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# AVKO Educational Research Foundation Newsletter

**BACK TO SCHOOL !** August, 2008

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**Read EdNews.org Interview with Don McCabe**

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Interviewer, Michael F Shaughnessy, Senior Columnist with EducationNews.org is currently Professor in Educational Studies and is a Consulting Editor for Gifted Education International and Educational Psychology Review. In addition, he writes for www.EdNews.org and the International Journal of Theory and Research in Education. He has taught students with mental retardation, learning disabilities and gifted. He is on the Governor's Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Council and the Gifted Education Advisory Board in New Mexico. He is also a school psychologist and conducts in-services and workshops on various topics.

[An Interview with Don McCabe: On Teaching Pupils with Dyslexia, Michael F. Shaughnessy, Senior Columnist EducationNews.org](#)

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**A Positive Approach To Teaching** by Gloria Goldsmith

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There Is An Old Adage We All Know, ...

"If at first you don't succeed: try, try again". The problem with that adage is, when it comes to learning how to spell and read, kids are just B-O-R-E-D with that theory. Repeating the same old thing that you didn't understand the first time is just going



to increase frustration, eventually tears flow and learning is pain.

AVKO supports a positive approach to learning: **MAKE IT FUN!**

Creating a learning environment that accepts laughter and fun as basic to the concept of learning is much more attractive to any human being - children and adults. Remember the baseball movie "Field Of Dreams" and the phrase "Build it and they will come"? Build that positive learning environment and watch your kids being attracted like a moth to a flame to learning - old subjects and new.



Make Sequential Spelling Interesting.

Here is where public school and homeschooling just can NOT compete. YOU can tailor your child's spelling words used in sentence context to HIS/HER PERSONAL interests. If he is totally into basketball, then formulate the target word sentences about basketball, his favorite player, or his growing skills in playing the game. If she is completely absorbed by a certain book or author, make her sentences about that author or that set of books. Whatever their interests happen to be, feature THAT in the sentences you give as word meaning examples.

Assign Sentence or Paragraph Writing Using the Current Word Family.

At the end of a word family give the extension assignment of writing sentences or paragraphs (depending on their ages and abilities), using as many of the word family words as possible in their work. Set a minimum, maybe 8 and let their creative juices flow. Best Idea: Give them specific writing subjects: first time, they write about ANYTHING they want - BUT they have to make you LAUGH! Encourage the use of their Student Response Books as their personal dictionaries to check for correct spelling.

Future Assignments: Use the student's ardor for sports, biology, animal stories or animated movie characters, whatever. Be sure they write about something which they already have LOTS of information. Months down the road when they know they can compose, have them write about their opinion as in "What makes a good best friend/brother/sister/a favorite game? Or, Why do they like sports/biology/literature/the Internet, etc.

Play Word Games.

What a great way to aid recall information in a positive setting: playing games. Just as in playing any game, we get better at word games the more we play.

Play Hangman with the current spelling word family and slip a few from the last week's lessons as well.

Scrabble or Word Up are also excellent general word games.

The Wheel of Fortune - probably the best all around word game. Available in table-top, which means several children can play at once, or it can be found on the web, usually for free. Wheel of Fortune is particularly good for using PATTERNS to help decipher the words. For example: an "N" in the next to last letter position means, using pattern strategy and the word clue given, it may well be a word with an "ing" ending. Perhaps buying a vowel - an "i" - would be a good strategy. Plus the web edition of Wheel of Fortune game reminds you about the most common letters in English. This game is really excellent for continuing to reinforce Sequential Spelling patterns found in the English language.

Sidewalk Hopscotch or Table Top Hopscotch

Sidewalk Hopscotch is played outdoors and is so much fun, it doesn't seem like you're REALLY working on spelling! Get some chalk and use the driveway or the sidewalk area. Give your student(s) each a piece of chalk and have them draw 12 to 16 LARGE rectangles in singles and doubles. Fill in each rectangle with a different spelling word. Use a small rough stone with lots of edges and let them roll it toward their target word. The rectangle it lands nearest, is their word. They hop to the word, pick up the stone, look up at the sky and spell the word aloud. If they spell it correctly they go forward from that word. If they spell it incorrectly, they have to come back to their last position. The goal is to go to the end and come back first. The winner should get some sort of prize. I like a home-made Crown for the King or Queen of the Hopscotch! Of course the King or Queen get to do a Victory Dance, making it all the more fun!

