

Enhancing Students' Spelling Skills in English Using Dictation Exercises for Grade 6 Level

Ericson S. Caparas ¹

1 – Cabuyao Central School

Publication Date: September 23, 2026

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.22920241

Abstract

This action research investigates the effectiveness of an intervention program called I-SPELL (Intensive- Spelling Practices to Elevate the Learning Level) in improving the spelling skills of Grade 6 students.

The program involved a single section of 59 Grade Six students and utilized a descriptive design with dictation exercises complemented by various activities. Results showed that students' spelling performance improved significantly, with the mean score rising from "fairly satisfactory" (3.71) in the pre-test to "very satisfactory" (6.47) in the post-test. Using paired sample T-test, the resulting t-value was 10.62, with the p-value 0 with df 58. The p-value is less than the alpha level thus, null hypothesis was rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference before and after utilizing the dictation exercises to improve student's spelling skills.

The study concludes that the I-SPELL program offers a practical and engaging approach to enhancing spelling skills. Dictation exercises and activities that target visual, kinesthetic, and auditory learning styles encourage understanding word meaning, effectively address spelling challenges, and promote overall language development.

Keywords: *Dictation Exercises, Effectiveness, English I-SPELL, Spelling Skills*

I. Acknowledgement

The researchers would like to express their sincerest gratitude to the Casile ES learners and teachers for their assistance in the conduct of the study; to Ma. Fe L. Cantillano, EdD, PSDS of District 5, for the support and guidance during the conduct of this action research; To Dr. Alona Raton, especially to Dr. Jonathan Marquez for the technical assistance provided to them; To their family, friends and colleagues; Most especially to the Lord Almighty for the continuous provisions.

II. Context and Rationale

The global educational landscape was increasingly focused on foundational literacy, with international assessments like PISA and PIRLS consistently highlighting the critical role of spelling proficiency. UNESCO (2025) emphasized that basic literacy skills, including accurate spelling, were essential for lifelong learning and participation in a globalized society. This emphasized was driven by the understanding that strong spelling skills were not merely an academic exercise, but a fundamental tool for effective communication in an increasingly digital world. The ability to articulate thoughts clearly and accurately in written form was a vital for both personal and professional success, making spelling a non-negotiable component of elementary education.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) acknowledge the persistent challenge of English language proficiency among students. National assessments frequently revealed gaps in literacy skills, including spelling. The K to 12 curriculum emphasized the development of communicative competence, which necessitates a strong foundation in spelling. Moreover, the DepEd's focus on improving the quality of basic education reflected a national commitment to addressed literacy challenges. The Philippines, being a bilingual nation, faces the added complexity of students navigating both their native languages and English, which can sometimes lead to spelling inconsistencies. Reports and observations from the DepEd, highlight that many students, especially in early grades, struggle to master essential English spelling patterns. (DepEd, 2023).

Locally, in Cabuyao, Laguna, observations within the school and surrounding communities indicated that many elementary students exhibited significant spelling difficulties. The prevalence of Tagalog as the primary language influences English pronunciation and spelling, leaded to unique challenges. Moreover, anecdotal evidence from local teachers and parents suggested that access to supplementary educational resources may vary, impacting students' exposure to English language materials. Large class sizes in the school also contributed to the difficulty in providing individualized attention to students who required extra support in spelling. As a teacher in Cabuyao, I witness the direct impact of these challenges on students' confidence and academic progress.

Given this context, the imperative for targeted intervention is clear. The current pressure on schools to produce graduates with strong spelling skills underscores the need for proactive measures. This action research, "Enhancing Students' Spelling Skills in English Using Dictation Exercises for Grade 6 Level," investigated the effectiveness of the I-SPELL (Intensive-Spelling Practices to Elevate the Learning Level) program, utilizing dictation exercises, in improving

spelling proficiency among 59 Grade 6 students in Cabuyao City. The study aimed to address the persistent challenge of spelling deficiencies observed within the local context, aligning with broader national and global concerns about foundational literacy. By employing a descriptive design with pre- and post-tests, the research sought to determine if dictation exercises, supplemented by various activities targeting diverse learning styles, could significantly enhance students' spelling skills.

