem? That is, what makes spelling harder for B/VI Kids?

- Some factors affecting spelling are different for children who are "blind" compared to "visually impaired" children. Other factors affect both groups.
 - "Blind" means they can't see at all, or can only see light but not shapes. "Visually impaired" (or "low vision") means they can see to a limited degree, possibly with distortions.
 - For many children in both groups, other physical or health problems also get in the way of learning to spell.
- Both blind and low vision kids miss out on "incidental" spelling that comes simply from exposure to print in the daily environment. That's a big factor.
- Both groups do less reading for pleasure than their sighted friends. Why? It may be harder, or slower, or sadly, they may not have access to reading materials they can actually use – i.e., in Braille or enlarged print.
- It's not surprising that those in the general public who care about education know very little about Braille; unfortunately many general education teachers and administrators also are in that camp.
 - Some facts: Very few children who have any remaining vision learn Braille, or learn it well enough to be proficient. However, the movement for Braille literacy is well on its way, suggesting some children need both Braille and print because reading large print is a slow process, when compared to sighted kids. Learning to read by touch is harder for teachers than for children, but most kids get too few hours of teaching per week to become proficient without delay.
 - Braille symbols represent letters of the alphabet, so good Braille readers can be good spellers. But there is a wrinkle. Most Braille users learn many contracted word forms, a kind of shorthand. In the past this was partly to save paper, since Braille took so much space, but using computers, space is not the issue. Reading contracted Braille is faster but can hamper spelling; still, good teachers teach spelling in uncontracted Braille, so students can and do keep up.



- Kids with low vision who use very large magnification to read might see only parts of words at a time, making it hard to grasp the spelling.
- There are techniques and devices that low vision children need, but don't always get, to use their limited vision well; large print alone is not enough.
- Blind and visually impaired children may rely too much on audio "reading" in order to keep up with their classmates. How do you absorb spelling by hearing words?

On the bright side: What's possible? What's being done?

- In 2004, a 14-year-old girl, totally blind since birth, got all the way to the Washington, D.C. level of the Scripps National Spelling Bee. A few other blind or low vision kids have won local or regional levels.
- Some Special Schools for B/VI children hold their own spelling bees. Their students learn spelling is important and can be fun.
- Teachers who have made the effort report B/VI kids can get to levels of spelling that, on average, match their sighted classmates. And of course, some individuals, not only the Bee winners, do better.
- One proposal for teaching spelling in regular classrooms involves sighted and B/VI kids, learning spelling through mutual activities.
- Some teachers and parents, often using advocacy organizations, are pushing for standards in spelling as in everything else.
- New techniques, like multi-media educational software, offer new possibilities, keeping mind that for the blind it needs to be accessible .

With what benefits?

Activist parents of B/VI children, and blind adults, have written from their child's or their own life experience about benefits from being a good speller. The following benefits all work together:

- Reading better and faster, therefore more enjoyably;
- Reading more things, thus more comfortable in conversation;
- Higher self-esteem comes directly from better skill in spelling, and indirectly, from doing better in school and social skills;



And, most importantly, in adolescence and adulthood:

- o Becoming MORE EMPLOYABLE in BETTER JOBS!

A Surprising Dissenting Note: Who Says Spelling is Important?

- Historically, and recently, some groups have protested giving so much attention to correctness in “Standard English” spelling.
 - o In Shakespeare’s time, there was no standard spelling – and we don’t think Shakespeare was a slouch in terms of literacy;
 - o There’s a longstanding “simplified spelling” movement that included George Bernard Shaw, Teddy Roosevelt, Mark Twain. A group protests yearly at the National Bee in D.C.
 - o Recently, IM-speak and txt msgs have brot “creative” spelling espeshuly among kidz. It’s actually beginning to be adopted for certain purposes even in a few school and business situations!

BUT – whether these objections are worth attention or not, the point is that they are being raised for **all** people, not just for those who are B/VI. (And by the way, even for IM-speak, standards and dictionaries are appearing!)

So . . .Conclusion:

As long as spelling has its current importance in our society, blind and visually impaired kids **must** have an equal chance to gain that competence.

Study Questions:

1. What are the ways that children who cannot see at all can read? What about ways that children with low vision can read?
2. What are the problems and possibilities of teaching Braille to solve the problem of poor spelling by blind and visually impaired children?

Corinne Kirchner, Ph.D., is Senior Research Scientist, Emerita, American Foundation for the Blind. She teaches at Columbia University in Public Health and in Sociology, and is researching sociology of language, focusing on Spelling Bees.

September 2007





Large Type Program for the Visually Impaired



CIRCLE IN THE SQUARE

UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
THEODORE MANN and PAUL LIBIN

David Stone James L. Nederlander Barbara Whitman Patrick Catullo
Barrington Stage Company Second Stage Theatre

Present

The 25th Annual Putnam County **SPELLING BEE**

Music & Lyrics by
WILLIAM FINN

Book By
RACHEL SHEINKIN

Conceived by
REBECCA FELDMAN

Additional Material by
JAY REISS

With

AARON J. ALBANO, STANLEY BAHOREK, JENNI BARBER, JARED GERTNER,
JAMES MONROE IGLEHART, SARA INBAR, GRETA LEE, DANIEL PEARCE, JENNIFER SIMARD
BRIAN GONZALES, CARLY HUGHES, MAURICE MURPHY, JACQUI POLK

Set Design by
BEOWULF BORITT

Costume Design by
JENNIFER CAPRIO

Lighting Design by
NATASHA KATZ

Sound Design by
DAN MOSES SCHREIER

Orchestrations by
MICHAEL STAROBIN

Music Director &
Dance Arrangements by
VADIM FEICHTNER

Vocal Arrangements by
CARMEL DEAN

Music Coordinator
MICHAEL KELLER

Press
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Casting
TARA RUBIN CASTING

Production Stage Manager
ANDREA "SPOOK" TESTANI

Production Manager
KAI BROTHERS

General Management
321 THEATRICAL MANAGEMENT

Choreographed by
DAN KNECHTGES

Directed by
JAMES LAPINE

Based on C-R-E-P-U-S-C-U-L-E, an original play by THE FARM.
Original Broadway Cast Recording on GHOSTLIGHT RECORDS.



CAST

(in alphabetical order)

Chip Tolentino AARON J. ALBANO
Leaf Coneybear STANLEY BAHOREK
Olive Ostrovsky JENNI BARBER
William Barfee JARED GERTNER
Mitch Mahoney JAMES MONROE IGLEHART
Logainne Schwartzandgrubenierre SARA INBAR
Marcy Park GRETA LEE
Douglas Panch DANIEL PEARCE
Rona Lisa Peretti JENNIFER SIMARD

UNDERSTUDIES

Understudies never substitute for listed performers

unless a specific announcement is made at the time of the performance.