Table-Top Hopscotch is played in-doors for winter games or if you have no sidewalks or paved driveways. It is played the same way except using paper. (Tape two pieces or more together.) Use a small piece of paper wadded into a ball as your stone. And instead of hopping by foot they hop their fingers over the course, slapping their hand over the target word they are to spell. Without peeking, they spell the word to you. If correct, put a bingo chip or paperclip there to mark it while the next player has his turn. If not correct they go back to their previous position. Be sure the winner gets a Crown and Victory Dance.

Poetry for fun.

Poetry is also a great way to review spelling words. The fun that can be derived from rhyming and making up some funny poems is creative and expands the intellect. Here are some short two-liners samples:

*Tom was very calm
until he saw the bomb.*

*Vance won't take chances
learning any new dances.*

And how about the zany Addams Family Lyrics?

They're creepy and they're kooky, Mysterious and spooky,
They're all together ooky, The Addams Family.


Their house is a museum, Where people come to see 'em
They really are a scream, The Addams Family.

You and your kids can really get a charge out of creating a song, or rewrite the words to your favorite tunes.

Please tell [us](#) about any games or poetry your family creates or finds enjoyable and educational. We will share it with our AVKO Member Families in future newsletters!



What Supplies Do I Need for the AVKO Program? by Gloria Goldsmith

 **Dry Erase Boards** - If you do not already own one, be sure to purchase



one that is large enough for your needs. A 2' X 3" is probably the smallest size that would be helpful. You will need at least 4 and possibly 6 dry erase markers. A timer is VERY useful.

Another choice. You can purchase **chalkboard paint** which runs about \$11.00 a quart, covers about 100 sq foot (10 X 10 feet) at Lowes or Home Depot. Lowes carries it in black. Home Depot carries Rustoleum chalkboard paint for about the same price per quart, covers 120 sq ft and comes in 12 different colors.

Advantages of Chalkboard Paint -for about \$25, which covers the cost of the paint, rollers and chalk for writing, you have the possibility of a larger board area for writing than a dry erase board. Plus you can paint any wall in your home with it, and when you are no longer homeschooling, the chalkboard section can simply be painted over with regular paint. Some chalkboard paint is **magnetic**, too!

Both: Dry erase boards can be put away out of sight when school is not in session. If you use a piece of plywood for the chalkboard paint, it can also be stored away when not in use. Choice is good!



AVKO Member Benefits: SAVES \$\$\$



Homeschooling parents are feeling the time-squeeze of that Back-To-School preparation. All the must-finds come to bear and the search begins for textbooks that are easy-to-use, yet contain what YOUR child needs.

\$25 buys a **MEMBERSHIP** worth over \$180 in benefits. These e-books are the bedrock of our program. If you have a Pre-schooler, Kindergartner or First Grader, be sure to check out the **MEMBER BENEFITS**. Children who are taught the basics with *The Teaching of Reading and Spelling* and *Starting at Square One* will zoom along in second grade when starting Sequential Spelling Volume 1. For higher elementary (and up) students that have holes in their spelling knowledge, they will benefit from *The Reading Teacher's List of Over 5,500 Basic Spelling Words*. The diagnostic information is invaluable to parents and teachers.

Parent/teachers of students using Sequential Spelling should be aware of the NEW extension information in *The Patterns of English Spelling Combined with NEW Word Families in Sentence Context*. By looking up the word family you can find not only the Sequential Spelling words, but also a list of Power Words in the same family, and sentences using the target words in context. These sentences can be used for additional reading practice/comprehension, handwriting or keyboarding exercises. Currently we have the first FOUR VOLUMES available. By the end of October all TEN VOLUMES will be available FREE to MEMBERS ONLY.

In addition to these SUPER Membership Benefits, AVKO also gives each member a **25% DISCOUNT** for 1 year when purchasing books directly from the AVKO Foundation!



"The Smell Of Stupid" by Lee Caskey

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Lee Caskey has written an enjoyable yet poignant book, ***The Smell of Stupid***, about growing up dyslexic. "This book is an insightful autobiography that delves into the interior world of a child growing up with dyslexia. It is a world of isolation, confusion, loneliness, and frustration. Despite Lee's above average intelligence and heightened imagination, she finds herself ostracized by her peers, ridiculed by her teachers and labeled "stupid" because of her inability to read. This book is a "must-read" for all parents, educators and school administrators." --Dr. Patricia Bowman, Professor of English(retired)

You can purchase this book or audio CD by calling 1 870 351-5075 or at [Diamonds in the Rough Publishers](#).

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**For More Advice or Information About AVKO Books or Membership:
1-866-AVKO-612 or go to the [AVKO Foundation](#)**

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