

Literacy Plus Newsletter

Spring 2014 | **Word Reading**



**This newsletter's topic
is WORD READING**

Articles include:

- Early and Late Emerging Reading Difficulties
- The Two Key Skills of Word Reading
- Echo Reading
- Successful Engaged Learning with Literacy Plus

**25% OFF
Value Packs***

See page 5 for details

**literacy
PLUS**
LEARNING MADE FUN



www.literacyplus.com.au

Hello keen literacy educators

Welcome to our first Literacy Plus newsletter. We've recently relaunched our website www.literacyplus.com.au. It's intended to be a useful resource for teachers and schools, with information, videos and a steadily increasing number of free downloads. Do check it out.

My name is Dr Susan Galletly *PhD*. I'm a reading researcher, teacher and speech pathologist from Mackay, Queensland. I love sharing 'Easy Theory' - practical teaching strategies built from research knowledge. Easy Theory is powerful for teachers of all F-2 children and struggling readers in later years.

I conduct seminars on this area throughout Australia, most recently a two day seminar in Canberra, with 100 keen teachers, titled *Teaching to the Instructional Needs of Children with Reading Weakness: Theory & Practice*, which received lots of positive feedback.

Our newsletters will arrive three times per year in Summer (Feb), Winter (June) and Spring (Sept-Oct).



Susan presenting at a recent Brisbane conference.

Newsletters will provide links to free downloads such as Literacy Plus Postergames, Easy Theory handouts, games and tests.

Literacy Plus has commercial products: we recommend them to you and they are available on our website. All newsletter downloads are completely free, no strings attached, to support your reading instruction of beginning and at-risk readers.

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WORD READING and Why Some Children Struggle

What is word reading and what makes it hard for some children to master?



Word reading, sometimes called word identification or reading accuracy, is the reading of words, as single words and in connected text.

Along with reading comprehension, and language reasoning, it's a crucial component of effective reading.

Word reading is a partner skill to spelling: both build from orthographic (spelling pattern) skills and phonological skills.

Word reading includes reading of words and word parts, and familiar and unfamiliar words, from rapid recognition of highly familiar one syllable 'sightwords' to careful decoding of long complex multisyllabic words.

In many nations, word reading and spelling are acquired quite effortlessly: that's because they use highly regular orthographies (spelling systems) with each sound (phoneme) having just one way of writing it (grapheme). In those nations, learning to read and write has very low cognitive load.

In contrast, English has one of the world's most complex orthographies: 26 letters representing 44 common sounds using well over 500 spelling patterns. The many spelling patterns used for vowels are particularly challenging.

This makes learning to read words a highly complex task, such that many children struggle with learning to read.

Some of the research articles I've written with Prof Bruce Knight focus on crosslinguistic differences in learning to read.'

[Click here](#) for a list of Susan's research writing.



The Two Key Skills of Word Reading

The two pivotal elements of effective word reading are

- **Proliferating sight words:** increasing numbers of words recognised instantly and effortlessly.
- **Efficient phonological recoding:** confident skills reading unfamiliar words.

These two elements work hand in hand, with cognitive load reducing as fluency builds:

- When words are first met, they have high cognitive load, and children use a fair amount of working memory thinking on them to read them.
- As they become increasingly familiar, cognitive load reduces.
- When automatic and read effortlessly, they use almost no working memory.

In Literacy Plus modules, we use analogies of:

- Working memory being a cup with elastic sides.
- Cognitive load being space used up in our cup of thinking space.
- Long term memory being our Filer filing information in our memory system.

When we're relaxed and confident, the sides of our cup swell out: we get a fat happy cup with lots of thinking space.

When we're anxious or stressed, the sides shrink in: and a sad skinny cup soon overflows with our thinking. The aim of effective teaching and learning is to keep task cognitive load lower than children's cup space of processing capacity: when cups overflow, we make errors because we ran out of think!

Reading unfamiliar words uses a lot of thinking space. When we practise reading, Filer retrieves the word more and more quickly and efficiently from memory, and reading the word uses less and less thinking space. When we're automatic at reading words, virtually no cup space is required, and thinking space is free for thinking on other things:



"Fluency gives the gift of time to the reading brain so insights and inferences can be made and emotions engaged."