For William Barfee – BRIAN GONZALES; for Mitch Mahoney – MAURICE MURPHY;
for Leaf Coneybear – BRIAN GONZALES, MAURICE MURPHY; for Douglas Panch –
BRIAN GONZALES, MAURICE MURPHY; for Chip Tolentino – MAURICE MURPHY;
for Marcy Park – CARLY HUGHES, JACQUI POLK; for Rona Lisa Peretti – CARLY
HUGHES; for Olive Ostrovsky – JACQUI POLK; for Logainne Schwartzandgrubenierre –
JACQUI POLK

Dance Captain: JACQUI POLK

MUSICIANS

Conductor/Piano: Vadim Feichtner

Associate Conductor/Synthesizer: Carmel Dean

Reed: Rick Heckman

Cello: Amy Ralske

Drums/Percussion: Glenn Rhian

Music Coordinator: Michael Keller

Music Copying: Emily Grishman Music Preparation

Emily Grishman/Katharine Edmonds

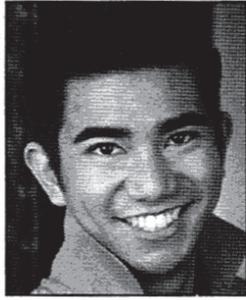
THE 25th ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE
IS PERFORMED WITHOUT INTERMISSION.

A strobe light will be utilized in this production.

Please silence all electronic devices such as cellular phones,
beepers and watches. The use of cell phones in the
theatre is prohibited by New York City law.



The use of any recording device,
either audio or video, and the taking
of photographs, either with or
without flash, is strictly prohibited.



Aaron J.
Albano



Stanley
Bahorek



Jenni
Barber



Jared
Gertner



James Monroe
Iglehart



Sara
Inbar



Greta
Lee



Daniel
Pearce



Jennifer
Simard



Brian
Gonzales



Carly
Hughes



Maurice
Murphy



Jacqui
Polk

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

AARON J. ALBANO (*Chip Tolentino*) is titillated to be back in the ...*Bee* this time on Broadway! Most recently, Aaron was seen in the Broadway revival of *A Chorus Line*. Other Broadway: *Bombay Dreams*. National companies: *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (San Francisco and Boston sit-downs), *Wicked* (1st national tour). Regional: *Miss Saigon* (Pittsburgh CLO); *Cinderella*, *Crazy for You* (St. Louis Muny); *The Music Man* (AMTSJ). Member of Actors' Equity Association. For more info, visit www.aaronjalbano.com. "Love and thanks to God for all His many blessings, and to family and friends...for everything else."

STANLEY BAHOREK (*Leaf Coneybear*) played Leaf Coneybear in the San Francisco and Boston productions of ...*Spelling Bee* (Bay Area Critics Circle Award nom.). National tour of DeafWest Theatre's *Big River*, also at Ford's Theatre in Washington D.C. (Tom Sawyer). Regional: *A Little Night Music* (Henrik) at the Post Street Theatre and TheatreWorks, San Francisco, CA (Dean Goodman Award); multiple productions with Music Theatre of Wichita. Graduate of the University of Michigan. www.stanleybahorek.com. Thanks to my loving family for their years of support. Broadway debut!

JENNI BARBER (*Olive Ostrovsky*) is overjoyed to be making her Broadway debut after playing the role of Olive in the San Francisco and Boston productions of ...*Spelling Bee*. New York: *Henry and Mudge* (TWUSA), *The High Life* (Musicals Tonight). Regional: Gertrude McFuzz in *Seussical* and Maggie in *A Chorus Line* (both at Music Theatre of Wichita). Television: "Law & Order: SVU." Graduate of the University of Michigan musical theatre program. Thanks and love to

H/H, Mark Madama, the Barber bunch (esp. Momma) and my darling Ronnie. All praise to God for these wonderful blessings.

JARED GERTNER (*William Barfee*) first played William Barfee in San Francisco and Boston (IRNE Award, Best Actor). He is so happy to continue this mucous-filled journey to his Broadway debut. New York: the premiere of *Anatomy 1968* (Theatre Row, SPF), *My Favorite Year* (Musicals Tonight), *Minimum Wage* (NY Fringe) and the premiere of *Corduroy* (TheatreWorks, USA). Regional: Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, St. Louis Rep, Paper Mill Playhouse, the Orpheum Theatre (Omaha, NE) and 11th Hour Theatre Company (Philadelphia, PA). Education: NYU/Tisch (BFA). Jared is also a teaching artist for Camp Broadway. Thanks to Penny Luedtke. For Mom and Dad.

JAMES MONROE IGLEHART (*Mitch Mahoney*) is ecstatic to be making his Broadway debut with the ...*Bee*. Recent credits: Mitch Mahoney in the San Francisco and Boston productions of *Spelling Bee*; *Smokey Joe's Cafe* at American Musical Theatre of San Jose (Fred); *Memphis* (Bobby) and *Into the Woods* (Wolf/Stewart) at TheatreWorks in Palo Alto, Ca; *Show Boat* at Casa Manana in Fort Worth, Texas. James would like to thank God for this amazing blessing. To my wife: You are my heart.

SARA INBAR (*Logainne Schwartzandgrubenierre*). Broadway: *Mamma Mia!* (Ali, original Broadway cast). National: ...*Spelling Bee* (Logainne, San Francisco and Boston). Regional: *Lizzie Borden* (Stoneham Theatre); *Godspell* (Alabama Shakespeare Festival). NYC workshops at the York, Public, Roundabout, Abingdon. Irish folk band: Random Folk,



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WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

www.myspace.com/randomfolkny. BFA English, theatre and Irish studies; NYU. Currently pursuing an MA in elementary/inclusive education at Teachers College, Columbia University. Many thanks to George, my family, my teachers and Penny. For Dana and Lauren.

GRETA LEE (*Marcy Park*). For Greta, a reunion with this cast to make her Broadway debut is better than Pinkberry yogurt. She is a proud alumna of Northwestern University and a member of AEA. Her most recent credits include *...Spelling Bee* (San Francisco/Boston), *No Boundaries* (NYMF) and "Law & Order: SVU." Special thanks to her incredible friends, the amazing Stewarts and the Russ. This one's for umma, abba, sharbear and jamesy. Batman get a job.

