

ELR-News

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Newsletter of ELR Software Pty Ltd

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ELR Software produces a range of computer programs designed by speech pathologists for speech, language & literacy intervention. Our programs may be used interactively within therapy sessions, to increase efficiency in service delivery, and to improve access to the Internet for people with special needs. We are also available as consultants to clinicians and research projects in the fields of literacy and accessibility issues associated with the Internet.

The aim of this newsletter is to inform you of developments and changes to our major products eLr (Extra Language Resources), Build-a-Sentence and Word Meanings. We welcome the opportunity for feedback and questions, and will be pleased to consider including reader contributions and announcements.

This Newsletter (and previous editions) as well as a "print-ready" PDF version of the current edition is available online at www.elr.com.au/news. An email version is also sent monthly to members of our mailing list (See [Subscribing/Unsubscribing](#)).

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1. Updated eLr Materials

We have completed our revision of tasks within the "Consonant Digraphs" section in "Reading and Spelling". Twelve tasks using the *Typing with Words* model within the "sh, ch, tch, ck, ph, wh, and th" subsections have been revised to ensure that, where possible, the target words contain only short vowels.

These revisions will support use of a synthetic phonics approach to the teaching of early reading skills. This approach was recommended by national and international government-commissioned reports on reading instruction (Rose 2006) to target development of word reading skills: an essential component of early reading instruction which occurs within a language-rich reading environment.

The learner is initially taught to convert graphemes to phonemes using a part-to-whole approach for consonants and short vowels. For example, the letter-sound correspondences for a small set of letters that look and sound different (eg "m, s, a, t") are taught, and the learner is encouraged to sound out and blend to read words such as "mat, sat, at". Then more letter-sound correspondences are taught to expand the range of words the child is able to decode. After most of the single consonants and short vowels have been taught, consonant digraphs are introduced.

The tasks in eLr are now consistent with this approach. The teacher or support person is able to initially focus on words with short vowels (from 3-letter words, to consonant blends, and consonant

digraphs), and then use a systematic approach to teach the range of spelling patterns for long vowel sounds and diphthong vowel sounds.

The *Typing with Words* model presents the learner with words (each one appearing on the graphic of a button) which need to be rearranged to make a sentence. The support person encourages the learner to read each word, then touch one button at a time to form a sentence which appears above the buttons. This activity provides practice at reading target words within the context of a sentence - reinforcing the orthographic (spelling), semantic (meaning), and syntactic connections to support sight word development.

This model compliments the range of other models within each of the subsections in "Reading and Spelling". Some models focus on single word reading (eg *WordSoundButtons*, *WordSearch*, *SmileyMan*, *MemoryWords*, and *ConnectWords*) while others provide an opportunity to read target words within a sentence based activity (*Sentence Completion* and *Typing with Words*).

As with all eLr tasks the role of the teacher or support person is crucial in providing feedback about accuracy of decoding and encouraging extension activities. These may include a discussion about the meaning of the words, generating other sentences which contain the target word, and talking about words which may have multiple meanings.

Rose, J (2006). Independent review of the teaching of early reading. See "[Rose Report](#)" on Wikipedia

2. Changes to eLr Subscriptions

From January 1st 2017 we have made 2 changes to our subscription processes which affect eLr subscribers.

1. *eLr-Offline* for Windows is provided on a USB key, instead of a CD, as many modern computers no longer even have a CD drive. The content of this installation USB key is essentially unchanged. If you absolutely need a CD version, please contact us.
2. We are phasing in a small charge for the physical version of *eLr-Offline* for Windows (the USB key). eLr subscriptions for all subscribers will continue to include unlimited web access for the subscriber and their clients, as well as *eLr-Offline* (free iPad and Windows versions which allow access to eLr without needing internet connection)
 - a. **New subscribers** (from Jan 1st 2017) are able to obtain their free Windows version of *eLr-Offline* by internet download from our website www.elr.com.au/offline, or purchase a physical version (USB key) at a cost of \$30 per copy.
 - b. **Existing subscribers** will continue to receive the free physical version (USB key) at no extra cost for 12 months following their latest subscription renewal. All of you should have now received one of these new USB keys, either with your updated subscription, or as your "6-monthly update". You can also, of course, download the internet version if and when you wish. In fact, if you run the automatic process directly from the USB key you can keep the key continually refreshed with the latest version of *eLr-Offline*.

If you have any questions about these changes and their implementation, or the automatic updating process, please contact us.

3. Other Independent Developers

As an occasional feature of this Newsletter, we include simple, unpaid announcements of products developed by other small, independent developers, who, like ourselves, are practising clinicians who have put their ideas and experience into resource materials for general distribution. Links and brief information about these sites may be found at www.elr.com.au/links/developers.htm. To date we have listed -

Innovative Communication Programming
News Talk CD
PELICAN TALK Speech Therapy Resources

ReadingDoctor Software
The MusicLanguage Series
Grow Words
The Word Whizzer
The Building Language Series
Online Cued Articulation
Spelfabet
Looking Learning

If you would like your materials listed on this page (at no charge), please contact us.

4. Free Downloads

ELR has a number of free or evaluation files available for downloading directly from our website. Please see www.elr.com.au/downloads.htm for specific details. For other supporting materials and documents available for free download, please see www.elr.com.au/support.htm.

Products: The current ELR Software - Product Brochure, in PDF format.

eLr-Offline: Compiled, "mirror" version of the eLr (Extra Language Resources) website which you may download and run on your own PC. Allows access to the eLr Directory and all tasks from locations where regular access to the Internet is not possible.

eLr Fonts: 19 free symbol fonts as used in many eLr activities. Download the single zip file containing all fonts and install them on your own own computer.

Build-a-Sentence: An interactive program to strengthen labeling of nouns, verbs and objects and production of 2 & 3 part sentences.

Word Meanings: Volume One. Trialware, Interactive Language Program designed to build understanding and recall of words by strengthening semantic processing, based on the therapy manual *Building Language: Word Meanings* by Robyn Dower and Jan Mackey's, Helios Art and Book Co, 1996.

eLr Directory (Summary): Summary of eLr Directory in print-ready PDF format. Contains all the classification information but no listing of actual tasks and task numbers. (The full version is available only to eLr subscribers.)

APAR/PDF (zipped): APAR (Assessment of Phonological Awareness and Reading) in print-ready PDF format (zipped). Contains all the score sheets and stimulus cards.

Literacy Online: Mirror of Literacy Online web site. This is the full (except for external links) set of files (.htm/.js/.css/.gif/.jpg) that constitute the Literacy Online web site.

5. ELR 2017 Calendar

ELR Software offers regular, free eLr tutorials over the web. We can provide this sort of support to individuals, or to groups who would like to have an overview of eLr. Please contact us for details.

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