



Spelling Test

Instructions:

1. Tell the class that they will take a spelling test.
2. Have all **right handed people raise hands, tell them that they are now “left-handed” and must write only with their left hand.** Do the same for left-handed people who will now be “right handed.”
3. Have participants **number their paper from one to ten** for “practice.”
4. Instruct participants to **use their “wrong” hand and write the word backwards when you say it.** For example if you say the word “dog” they will actually spell the word “god.” Be sure to share that example or a similar example with them as you begin.
5. **Inform participants that the class has lots to cover today and that you will only be saying each word once.** It is really important that you play the part of a very inconsiderate teacher.
6. Have a **list of ten difficult words such as “expectations,” “frustration,” “annoying,” “misunderstood,”** and so on. While they are taking the test be very critical of them. Say things such as, “wow, this group is not very good at this,” “my last class did this so much better,” and so on. Go through words very quickly and end test saying “Hurry, hurry, hurry.” Your goal is to produce anxiety and stress.
7. At the end of the exercise, **ask participants how they felt about the test, about you as you administered it and about themselves as they took it.** Some people will give up. It is very important to **process why people give up.**

Tip for Discussion and Processing:

The point of this exercise is to talk about unrealistic expectations. One way to process this is to discuss how we set people up for failure, unable to live up to our expectations. Talk about how the instructor could have made it easier by demonstrating on a chalkboard an easy way to write backwards. Another topic to explore is how we discourage people with our words and actions and how this can lead people to become frustrated and give up. This can be tied into both parenting and marriage groups.

Title: Spelling Test

Group Size: Any

Time Needed: 5 minutes (discussion times vary)

Goal: To create an experience of unrealistic expectations

Audience: Couples, Parents, Teens, Singles

Special Considerations: Not appropriate for children as they may not get the “role” you are playing. This exercise may bring up some challenging issues for some participants around self- esteem.

Materials:

- ✓ Small piece of paper or index card for each participant
- ✓ Writing utensils