Neuronauts has been gaining new members rapidly over the last months and has many studies currently on offer. Below we would like to share with you the results of one recent study.

**Spelling training improves spelling for untrained words**

Spelling is tricky! In English, there are a lot of words that cannot be spelled using the letter-sound rules (e.g., the OUGH in enough, the AI in said). These are called “unpredictable” or “irregular” words. Unfortunately, it would be impossible to teach the spelling of every single irregular word to children!

In our study we wanted to investigate if spelling knowledge can be generalised. That is, if we teach some irregular words, will there also be improvement for irregular words that were not specifically trained?

We recruited 12 children with developmental spelling difficulties. These children were “phonetic spellers” and tended to spell words the way they sound, for example, ‘said’ as ‘sed’.

All 12 participants showed significant improvements in spelling their trained words using the copying technique from the study. Seven of the children also showed generalisation for a small number of words that were not specifically trained. These words tended to share letters with the trained words, they occurred more often in written texts and were shorter.

The results can be used to maximise training effects by choosing to focus training on words that are less likely to improve without specific training. We would like to thank all of the families who participated in our study!

The Spelling Training Study Team - Dr Saskia Kohnen, Ms Kristina Barisic, Prof Lyndsey Nickels, Ms Kaitlin Moore, Ms Yvette Kezilas, Ms Trudy Krajenbrink, Ms Danielle Colenbrander

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**Holiday Research Program for Kids!**

In September 2012, nearly 60 kids were involved in a research program during the school holidays. The theme was space exploration! All the kids had a great time and the researchers discovered a few interesting things about attention and reading, especially auditory memory and reading development. It worked so well last year that we’re running it again this year!

We are looking for children between 7 and 11 years of age with English as a first language to help us with the project. For one full day during the school holidays (23 Sept - 4 Oct), children will be led through a series of games and puzzles all with the theme of Space Colonisation!

The program will be held at Macquarie University’s North Ryde Campus in the ARC Centre for Excellence in Cognition and its Disorders. This will take place during the school holidays 23 September to 4 October 2013.

If you are interested or have any questions please contact us (kathryn.preece@mq.edu.au) or register online.