Maryanne Wolf, 2008 Proust and the Squid, p.131

Literacy Plus mottos are teaching and learning principles that keep cognitive load manageable. They are catchy terms easily understood by children as well as adults, e.g.,

- Hurrah for Fat Happy Cups!
- Find the Right Level!
- Practice Makes Perfect!
- Automatic! Fantastic!
(Automatic = Correct + Fast + Supereasy)

Word Reading Games Build Authentic Reading of Texts

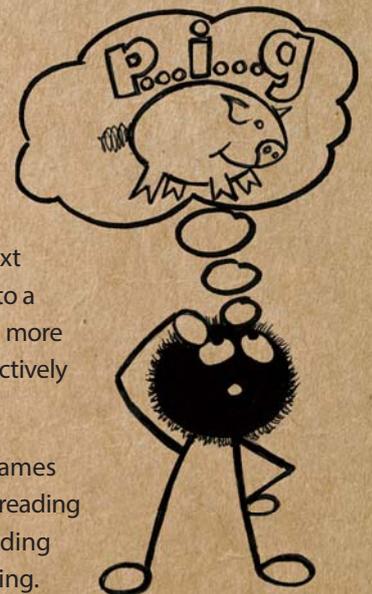
Word Reading games help children read authentic texts in several ways:

1. They build word reading skills, readying children for reading those words effectively in books.
2. They remove the need for reading lessons when reading books.

Word reading games focus children's attention on the vowel graphemes and word structure of the words being read, with lots of fun practice.

They offer a highly supportive learning context where children can build word reading skills to a developing then fluent level, making it much more likely that words of that type will be read effectively when encountered in books and texts.

In addition, teaching word reading using games removes the need for 'lessons' building word reading when children are reading books. Word reading games partner and support authentic reading.



Early & Late Emerging Reading Difficulties

The reading difficulties of many children emerge early, and are evident very early in their schooling. Some struggle with word reading, others are weak on language skills for reading, and still others are weak in both areas.

Effective instruction meets children where they are at. It keeps confidence high and smoothly develops skills by supporting reading progress and meeting each child's individual needs for word reading or language skills instruction.

Late-emerging difficulties (sometimes called the *Year Four Slump*) occur in children who seem to read well in the early years, only to struggle later on. It used to be thought that late-emerging difficulties were due to weak language skills: low background knowledge, vocabulary, comprehension and reasoning.

More recent research is establishing that late-emerging reading difficulties are like early reading difficulties in that both word reading and language skills are causal, with some children weak just in language, others weak just in word reading, and others weak in both areas.

Studies of late-emerging readers (e.g., Leach, Scarborough & Rescorla, 2003) show that about one third are weak just

in language skills, one third just in word reading and one third in both areas, i.e., two thirds need word reading instruction and two thirds need language skills instruction.

Both early and late emerging reading difficulties can be overcome by effective early intervention in the first years of schooling, by monitoring children's progress in word reading of unfamiliar words and inferential language skills from early primary school.

For word reading, ensure a strong teaching learning focus on both of the two key skills of word reading: avoid teaching just sight words, and make sure you also teach skills for reading unfamiliar words.

Children at risk of late-emerging word reading difficulties are usually successful at learning sight words logographically (as whole visual units) and weak at using phonics to decode unfamiliar words.

They seem to read well for early years' purposes, but this is because most words are one-syllable highly-frequent words that have been learned as sight words, plus the strong picture supports of early reading books make unfamiliar words predictable. This does away with the need to use phonics and decoding skills to read unfamiliar words.

This can result in failure to develop effective skills for reading unfamiliar words. And from Year 2 and 3 on, texts have increasingly weak picture supports and increasingly more unfamiliar words to be decoded, so children with poor skill reading unfamiliar words become increasingly unable to keep up.

Three categories of weak readers: common profiles of strength and weakness in children with reading difficulties. © Susan Giblin, June 2014

These profiles are not mutually exclusive and children may have features in common making it hard to think of categories and sub-categories. They are intended to help you think about the range of difficulties that children may have and how they might be supported.