DANIEL PEARCE (*Vice Principal Douglas Panch*). Broadway debut. Off-Broadway: *King Lear*, *Measure for Measure*, *Henry V*, *Henry VI* (Public); *A Mother, A Daughter and A Gun* (Dodger Stages); *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Irish Repertory); *Loves' Fire*, *Romeo and Juliet* (Acting Company). Regional: Long Wharf, McCarter, Guthrie, George Street, Cleveland Play House, Berkshire Theatre Festival, GLTF, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Colorado Shakespeare Festival, Pittsburgh Public Theatre. Film and TV: *Clowns*, *Godzilla*, "Law & Order." "SVU." "Criminal Intent," "Chappelle's Show," "Queen's Supreme."

JENNIFER SIMARD (*Rona Lisa Peretti*). Broadway: *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. Off-Broadway: original casts and recordings of *I Love You, You're Perfect Now Change*; *The Thing About Men*; and *Forbidden Broadway: SVU*. She received one Lucille Lortel nomination, one Drama League nomination and three Drama Desk nominations for the above and is, therefore, a five-time loser. Television: "Law & Order." "The King of Queens." Film: *The Flintstones in Viva Rock Vegas*. www.jennifersimard.net. For Mom and Dad.

BRIAN GONZALES (*u/s for Barfee, Coneybear, Panch*). Broadway debut! Regional roles include *Oklahoma!* (Ali Hakim); *Evita* (Che); *Ragtime* (Tateh); *Sunday in the Park With George* (George); *Titanic* (Andrews); *Woman in Black* (The Actor); *Red Scare on Sunset* (Mitchell Drake); *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* (Charlie Brown); *Forever Plaid* (Smudge);

Journey's End (Trotter). Studied with the Royal National Theatre in London, England.

CARLY HUGHES (*u/s for Marcy Park, Rona Lisa Peretti*) is overjoyed to be making her Broadway debut in the *...Bee!* Credits include Off-Broadway: *Sidd: The Musical*. Regional: *Dessa Rose* (Dessa Rose, West Coast premiere, Theatre Works Palo Alto), *Footloose* (Rusty), *Aida* (Aida), *Constant Star* (Ida One), *Ragtime* (Sarah), *Smokey Joe's Cafe* (Brenda), *Dreamgirls* (Michelle). She has a BFA in musical theatre and received the Princess Grace Award for Acting & Excellence in the Arts, 2003-2004 (www.pgfusa.com). Thanks to God, from whom all blessings flow. Much love and thanks to all family and friends for your never-ending support — where would I be without all of you?!?!?

MAURICE MURPHY (*Understudy for Mitch, Chip, Panch*) is overjoyed to be making his Broadway debut. New York/Off-Broadway: *Two Gentleman of Verona*, *The Public Sings* benefit concert. With a BFA from Millikin University, Maurice's college credits include *Jekyll & Hyde*, *A Little Night Music*, *Secret Garden* and *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches*. Many thanks to Dulcinea Eisen & Associates. Love to my family and friends for their prayers and support. Hebrews 11:1. www.myspace.com/mauricemurphy.

JACQUI POLK (*Understudy for Marcy, Olive, Logainne; Dance Captain*) is beyond thrilled to be making her Broadway debut in *Spelling Bee*. Recently: *Hairspray* 1st national tour, 5th Avenue Theatre's *Princesses* (pre-Broadway), *The Music Man* (Zaneeta) at the MUNY. TV: "Six Degrees." Graduate of the Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music. Much love and many thanks to Mom, Dad, ATD and Aaron. ILUQ.

WILLIAM FINN (*Music/Lyrics*) is the writer/composer of *Falsettos* (two Tony Awards: Best Book [with James Lapine] and Best Original Score). He has written/composed *In Trousers* (L.A. Drama Critics Award), *March of the Falsettos* (Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Musical, L.A. Drama Critics Award), *Falsettoland* (two Drama Desk Awards and Lucille Lortel Award for Best Musical), *Romance in Hard Times* (Public Theater), *A New Brain* (Lincoln Center/Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Musical) and *Elegies: A Song Cycle* (Lincoln Center). He graduated from

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

Williams College, where he was awarded the Hutchinson Fellowship in Musical Composition, and currently teaches a weekly master class at NYU's Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program.

RACHEL SHEINKIN (*Book*) collaborated with William Finn and the company to adapt *C-R-E-P-U-S-C-U-L-E* into this musical (Tony, Drama Desk awards). Other music theatre collaborations include *Striking 12* (TheatreWorks, Palo Alto), *Blood Drive* (O'Neill National Music Theatre Conference) and *Serenade* (upcoming Baryshnikov Arts Center). She has been an MTC playwriting fellow and is currently an adjunct faculty member at NYU's Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program. Thanks to Rebecca Feldman et al. for this opportunity.

REBECCA FELDMAN (*Conceiver*) conceived this show, which won a Lucille Lortel Award and was nominated for Drama Desk and Tony Awards for Best Musical. She directed its world premiere at Barrington Stage Company in the summer of 2004. Rebecca conceived, directed and performed in *C-R-E-P-U-S-C-U-L-E*, the play upon which ...*Spelling Bee* is based, with her company The Farm. Previous projects with The Farm include *Super* (Atlantic Theatre Studio), *V-Ville* (West End Theatre), the work-in-progress *Jade Winds or Why I Hate Florida*. She is a Lincoln Center Directors Lab alum. Her independent TV pilot "AV Club" premiered last fall at the New York Television Festival. She attended the AFI Directing Workshop for Women, through which she directed the short film *My First Time Driving*. *Driving* won Best Short at the Lake Arrowhead Film Festival and is currently playing at festivals around the country. Rebecca currently lives in Los Angeles.

JAY REISS (*Additional Material*) is a graduate of Juilliard's playwriting program. His most recent play, *That May Well Be True*, was originally commissioned by Manhattan Theatre Club and recently completed a sold-out run in L.A. Other plays include *The Tulip Craze*; *Meanwhile, on the Other Side of Mount Vesuvius*; and *Hooray for Iceboy!* (co-writer w/EQP). He recently sold his first original screenplay to Warner Bros. and has re-written films for New Line Cinema. He created the character of vice principal Panch in *C-R-E-P-U-S-C-U-L-E* and received a Drama Desk Award (Best Ensemble) for his portrayal of the role in *Spelling Bee*.

JAMES LAPINE (*Director*) has worked in one capacity or another with William Finn on *March of the Falsettos*, *Falsettoland* (later seen on Broadway as *Falsettos*), *A New Brain*, *A Winter's Tale* and the yet-to-be-produced (but beloved) *Muscle* and *The Royal Family of Broadway*. Other Broadway credits: *Sunday in the Park With George*, *Into the Woods*, *Passion*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Golden Child*, *Dirty Blonde*, *Amour*. Off-Broadway: *Table Settings*; *Twelve Dreams*; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; *A Winter's Tale*; *Luck, Pluck and Virtue*; *Modern Orthodox*; and *Fran's Bed*. Film: *Impromptu*, *Life with Mikey*, *Earthly Possessions*.

