

For the Grown Ups





Hi! My name is Susan Galletly.

I'm a speech pathologist, teacher and learning disabilities specialist. I work a private practice in Speech Pathology, specialising in working with people with literacy difficulties. I also inservice teachers in the Learning Disabilities area. Over the past two decades I've worked individually with many hundreds of children with severe difficulties in literacy skills. In that time I've created a lot of materials for systematically developing reading and writing skills. People who've seen my work have repeatedly told me I should publish my materials, so here I am, finally doing it.

Who am I writing to?

This book is for adults who work with children who have difficulties in reading and writing. You could be a teacher, speech pathologist or other professional working with children who have reading and writing difficulties. You might be the parent of a child with reading and writing difficulties. Perhaps you are a teenager or adult with reading and writing difficulties yourself. Perhaps you are none of these. Anyway, hello!

If you are a teacher, speech pathologist, or other professional, you'll work out pretty quickly which of your students these books are for. You might like to use this as your teacher instruction book and order copies of my Student Workbook edition for individual students to use. They will contain all the activities in this book but without this preamble or detailed instructions - you'll be the person setting the activities and giving the detailed instructions. The Student Workbooks are cheaper and a discount is given for bulk orders.

If you are a parent, use this book not the Student Workbook edition as you'll find coming back to this preamble from time to time very helpful and you will need the detailed instructions given for each activity. The Student Workbook also doesn't have the 'What's it all about?' discussion pages you'll find scattered throughout this book and you'll want to keep coming back to them. You might be trying to decide whether this book is what you need for helping your child. As I see it, in making this decision there are two main options.

The one I like best is to:

- consult with your child's teachers;
- have an assessment done by an Educational Specialist either at school or privately;
- find out how delayed your child is and whether his difficulties come from learning disability, intellectual challenge or some other reason; and
- get professional advice as to whether my books are the ones for you.

The second option is to:

- systematically work with your child through the book for about a month or so; then
- decide from gains made whether this program is working for you both.

May I say to you, if you are a parent, how much respect I have for dedicated parents. I show parents what to do in my sessions with them and their child, and they do 'the work' at home. May I also stress how big a difference you can make for your child, and what a significant support you can be to your child's school programming. We do not live in a Utopian world. Our teachers are talented professionals dedicated to

helping your child develop and progress. Funding limitations however, mean that there may not be teacher release time or teacher aide time for your child to work one-to-one with anyone on a regular basis, and it's regular practice of skills that makes the difference for students with learning difficulties. You can be the one who provides the regular practice.

You, as a parent, are an invaluable resource and as such you need not worry that my work will conflict with your child's school curriculum. My experience with the many students I've worked with over the years has been that this work may be different to, but does not conflict with students' class programs. It simply builds the skills students need for making progress as readers and writers, so that they can then successfully access the school curriculum at their year level. Ideally you will be able to consult with your child's teacher occasionally so you are aware of the activities you each are working on. You may be a parent who has difficulties with reading and writing yourself. If so, don't panic. I work with many child-parent teams where both have difficulties. The work you'll be going through is basically the same work I set for adult students. Stay calm, take it steady and you and your child can both progress. You might even have more than one child with difficulties. You can do this - it will be a real team effort. Together you can make this program work for you.

If you are a teenager or adult with learning difficulties, the content and skills developed in these books are what you need, though you'll probably find the game format irritating. I'm thinking of writing a parallel series of books for adults, but not just yet. I work with adults as well as children, and I use the same systematic skill development seen in these books, in my working with them.

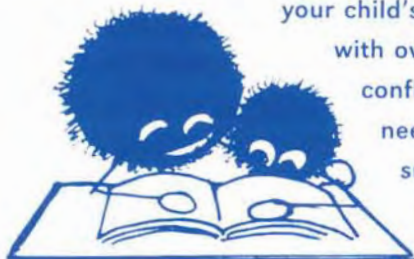
He? She? What shall I say?

In this book, when I am referring to students with learning disability, I talk about 'he', 'him' and 'his'. The students you work with will be male and female, and technically I should be writing about both sexes. I personally find it distracting however, to read sentences such as 'He or she will find his or her difficulties frustrating', so have taken the liberty of simplifying text by referring to students as male (he/his/him). I ask your forbearance in this matter. I've chosen male gender rather than female on the basis that more boys than girls have learning disability.

What books?

This book is one of a series I'm working on. The series consists of:

1. PHONOLOGICAL FUN - Activities to develop essential pre-reading skills in children aged 4-7.
2. EARLY READING FUN - Early literacy skill development. Use it if this book seems too advanced.
3. SIGHT WORDS FOREVER - Making permanent memories of early sight words. You can use it in conjunction with EARLY READING FUN.
4. SOUNDS AND VOWELS - Mastering words using a e i o u, blends and final e. That's this book.
5. TWO VOWELS TALKING - Mastering words with two letter vowels. That's the book to go on to when you finish this one.
6. STUPENDOUS SPAGHETTI SUPREME - Mastering multisyllabic (big) words. You can use it in conjunction with TWO VOWELS TALKING.
7. THE ELEPHANT NEVER FORGETS - Making permanent memories of spellings. A really useful acquisition.



CHAPTER 2 STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

I've developed my materials and systematic teaching for working with students with reading and writing learning disabilities. These students usually have normal intelligence but are significantly behind in their reading and writing. I've found the materials are equally useful for students whose attentional difficulties mean they are behind in this area. They are also valuable for students who are intellectually below average, but it must be remembered in using them that whilst your goal is steady systematic progress, you are aiming to help the child read and write not at his age level but instead at his ability level.

Learning Disabilities/Difficulties/Differently/Dyslexia?

Is your child dyslexic? learning disabled? experiencing learning difficulties? What terms should we use? I've always avoided the term 'dyslexia' as people often have very definite and frequently incorrect ideas about what it means. It seems to be appearing more and more again now, so it's important to acknowledge it. The word 'dyslexia' comes from 'dys' meaning 'difficulties with' and 'lexia' meaning 'literacy' or 'reading and writing'. It does not mean words are seen back to front.

So if you have a child who's doing fine in some areas but is behind with reading and writing, you can say he's dyslexic if you like. I'll probably stick with the term Learning Disability or Learning Difficulties as I think that describes the problem best. I love the idea of the initials L.D. standing not for Learning Disability or Learning Difficulties but instead for Learning Differently - because that's exactly what it is. These students can learn, but they need to be guided more systematically than the rest of the class - they learn differently.



The most common pattern I see in students with learning disabilities is:

- normal intellectual ability;
- normal skill in mathematics, science and social studies apart from where reading is involved; and
- significant delay in reading and writing skills.

When I assess students, I usually find significant difficulties with:

- phonological processing (sound awareness skills - I'll go into more detail on this a few pages ahead);
- reasonably good skill on letter sounds and names apart from mixing up the vowel pairs e/i and a/u;
- significant difficulties reading and spelling unknown words;
- more errors on vowels than consonants;
- vowel and other weakness in spelling;
- varying skill in learning spellings for weekly spelling tests but with the newly learned spellings being relatively quickly forgotten; and
- mild language skill weakness including a tendency to use short sentences and lots of 'and's which means they get by quite well in talking activities, but have difficulties writing and proofreading mature sentences which are grammatically correct.

Check out Henry's report card. He shows the most common pattern of learning difficulties. Every child is a distinct individual so your student probably will be different to Henry. He may well have similarities though. I've described students as being good at maths and science. Perhaps your student isn't. Your student may have all the things I've described or only some. Perhaps your student has significant problems with understanding verbal instructions. Perhaps his reading is reasonable but his spelling and writing are in need of help. If you really don't think your student is similar to the students I'm describing, consider the two options I suggested earlier. Either seek professional assessment and advice as to the appropriateness of using this book, or try using the book for a month or so then decide how well it has worked and if you should continue.

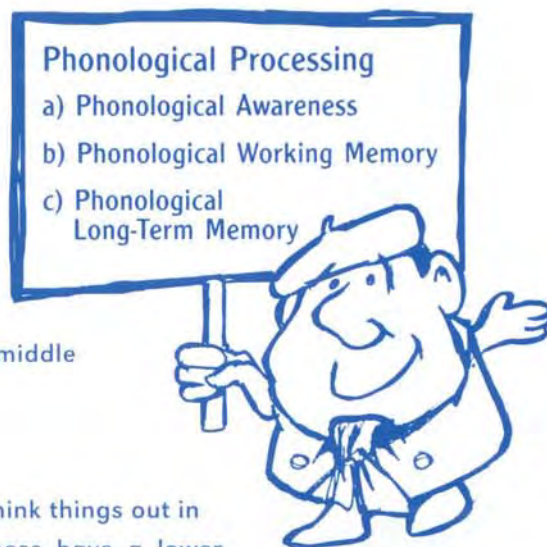


The scientists who've been studying reading and writing skill development over the past thirty years or so have found that an extremely significant part of failure to develop literacy skills is a student's weakness in phonological processing. The word 'phonological' means 'relating to the sounds of words'. There are three parts of phonological processing which are generally affected. They are phonological awareness, verbal working memory and verbal long term memory. Let's have a brief look at these.

a) *Phonological Awareness*

Phonological Awareness includes skills like:

- identifying sounds and syllables in words;
- distinguishing between sounds which are similar, such as m/n, th/f;
- rhyming;
- blending lists of sounds to make words;
- listing sounds in words; and
- being able to name the sounds at the beginning, middle and end of words.



b) *Phonological Working Memory*

Working memory is our processing capacity, our ability to think things out in our heads. Students with phonological processing weakness have a lower processing capacity for verbal and literacy information. They try to work things out in their heads but they run out of thinking capacity before they've worked the answer out.

We all do processing, all the time. What's the answer to 7×4 ? You were automatic on that one weren't you? (Weren't you?) Now try $7 \times 4 + 2 \times 4$. That wasn't hard either, was it, but did you notice how you paused to think about the sum before giving the answer? That's processing. That uses working memory. Sometimes we're aware of it, sometimes we're not.

Try working out 258×369 in your head. I'll bet you run out of processing capacity before you get to the answer. A student with learning disabilities can run out of processing capacity in trying to read a word like 'cot' if it's a hard word for him. Think of a student you know. Can you think of an instance lately where he ran out of processing capacity?

c) *Phonological Long-Term Memory*

Students with learning disability have a great talent for forgetting things you were sure they knew. 'But he knew it last week!' is our common cry. You may have worked hard on recognising a word, knowing a letter sound, or learning a spelling, yet a few weeks later it's forgotten. This is long term or permanent memory weakness.

Students with phonological processing weakness have difficulties storing information they've learned. They also have difficulty retrieving information they've learned. Your student may only have difficulties making long-term memories of things related to reading and writing. He could well be an expert at making memories of science concepts, dinosaurs and the holiday you went on when he was three - the difficulty is often only with phonological (reading and writing) information.



How do we work with Phonological Weakness?

If you follow the programming in this book, you'll be working systematically on phonological processing all the time you're working on reading and writing skills. We'll work on all three of the areas of weakness:

- We'll work on Phonological Awareness by using games and activities directed at developing your student's phonological processing skills.
- We'll reduce the load on Working Memory by helping him become automatic in the skills we help him learn.
- We'll make better Long Term Memories by helping him make permanent memories of what he learns.

What is Information Processing?

Phonological processing is just one part of human information processing. We often think of information processing as to do with computers. Our brains process information too. They are nonstop information processors. It's very helpful to consider aspects of information processing in understanding why students have difficulties learning - things like:

- paying attention;
- thinking about something while we learn it;
- running out of working memory when we're thinking about something hard;
- making memories of what we're learning;
- storing long term memories; and
- retrieving long term memories.