WORD READING WEAKNESS		COMBINED SKILLS WEAKNESS		LANGUAGE SKILLS WEAKNESS	
Profile	Characteristics	Profile	Characteristics	Profile	Characteristics
Profile 1	Weak in word reading and language skills	Profile 2	Weak in word reading and language skills	Profile 3	Weak in word reading and language skills
Profile 4	Weak in word reading and language skills	Profile 5	Weak in word reading and language skills	Profile 6	Weak in word reading and language skills
Profile 7	Weak in word reading and language skills	Profile 8	Weak in word reading and language skills	Profile 9	Weak in word reading and language skills

FREE RESOURCE

Three Categories of Weak Readers: Meet 7 Children with Reading Difficulties is an Easy Theory handout explaining

- Common profiles of weak reading: you'll recognise your students in the 7 children you'll meet.
- Weakness in word reading, language skills or both areas.
- Early emerging and late emerging reading difficulties.

(We'll refer to these 7 children at times in future newsletters.)

Free Resources!

Each newsletter has free resources available to download from our website, e.g.,

- Free games and Postergames™
- Practical hands-on activities
- Easy Theory handouts
- Tests

* Postergames and charts from Literacy Plus modules are only available for download until the next newsletter is published, so should be downloaded in the short term.

Successful Engaged Learning with Literacy Plus Games

Successful Engaged Learning is **Successful** (reading words correctly) + **Engaged** (active, motivated learning)

At-risk readers with word reading difficulties are vulnerable, often feeling very discouraged about reading. They need carefully scaffolded instruction ensuring high levels of success, while keeping them highly engaged and thinking actively.

The Literacy Plus modules: *Sounds & Vowels* and *Two Vowels Talking* focus on building children's phonics and word reading skills for reading unfamiliar words.

They use games, games and more games to keep children's interest and engagement high. They keep task cognitive load low and children's attention focused on word reading by using single words of specific types in each game.

Sounds & Vowels and *Two Vowels Talking* can be used as a complete program for building word reading of unfamiliar words, or as resources supplementing and complementing your current word reading program. They provide practice with high instructional intensity in enjoyable game form.

Sounds & Vowels builds skill with the six phonological awareness skills for reading, and reading of 10 commonest vowel graphemes using 3 word sets:

- **Consonant Vowel Consonant (CVC)** words using short vowels e.g., hut vip.
- **Consonant cluster words** e.g., risk clasp disp slomp.
- **Words with Bossy-e vowels** e.g., cute, poke, vipe, tobe.

Two Vowels Talking continues on from *Sounds & Vowels*, systematically building skill on words with 19 commonest vowel graphemes, and multisyllabic words:

- **Cry Baby Y: y**
- **When two vowels go walking:**
ai ee ea ie oa
- **R Vowels:** *ar or (er ir ur)*
- **W Vowels:** *aw ew ow*
- **Rainy Day oi Boys:** *ai ay oi oy*
- **Steadmeat's Two ea Sounds:** *ea*
- **OO Vowels:** *oo*
- **OU Vowels:** *ou*
- **Multisyllabic words and rules**

Both modules are packed with resources for helping children build confident word reading skills. Each module can be purchased as a Masterbook with all games included in the books' pages, or as Value Packs which include Masterbooks in photocopiable form, Masterbook games in full colour laminated Postergame form, and card sets as full colour durable Vowel Word Playing Card sets.



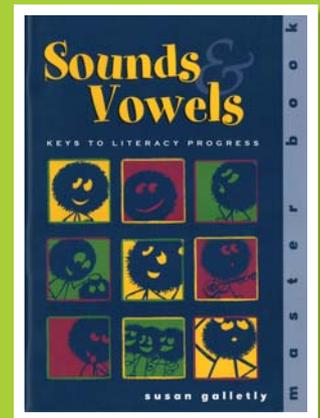
Check out the video explanation for each module on the Literacy Plus website:

- [Sounds & Vowels](#)
- [Two Vowels Talking](#)