Several research literatures and studies supported the efficacy of dictation and explicit spelling instruction. Hammond and Robinson-Kooi (2020) highlighted the positive impact of sentence dictation combined with explicit instruction on students' understanding and practice of spelling and punctuation. Similarly, Changkakoti and Goswami (2021) found that spelling intervention programs, including various teaching activities, significantly improve students' understanding of correct spelling. Furthermore, the studies of Critten and Daffern (2019), Westwood (2018), and Daffern and Fleet (2021) suggested that incorporating formal instruction, linguistic strategies, and supplemental methods enhances spelling skills. These studies collectively underscore the value of structured spelling interventions, like the I-SPELL program, in addressing spelling challenges.

The observed differences in students' spelling skills, along with the local setting of Cabuyao, Laguna, where Tagalog influences English pronunciation, served as the driving force for this study. Literacy deficiencies were often identified by national exams and teacher observations, requiring focused interventions. Global trends that emphasize fundamental literacy, as emphasized by UNESCO and international tests such as PISA and PIRLS, further supported the study's justification. The goal of the study was to help primary students develop a stronger foundation in English literacy by tackling these regional issues using evidence-based approaches.

The results of this study can be utilized in several practical ways. Teachers can adopt the I-SPELL program as a structured intervention to enhance spelling skills, incorporating dictation exercises and diverse activities into their daily instruction. The significant improvement in students' mean scores from "fairly satisfactory" to "very satisfactory" validates the efficacy of this approach. Moreover, the study's findings can inform teacher training programs, emphasizing the importance of explicit spelling instruction and tailored interventions. The dissemination of the I-SPELL program's outcomes to parents, educators, and school administrators can promote its broader adoption, benefiting more students.

Lastly, the general purpose of this action research was to improve the spelling skills of Grade 6 students through the implementation of the I-SPELL program, which utilized dictation exercises. The effectiveness of this intervention was demonstrated thus, the study aimed provided practical, evidence-based strategies that integrated into daily instruction, ensuring that students in Cabuyao City develop the strong spelling skills they needed to thrive. Moreover, this research sought to empower both students and teachers, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and contributed to the broader goal of enhancing English literacy among elementary learners.

III. Innovation, Intervention and Strategy

There is a need for strengthening the daily vocabulary activities, and a routine should be given to students. The improvement of the students should be assessed by giving a spelling test or sentences appropriate to their levels. Girls and boys should be given equal opportunities to participate in this action research. Enhance writing, listening, and reading skills. Through these intervention dictation exercises, we can re-assure that the spelling problems would be soon diminished if not completely eradicated.

The researchers created an intervention measure, specifically activity sheets, for the learners to evaluate the student's performance before and after using dictation exercises.

They proposed the Intensive-Spelling Practices to Elevate the Learning Level (I-SPELL) intervention program to answer the research problem.

The I-SPELL program is an intervention program designed to improve students' spelling skills, particularly those in Grade 6. This program utilizes dictation exercises alongside other activities to enhance learning and retention. Hammond and Robinson-Kooi (2020) asserted that sentence dictation combined with explicit instruction significantly improves students' understanding and practice of spelling and punctuation concepts. Thus, it is strongly recommended that this proposed intervention and strategy be practiced.

Table 1

Intensive- Spelling Practices to Elevate the Learning Level (I-SPELL)

Intensive- Spelling Practices to Elevate the Learning Level (I-SPELL)		Timeline
Program Components		
Dictation Exercises	• Word lists or passages for dictation that are age-appropriate will be used. • The level of difficulty will progressively rise as pupils advance. • The dictation shall be given in a clear, well-paced manner with appropriate enunciation. • There will be chances for students to go over and correct their own work.	The I-SPELL program can be implemented for a designated period, such as two quarters or an entire school year. This study proposed that the intervention's implementation period was four months. The frequency of
Activities to Enhance Learning	Visual Activities: Matching games, drawing diagrams or drawings to symbolize words.	