Wow! We really do a lot of complicated things in just reading a word, don't we? Computer folk among you might find it helpful to think of our human information processing as being similar to computer information processing. Actually, many of the scientists who study information processing in people, study it from the perspective of our thinking being like computer activity. Let's see how our thinking matches computer activities:

- Retrieving a memory is like downloading a file.
- Poor phonological processing is like trying to open a file in an incompatible program. Have you ever done that? The squiggles and squares that appear, instead of the print you were expecting, are impossible to interpret and most frustrating.



- Learning new information is working just on the keyboard and screen without saving information.
- Making a long-term memory is saving information to a file.
- Not getting filed is a glitch happening before a file is saved to hard drive or disk.
- Smaller working memory is not enough megabytes of RAM for the program we're running.
- Difficulty remembering a long-term memory is having trouble finding a file and searching multiple drives before we do or don't find it.
- Incorrectly remembered information is a corrupted file.

Personally I find the human information processing system the most fascinating and complex computer of them all.

The student with learning disabilities is ineffective at processing information. He doesn't just have trouble learning something - he has trouble storing it, remembering it and using it at the right time and place. As part of his Learning Differently he not only needs to systematically learn appropriate content (sounds, letters, words, and/or spellings), but also strategies - how and when to do things. We also need to use systems in our working with him that help him be an effective information processor - someone who learns, remembers and doesn't forget. It's worthwhile spending a little time now looking at information processing. Besides, it will explain to you why there are little cartoon cups and filing cabinets all through the book!

The student with learning disability with a phonological basis usually has hearing which is within normal limits. You may well have had his hearing assessed because you've wondered about it at times, but usually, however, this student can hear well. If your student's hearing hasn't been properly assessed, it's a good idea to get it tested.

Although his hearing in a hearing test is good, his hearing of the finer points of the sounds we use in words, how they can be heard singly, how they blend together and things like that, is usually not so good. I liken our phonological awareness system to that stereophonic sound system you play your favourite music on. If your sound system is not tuned properly you just cannot hear the beauty of the music you're playing, even though the sound system has the potential to play it well. When you first bought the sound system you may have had to do a fair bit of fine-tuning to get it working well but 'Practice makes Perfect' and now you don't have any problems with it at all.

Our human sound system works for the sounds of speech. If we have a sound system that works really well:

- we hear the fine distinctions of the sounds and syllables of words easily;
- we can rhyme very well and automatically recognise and use rhyming in our speaking, reading and spelling of words;
- we can quickly identify the sound at the beginning, middle and end of short words;
- we can list the sounds of short words relatively effortlessly; and
- we can quickly and easily say the word which a list of sounds makes ('p-or-k' 'pork').

The student with learning disabilities usually has a sound system which needs fine-tuning. We fine-tune by helping the student practice phonological skills like the ones just listed until he can do them not just correctly,



but automatically. If the student is only correct but not automatic, he will still have to think about phonological processing as he does a literacy tasks like reading or spelling words he doesn't know easily. He will then have too much to think about and not be able to do the task - an overflowed cup means a mistake has been made. Correct just isn't good enough. In fine-tuning a phonological processing sound system we aim for automatic.

This brings us to our first motto -

Fine-tune that sound system

Section A in Part 2 of this book is devoted to fine-tuning your student's phonological awareness skills to a level where he will be able to use them in boosting his literacy skills. You'll find the activities in the remaining sections of the book will incorporate phonological processing while working on reading and spelling skills. Phonological awareness and literacy skills help each other develop, and they work best in combination. That's what we'll be doing.



PICTURES FOR YOUR PLEASURE

Meet the Information Processors

I'm a fat
happy cup.
I represent
Working Memory



I'm tuning
a sound system.
I represent
Phonological
Awareness.



I'm a Filer. I store
and retrieve Long
Term Memories.

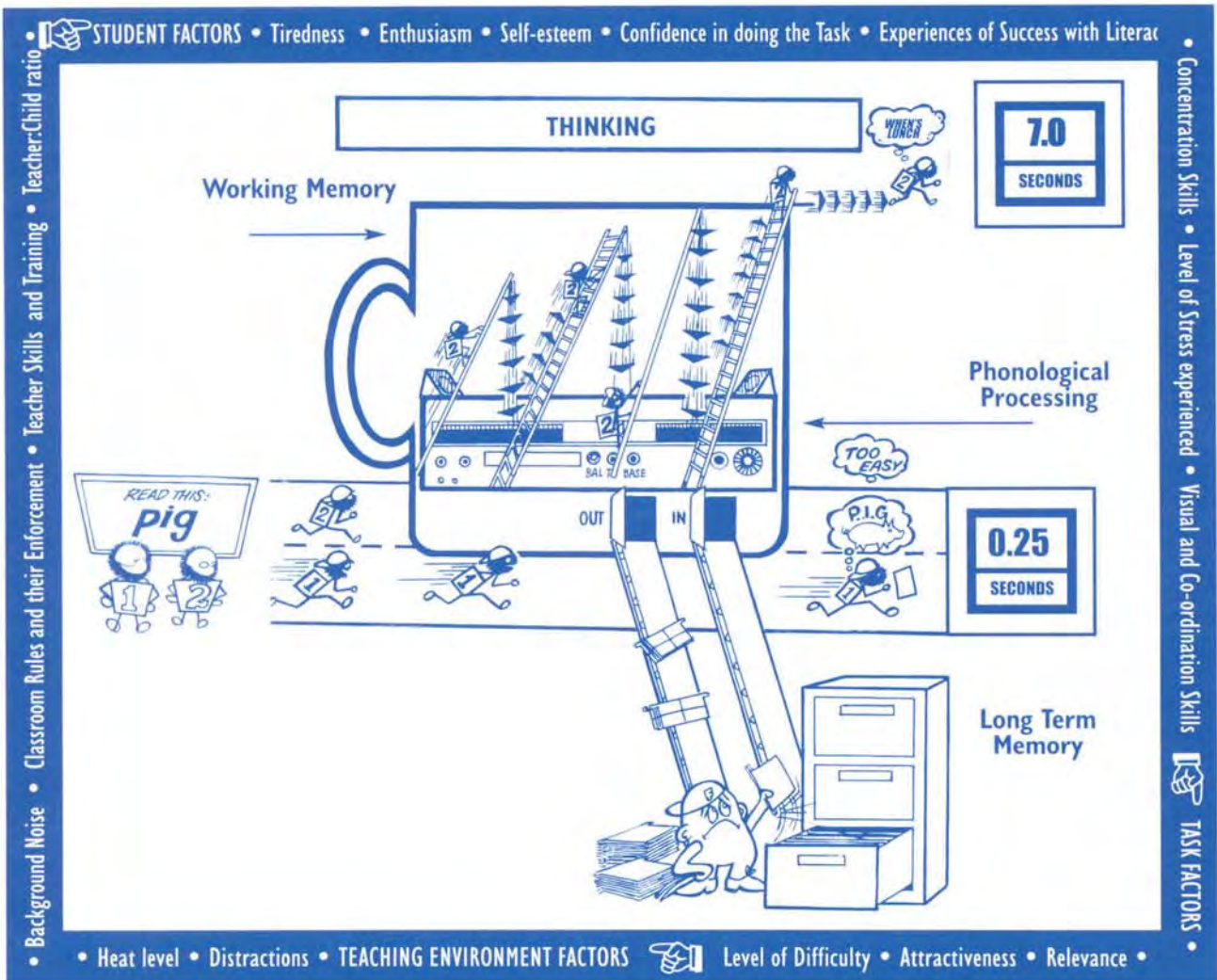
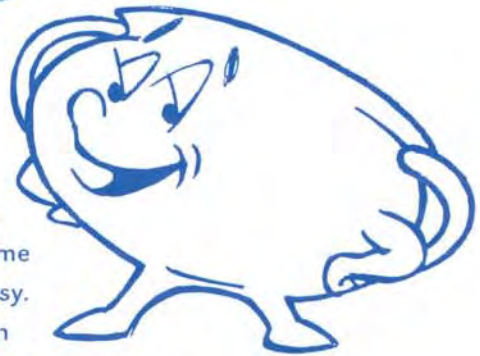


CHAPTER 5 SMALL CUPS - WEAKNESS IN WORKING MEMORY

Why does our Henry do so poorly at school? He seems clever enough and actually does quite well at science and maths, but reading and writing are a very different story. He seems to make no headway. Sometimes he does seem to learn things quite well and you get rather excited - but three weeks later you find that it's completely forgotten. Oh dear!

What can we do in our teaching so Henry learns more easily and so his learning stays learned? An understanding of how people process information will really help us. Bear with me for some half-complicated theory. I'll make it brief and promise I'll keep it easy. Have a look at a simplified diagram of information processing. Can you find the sound system we were talking about in the last chapter?

I'm a fat happy cup.
We learn things well when our cup is fat and happy.



Look at the little runners. They're both going to read the word 'pig'. Our stimulus could as easily be '7x4' or 'Write me an excellent sentence about horses.'

Reader No 1 is a skilled reader who has no problems with a word like 'pig'. Henry is reader No 2. See the number on his back. You will remember how reading and spelling are far from easy for him.

Reading requires brain work, processing. I've used the classy term 'Thinking', which you'll see on the heading at the top of the diagram. Both readers see the word 'pig', and their perception of it goes into their information processing systems. We get a dividing of ways here.

Reader 1 recognises the word easily and does very little processing at all. He is automatic at reading this word and his response is almost immediate - he reads the word clearly and effortlessly, no stress. See how quickly he reads the word - a quarter of a second. Now that's automatic. His thinking path takes him quickly through working memory and phonological processing, as even skilled readers use phonological information in their processing. But he hardly used any working memory capacity at all.

Henry, our Reader 2, is not automatic at reading 'pig' so his processing is a very different story. He makes a processed response and uses almost all of his processing capacity, nearly a whole cupful. It's a more complicated journey, isn't it and it takes a lot more time. Seven seconds to work out one word.

Henry's problem is not just the amount of processing. It's the fact that his working memory is not big enough for his needs. You see, working memory, or short-term memory if you'd prefer to call it that, has limited capacity.

I like to think of Working Memory as a cup. That's why I've drawn it that shape. A cup only holds a certain amount. Fill it too full and it overflows. Your cup overflows when you run out of thinking space before you work out the answer. Put too big a thinking job into your working memory cup and it will overflow. The mess it makes is the mess we all make when we get something wrong, 'p-i-g' says 'pup', etc.

I'm using a very simplistic explanation here, as you can see. I've simplified the vast body of information on working memory to a cartoon cup, the enormous pile of research on phonological processing to a stereo sound system and the mountain of knowledge on long-term memory to a filing system and conveyor belt.

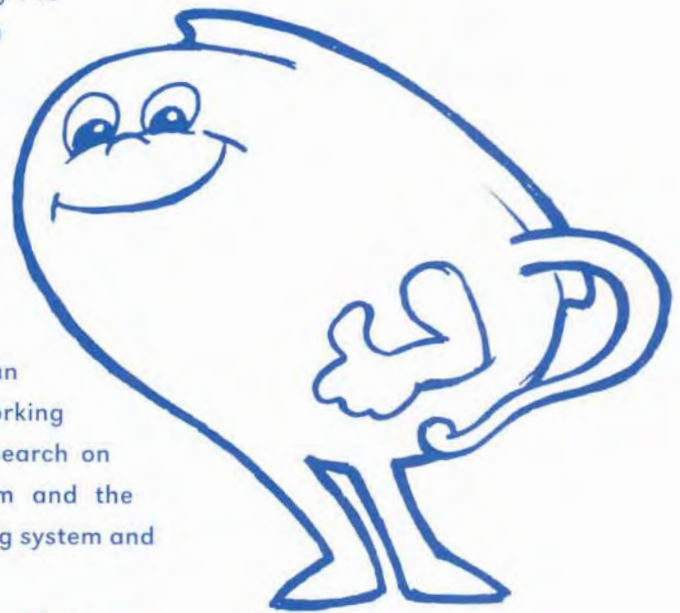
In my simplification, I haven't mentioned how well Henry is concentrating, whether he gets distracted while he's reading and things like that. Lots of factors effect how well we process information and whether our cup is big enough for the job. Some of them are mentioned on the border of the Thinking diagram.