25% OFF SALE*

Sounds & Vowels Value Pack - NOW \$462.75

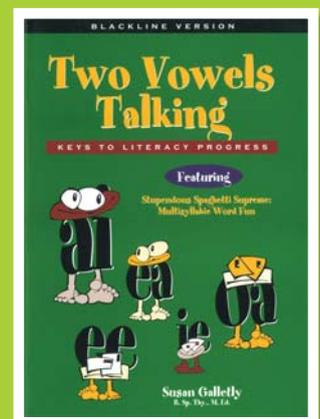
(SAVE \$142.25 off Value Pack and \$342.65 off cost of individual items)



This pack includes the Sounds & Vowels Masterbook, Blackline Student Workbook, Postergames, Wallcharts, Playing Cards and the Literacy Plus CD.

Two Vowels Talking Value Pack - NOW \$516.75

(SAVE \$172.75 off Value Pack and \$512.75 off cost of individual items)



This pack includes the Two Vowels Talking Blackline Masterbook, Postergames, Playing Cards and the Literacy Plus CD.

Our products are sold through Pro-Ed Australia
www.proedaust.com.au

Sale ends 01/03/2015

* 25% off offer for Sounds & Vowels and Two Vowels Talking Value Packs only.

Build Metacognition while Building Reading Skills

Use *Understanding Why* and *Wondering Why* topics to build children's understanding of how they learn

Children learn to read far more effectively when they understand both how they learn and the purpose of different reading tasks and skills.

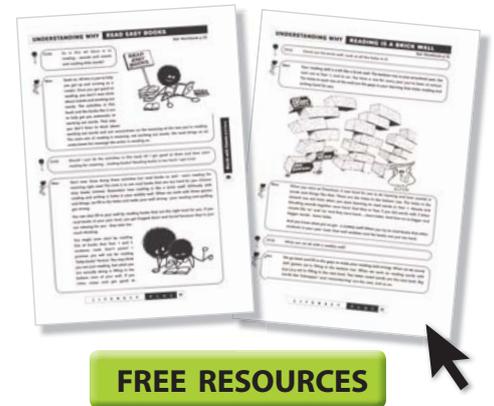
This is particularly important for struggling readers, who are often very confused about why they forget things they've learned, and why it's been hard for them to learn to read.

Literacy Plus mottos build adults' and children's metacognition on how to optimise children's learning. The two Literacy Plus modules, *Sounds & Vowels* and *Two Vowels Talking* include metacognition sections which build children's understanding of how they learn best, and the purpose of different reading tasks and skills.

Read about Literacy Plus mottos and *Sounds*

& *Vowels Understanding Why* sections in *For the Grownups* at the start of the *Sounds & Vowels* Masterbook. The *Understanding Why* sections are listed on p. 31, then are included as separate articles interspersed across the masterbook. Each is a conversation between a child and a professor, to be read with children, ending with a contract, which the children complete when having shown mature understanding by explaining that article's key points.

Two Vowels Talking uses a *Wondering Why* section, pages 53-71, containing one page 'posters' which explain Literacy Plus mottos and key aspects of learning to read. Check out page 25 of *Two Vowels Talking* for a table which lists topics and matches the *Wondering Why* posters to the *Sounds & Vowels* professor and child *Understanding Why* sections.



Two Sounds & Vowels Understanding Why sections are free downloads for this newsletter:

- Reading is a Brick Wall (p. 92-93)
- Read Easy Books (p. 97-99)

You'll find a *Two Vowels Talking Wondering Why* poster page 'Build that Wall Strong. No Wobbles' on the last page of this newsletter.

Pseudowords Build Reading Skills

Build skill for reading unfamiliar words and the syllables of multisyllabic words

Sounds & Vowels and *Two Vowels Talking* both use games with real word and pseudoword versions.

Pseudowords are made-up words which use the orthographic structure of real words, e.g., *vip*, *drusk*, *derp*.

