Nonword Spelling:

Instructions for Use

Although it seems to be a quirk of some clinicians to make use of letter strings which are not real words, it turns out that nonwords are a useful tool with which to assess reading, spelling and auditory processing skills. This task requires nonwords to be written down to dictation. The set is also used to test Nonword Reading [36]. All are monosyllabic and vary in letter length from 3 to 6 letters.

Some patients with acquired dysgraphia find it impossible, or almost impossible, to construct spellings for unfamiliar word-like utterances (eg. Bub, D. & Kertesz, A. (1982) **Brain**, **105**, 697 - 717; Shallice, T. (1981) **Brain, 104**, 413 - 429; Bub, D. & Kertesz, A. (1982) **Brain & Language**, **17**, 145 - 165). Even though patients who have difficulty with nonwords may be aware that the item is not a word, they may produce a visually similar real word error, or may simply fail to make a response.

Special Points:

Find out about pre-morbid spelling ability.

Ensure that the patient understands that the materials to be spelled are not real words, even though they sound as if they could be. Introduce the idea by suggesting, for example, that <u>yead</u> and <u>suff</u> could be new product names or street names.

Bear in mind that any acceptable spelling (based on existing sound-spelling correspondences) should be counted as correct: "cug", for example, may be spelled as <u>cug</u>, <u>cugg</u>, <u>kug</u>, or <u>kugg</u>.

Descriptive Statistics (for 32 control subjects):

3-Letter (n = 6)	Mean = 5.43	Std. Dev. = 0.88
4-Letter (n = 6)	Mean = 5.25	Std. Dev. = 1.14
5-Letter (n = 6)	Mean = 5.25	Std. Dev. = 1.24
6-Letter (n = 6)	Mean = 4.96	Std. Dev. = 1.45

Suggestions for Where to go next: If the subject finds this task difficult, test ability to repeat the items aloud [8]. If the subject is able to repeat them aloud, yet not write them down, it suggests that the problem is not one of auditory processing or phonological output, but is more specific to spelling. If nonword spelling is poorer than the ability to spell real words, it suggests that there is a difficulty in marshalling information about the way sound segments (corresponding with letter clusters) are spelled, rather than the way morphemes or whole words are spelled.

If the subject is able to spell nonwords to dictation, try performance with other variables on other spelling tasks (eg. Regularity [44]).

PALPA

Nonword Spelling Test:

Presenter's & Marking Form

Instructions to Subject: I'm going to say a made-up word. Can you think how it might be spelt? Write it down.

Instructions to Marker: Words in brackets can guide your pronunciation of the nonwords.

Target		Response
1. ked (shed)		
2. bem (stem)		
3. nar (car)		
4. cug (jug)		
5. fon (Ron)		
6. lat (hat)		
7. shid (lid)		
8. boak (cloak)		
9. doop (hoop)		
10. birl (girl)		
11. dusp (dust)		
12. soaf (loaf)		
13. snite (bite)		
14. hance (dance)		
15. hoach (coach)		
16. smode (rode)		
17. glope (rope)		
18. grest (nest)		
19. dringe (binge)		
20. squate (gate)		
21. churse (nurse)		
22. thease (please)		
23. shoave (loaves)		
24. pretch (fetch)		
Total Correct		/24