	Kinesthetic Activities: Stacking words according to difficulty and creating words with manipulatives. Activities with a Meaning: Putting words in sentences, coming up with synonyms or definitions.	dictation exercises and activities can be adjusted based on student needs and available time.
Implementation Phase		
Pre-Test	Using a spelling list developed by the researcher, it was validated, determine the students' baseline spelling abilities.	
Daily Dictation	Perform dictation exercises with the above-mentioned activities daily.	
Post-Test	Administer a similar spelling test after a designated period (e.g., four months) to evaluate progress.	
Post-intervention		
Dissemination	The I-SPELL program's outcomes can be discussed with parents, other educators, and the school administration. This may promote the program's broader adoption, which would benefit more pupils.	

The I-SPELL program gives sixth-grade pupils a valuable and entertaining way to improve spelling. Using a blend of dictation tasks and diverse educational activities (e.g., game-based learning), the program may proficiently tackle spelling difficulties and foster comprehensive language proficiency. Running dictation games can effectively increase students' speaking skills in English (Murtafiah & Muawanah, 2022). Also, Afraz and Zakeri (2021) stated that spelling-related language learning strategies significantly improve learners' dictation ability.

This implied that continuously practicing this intervention program improves students' engagement, comprehension, and spelling skills.

IV. Action Research Questions

The action research aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the students' English spelling skills performance in Grade 6?

2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the implementation of dictation exercises in improving the students' English spelling skills?
3. Is there any significant difference between the student's performance before and after using dictation exercises?
4. What intervention materials can be proposed?

VI. Action Research Methods

a. Research Design

This action research employed descriptive quantitative design. It emphasizes what exists, such as current conditions, practices, situations, or any phenomena. It is used to assess the effectiveness of the I-SPELL (Intensive-Spelling Practices to Elevate the Learning Level) intervention program in enhancing the spelling skills of Grade 6 students. Specifically, a pre-experimental, one-group pretest-posttest design was utilized. This design involved administering a pre-test to measure the baseline spelling skills of the participants, implementing the I-SPELL intervention, and then administering a post-test to evaluate any changes in spelling performance.

The pre-experimental design was chosen due to its feasibility within the classroom setting and its ability to provide initial insights into the impact of the intervention. While this design does not include a control group, limiting the ability to establish causality, it allows for the examination of changes within a single group over time.

b. Participants and/or other Sources of Data and Information

The participants consisted of Fifty-nine pupils in Grade 6 level (1 section only), composed of 31 males and 28 females, were requested to answer the pre-test and post-test, spelling and sentences given through dictation. The results will be tabulated and tallied for data analysis and interpretation.

c. Data Gathering Methods

The pre-test was conducted in Grade 6 class that checked the basic spelling skills of students. The intervention program followed this process, which included activities-based teaching and learning. The classroom teacher helped collect data and assisted in conducting activities.

A post-test was conducted to check the activities' effectiveness in improving spelling ability. The details of the activities undertaken that improve spelling ability were given in Table 2 below.

d. Data Analysis Plan

The Data collected from the tests was analyzed using essential statistical tools/calculations. The scores obtained from the pre-test and post-test were used to compare the effectiveness of the dictation exercises used to improve English language spelling ability. Scores were tabulated and got the frequency distribution and then calculated and got the Mean and Standard Deviation.

Table 2

Action Research Work Plan and Timelines

ACTIVITIES	*Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6
1. Formulation of the project and statement of the problems.						
2. Collection and gathering data, administration of the pre-test.						
3. Implementation of the project.						
4. Presentation, Interpretation, analysis of data.						
5. Testing of validity and reliability of the questionnaire						

**Shade the corresponding month per activity*

Table 3

Plans for Dissemination and Utilization

DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES	*Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6
1. Publication of the school memo regarding the conduct of the study and implementation.						
2. Orientation to parents regarding the use of localized reading worksheets.						
3. Implementation of the intervention program.						
4. Submission of terminal report of the study.						
5. Presentation, printing and submission of the terminal report.						