In Henry's reading of the word 'pig' in the diagram, his cup was just big enough to work out the word. On other days, or on reading harder words (p-o-r-k), it might not be big enough. Despite thinking long and hard, Henry will run out of puff before he's able to work the word out. More mistakes made!

Try this mental exercise for size. No paper and pencils - do it in your head.

How many seconds are there in 17 hrs 23mins 47secs?

Did your cup overflow? If you managed it, pat yourself on the back. You have a really big cup. But admit it - you weren't as fast as your calculator, were you? And a pen and paper would have made life easier.



A child with learning difficulties frequently has a smaller than average phonological short term memory - a small cup. And even if his cup is of average size, he has so many skills that he isn't automatic on - and skills that aren't automatic take up valuable thinking space in his cup. Too many bits of space used up in his cup and splash, an overflowed cup, another failure.

Let's look more closely at how these cups fill up. Consider the example of me collecting my children after school and driving to the local shopping centre. I'll use some of my processing capacity monitoring my driving, but not much - I'm pretty automatic on driving this route. I'll use up a bit more in listening to the children talking about their day at school, a bit more listening to the song on the radio and some more thinking about the errands I've got to do. But look how much space is left in my cup - heaps. I think you could call the space left in the top of working



memory cups, 'confidence' or 'feel good' space. I'll use that leftover processing space to notice the sun shining through the trees, think about how good life is, maybe decide to pick up pizza for tea ... yes, feeling good is a good term for it.



Now consider the same example in a different location. Put little Susan from Mackay into the middle of huge Sydney, same children to collect,

same errands to be done at a local shopping centre. I am not

automatic at driving in Sydney, far from it. See how much of my processing capacity is used up just in driving. Whew!

How will I cope? Well, the children have been told in no uncertain terms to sit there and make no sound. One child dared to turn the radio on and was spoken to with words that years ago I knew I would never use with my children, and I am not going to even think about the errands until we get to the shops, if we get to the shops.....alive! 'Please Officer, I didn't mean to drive up the one way street that way. My cup just overflowed.' Confidence - zero ! Stress - through the roof !

Now look at Henry's cup as he reads 'pig'. Henry isn't that automatic at many aspects of literacy so he's going to put a fair bit into his cup. He's got to remember what strategies to use in this challenging situation and then use them. He's got to remember what the sounds say then work out the word. Can he do it?



He knows his letters - hurrah! But oh dear, he's not automatic. He knows his letters only when he stops and thinks about them - half a cup of processing space used up in sounding out three letters. Now believe it or not, for a child with learning difficulties it's a long haul from having listed three sounds, to working out what word the sounds make - sound blending is a big task. If it's a three quarters of a cup task, Henry's cup has overflowed - 'p-i-g'.....'pup'. If it's only a three eighths of a cup task, Henry might get the word read correctly, but has he got enough processing space left over to attach meaning to the word? Has he enough left to put the meaning of the word 'pig' into the meaning of the sentence and story? Enough left for confidence to enjoy the story and feel clever and competent about what he's doing? Probably not.





Now what happens if we teach Henry his letters and teach him how to blend sounds to make words? And we won't just teach these skills to a level where he only gets things right if we give him lots of time to work things out. We'll be so totally thorough that Henry will be automatic (Correct + Fast + Supereasy) at both skills. Let's look at his cup now.

Wow, it's different, isn't it? Much space less used. A bit more for attaching meaning to the word he's said, a bit more for understanding the meaning of the sentence and look at all that confidence space left over. Henry's feeling really 'cool'. This task is just 'too easy' and this boy is a reader.

I've used a phonics and reading example but it would be the same thing if we were talking about learning letter sounds or sight words. The trick is to make literacy skills, eg. knowledge of the word 'pig', automatic so that processing capacity doesn't get overloaded. Now here's a motto for our working together:

AUTOMATIC! FANTASTIC!

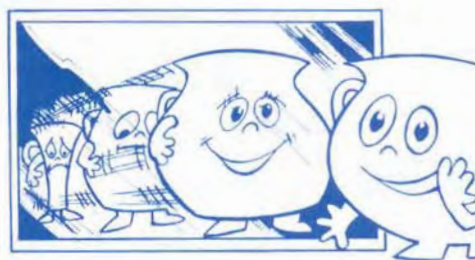
And here's a good definition of automatic:

Automatic = Correct + Fast + Supereasy.

We don't just teach things till they're merely correct. We teach them till they're automatic. That way the student doesn't have to think about them and they'll take up virtually no cup space at all. Besides, things that only get taught till they're correct are the things that are forgotten in a few weeks' time. Automatic is beautiful!



It's rather hard to change the size of the cup we each have but there's still good news. Our cups are elastic sided. The sides can swell out or shrink in - and we can fit a lot more or a lot less in our cups depending on what those elastic sides are doing. Our students still have a smaller cup but it might be a fat happy cup which fits lots in or a sad skinny cup which overflows easily. Self-confidence effects everything we do. If we're feeling successful and confident, a fat happy cup results with more processing capacity and more success. When feeling worthless and a constant failure, a sad skinny cup results, with less processing capacity and far less success.



The research shows that one of the best ways for students with learning difficulties to develop feelings of confidence and success is for them to make academic progress. That's what we'll be helping them do. And have you ever noticed how we all enjoy doing things that we succeed at. None of us like doing things that are too hard - that's why few of us do astrophysics as a hobby. We like things which are manageable for us, things we know we can succeed at. As students get better at doing something, perhaps reading, they get more confident, they have fun and they develop the 'Fat Happy Cup' syndrome - more thinking space, more confidence and more and more success. That's a wonderful way to be - on an upward cycle of success. So that's the 'small cups' the chapter title referred to. They fill, they overflow, they make a mess. What are some ways we can teach so we can help students use their cups efficiently? Let me introduce you to some more mottos I want you to keep in mind as you work with your students.

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

Aim to cover very small areas extremely well rather than covering heaps of curriculum content in a year with almost all of it being forgotten. You will absolutely achieve more for the child this way. Choose key concepts (small) and teach them so thoroughly that this child hasn't got a hope of forgetting them. Remember correct is just not good enough. 'Automatic' is the aim, and 'Automatic' is beautiful too!

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL



PRAISE A JOB WELL DONE

Another worthwhile motto. Be both honest and positive as you work. Praise your student's achievements ... 'You really worked hard on that.' ... 'Hey! You're getting good at these!' ... 'I can't believe you're so quick at these now. Remember when they used to be really hard? Boy you're doing well.'

PRAISE A JOB WELL DONE



PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Provide lots of practice in using a new skill so that the student doesn't just know the skill, but is also automatic in his use of it. Remember if you're merely correct at something, you're still using up valuable processing capacity. When you're automatic at the task, you use virtually no capacity at all. Now you and I both know that for some students, achieving automaticity on a task is no mean feat. Some students don't just need practice, they need lots of it. Some students might need over one hundred exposures to a new concept/sight word/maths fact before they master it. That's why I use games as the main part of my programming. I want students to have lots of successful enjoyable practice - games are a great way to achieve that.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT



HURRAH FOR FAT HAPPY CUPS

Cups seem to be elastic sided. When students feel stressed, hopeless, 'I always get this wrong', their cups' sides shrink in, cup size reduces dramatically and spills occur far more frequently - mistakes abound. Students get onto a cycle of failure, which is not what we want at all. When students are happy, confident and focussed, their cups fit far more in and they have lots of space for feeling good. The 'Fat Happy Cup' syndrome is really good news.

HURRAH FOR FAT HAPPY CUPS



Aim for the child to have lots of earned success - not easy success handed on a platter but work he can do. We do this by letting him have lots of practice on work which is at the right level of difficulty for him. Which brings us to our next motto...

FIND THE RIGHT LEVEL

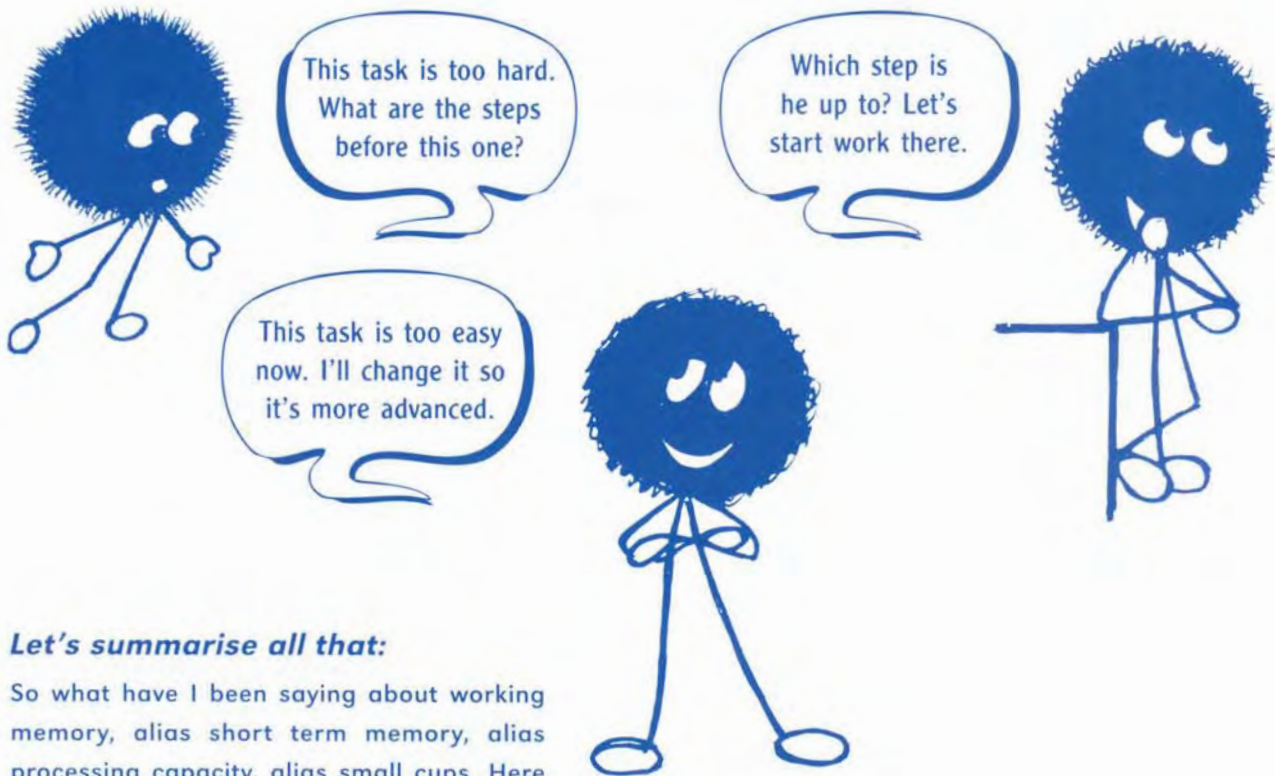
It's extremely important that your student works on activities which are at just the right level of difficulty for him. Work that is too easy is as bad for your student as work that is too hard. Too hard and he thinks he's a failure. Too easy and he's thinks you're a really nice person and you're being so nice, but this is just baby work and if that's the work you think he should be doing, well boy he really must be dumb.