DAN KNECHTGES (*Choreographer*). Credits include *Spelling Bee*; *Nerds: A Musical Satire* (NYMTF); *Girl in the Frame* (Goodspeed Musicals); *Hello, Dolly!*, *The Wiz*, *Cats*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *My Fair Lady*, *The Sound of Music*, *Joseph...* (Hangar Theatre); *Mame*, *Angel Street*, *A Funny Thing...* (Surflight Theater); *Don Giovanni* (Indianapolis Opera); *Candide* (Harrisburg Opera); *Carousel*; *The Merry Widow*; *West Side Story*; *Iolanthe*; *Ruddigore*; *The Mikado*; *Patience*; *The Gondoliers*; *H.M.S. Pinafore*; *The Sorcerer*. TV/film: Fatboy Slim's music video "It's a Wonderful Night" and Todd Solondz's film *Palindromes*. Member, Lincoln Center Directors Lab. www.danknechtges.com

DARREN KATZ (*Associate Director*). Associate director for the national touring and San Francisco/Boston companies. Broadway (Asst. Director): *Amour* for James Lapine and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* for Scott Ellis. National tours (Asst. Director): *Kiss Me, Kate* for Michael Blakemore. Off-Broadway (Asst. Director): *Preaching to the Perverted* for Holly Hughes and Lois Weaver. Other directing projects: multiple shows with Murray Hill, *The Adventures of Mottel*, *Eleanor & Hick*, *Cul-de-sac Rock* and *9th Street Water*.

BEOWULF BORITT (*Set Designer*). Broadway debut. ...*Spelling Bee* for Second Stage and Barrington Stage. Other NY credits: *The Last Five Years*, Drama Desk nom. (NY, Chicago); *Saint Lucy's Eyes*, AUDELCO Award (NY, Atlanta); *Hank Williams: Lost Highway*; *Wonderland*; *Class Mothers '68*; *Burning Blue*; *Roar* (New Group); *The Two and Only* (Atlantic); *Miss Julie*; *In-Betweens* (Cherry Lane), Lucille Lortel, Duke, Women's Project, American Place, Pearl, MCC, New

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

Victory, Juilliard, Naked Angels. Regional: Alliance, Trinity Rep, Berkshire Theatre Festival, Cleveland Play House, Utah Shakespeare, Northlight, Syracuse Stage, Delaware Theatre Co. (Barrymore nom.), Virginia Stage, NYS&F, Hangar.

JENNIFER CAPRIO (*Costume Designer*). Broadway debut: ...*Spelling Bee* (also Barrington Stage, nat'l tour, Chicago and San Francisco). Off-Broadway: *Hardball* (NYS&F), *The Blowin' of Baile Galle* (Irish Arts), *Miss Julie* (Access), *Brando* (Audax), *Play* (Director's Theatre). International: *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid* (Edinburgh Festival). Regional: *Lucy and the Conquest*, *The Chekhov Cycle* and *Double, Double* at Williamstown; the Hangar; Cleveland Play House; Barrington Stage; Millbrook Playhouse; Helen Hayes Theatre Co.; Hudson Stage; the Kitchen Theater; Utah Musical Theatre. Graduate of Carnegie Mellon School of Drama.

NATASHA KATZ (*Lighting Designer*) has designed extensively on Broadway, Off-Broadway and in American regional theatre. Recent Broadway: *Aida* (Tony Award, 2000), *Beauty and the Beast*, *Taboo*, *Flower Drum Song*, *Sweet Smell of Success*, *Twelfth Night*, *Dance of Death*, *The Capeman* and *Barrymore*. Recent dance and opera: *Carnival of the Animals* (NYC Ballet), *Tryst* (Royal Ballet), *Don Quixote* (American Ballet Theatre) and *Die Soldaten* (NYC Opera). Permanent lighting installations: Niketown NYC and London and the *Big Bang* at the Museum of Natural History in NYC.

DAN MOSES SCHREIER (*Sound Designer*). Broadway: *Julius Caesar*; *On Golden Pond*; *Glass Menagerie*; *Gem of the Ocean*; *Pacific Overtures*; *'night, Mother*; *After the Fall*; *Assassins*; *Anna in the Tropics*; *Into the Woods*; *Topdog/Underdog*; *Dirty Blonde*; *Amour*; *Dance of Death*; *Major Barbara*; *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan*; *The Diary of Anne Frank*; *The Tempest*; *Bring in 'da Noise*, *Bring in 'da Funk*. Off-Broadway: *Homebody/Kabul*, *Radiant Baby*, *Far East*, *Floyd Collins*, *Spic-O-Rama*. Awards: three Drama Desks, 2004 L.A. Ovation Award, 2003 Entertainment Design Award for Sustained Excellence and an Obie for Sustained Excellence.

MICHAEL STAROBIN (*Orchestrations*). Credits include *Assassins* (Tony, Drama Desk), *Tom Sawyer*, *A New Brain*, *A Christmas Carol* (MSG, NBC), *Hello Again*,

Guys and Dolls, *My Favorite Year*, *Falsettoland*, *March of the Falsettos*, *In Trousers*, *Sunday in the Park With George* (Drama Desk), *Once on This Island*, *Closer Than Ever*, *Legs Diamond*, *Romance Romance*, *Carrie*, *Birds of Paradise*, *Rags*, *Three Guys Naked*, *Von Richtofen* and the Disney films *Home on the Range*, *Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Life with Mikey*.

VADIM FEICHTNER (*Musical Director/ Dance Arrangements*). Broadway debut. Recent credits include *Elegies: A Song Cycle* (Lincoln Center), *Cam Jansen* (Lamb's Theatre), *Spelling Bee* (Second Stage) and *O. Henry's Lovers* (Goodspeed Opera). His work as a composer has been performed at the Public Theater, Avery Fisher Hall and the University of Nebraska. (Nebraska?) Recordings: *Elegies*, *Infinite Joy*, RCA's *Great Musicals*, *I Sing!* and *Spelling Bee*. Vadim is an alumnus of the NYU Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program.