**Shade the corresponding month per activity*

VII. Discussion of Results and Reflection

The distribution of spelling skills performance among Grade 6 students highlights varying proficiency levels. Specifically, 15.52% of the students, 9 out of 58, demonstrated advanced spelling skills. The majority, 67.24% or 39 out of 58 students, exhibited intermediate spelling abilities. The remaining 17.24%, equating to 10 students out of 58, showed beginner-level proficiency in spelling. These findings underscore the diverse range of spelling competencies among Grade 6 students assessed in this study.

According to Esposito et al. (2022), teachers in primary schools in England believe in the importance of explicit spelling teaching and support the need for tailored instructional approaches for varying abilities.

Thus, this implied that this diversity in spelling proficiency underscores the need for tailored instructional approaches or interventions that accommodate varying skill levels and learning styles within the classroom setting

Also, the findings noted that the mean score of the pupils out of the 10-item test during the pre-test was 3.71, which was interpreted as Fairly Satisfactory. On the contrary, the mean result of the students' post-test was 6.47, which was Very Satisfactory. Using a paired sample T-test, the resulting t-value was 10.62, equivalent to a p-value of 0 with a df of 58. The result showed that it is statistically significant. Hence, there is a significant difference between the student's performance before and after using dictation exercises. In conclusion, the result showed that the I-SPELL intervention program effectively taught the students to spell and learn different words correctly.

The study of Changkakoti and Goswami (2021) converged with this study. They stated that the spelling intervention program improves students' understanding of correct spelling when writing. Utilizing a variety of teaching activities to be implemented in the classroom was recommended.

Thus, similar to this study, which recommends daily dictation exercises, the study of Changkakoti and Goswami (2021) also asserted that spelling exercises should be given to the students for regular practice.

This implies that continuous implementation of dictation exercises can foster students' better spelling and comprehension skills.

Table 4

Result and Interpretation of Pre-Test, Post-Test, T-Test

	Pre-Test	Post-Test	T-test
Result	3.71	6.47	t-value 10.62 p-value 0 df 57
Interpretation	Fairly Satisfactory	Very Satisfactory	Reject null hypothesis; There is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results of the students.

The result of the pre-assessment revealed that the learners' spelling skills are reasonably satisfactory, further fueling the urge of the researchers to find a means to improve their spelling skills. At the same time, the result of the post-assessment, which was very satisfactory, sparked the hope that with the continued implementation and further improvement of the dictation exercises, the I-SPELL will lead to the realization of developing teaching strategies to develop the students' spelling skills further.

Likewise, the studies of Critten and Daffern (2019), Westwood (2018), and Daffern and Fleet (2021) suggested that the I-SPELL will lead to the development of teaching strategies that improve students' spelling skills by incorporating formal instruction, a range of linguistic strategies, and supplemental methods.

VIII. Conclusions and Recommendations

To answer the problems stated in the study, the following conclusions were derived from the result of the study:

1. The spelling skills of the learners before the dictation exercises were fairly satisfactory. Thus, interventions are necessary to improve their reading level. After the Dictation Exercises, it was significantly improved. The mean spelling score increased substantially from fairly satisfactory to very satisfactory.
2. The strengths of the implementation of dictation exercises in improving the students' English spelling skills were that it enhanced their listening skills and boosted concentration as they focused on what the teacher wanted to spell them. The weakness is that dictation exercises target specific words or passages, and students might need help applying the learned patterns to broader vocabulary.

3. The null hypothesis was rejected; therefore, there is a significant difference between the students' performance before and after using dictation exercises. The pre-test mean was equivalent to reasonably satisfactory, while after the intervention or dictation exercises, it was improved; the post-test mean was equivalent to very satisfactory. Thus, interventions undertaken as part of the I-SPELL improved their spelling skills.
4. A proposed strategic instructional plan utilizing the interventions for spelling will be implemented daily for students to improve further the learners' spelling skills, vocabulary retention, and comprehension of the I-SPELL intervention program.