FIND THE RIGHT LEVEL



Aim for the level of difficulty which is just right. If you think about most tasks you can usually work out minor modifications that will make them harder or easier. That's called 'Task Analysis'. It's an invaluable skill in helping students with learning difficulties. If a task set for a child is too hard, analyse it into subskills. Help the student master each step till finally he's mastered the whole skill.

So that the activities in this book are at just the right level of difficulty for your student, I've task analysed modifications you could trial for each activity. They come under the headings labelled 'Too Easy' and 'Too Hard' on the information page you'll find beside each activity. After you've worked together for a while, you'll get the feel of which modifications work best for your student and you'll probably find you'll get confident in making your own changes. Task analysis is an excellent way to ensure the student experiences lots of earned success, because you know he's working at the level he's supposed to be at.

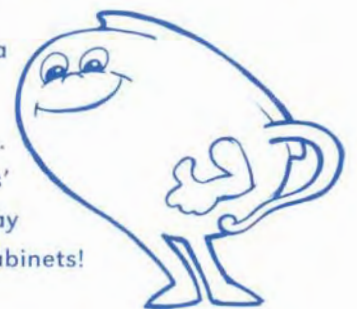


Let's summarise all that:

So what have I been saying about working memory, alias short term memory, alias processing capacity, alias small cups. Here are the main points again:

- Working memory (short term memory) can be likened to a cup.
- Some of us have big cups. Some of us have smaller cups. All of us can overload our cups.
- When we run out of processing capacity, we overflow our cup and make a mess - a mistake.
- If we use up almost all of our processing capacity, we have no space left in our cup for confidence. We get the right answer but we're having to work hard. Life is not exactly a picnic.
- Our cup shrinks when we're stressed, nervous or feeling a failure. It becomes a sad skinny cup. We fit less in and we make more mistakes.
- Our cup expands when we're confident and relaxed. We get a fat happy cup. We fit more in. We get more things right. We have 'confidence' space left over for feeling good.
- We can reduce our processing load by becoming automatic on the subskills of a task.
- Automatic is really fantastic. Automatic = Correct + Fast + Supereasy. First we help the child master the skill to the level where he's usually correct. He still uses a fair bit of his cup at this stage but it doesn't overflow. Then we encourage him to get better and better at it - fast and not stressed. This way the task takes up less and less cup space, less and less working memory capacity.
- Find the right level. Task analysis helps us work out the subskills of any task a student is having difficulty in. The child learns most effectively if he's working at the right level of difficulty. Think 'What's the step before this one?'
- Small is beautiful. It's better to concentrate on helping the child totally master a few small areas than covering lots of work, most of which will be forgotten.

So that's the story of small cups working memory processing capacity short term memory whatever you'd like to call it. Embrace the concept. Students' working memories can be friend or foe depending on how we help them learn. May all your cups be fat and happy! Now read on for long term memory - messy filing cabinets!



The frustrations of Long Term Memory Weakness



CHAPTER 6

MESSY FILING CABINETS -
WEAKNESS IN LONG TERM MEMORY

Long-term memory can be thought of as filing systems in our heads. We can think of it as a computer system or as filing cabinets with a little 'Filer' person who works on each one. Let's meet our friend Filer.

Some of us have great long term memory filing systems and others of us, including the student with learning disabilities, have extremely inefficient filing systems. If you look back at the information processing diagram on Page 16, you will see long-term memory as a filing cabinet full of stored information. You'll also see a conveyor belt going between it and working memory. We constantly have information going back and forth between our Long-Term Memory and our Working Memories. Filer is the worker who organises our information for us.

I say to students,

'Think of a kid in your class who learns things really easily.' They always can. Let's call her Joan today.

Then I say,

'Now if I teach the class that 'e-r' says 'er', and the next day, I say 'Who can tell me about 'e-r'?', Joan's hand is the first one up. 'Yes, Joan.'

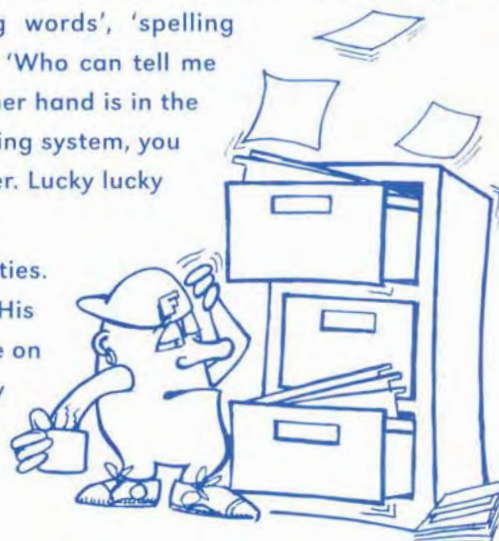
'Well Mrs Galletly, 'e-r' says 'er' and I know three words that say 'er'. There's 'her', and 'fern' and 'herd'. And my mum says that there's two types of 'herd'. There's 'h-e-r-d' and 'h-e-a-r-d' but you can remember which one's which because you think of a lady's herd of cattle so it's 'her-d' and the other one has an 'ear' for hearing in it so it's 'h-ear-d'. And....' 'Yes Joan. That's lovely dear. Do sit down now.'

Joan has a 'perfect' filing system. As soon as she heard about 'e-r', her Filer filed it efficiently probably in multiple files. The information processing experts call the files 'schemas'. Joan's schemas might be 'vowels', 'similar sounding words', 'spelling rules I know', etc. When I say 'Who can tell me

about 'e-r'?', her Filer instantly hands her the information and her hand is in the air within a moment. And with her efficient effective filer and filing system, you can just about guarantee she won't forget the information either. Lucky lucky Joan and all her companions to whom learning is so effortless.

It's a different story for young Henry who has learning difficulties. He listened when 'e-r' was being taught. He even understood it. His Filer was a bit harassed and flustered as usual, so he put the file on top of the filing cabinet to file later when he had time. Henry then listened to a bit on spelling 'dust' and that file went up on top too. But then while Henry was concentrating on

Knowing about
Long Term Memory
really helps me
learn.



his next bit of learning, maybe how to read 'bin' or a word like that, something sad, but alas not uncommon happened. Some of the papers slipped off the top of the filing cabinet and into the waste paper basket beside it. Henry understood all that was said but the information just didn't get filed in his storage system. And when I ask him to tell me about 'e-r', he can't even remember having talked about it.

On another day Filer might get the information filed in the filing system but look what a mess the system is in. When I asked about 'er', Filer who's a really hardworking fellow, starts looking at once. It takes him quite a while because he's not at all efficient - he just doesn't know where the information is so he can find it quickly.

'What can you tell me about 'e-r', Henry?'

'Um.' Filer finishes looking in the top drawer.

'Well.' He finishes looking in the second drawer.

'Oh. 'E-r' says 'er', Miss.' He finally found it in the third drawer.

or 'Um, 'e-r' says 'or', Miss.' A related but incorrect memory was retrieved. But he might know it next time.

or 'Um, I don't know, Miss.' Filed but not found. Maybe it's in that schema hanging out of the third drawer.

Henry has an inefficient filing system. He has trouble storing and retrieving memories. He can learn things but even when he does, memories may not get filed well and even if they are, his Filer has trouble retrieving them when they're needed. So what can we do to help Henry develop an efficient filing system, so he remembers things well and permanently. No brain surgery required. You'll be pleased to hear that the same strategies that work for overcoming low working memory capacity (small cups) work for efficient filing. Let's revise our mottos:

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

Cover very small areas extremely well. This way files get made.

AUTOMATIC! FANTASTIC!

PRAISE A JOB WELL DONE

HURRAH FOR FAT HAPPY CUPS

Don't stop practising when your student is correct.

Keep going till he's automatic.

Automatic = Correct + Fast + Supereasy.

Confidence and feeling capable increases filing abilities.



PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Lots of practice at regular intervals really works. Information gets filed and refiled every time the child revises it.



FIND THE RIGHT LEVEL

Tasks at the appropriate level of difficulty are more easily learned and remembered. The student earns the success he achieves and confidence grows.

So that's good news! What works to reduce overload on Henry's working memory also helps him overcome his difficulties with long term memories. There are two extra things we need to do though, to ensure permanent memories are made. Meet two new mottos to help us on our way.



GIVE FILER HIS INSTRUCTIONS

We tell Filer what to do by thinking consciously about how we want to remember some information. Be scientists together working on how to help your student remember best. Different people have different strengths in the way they learn. Lots of people remember better if they visualise things - make a picture in their heads of what they want to remember. Others remember well if they chant something to a rhythm or tune. All of us remember better if we consciously think about wanting to remember something. The more we actively think about wanting to remember and about what we have to remember and why, the more likely we are to remember it. This might sound a bit odd but try it anyway. There's a whole area of study on conscious thinking called metacognition. Thinking about remembering really works!



STRETCH THOSE MEMORIES

What does that mean? Well when we keep practising something regularly, students with learning difficulties still often don't make permanent memories of the information they've learned. They know it, but a month or two after you stop practising it, the information may well be forgotten. It's almost as though the information was being stored in an intermediate memory rather than a permanent one. We can work to ensure permanent files, ones that don't get forgotten, by 'stretching memories'. When we feel the student is automatic rather than just correct at a skill, we stop practising it regularly and instead test the student's performance on the skill after longer and longer intervals of time.



The system I use is 1 week, 2 weeks, 1 month, 3 months:

- Once something is known well, it gets left for a whole week and then checked.
- If it's still known well, it gets left for 2 weeks then checked.
- Then it gets left for 1 month and checked.
- Then it gets left for 3 months and checked.
- If it's correct at this point, testing stops. It's now most unlikely to be forgotten.
- If at any of the test times the information is not known well it comes back to current status and gets practiced regularly until it's automatic again. Then we stretch memories again.



Stretching memories is a long-term memory making strategy. Long-term memory making strategies work for the vast majority of students with learning disabilities. If this particular system doesn't work for your student, vary it - you might want to start with 4 days, 7 days, 10 days or perhaps 1 week, 1 week, 2 weeks, 2 weeks, rather than 1 week, 2 weeks as I've suggested.