CARMEL DEAN (*Vocal Arranger/ Associate Conductor/Synthesizer*). Born and raised in Perth, Western Australia, Carmel came to the U.S. in 2001 on a Fulbright Scholarship. Broadway orchestras: *The Boy From Oz*, *Gypsy*, *Cabaret*, *Les Misérables*. Other credits: *Belle Epoque* (Lincoln Center), ...*Spelling Bee* (Barrington Stage), William Finn's *Elegies* (Lincoln Center, Canon Theatre in Los Angeles), *Vanities* (TheatreWorks Palo Alto), *Chicago* (Hong Kong) and the 2000 Olympic Games (Sydney, Australia). She received her Master's in Musical Theatre Writing from NYU in 2003. Her original compositions and arrangements can be heard in season two of Disney TV's "Johnny and the Sprites."

MICHAEL KELLER (*Music Coordinator*). Music coordinator for *A Chorus Line* (2006); *Tarzan*; *Wicked*; *Spamalot*; *The Lion King*; *Avenue Q*; *Mamma Mia!*; Barbra Streisand concerts in 1994, 2001, 2006. Life is complete with wife Pamela Sousa and children Zachary and Alexis.

TARA RUBIN CASTING (*Casting*). Broadway: *The Pirate Queen*, *Les Misérables*, *Mary Poppins*, *Jersey Boys*, *History Boys*, *Spamalot*, *The Producers*, *Mamma Mia!*, *Phantom...*, *Good Vibrations*, *Bombay Dreams*, *Oklahoma!*, *Flower Drum Song*, *Imaginary Friends*, *Metamorphoses*. Lincoln Center: *The Frogs*, *Contact*, *Thou Shalt Not*, *A Man of No Importance*, *Anything Goes* (concert). Off-Broadway:

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

Second Stage. Regional: Williamstown Theatre Festival, Kennedy Center, La Jolla Playhouse, Yale Rep. Film: *The Producers*. Member: Casting Society of America.

KAI BROTHERS (*Production Manager*). Broadway: *'night, Mother; Match; Urinetown; Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune*. Off-Broadway: *Bare, The Beckett/Albee Project, Talking Heads, Avenue Q, Our Lady of 121st Street, Debbie Does Dallas, Urinetown, The Laramie Project, Wit* and many others. Since joining Showman Fabricators, Inc., *Steel Magnolias* and *Beast on the Moon*.

ANDREA "SPOOK" TESTANI (*Production Stage Manager*). Broadway credits include *I Am My Own Wife, Match, Frankie and Johnny...*, *The Full Monty, Side Man, Design for Living, The Man Who Came to Dinner* and *The Man Who Had All the Luck*. She's also a director with credits including *The King of Mackie Street* (OOBR Award), *The Menaechmi, The Creation of the World and Other Business, Veronica's Room* and *T-Bone N Weasel*.

KELLY HANCE (*Stage Manager*). Off-Broadway: *The Scene, Spelling Bee, Danny and the Deep Blue Sea, The Triple Happiness, The Mystery Plays, Wintertime, Dinner With Demons, Living Out, Spanish Girl, ...in the absence of spring...* (all at Second Stage), *Peg O' My Heart, Bedbound, Bailegangaire* (Irish Rep), *Hobson's Choice, An Adult Evening of Shel Silverstein* (Atlantic Theater Co.). Love and thanks to Mark, Mom and Dad.

321 THEATRICAL MANAGEMENT (*General Management*). Nina Essman, Nancy Nagel Gibbs and Marcia Goldberg's management credits include *Wicked* (Broadway and tours); *Man of La Mancha; The Graduate; The Vagina Monologues; Bat Boy; Fully Committed; Search for Signs...; Taller Than a Dwarf; The Lion King; De La Guarda; Hank Williams; Rent; Guys and Dolls; How to Succeed...; A Funny Thing Happened...; 42nd Street, I Love You, You're Perfect...; Visiting Mr. Green; Full Gallop; Smoke on the Mountain; The Santaland Diaries; and Smokey Joe's Cafe*.

THE FARM, founded in 2000 by Rebecca Feldman, is a collective of writers and performers. The Farm's interest is in the role of improvisation in creating new work for the theatre. In an initial two-week intensive period, from the impulses borne mainly out of the pressure of a deadline, a play is discovered, developed and rehearsed. Previous projects include *Super* (Atlantic Theatre

Studios), *V-ville* (West End Theatre), *Why I Hate Florida* and *C-R-E-P-U-S-C-U-L-E* (Present Company Theatorium, 2002), upon which *Spelling Bee* is based. The original characters and dialogue of Vice Principal Douglas Panch, William Barfee and Logainne Schwartzandgrubenierre were created by Farm members Jay Reiss, Dan Fogler and Sarah Saltzberg, respectively. www.rebeccafeldman.com

DAVID STONE (*Producer*) is currently represented on Broadway by *Wicked* and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. He has produced *Three Days of Rain, Man of La Mancha, The Vagina Monologues, Fully Committed, Lifegame, The Diary of Anne Frank, Full Gallop, The Santaland Diaries* and *Family Secrets*. David serves on the Board of Governors of the League of American Theatres and Producers as well as the Board of Directors of the League of Off-Broadway Theatres and Producers. He has lectured on theatre at the Julliard School, NYU, Yale, Columbia and his alma mater, the University of Pennsylvania.

JAMES L. NEDERLANDER (*Producer*) is the president of the Nederlander Organization and the son of James M. Nederlander (chairman). Among Mr. Nederlander's producing credits are the Royal Shakespeare Company's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Peter Brook's *The Tragedy of Carmen* (recipient of a special Tony Award); Natalia Makarova's tour of *On Your Toes; Ray Davies: 20th Century Man; Tallulah*, starring Kathleen Turner; *Thoroughly Modern Millie; Private Lives; La Cage aux Folles; Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*; Billy Joel and Twyla Tharp's *Movin' Out; Fiddler on the Roof*; and Bob Dylan and Twyla Tharp's *The Times They Are A-Changin'*. Mr. Nederlander has also produced Billy Joel, U2 and Pink Floyd at Yankee Stadium. Future productions include a live show with magician David Blaine.

BARBARA WHITMAN (*Producer*). After one career as a performer and another in finance, Barbara made her Broadway debut producing the Tony-winning revival of *A Raisin in the Sun*, starring Sean Combs. She is also currently represented on Broadway by *Legally Blonde: The Musical*. Other productions include *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*. A native New Yorker, Barbara attended NYU (Gallatin) and Columbia University (MFA, theatre management and producing). Her

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

proudest productions are her sons, Daniel and Will.

PATRICK CATULLO (*Producer*) has produced, on Broadway, Twyla Tharp and Bob Dylan's *The Times They Are A-Changin'* directed and choreographed by Ms. Tharp, and Eliam Kraiem's *Sixteen Wounded* directed by Garry Hynes. He currently serves as associate to producer David Stone and 321 Theatrical Management. Patrick previously worked for the Roundabout Theatre Company. He is a graduate of Yale University and a member of the League of American Theatres and Producers.