As recommendations, the researcher proposed that further improvement of the project be implemented through implementation to a more significant number of learners and a more extended period in the sixth grade. Also, it is recommended that the I-SPELL intervention be utilized in the succeeding school year as an innovative means of teaching spelling, especially to sixth graders. In addition to that, it is recommended that teachers be provided with training on the I-SPELL program to implement its use and maximize its benefits effectively. This program is highly recommended to be integrated into the curriculum to ensure daily dictation exercises occur. Also, further research should be undertaken to improve the project further.

IX. Action Plan

Table 5

Action Plan

Target Subject	Persons Involved	Action to be Taken	Time Frame	Expected Result
School	School Head, Researcher	Proposal for continuation of intervention and adoption in the school level	May 2025	Crafted strategic instructional plan
Teachers	Casile ES Grade Six Teachers	Information dissemination on the result of the dictation exercises or I-SPELL intervention a	May 2025	Informed teachers on the process and result of the project. Encouraged teachers to adapt the intervention.
Parents and learners	Grade Six teachers, parents, learners	Information dissemination on the result of dictation exercises or I-SPELL Orientation on the process of implementation of Project EFA Adaption of the project	June to July 2025	Encouraged and committed parents to improve the spelling skills of the learners through dictation exercises.

X. REFERENCES

- Afraz, S., & Zakeri, D. (2021). The Impact of Spelling-related Language Learning Strategies on Improving Dictation Abilities of Young Iranian EFL Learners, Teacher and Students Perspective. *International Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*. <https://doi.org/10.33422/ijsfle.v1i3.171>.
- Arfe, B., & Danzak, R. L. (2020). The influence of first language spelling and response inhibition skills on English-as-an-additional-language spelling. *Cognitive Development*, 56, 100952.
- Changkakoti, A. & Goswami, D. (2021). Spelling Games: An Action Research at the Primary Level. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*, 12 (9). <https://www.tojq.net/index.php/journal/article/download/6005/4267/6524>
- Critten, S. & Daffern, T. (2019). Student and teacher perspectives on spelling. *The Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 42, 40-57. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03652025>.
- Daffern, T., & Fleet, R. (2021). Investigating the efficacy of using error analysis data to inform explicit teaching of spelling. *Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties*, 26, 67 - 88. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19404158.2021.1881574>.
- Daulay, S. H., Dewi, U., & Pulungan, R. (2022). Using Digtogloss Dictation Method to Improve Students' Skills in Writing Narrative Text. *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 14(2), 1703–1710.
- Deped. (2023). *General Shaping Paper*. Retrieved from <https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/GENERAL-SHAPING-PAPER-2023.pdf>
- Esposito et al. (2022). Capturing variations in how spelling is taught in primary school classrooms in England. *British Educational Research Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3829>.
- Farrell, T. S. C., & Jacobs, G. M. (2020). *Essentials for successful English language teaching*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Murtafiah, M., & Muawanah, M. (2022). IMPLEMENTING RUNNING DICTATION GAME TO INCREASE SPEAKING SKILL OF THE STUDENTS. *Aulada : Jurnal Pendidikan dan Perkembangan Anak*. <https://doi.org/10.31538/aulada.v4i1.2593>.
- Robinson-Kooi, S., & Hammond, L. (2020). Using sentence dictation to practice and assess taught spelling and punctuation skills: a Year 2 Explicit Instruction intervention. *Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties*, 25, 108 - 83. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19404158.2020.1752747>.
- Westwood, P. (2018). Learning to spell: enduring theories, recent research and current issues. *Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties*, 23, 137 - 152. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19404158.2018.1524391>.



UNESCO. 2025. *What you need to know about literacy*. Retrieved from
<https://www.unesco.org/en/literacy/need-know>