Another summary

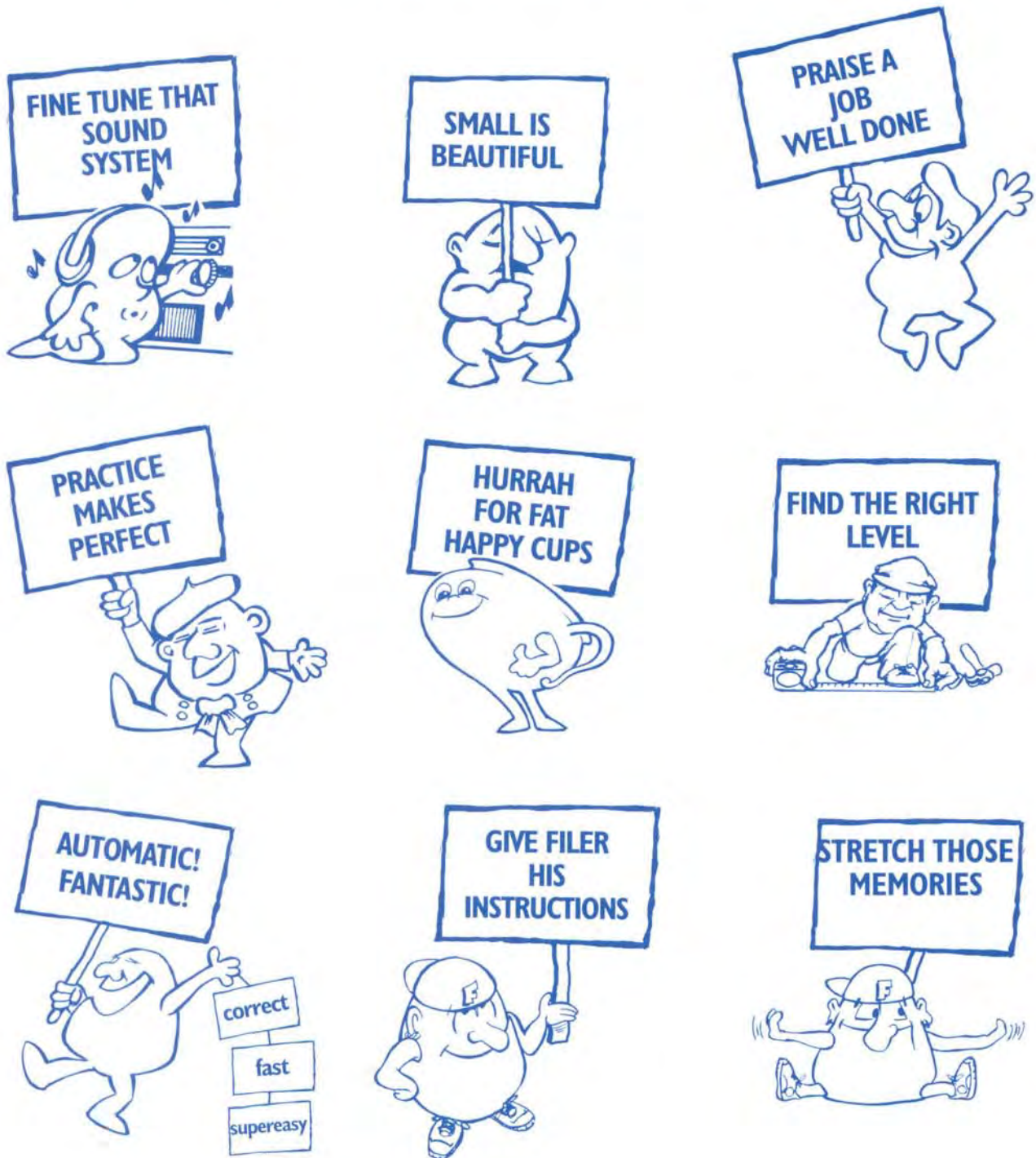
So that's long term memory. Let's revise. When we were talking about phonological processing, we said there were three areas of difficulty. We have discussed:

- a) Phonological Awareness - our awareness of the sounds in words.
- b) Phonological Working Memory - our cups of thinking space.
- c) Phonological Long Term Memory - our filing systems and friendly Filer.

Thus and therefore, with apologies to the purists among you, you have now been exposed to the complicated theory of human phonological processing and information processing reduced to sound systems, small cups and messy filing cabinets. And you've come through it very well.

Meet the mottos again

We've covered nine mottos while we were talking. You'll find them again and again in this book. They're very useful to think about and to talk about with your students from time to time when you're working together. Help your student to become good friends with them too.



CHAPTER 7 OTHER FACTORS INFLUENCING LEARNING

Researchers have shown that phonological weakness is the factor most commonly associated with failure to acquire literacy skills. The body of knowledge on this area is enormous and expanding rapidly. Phonological processing weakness is well worth addressing.

Despite the important role of phonological processing, learning never occurs in isolation and of course there will be other factors effecting your child's learning. Have a look at the words on the border of the Information Processing Diagram on Page 16. These are factors which commonly influence how we process information and learn. I'll list them here again for you to read:

Student factors

- Tiredness • Enthusiasm • Self-esteem • Confidence in doing the task • Experiences of success with literacy • Concentration skills • Level of stress experienced • Visual and co-ordination skills

Task factors

- Level of difficulty • Attractiveness • Relevance

Teaching Environment factors

- Background noise • Heat level • Distractions • Classroom rules and their enforcement • Teacher skills and Training • Teacher:Child ratio

Each of these is well worth discussing, but such detail would take too long. One which I will elaborate on, because it is strongly associated with learning difficulties and is the subject of much confusion and debate, at least in Australia, is Attention Deficit Disorder.

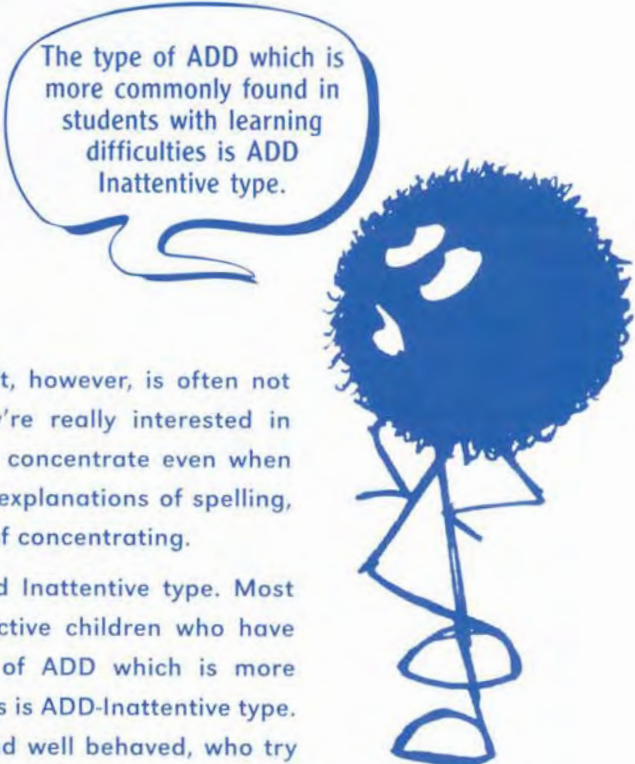
Attention Deficit Disorder.

Attention Deficit is difficulty applying the right amount of attention and concentration to tasks we're thinking about. We all have difficulties with concentration and distractibility at times but for most of us, the problems aren't significant.

The student with ADD has difficulties which interfere significantly with his learning. We might ignore it with words like 'Oh, he's just a dreamer', or 'He's lazy. He just can't be bothered listening.

He can concentrate when he wants to.' Ignoring it, however, is often not beneficial. Everyone can concentrate when they're really interested in something, but students who don't have ADD can concentrate even when things are a bit boring - when listening to teacher explanations of spelling, etc. The child with ADD has difficulties in this type of concentrating.

There are two types of ADD, Hyperactive type and Inattentive type. Most people think only of ADD-Hyperactive type, overactive children who have difficulty settling and working quietly. The type of ADD which is more commonly found in students with learning difficulties is ADD-Inattentive type. These students are usually nice kids, no trouble and well behaved, who try hard but seem to be in a bit of a cloud at times - things that are being taught just don't seem to go in.



The type of ADD which is more commonly found in students with learning difficulties is ADD Inattentive type.

We can think of attention as 'Out-there' and 'In-here'. The 'Out-there' attention skills are things like resisting distraction, sitting quietly, not fidgeting, etc. The 'In-here' attention skills are things like:

- paying enough attention so you can notice the important bits of what is being taught;
- thinking about information 'long enough and strong enough' to make a strong long term memory of it; and
- retrieving long term memories of things already known about what is being taught.

These 'In-here' difficulties are the ones which cause trouble for the student with learning difficulties who has ADD-Inattentive type. Respect ADD. It's a very real entity. There is still a lot of hype and ignorance about ADD and unfortunately it's often those who know very little about ADD who have the loudest opinions. If you think your student may have ADD investigate it further. Medication has really positive effects for many students and can make a big difference to how they learn. There are some very good books out on ADD if you're wanting to read further. I'd particularly recommend the following three books:

1. '*Attention Deficit Disorder and Learning Disabilities - Realities, Myths and Controversial Treatments*' by Barbara Ingersoll and Sam Goldstein. (Main Street Books, Doubleday. New York. 1993)
2. '*Understanding ADD*' by Christopher Green and Kit Chee. (Doubleday.Sydney.1994)
3. '*Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder*' by Jeff Bailey and Don Rice (Australian Association of Special Education, Bombaderry, NSW. 1997)



CHAPTER 8 HOW TO USE THE ACTIVITIES IN THIS BOOK

I'm hoping you'll find the activities in this book easy to work with. I've planned them that way. There are four sections of activities:

- Section A: Phonological Awareness Skills Page 47
- Section B: Words with Vowels a e i o u Page 77
- Section C: Words with 'Bossy-e' Vowels. Page 113
- Section D: Words with Consonant Blends. Page 133

Start with the first activity. Read all the instructions before you introduce the activity to your student. Try the activity together, aiming to have fun doing so. Then talk together about how it went. If the activity was too easy or too hard, don't panic. Look at the sections in the Activity Information page labelled 'Too Hard' and 'Too Easy' for ideas on how to make the activity the appropriate level of difficulty for your student. Say 'That seemed a bit easy (or hard) for you. Try it this way now.' and do the modified activity. You might find making activities the correct level of difficulty a little challenging at first, but you'll soon become expert at it.

When the first activity is something you are comfortable with, introduce the next one. It's not necessary for students to be expert on one activity before beginning another. You can be working on activities from more than one section at a time too. You'll probably find you'll work on Section A (Phonological Awareness) and Section B (a e i o u words) together for awhile. I would suggest that you don't go on to Section C (Bossy-e Words) or Section D (Consonant Blend Words) until your child is relatively confident and competent with Section B activities.

You'll probably find that after awhile you will have activities which are at three levels of difficulty for the student:

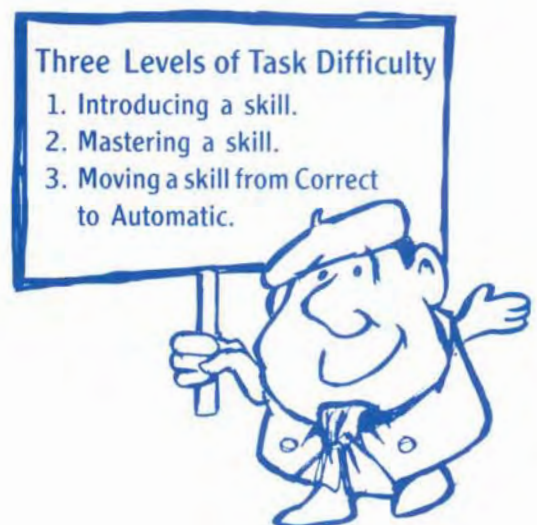
1. Skills which you're introducing.
2. Skills which you've introduced, explained and demonstrated and on which you're guiding the student as he works, so that he can get to being usually correct.
3. Skills which the student is correct on and which he's practising so he will become automatic on them.

How are the activities set out?

If you flip through the book you'll notice there's a general format of:

- Activity pages.
- Information pages relating to each activity.
- 'Memory Stretching' pages relating to each activity
- 'Understanding Why' discussion pages which explain important concepts in terms your students will understand.

We'll discuss each of these in turn.



Activity pages

Most activities are games you can play while you work on the particular important skill being focussed on, though you can do the activities without playing the game itself if you want to.

Information pages

Beside each activity page is an information page. The game is the student's fun page - work happens easily when enjoyed. The information page is the page that will be your friend. It has quite a few sections:

- **Aim:** gives you the aim of the activity.
- **Concepts:** explains concepts which are talked about.
- **Why do this activity?** explains the purpose of the activity.
- **Steps:** detailed instructions on how to do the activity.
- **Problem Solving:** discusses questions or confusions you might encounter.
- **Praise a job well done. Small is beautiful. Hurrah for Fat Happy Cups:** gives hints on helping your student really enjoy the activity and get confident with the skill being developed.
- **Automatic! Fantastic! Practice makes Perfect:** tells you how skilled your student needs to be before you consider him automatic on the skill. When he's automatic you can stop playing the activity and move on to the 'Memory Stretching' page which is described shortly.
- **Give Filer his instructions. Stretch those Memories:** gives hints on how to help your student take charge of remembering the information he's learned.
- **Find the right level:** gives you lots of handy hints on how to make the activity easier or harder so it's always at the right level of difficulty for your student. As his skill improves you'll modify the activity so it's just what he should be doing.
- **Include simple theory too:** gives hints as to what concepts you might want to discuss briefly with your student while you work.