BARRINGTON STAGE COMPANY (*Producer*) is an award-winning Equity theatre co-founded in 1995 by artistic director Julianne Boyd. BSC recently moved into a 500-seat renovated vaudeville theatre in Pittsfield, MA (in the Berkshires). BSC is committed to developing new plays and musicals, and has presented six world premieres in the last three years, most notably the workshop and world premiere of *Spelling Bee* in 2004. www.barringtonstageco.org

SECOND STAGE THEATRE (*Producer*), founded in 1979 under the leadership of artistic director Carole Rothman, produces a diverse range of premieres and new interpretations of America's best contemporary theatre, including such productions as *Coastal Disturbances*, *This Is Our Youth*, *The Good Times Are Killing Me*, *Jar the Floor*, *Saturday Night*, *Tiny Alice*, *Jiminy*, *Crowns* and *The Water's Edge*. 2ST's more than 125 citations include three Tony Awards and the 2002 Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Body of Work. Visit www.2ST.com

CIRCLE IN THE SQUARE THEATRE SCHOOL's professional workshops in acting and musical theatre are intensive, accredited, two-year programs providing individual attention with a teaching staff of the industry's leading actors and directors. The Summer Workshop in acting and musical theatre offers an introduction to advanced training for the professional theatre. Admission to all programs is by audition. Another facet of the curriculum is the school's educational outreach programming, consisting of arts education, playmaking for children and performances for all ages. For more information, call 212 307-0388.

Information in "Who's Who in the Cast" is provided by the production. Where opinions are expressed, they are those of the players, not necessarily those of PLAYBILL Magazine.

OPENING NIGHT: May 2, 2005

STAFF FOR THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE

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COMPANY MANAGER David Turner

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Stage Manager Kelly Hance
Assistant Stage Manager Carly Hughes
Management Assistant Aaron Mize
Assistant Choreographer DJ Gray
Dance Captain Jacqui Polk
Associate Lighting Designer Philip Rosenberg
Assistant Set Designer Jo Winiarski
Assistant Costume Designer Brian Russman
Associate Sound Designer David Bullard
Assistant Lighting Designer John Viesta
Automated Lights Programmer Laura Frank
Production Managers Kai Brothers, Jason Block
Electrician Randall Zaibek
Flyman John Gordon
Monitor Engineer Stephanie Vetter
Wardrobe Supervisor Yvonna Balfour
Dressers Cleon Byerly, Susan Sigrist
Costume Assistant Jeffrey Hinchee
Set Design Assistants John Connors,
Camille Connolly, Mike Wade
Synthesizer Programming Bruce Samuels
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Zach Lezberg, Julie Monahan,
Chet Unger
Volunteer Spellers Coordinators Alan Arellano,
Brooke Brod, Aaron Glick,
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Opening Night Coordination ... Tobak-Dantchik Events
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The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee

a Visual Description

Six quirky elementary and middle school students on the edge of puberty, are the finalists in The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee. These outsiders use competition to define who they are, and as a way to separate themselves from their crazy families. Their struggles to escape childhood are overseen by grown-ups who never completely succeeded in escaping it themselves.

The interior of the theater resembles a junior high school gymnasium, complete with a hardwood floor and a larger-than-usual basketball hoop with net hanging over the center of the floor above the audience. The rows of red audience seats are in a mini-stadium style horseshoe. The stage is located in the center floor area, but there are also five more rows of red theater seats located on the center floor, facing the stage. Directly opposite the stage, at the back of the theater is a narrow stairway that leads down to a small balcony surrounded by the rows of stadium seats. The stairs are an aisle for the audience but are also used during the show.



The walls of the theater are decorated with banners and signs about "Putnam Valley Middle School."



Sample of Story Synopsis and Description of Musical Numbers

Sample Story Synopsis and Description of Musical Number

1. Ms. Rona Peretti enters the stage carrying a large trophy. In a flashback of when she was a girl, she spells a word at a spelling bee. She is announced the winner.



Musical Number: *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*

performed by the Company. One at a time, the various characters walk through the aisles of the theater, enter the stage, meet and greet other spellers, and then take their seats on the bleachers. During the number, two spellers bring out the official blue and gold banner that says "Welcome to the 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee". Ms. Rona Peretti calls 3 or 4 additional spellers to the stage. They are audience members who volunteered to participate. Also, she calls Olive

Ostrovsky to the stage to discuss her unpaid entrance fee. Then, Ms. Peretti asks the audience to turn off their cell phones and to unwrap any candy before the spelling begins.

all Scenes and Musical Numbers included thru. . .

43. Then, Vice Principal Panche announces a second place price. He gives Olive cash from his wallet; the amount of which happens to be exactly that of her unpaid entrance fee

Musical Number: *Finale* performed by the Company. All of the main characters are on stage; Ms. Peretti and Vice Principal Panche sit at the table, the spellers sit on the bleachers, and Mitch Mahoney sits in the back on his chair. The lights dim and the curtains open at the back of the stage to reveal a scene with a blue sky and rolling green hills. In the center of the scene is a long paved road that leads off into the distance. Each character takes a turn telling his or her part in the epilogue. The cast then walks through the aisles of the theater. They each take a turn holding the trophy (Leaf licks it). They walk back to the stage, and then gather on the bleachers. Logainne holds a black sign that says "25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" in white letters. A light flashes and they all smile for their picture.



The Cast

There are nine major characters, kids and adults, played by nine adult actors (some names and descriptions below). During the show, 3 or 4 audience volunteers, selected before the show begins, are called down to participate as spellers. This element of the performance is improvisational. The actors who play the major characters, double- and triple-up to play 12, additional, minor characters, kids and adults.

Throughout the performance, the spellers wear yellow number cards that hang from a string around their neck. They remove the number card when they take on a different character.

Rona-Lisa Peretti

A middle-aged woman with dark, curly hair, a slightly plump hourglass figure and a warm smile. She wears brown high-heeled shoes; flesh colored panty hose; a green suit skirt with a slit in the back that is almost one-half the length of her skirt; a green double-breasted suit jacket; and an animal print, button-up blouse. She wears a gold chain necklace, a small gold pin on her left lapel, and gold dangling earrings. Her curly, light-brown hair is piled atop her head and she wears green eye shadow and a touch too much red lipstick. Late in the show, Rona Lisa Peretti does a kick that reveals her modest and simple white underpants.



The actor who plays Rona Lisa Peretti also plays the mother of one of the spellers, Olive Ostrovsky. When she takes on this role, she simply puts a long piece of sheer fabric over her head and wrapped around her shoulders like an Indian head scarf.