Treat the information page as your friend and guide. Be very familiar with it. Instead of just reading it once, come back and re-read it from time to time. This way you'll ensure you get the very best value out of the activity.

Memory Stretching pages

As I said earlier, students with learning difficulties forget literacy information very easily. They can learn things, but after you stop working on them, memories slip. To ensure permanent memories of the work we do, there are two significant stages of our work:

1. Helping the student become automatic on the skill, so his working memory is no longer overloaded (Fat Happy Cups).
2. Helping the student make permanent memories of skills he has mastered. (Neat filing systems so we can remember things quickly and efficiently.)

When your student is automatic on the skill being developed on the activity page, stop practising it regularly and instead test it after longer and longer intervals. Have a look at a typical Memory Stretching page on Page 60. It has details of the skill being tested and then a table in which you write the day you test it and mark the child's score. Some students like to colour in the squares up to the score they got so they can see how well they did. Aim to check the skill:

	<i>after 1 week</i>	<i>then a fortnight</i>	<i>then 1 month</i>	<i>then 3 months</i>
eg.	8th March	22nd March	22nd April	22nd July.

Don't worry if you don't test on exact days, but keep these basic time frames in mind. If your student's skill stays at 4/5 or 5/5, keep going. If it drops, go back and practise the skill then stretch memories again.

Encourage your student to think about how he's going to remember. Perhaps decide together on rewards for work remembered. Planning to remember really works.

'Understanding Why' pages

As well as Activity pages, Information pages and Memory Stretching pages, you'll find sections labelled 'Understanding Why'. These sections explain a lot of the theory that I'm discussing in this 'For the Grown-Ups' section in terms your student will understand. Your student will learn far more effectively if he understands the concepts presented on the pages. When you come to one, read it together and talk about it. You might try using finger puppets to 'read' each page. Then come back to it several times over a few weeks and talk briefly about the content. Perhaps use a Goodie Run (see Page 33) as you ask questions about it. Encourage your child to take on the contract at the bottom of the page, when you think he knows it quite well.

I've placed 'Understanding Why' pages throughout the book rather than together, as I felt one block of theory pages might be a bit daunting for children. Please don't feel that you can't do the next 'Understanding Why' page until you've finished the game before it. I'd prefer you to go through all of them quite early in your working together. If you work through the book quickly, they'll be well placed for you. If you're working steadily through, aim to discuss one or two each week, even if just briefly.

You'll find them on the following pages:

UNDERSTANDING WHY	TOPIC	PAGE
1. Hearing the sounds of words	Phonological awareness	Page 52
2. Automatic = Correct + Fast + Supereasy	The need for lots of practice	Page 66
3. Confidence helps us learn	Working memory & confidence	Page 71
4. Meet a student with Learning Disability	Strengths and weaknesses	Page 82
5. Reading is a brick wall	Why we do early reading skills	Page 92
6. Read easy books	Book reading	Page 97
7. Small is beautiful	Working at the right level	Page 104
8. Reminding myself to remember	Planning to remember	Page 120
9. Memory stretching	Long term memory programs	Page 130
10. Nine mottos to help us learn	For improved learning	Page 138
11. How our mind works when we read	How we process information	Page 146
12. A poem for your pleasure	Summary of key points	Page 155

CHAPTER 9 IDEAS FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING

The following principles are very useful in teaching a concept or skill.

1. Talk to the student about what you'll be working on. Give clear explanations of what you are teaching.
2. Introduce small amounts of new information at any one time.
3. Show the student what you want him to do by doing it yourself as he watches.
4. Work closely with the student as he tries doing the task.
5. If the task is too hard, make it easier.
6. Give the student as much help as he needs to succeed on the task.
7. Give less guidance as the task gets easier.
8. Provide lots of opportunities for the student to practise the skill.
9. Practise over many days, not just one.
10. Keep practising the skill till the student becomes automatic at it.
11. Check the student's skill on the task after longer and longer intervals till you are confident he has made permanent memories of it.

Practice makes perfect!

One of the main reasons students forget skills they've been taught is that they needed more opportunities to practise the skills than they actually got. Most students with learning disabilities learn best by doing rather than listening. Providing frequent practice sessions over days and weeks makes for lots of opportunities for learning by doing.

Regular practice is best practice. I recommend aiming for 10 to 20 minute sessions five times per week. Don't panic! If you think laterally about it you will probably be able to achieve this, perhaps by some compromise. You might do a smaller number of sessions and spend longer per session, or do less games and more straight skill work so sessions are shorter. If you can't achieve this level of practice, just do your best. Do try to achieve practice sessions at least three times per week, however brief the sessions. Teachers will find the student workbook edition of this book a very valuable extra. It contains all of the games in this book, but with no theory or explanations, and is intended for the use by teachers using this book as their source book. The student workbook is ideal for use as part of homework or peer tutoring programs. Laminated A3 and A4 size full colour poster games of each activity are also available. Perhaps you will achieve regular practice by using games for group work and floor work. Some parents have been known to revise work verbally while driving in the car. Regular practice helps the learner make strong memories of what is taught and become automatic in the skills being learned.

Having fun is a must!

None of us like to do things we don't enjoy. We also don't tend to enjoy things that are hard work for us. When was the last time you prepared your tax return for a fun Friday night with your partner? For this program to succeed with your student, we want him to feel very positive about working with you and be keen to work each time you come together. Students do not learn things well when they are resentful of having to do an activity.

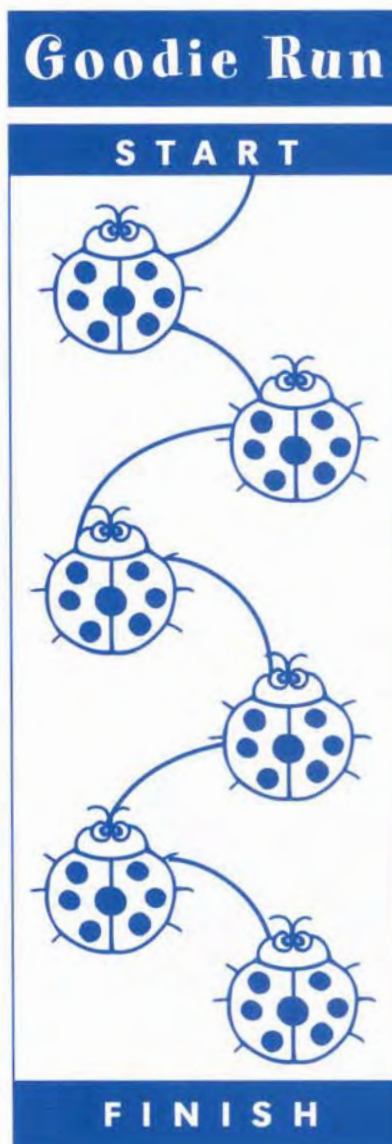
Can we make working together on literacy skills fun? We can indeed - by using the following principles:

- Work on activities which are at just the right level of difficulty - not too easy, not too hard.
- Play games to make things fun. They do take more time but it's time well spent. Instead of playing a game for every activity, for some you might just do direct practice of the reading/writing activity included in the game. Work out a balance of games and direct skill practice that suits your student. Perhaps have another student play a game with him.
- Reward! Reward! Reward! Reward as you work. Teachers can get away with lots of praise and the odd sticker or two. Parents need to look at this issue very carefully.

Goodie runs

Playing games can be very time consuming. One alternative is to use a Goodie run. Goodies can be lots of things. I use small sweets - they are an *extremely, really, very, incredibly* useful addition to your program (did you notice my emphasis?) and can be a really big part of making working together a pleasure. Shop around for very small sweets, or cut up bigger ones into little pieces. That way your student can earn 20 or so in a session, without ruining his teeth or appetite. If sweets really aren't your scene, consider sultanas, small coins, and tokens such as paper clips where a certain number of tokens equals the prize you've discussed. Perhaps 20 tokens equals 50 cents, a dollar, or points towards a video or game.

Draw a simplified goodie run on the page beside the activity you want to practice. Have the student do the same task he would do for his turn in the game. Each time he does the task, move the goodie one space down the page. When it gets to the bottom, it's the student's property. As the job gets easier, make the task harder, eg. instead of reading one word per move, the student might read three. Move the goodie down the run every time your student does the task, not just if he was correct. Rewarding only success isn't usually a good idea. Reward hard work, not just success. Mistakes are okay. We learn lots from them. You'll be impressed with how effective goodie runs are and how much faster they are than playing a game to practise a skill.



CHAPTER 10 SPECIAL POINTS FOR PARENTS

Many parents are nervous of working with their child. The following points may be found helpful.

Don't think bribery, think reward. You are asking your child to do something which is extra to his homework and what other students do, so you want and need your child to enjoy his time working with you and to want to do it next time. I use stickers and a jar of very tiny sweets which I dispense liberally. I know parents who use tokens or five cent pieces which the child earns for each activity done.

Check out the Goodie Run on the last page. If you're not wanting to play a game, but wanting to keep the activity fun, draw a Goodie Run on the page and do direct skill practice.

Use a reward chart for your child to earn a 'major prize'. There's one on Page 153. You might want to photocopy it as you may well need a few of these. Decide together what prize will be earned. Don't make it the bike for Christmas 'if you've been a good boy'. It needs to be something achievable in a week, fortnight or month - you'll soon work out how long a time frame best suits your child. For every session your child has co-operated well on and hasn't whined about missing TV or playtime, sign one of the spaces. Some folks cut a picture of a McDonald's advertisement into ten pieces and their child earns one each day 10 sessions = tea at McDonald's. I've seen students earning toy cars they're collecting, \$1 or \$2 each session towards a CD they want to get, money for special clothes and Nintendo games, etc. I can't stress enough how important this reward aspect is, as a cause of how successful your working together will be. Consider the money you spend, as money you've saved by doing this work yourself rather than paying for tutoring three times weekly. Think laterally about what rewards would work best. Rewards really do make working together so much easier.



Many parents combine immediate rewards, short term rewards and long term rewards. They might use the odd small sweet, sultana, token, or small coin while working as immediate rewards, a small treat or money for an ice-cream at school next day for each session done as a short term reward, and a grid filled in with the child earning a trip to the movies or some such treat for fifteen sessions completed as a long term reward. All this in an ocean of praise and encouragement. Seems a lot, but it will be worth it, I assure you.

Get into a routine so the student understands and is used to when and how long you work. Perhaps have a particular place where you always work. Perhaps work at the same time each day. Keep the things you need together in a special container. Consider using a timer when you work. You work till the timer goes, or until you finish the activity you're working on, whichever system you establish.

Use positive comments wherever possible. Avoid negative statements like 'No', 'That's wrong', and 'You're hopeless at this' like the plague. You might find this takes a bit of getting used to and even wonder why it's

necessary, but children are like little sponges. They soak up the negative comments we make and use them later to feel bad about themselves. Try some of the comments below. Be very honest in your praise and not gushy. Your child deep down probably thinks he is totally 'dumb'. He will not respect or accept praise he doesn't feel he's earned.



Respect your child's attitudes. You might find that he only likes things he can do pretty easily. Don't think of this as laziness and force him to work on harder activities.

See if you can gently extend the easy activities so he makes progress. Think also about how you can make the hard activity he hates much easier and see if he likes it then. You'll generally find that something a student baulks at a lot is either too hard or too scary for him. That means it's Task Analysis time again. (See 'Find the Right Level' on Page 20.)

Help your student overcome Learned Helplessness. This is when your child decides either through and through, or deep down but with a show of bravado on top, that he is a failure, that it's only luck if he gets things right and that nothing he can do will ever really help him get better. The best way to overcome learned helplessness is to gently guide the student till he's making some genuine progress, then talk to him about how he's learning and progressing. When your student says 'I can't do that', don't automatically insist that he can. Agree with him if the skill he's talking about is too hard - he may well have made an honest assessment of the situation. Guide him though, to realise that while there are some things he can't do, he is making progress and there are more and more things he can do. Show him that he is in charge of himself and not helpless.



Keep a good balance between your role as a parent and your role as a tutor. Don't let tutoring and your child's learning difficulty take over as the most important part of your relationship. Parent, ally and friend - first, second and third. Parent, ally, friend and tutor - maybe fourth or fifth.

Be kind to yourself. You are asking quite a bit of yourself to fit this work with your child into your no doubt busy life. Don't get cross at yourself for not being perfect. Go gently. Do the best you can under all the circumstances of your life. Some parents find making time for working together the biggest problem. Others find helping their child enjoy the work the tricky thing. Task analyse. Problem-solve. If you stand back and think about a situation, you'll usually think of a successful solution. That's what we parents are good at.

If you have trouble doing some of the activities yourself, don't panic. Most parents are wary of vowels and sounding words out to begin with. I've worked with many parents who have themselves had learning difficulties and they have managed to do my work with their children very successfully. Be honest with your child about activities that are hard for you. You can then be a team working together on solving a problem. Perhaps ask someone else to look at the materials with you and go over the hard bits with you. There are ways to overcome most difficulties.

When in doubt, make things easier. If your child isn't keen, consider the possibilities that the work may be too hard or you may be trying to make too much progress too fast. Do things he enjoys and gently extend. 'Small' really is beautiful, and much more effective in the long run.

If you get really bogged down and work is not much fun, talk with your student and decide together on a definite break period, maybe a week, maybe a month. Enjoy the break - you've both deserved it. Before you start work again, think about any changes you want to make so work is more fun. Then start work again, feeling positive and motivated. You can do it.



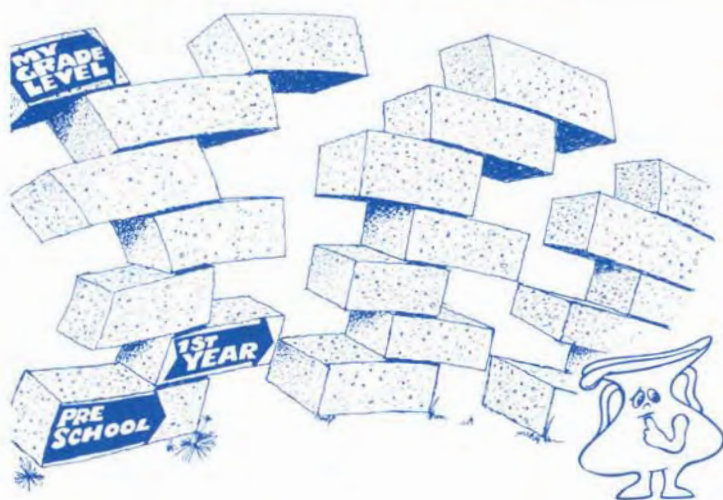
CHAPTER 11 UNDERSTANDING WHY

I do some things a bit differently to other training systems you may be using, because I've found my ways to be very effective. This chapter will explain these issues, so that you'll understand them yourself and, in time, be able to explain them to your student.

Reading is a brick wall

To explain to students why I want them to work on skills which may seem babyish to them, I use this analogy.

I describe each child's reading as a brick wall. The bottom row is his preschool year, the next row his first year at school, the next row his second, and so on.



I say there are holes in each row because there were things that were too hard for the child to do then, eg. rhyming and hearing sounds in preschool, reading words with a e i o u in Year 1, and things like that.

I say that the holes make the wall wobbly so when the student tries to read grade level material it's just too hard - his wall is not strong enough for reading hard texts.

I say that the activities we do go back and fill in the holes. And it doesn't take long to fill them in because now the student is older and knows how to learn.

I find this explanation works extremely well. You'll discuss this concept with your student on Page 92.

Should my student be reading books as well as doing the work in this book?

Absolutely, utterly and definitely Yes! The work in this book is very important but it is still only one element of your child's literacy development program. Reading of text in books is also really important. The two challenges in helping most students with learning difficulties to read books are :

1. Making book reading enjoyable.
2. Finding books at the right level of difficulty.

Generally teachers feel that for recreational reading, a student should be able to read 19 out of 20 words on the page correctly. This level (95%) is called Independent Level reading. Nine words in ten read correctly (90%) is called Instructional Level and less than 9 words in 10 correct (<90%) is called Frustration Level. These levels might seem a bit exaggerated if you haven't heard of them before because you're probably used to your student reading books where he can only read 5 or 6 words in 10. To understand why he doesn't relish book reading when lots of words are hard, imagine how much joy you'd have if every tenth word in the book you were trying to read was blacked out. I don't know about you but I wouldn't read for too long and you and I have got advanced reading skills, not like our poor struggling students.

Independent level	95% or better	1 error every 20 words
Instructional level	90% to 94%	1 error every 10 words
Frustration level	less than 90%	> 1 error every 10 words

At least nine out of ten words correct? Finding books to meet this criteria is a big challenge. We can cope with it in a few ways:

- Look for books with a high interest age and low reading age. Your library will have some. Unfortunately there is not usually an enormous range of these books.
- Use the brick wall concept (Page 92) to encourage your student to read easy books. I tell students they're not to think they'll always be reading easy books. What they're doing in reading easy books is filling in the gaps in their wall. After a while the level of books they're reading will get too easy and they'll move up. Most students can see the logic in this.
- I say to students that the types of books adults read to young children are actually excellent books to read. I'm blessed with four children and we borrow heaps of library books. For years, even when at high school, my older two children would always grab a pile of the younger kids' stories to take to bed and read, the night we'd been to the library. Why? Because they're great books with excellent storylines. I love them too. Be careful when you're choosing them though - many are not easy to read. Be discriminating.
- Read a book to your student before he reads it to you. He'll cope much better with it then.
- Re-reading a favourite book is usually easier than reading a new book and is a habit to encourage.
- Read together. Some people take turns reading pages or paragraphs. I actually like the 'Neurological Impress' method best. (How's that for an impressive name!) Neurological Impress reading, which I call 'Echo reading' in my explanation on Page 97, is where you and the student read the words of the book together, but you read a fraction of a second behind him. When you come to a word he can't read, without pausing or losing the rhythm of the story, read the hard word for him. He'll probably join in a fraction of a second after you and echo you for that word. Reading this way may seem strange at first but you'll soon get the idea of it. Because you are reading the hard words, we haven't got to worry so much about the one error in twenty idea. Because the rhythm and storyline is not interrupted, your student will read more words correctly than he would have otherwise, because he can follow the meaning of the story more easily. All in all this system works very well. If reading together totally irritates your student, read your part very quietly but still supply the hard words at a reasonable volume. It's worth persisting for a while even if it does seem irritating. If it gets easy it's a great system.
- You might find taped books an option for your child if you can help him be keen to look at the words and perhaps say them under his breath as he reads. Unfortunately, most taped books have the speaker speaking far too quickly for the tape to be useful for weak readers. If you're keen, make some of your own.



- If you're doing the activities in this book, don't correct your student when he's reading books. Make this book the theory section and make reading books the 'Learning to enjoy reading books' section. You might prompt occasionally, by saying the initial sound of a word if you think it's a word he knows, but otherwise just say the word and let the story go on. Your student will get enough practice reading the words he can read in a book without having a theory lesson on each one he doesn't know. I think if someone interrupted me to work out each of the one in ten words blacked out in my imaginary book, I'd be furious. There I'd be, working hard to put the meaning of the passage together and being constantly frustrated by interruptions for exercises in word attack every tenth word? It's worth thinking on, isn't it?

Will we work on reading comprehension too?

I'd love to work on everything, but that is just not practical in a book like this. Research studies show, as does my own experience, that a lot of the things we notice about students' difficulties with reading comprehension are less a factor of their having reading comprehension difficulties and more a factor of the material they are reading being too hard for them. Most students with learning disabilities don't have problems with reading comprehension when reading material at appropriate levels of difficulty. Studies also show that students' reading comprehension improves far more in their reading, if you improve their skill on reading isolated words. Improving skill on reading isolated words improves reading accuracy. Improving reading accuracy improves reading comprehension. I suppose you could say we are working on reading comprehension, but not directly.

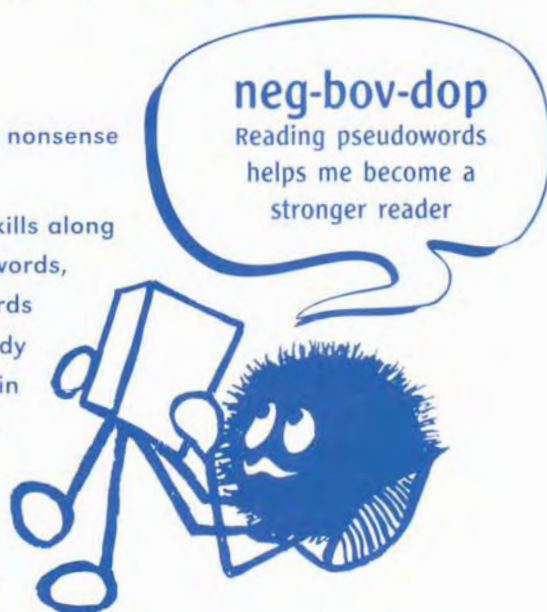
Why are there nonsense words in some games?

You'll notice if you flip through the activities in this book that I use nonsense words a lot. There are several very good reasons why I do this.

I'm trying to strengthen your student's phonological awareness skills along with helping him read. I want him to be hearing the sounds in words, blending sounds to make words, thinking about the sounds in words as he spells them, etc. If I use real words the words I use may already be known as sight words by him. Then, when I ask for the sound in the middle of 'bus', because he knows the word 'bus' well, he'll think of what the word looks like, realise there's a letter u, think 'What's the sound that she said u says?', and then tell me the sound. He'll have done the job by thinking mainly about what the letter looked like. If on the other hand I use a pseudoword (that seems to be the 'in' word for nonsense words now) like 'zep', the

only way he can read or spell it is if he knows all the sounds in it. That's why I use nonsense words - they're great for making students think about the sounds in words. For students who have very few sight words I use real words. For other students I use lots of both real and nonsense words.

The research shows that weakness in reading and spelling nonsense words is highly associated with difficulties in reading and writing. It also shows that improving skill on nonsense words results in significant improvement on reading and writing skills. If you think about it, there's logic there. Your student probably has difficulty working out words he does not know as sight words. In effect, for him they are nonsense words. If we help him get skilled at reading and spelling different nonsense words we present to him, he will become skilled in reading and spelling unknown words he meets. Instead of saying 'I don't know that one', he'll have developed useful strategies for reading and spelling unknown words.



Why all these mottos and 'Understanding Why' pages?

The more children understand why they are being taught something and the stronger a sense of ownership they have of their learning, the more effective their learning will be. This area is called Metacognition. It includes understanding theory, being able to define and discuss concepts, and things like that. I aim to help children become metacognitive in relation to their learning. I don't demand it at all, but I do encourage it in many ways. I find mottos, 'Understanding Why' pages with their attached contracts and discussing theoretical issues with children to be very rewarding activities. So be happy when you hear your student say things like 'Oh I know that word. It's 'mate'. The [a] has to say its name because it's got 'Bossy-e' at the end of it'. Instead of just reading the word, he has shown significant metacognitive skill, by explaining theory to you. And to think it seemed as though he was merely chatting!