Chip Tolentino

A Filipino boy wearing a Boy Scouts of America uniform. He wears black, high-top Converse tennis shoes; green uniform pants; a tan, short-sleeved collared shirt; and wire-framed glasses with a blue sport strap that sits across the back of his neck. Across his chest is a green merit badge sash with five patches of various colors. A compass hangs from his belt on his left hip. When Chip enters the stage he carries a green and black messenger bag that he wears slung across his chest. Chip also has thick black eyebrows that he periodically raises “suggestively” at female audience members throughout the show.



The Cast

Later in the show, Chip, still in uniform, enters with a colorful vendor display box that hangs from his shoulders and rests in front of his waist. The box says "Blow Pops" and is filled with bags of candy and popcorn. Around his waist he wears a belt that holds juice boxes.

The actor who plays Chip also appears as the character of Jesus. He has long black hair parted down the middle and wears a flowing white robe, and brown sandals. On his chest is a plastic, glowing red sacred-heart symbol, with a cross and flames coming from the top of the heart. When Jesus enters, he stands on a balcony situated among seats in the back center of the auditorium. Throughout his appearance, he stands with his arms outstretched. At the end of his appearance, he grabs his long robes and whisks away up the stairs to exit the theater.

Logainne Schartzandgrubenierre



A petite girl with bug eyes, multiple pig-tails, and a lisp. She wears brown penny loafers; multi-colored striped socks; red pants that fall slightly above her ankles; and a white button-up shirt with a red neck tie, under a navy blue blazer. On her left lapel she wears two buttons: one button is an upper case W with a red circle around it and a line through it. The other is a rainbow colored peace sign.

When Logainne spells, she also says the word in sign language, then spells it with her right hand.

The actor who plays Logainne also plays the mom of another speller, named Leaf Coneybear. When she takes on this role, she ties back her pig-tails and does not talk with a lisp.

Leaf Coneybear



A red-haired boy with a constantly dazed expression on his face. He enters wearing brown, two-strap Birkenstock sandals with two different multicolored socks; baggy tan sweat pants with multi-colored patches along the sides; a blue zip-up track jacket over an orange and yellow tie-dyed shirt; and a blue helmet. Around his shoulders he wears a red-and-white gingham cape. Upon first entry he also brings a brown paper lunch bag that he places under the bleachers. A piece of paper, the competition application, is pinned to the front of his shirt. He also wears a necklace with a pink, star-shaped bottle of bubbles hanging from it. During the show he blows the bubbles and eats them as they float in the



The Cast

air. During one of his solo musical numbers, Leaf takes a little red monster finger puppet from his pocket and puts it on his right index finger.

When Leaf spells he mumbles and talks until he suddenly opens his eyes wide, looks out into space and moves his head from left to right as if in a trance and seeing the word in front of him. Throughout the show he fidgets around, plays with his hair and stares into space.

Several times during the show, the actor who plays Leaf also plays one of the fathers of Logainne Schartzandgrubenierre, Carl Grubenierre, or, "Carl Dad". When he takes on this role, he zips up his track jacket, smoothes down his hair and puts on a pair of dark-rimmed glasses. Late in the show, he makes an appearance as Carl Dad, and he is dressed in dark, shiny loafers; slim fitting, dark-brown, pin-striped pants; and a brown turtleneck shirt. He wears a small, black purse-like bag across his chest and he carries an open can of Coca-Cola.

William Barfee

A short chubby boy with chin-length, curly, brown-hair, and a runny nose. He wears black and white wingtip Oxford shoes; gray, black and white argyle socks pulled up over his calves; gray shorts; a short-sleeve button up shirt that is white with thin, blue stripes; a blue and yellow striped tie; and wire-rimmed glasses. He wears a silver medical ID bracelet on his right wrist, and a white rabbit foot hangs from his belt. Early in the show, William takes a blue nasal bulb syringe from his pocket and uses it to clear his nose. He also carries a blue and white handkerchief seen hanging from his pocket throughout the show. He periodically uses the handkerchief to wipe his nose or shine his right shoe.

When William steps up to the mic to spell, he shuffles to his right as he uses his right foot to spell the word on the ground before speaking. Throughout the show, when William makes a smart-alecky remark, he often accompanies it with some sort of hip-hop, gangsta-like gesture (e.g. arms opened wide in a fight-like stance).



Under the Spell of Words

by John Cavanagh

The first example of writing appeared roughly 6000 years ago in the form of pictographs. Pictographs are pictures that represent words. They were developed in the Middle East by the Sumerians and passed down to the Egyptians. Today we know them as hieroglyphs, which is Greek for sacred writing. These picture symbols were developed so that the earliest cities could have a common form of written communication.

Stylized and fanciful, hieroglyphs set the standard for over a thousand years. Over time they went from representing words to representing sounds. For example, the modern word Hospital would be written with each letter corresponding to a particular hieroglyph:



The Phoenicians, traders and sailors of the ancient world, created the first alphabet. As we all know, the idea caught on. This effective writing system was adopted throughout North Africa and the Mediterranean. The Romans created the alphabet used today in Western European languages. In other cultures alternate writing forms developed, which produced systems such as “written Chinese,” in which each character represents a syllable of spoken Chinese. Also, Mayans developed hieroglyphs, which developed independently in Central America around the year 200 C.E. Since these ancient times, we have developed many ways to communicate language. For instance, take hospital, a word that has existed almost as long as written language. How might the idea of a hospital be expressed, or communicated in ways other than through our western alphabet?

Examples include:

Khoisan “Click” Language:

Isibhedlela is the word for hospital in the Zulu language, a dialect which uses specific clicks of the tongue to articulate consonants. These clicking sounds are categorized into five types: bilabial, (loud) dental, (tongue over teeth) palatal, (sharp) postalveolar (popping), and lateral alveolar (abrupt) clicks.



Morse code:

Created for the electric telegraph in the 1840s, Morse code uses a standardized sequence of long and short sounds or marks in order to communicate letters, numbers, and punctuation. The transmission or writing of the word hospital would be:

•••• - - - ••• • - - • •• - • - • - ••

H O S P I T A L

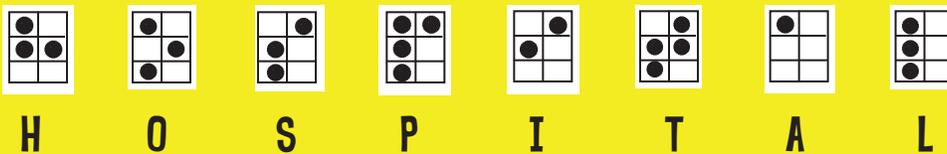
American Sign Language (ASL):

ASL is a complex form of communication often employed by those with hearing impairments. ASL uses signs made with the hand along with other movements that include facial expressions and postures of the body. To express the concept hospital, make the ASL hand-shape for the letter H (index and middle finger together, other fingers and thumb folded) and outline a cross on the upper part of your arm.