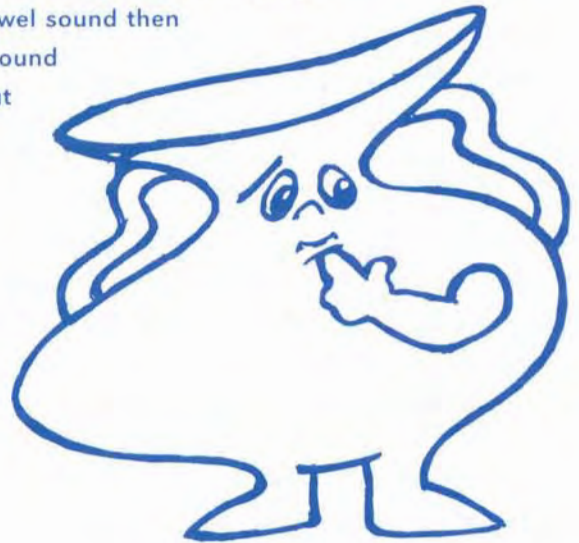
Understanding the terms used

There are lots of terms used in this book which you may be new to - Phonological Processing, Consonant Blends, Working Memory, etc. Terms relevant to each activity are discussed on the Information Page for that activity.

Will we be sounding out forever?

No! Sounding out is a good skill for some beginning readers as they master early reading, but for others it's a horror - they keep doing it but they never really expect to succeed in working the word out. It also doesn't work for really big words - students run out of thinking space before they've worked out the word.

We'll be doing some sounding out and blending in this book. The system I encourage is not sounding out all sounds, but instead saying the vowel sound then working the word out in one's head. Saying the vowel sound focuses the student's attention on the part of the word that is hardest for him. Working the word out in his head takes him away from a habit of sounding out words whilst still expecting not to succeed and makes him think about the word in a new pattern of thinking. If this step is too hard, I have the student say the vowel, then sound out the letters, then think of the word, but I still drop sounding out as soon as possible. Once his skill on vowel knowledge is at a reasonable level, we'll also drop saying the vowel first too.



CHAPTER 12 VOWELS, VOWELS AND MORE VOWELS

Vowels, vowels and more vowels

You'll find activities in this book focus a lot on vowels. This is because vowel errors are usually the most frequent errors students with learning difficulties make. From a phonological processing perspective, they are the hardest sounds to discriminate. From a learning perspective, they are hard because they are frequently written in so many different ways. Just look at the five ways [er] is written in these words - her first nurse works early. I find systematically teaching vowel knowledge is extremely effective in helping students make progress in literacy.

Vowels used to be taught as 'a, e, i, o, u, and sometimes y'. Really though, there are so many more vowels than this - aw, ea, oy, er, etc. Some people talk about long vowels as in 'cake' and short vowels as in 'cat' but I don't really find this useful in talking to children as you can say any of the short vowels for a 'long' time (aaaaaaaat) which makes the concept confusing. We could talk about the vowel saying its name as in 'ate', and saying its sound as in 'at', and this is quite useful, but only for ten vowel sounds. Vowel experts also talk about digraphs (one sound written in two letters, eg. [ie], [ee]) and diphthongs (two sounds in one vowel eg, [u-e] which is actually a combination of [e-e] then [oo]), but I don't find these concepts at all useful in talking to students.

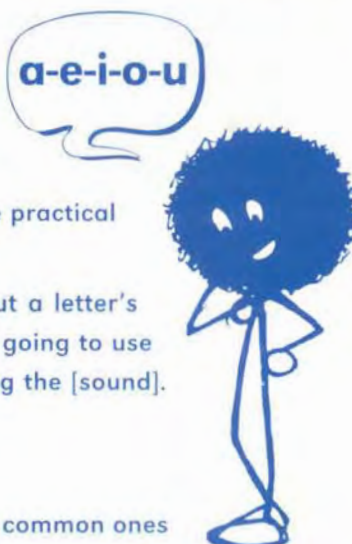
The system which I use is to talk about 'single vowels' (a, e, i, o, u, y) and 'two letter vowels' (ai, ea). My system is not foolproof either, as I teach 'y' when I'm teaching two letter vowels, and there are also three and four letter vowels, eg. [ear], [ough], which I teach as part of spelling rules. On the whole though, I find 'single' and 'two letter' descriptions of vowels to be practical and useful.

We also need a system in this book so you know whether I'm talking about a letter's name (bee) or its sound (buh). Again, there are lots of systems. The one I'm going to use is to underline the letter if I'm saying its name and to bracket it if I'm saying the [sound]. Under this system:

b says [b], u says [u], w says [w], etc.

I focus on 18 main vowel sounds in my teaching, though there are other less common ones as well. The ones I teach are:

[a]	as in	a (at)			
[e]	as in	e (egg)	ea (head)		
[i]	as in	i (it)			
[o]	as in	o (off)			
[u]	as in	u (up)			
[a-e]	as in	a-e (ate)	ai (wait)	ay (pay)	a (paper)
[e-e]	as in	e-e (Pete)	ea (weak)	ee (meet)	y (baby) e (Peter)
[i-e]	as in	i-e (kite)	ie (pie)	igh (high)	y (my) i (spider)
[o-e]	as in	o-e (hope)	oa (boat)	ow (show)	o (hotel)
[u-e]	as in	u-e (cute)	ew (stew)	u (tulip)	



[ar]	written as	ar (car)	a (past)			
[er]	written as	er (her)	ir (sir)	ur (fur)	(w) or (work)	ear (learn)
[or]	written as	or (for)	aw (raw)			
[oi]	written as	oi (oil)	oy (boy)			
[ow]	written as	ow (cow)	ou (out)			
[oo]	written as	oo (look)				
[oo]	written as	u-e (rude)	ew (blew)	oo (food)	ou (youth)	

[neutral vowel]
 written as almost any written vowel (mother, virus, pilot, majorer, etc.) This vowel usually only occurs in multisyllabic words.

There are other vowel sounds, eg. [air] , and other ways of writing vowel sounds, eg. [or] can also be written as au (taut) and auh (taught). In the table above, I've listed the most common vowel sounds and their most common spellings.

In this book we'll focus on the first ten sounds, but using only the first written form for each - [a], [a-e], [e], [e-e], etc. The other vowel sounds will be taught in 'TWO VOWELS TALKING', the book after this one.

In referring to the different vowel sounds, I'll use the letters I used in the first column of the vowel table. I write the sound in the middle of 'at' as [a], and the sound in the middle of 'wait' and 'cake' as [a-e]. The way I write this last vowel [a-e] may seem a little strange so let me explain.

The first vowels I teach are [a], [e], [i], [o], [u], then I teach the final e vowel. Adding a final e to a word changes the vowel sound and makes the vowel say its name, so 'mat' with the vowel sound [a] becomes 'mate' with an [a-e]. I use the system of the letter then a hyphen then an e as in [i-e] and [o-e] because the hyphen shows that there has to be a letter between the vowel letter and final e - 'cake' not 'caek', etc. Because I teach the final e vowels before I teach the two letter vowels like [ai] and [ee], I find it more logical to introduce the written form of these vowels in their final e form.

If all this vowel information is too complicated, don't worry - this is perhaps the most technical section of the whole book. Vowels, their names, sounds and how I write them will be easily understood as you work through the activities.



CHAPTER 13 A POEM FOR YOUR PLEASURE

If ...

An ode to the child with learning difficulties

If a task is too hard ...

I know I can't do it, I don't want to do it and doing it just makes me know how 'dumb' I really am.

If a task is too easy ...

I might do it because it's easy but I'm not fooled by you being nice and saying how clever I am at it. I know that I'm so dumb you have to give me baby work for me to be able to get it right.

If a task is at the right level of difficulty ...

If I work at it, I can do this task. I'm doing well at it but only because I'm working on it. If you work me through a graded series of tasks to develop my skill, I'll get better and better at it.

I see that I'm learning stuff. I can understand it. I'm getting there and it's because I'm working at it. Maybe I'm not dumb after all. It's like the teacher says - I just learn differently.

I need success and need to know I earned it

If you teach me something by just explaining ...

I might understand it but I might have processing problems - I get a bit overwhelmed by lots of new verbal information.

If you teach me by explaining then showing me some examples step by step ...

I'll understand it much better.

If I have lots of practice ...

I'll understand it better still.

If I have lots and lots of practice ...

I'll not just understand it but I'll remember it and be able to use it in other situations. I'll be automatic at the skill. I'll feel clever and be able to apply the skill in other situations.

Automatic = correct + fast + supereasy

If after I've learned work well we don't do it anymore and move onto new work ...

I'll forget it. I have problems making long term memories of information which was not easy to learn.

If you give me occasional revision and retests of work I've had to work hard to learn ...

I'll make long term memories of what you've taught me. I'll have mastered it and be able to use it and you and I will feel real success.

Once something is automatic, checking my skill after longer and longer intervals of time helps me remember work perfectly.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	3
PART ONE For the Grown Ups	7
Chapter One You and I	8
Chapter Two Students with Learning Disabilities	10
Chapter Three How We Process Information when Reading	12
Chapter Four Sound Systems Needing Fine-Tuning - Weakness in Phonological Awareness	14
Chapter Five Small Cups - Weakness in Working Memory	16
Chapter Six Messy Filing Cabinets - Weakness in Long Term Memory	23
Chapter Seven Other Factors Influencing Learning	27
Chapter Eight How to Use the Activities in this Book	29
Chapter Nine Ideas for Effective Teaching	32
Chapter Ten Special Points for Parents	34
Chapter Eleven Understanding Why	37
Chapter Twelve Vowels, Vowels and More Vowels	41
Chapter Thirteen A Poem for your Pleasure	43
PART TWO Let the Games Begin	45
Section A: Phonological Awareness Activities	47
Activity One: Say that Sound	48
Understanding Why: Hearing the Sound of Words	54
Activity Two: Blending & Listing	55
Activity Three: Random Rhyming	58
Activity Four: Syllable Sleuthing	62
Understanding Why: Automatic = Correct + Fast + Supereasy	66
Activity Five: Subtract a Sound	68
Understanding Why: Confidence helps us Learn	71
Activity Six: Sound Swap	74
Section B: Words with Vowels a-e-i-o-u	77
Something New: How well do you know your Vowels?	79
Activity One: Vowel Tap	80
Understanding Why: Meet a Student with Learning Disability	82
Activity Two: Racing Vowels	84

Activity Three: a-e-i-o-u Games	88
Understanding Why: Reading is a Brick Wall	92
Something New: a-e-i-o-u Vowel Flash Cards	94
Understanding Why: Read Easy Books	97
Activity Four: Spelling Made Easy	102
Understanding Why: Small is Beautiful	104
Section C: Words with Bossy-e Vowels	113
Something New: Meet Bossy-e	115
Activity One: Bossy-e Word Games	116
Understanding Why: Reminding Myself to Remember	120
Something New: Bossy-e Vowel Flashcards	129
Understanding Why: Memory Stretching	131
Activity Two: Spelling Made Easy	132
Section D: Words with Consonant Blends	133
Something New: Getting to know Blends	134
Activity One: Escape Blend Castle	136
Understanding Why: Nine Mottos to Help us Learn	138
Activity Two: Blend Word Games	140
Understanding Why: How our Minds Work when we Read	146
Activity Three: Spelling Blend Words	148
Reward Charts	153
Understanding Why: A Poem for your Pleasure	155
Information: Literacy Plus Product Range	156