Braille:

Developed in 1821, Braille is a system used primarily by those who are blind or visually impaired in order to read and write. In Braille, a varied arrangement of raised dots, representing letters and numerals, are identified by touch. The word hospital would be represented as:



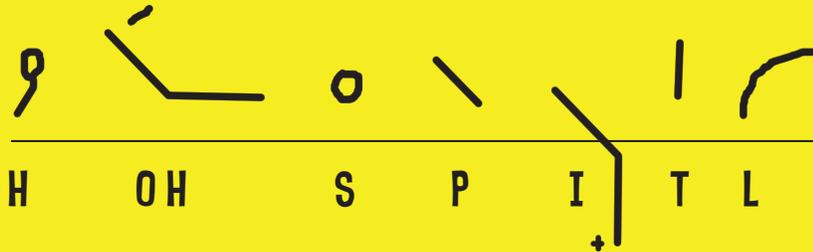
Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ACC):

Individuals with severe communication disorders use AAC to replace or augment speech by means of gesture, body language, manual sign or picture communication symbols. The PCF for hospital is:



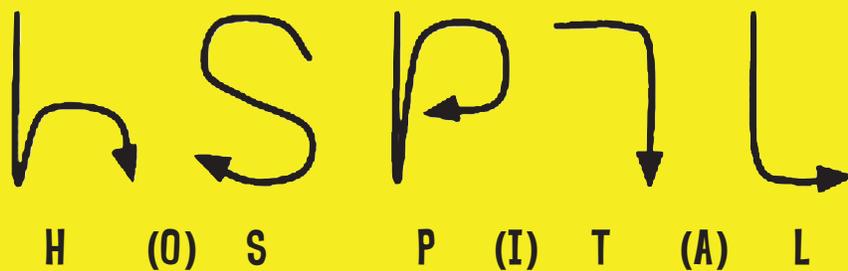
Shorthand:

Stenography is the process of writing in shorthand, an abbreviated, symbolic writing method that improves speed of writing, allowing expert users to write as quickly as people speak. Shorthand was highly popular in the days before recording or dictation machines. Hospital would be written as:



Graffiti:

Graffiti is the type of writing used for hand-held personal digital assistants, (PDAs) often referred to as Palm Pilots. Developed in the 1990s, graffiti is a constructed script that can be easily drawn with a stylus on a touch-sensitive panel. The word hospital would be constructed like this:



Abbreviate Electronic Language (AEL):

In the current generation of laptops, e-mail, and instant messaging, shorthand has taken the form of acronyms and emoticons (modern hieroglyphs that combine keyboard letters, symbols, or numbers to make a picture -- often viewed sideways.) A form of AEL known as 'text speak' is a system used for keyboards and mobile phone pads, in which vowels are removed so that the sequence of consonants remain and the shortened word is still recognizable. For example, hospital would be written as:

hsptl



Since its development, language has always proved fascinating to people...and entertaining. Puns and wordplay are abound in literature and plays. People are even interested in examining the individual letters that make up a word. During the 1840's informal spelling bees became popular in schools and among neighbors. In 1874 East Coast newspapers began to report on public spelling matches with an admission fee and prizes for the competitors. Some of the contestants were actually a part of vaudeville shows. The spelling bee then moved west and quickly became a national craze. Although it waxed and waned in popularity for the next century or so, the spelling bee never went completely out of style. The modern National spelling competition began in 1925. Now, at the start of the 21st century, the spelling bee is enjoying a tremendous resurgence in popularity, particularly due to coverage from television, movies, and theater.

Such enthusiasm does not come from simply reciting a memorized sequence of letters to form obscure or antiquated words. On the contrary, the spelling bee demonstrates a passion for words which have intriguing roots, rich histories, and complex systems. By taking a single word and deconstructing it, you participate in that word's centuries old journey from idea to linguistic expression. The spelling bee is actually a tribute to the excitement of communication!

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Language Arts

Discussion

Objective:

Use non-verbal communication, the internet and symbols to teach spelling and improve spelling skills for sight-impaired and legally blind students.

Exercise One:

The Egyptians drew symbols to express ideas, one character often incorporated complex concepts. Spelling is essentially the same process, using symbols (letters) and combinations of letters to represent sounds. Go to the website: www.edhelper.com. In the search box, type in: hieroglyphics chart. Click on Ancient Egypt: Hieroglyphics Chart. Print out pages from the site in large text format. Distribute to students. Have students “spell” words with

the symbols by matching sounds to pictures. Keep words simple. Make sure the words can be “spelled” easily with the pictures provided.

Teaching Tips:

Dispel the myth that impaired students are relegated to poor spelling skills through approved and innovative teaching techniques that can be woven throughout the basic curriculum in all subject areas. Encourage administrations to include the techniques on experimental levels, retaining those proven effective.

Exercise Two:

Pair a sight impaired student with a sighted student. Using the same chart, have students first say their words. Have them review the words created from the chart. Saying each word aloud, have the “helper” student reinforce the sounds used by exaggerating the sound, then asking the impaired student what letter or letters he or she thinks it represents. At the end, repeat the word.

A Word To The Wise. . .

Like it or not, text messaging is here to stay as an example of the changing nature of the way we communicate and what has become acceptable. 2U2 and ADN are as accepted and in fact preferable in this mode of communication as “to you to” and “any day now.” This type of communication can be a real boon to visually impaired students for whom spelling is a challenge--a perfect way to keep them within the mainstream of communication on a daily basis while reinforcing proper spelling within the classroom setting.



This accessible performance of *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* was made possible through the generous and enthusiastic participation of many individuals, including:

John Cavanagh, Writer, "Under the Spell of Words"

Jo-Ann Dean, Sign Interpreter

Philip Katz, Producing Director, Camp Broadway & Editorial Director

Corinne E. Kirchner, Ph.D., Writer, "Is Just a Littel Literassy OK for Blind and Visually Impaired Kidz? A Note on Spelling and Equal Opportunity"

Fran Libowitz, Lighthouse, Braille Services

Patricia E. Young, Visual Description writer

Nancy Gibbs, 321 Theatrical Management

David Turner, Company Manager, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*

Andrea "Spook" Testani, Production Stage Manager, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*

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Serino Coyne, Advertising

The entire cast and crew of *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*

...and all others who also played a role in this experience.