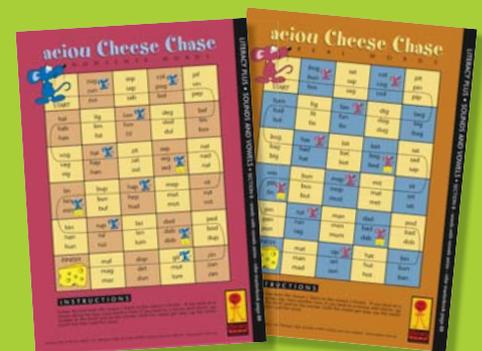
Pseudowords act as a proxy for unfamiliar words and the syllables of multisyllabic words. They help children build powerful word reading skills.

Reading pseudowords builds strong phonics skills plus shows teachers how effective children's phonics skills are: whereas real words can be read either

logographically (whole word sightwords) or by using phonics, the only way a child can read or write a pseudoword is through using phonics skills.

Try these two free games with your students who are still mastering reading of regular CVC words.

Notice how much harder reading the pseudowords is. While all readers are slower at reading pseudowords, children with weak skills reading unfamiliar words are usually extremely weak at reading them. They also benefit greatly from games building word reading using pseudowords.



FREE GAMES

Download two Postergames from *Sounds & Vowels* Section B:

- Aeiou Cheesechase Real Word
- Aeiou Cheesechase Pseudoword

Echo Reading Empowers Text Reading

Improve children's skill and confidence when reading, using gentle effective scaffolding

When children with weak word reading skills read books, the aim of reading a book is to enjoy it, and to want to read another one. Too often, however, children struggle over words, then adults try to help by asking questions re the word's meaning (semantic cues) or syntactic form. This works well for healthy progress readers but poorly for many weak readers.

At-risk readers need time reading successfully, but time spent working out tricky words allocates time to unsuccessful reading. Also, because the child's cup of thinking space is heavily loaded during reading, it's unlikely the child will learn effectively from the discussion.

Time spent focussing on unsuccessful reading and 'lessons' that seem confusing can be discouraging, with children often being increasingly reluctant to read books.

Echo Reading uses the three cueing system (graphophonic, syntactic and semantic cues) in a particularly empowering way, to increase successful reading in at-risk readers. The adult says the hard

words, and keeps the rhythm of the story going, enabling high

levels of time spent reading successfully, with very strong support from semantic and syntactic cues.

As explained in the free download, *Use Echo Reading to Build Successful Engaged Text Reading*, Echo Reading maximises five key aspects of successful book reading:

- 1 The percent of time spent reading words successfully.
- 2 The strength of text language supports for reading.
- 3 Skill using word decoding skills to read unfamiliar words.
- 4 Attention focussed on the meaning of the text.
- 5 Confidence and skill in being an effective book reader.

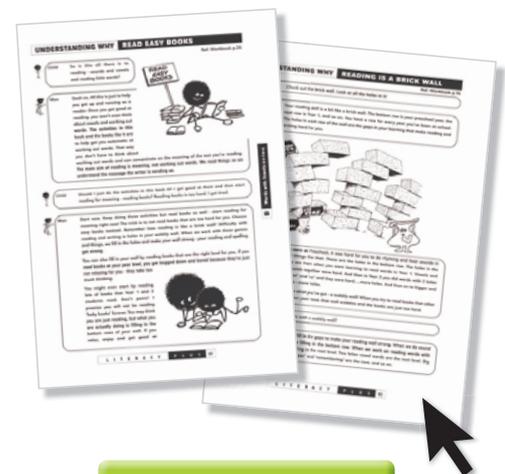
In Echo Reading, adult and child echo each other's reading. For words the child is able to read or likely to be able to read, the adult echoes a fraction of a second behind the child, ready to say all words the child is unlikely to succeed on. For these words, the adult moves ahead and reads the word, while the child echoes the word, or simply hears it and moves on. No word is repeated, and interrupting the flow of the text is avoided wherever possible. Text meaning is further heightened by casual comments at logical pause points, e.g., 'So they've got to the poor dog now. I wonder what's going to happen next.'

With semantic and syntactic cues heightened, word reading (graphophonic cues) is the child's strategy for reading words likely to be read successfully. Match your echoing to individual children's confidence so the

The aim of reading a book is to enjoy it, and to want to read another one.

child is active, not passive, and leads the reading wherever possible.

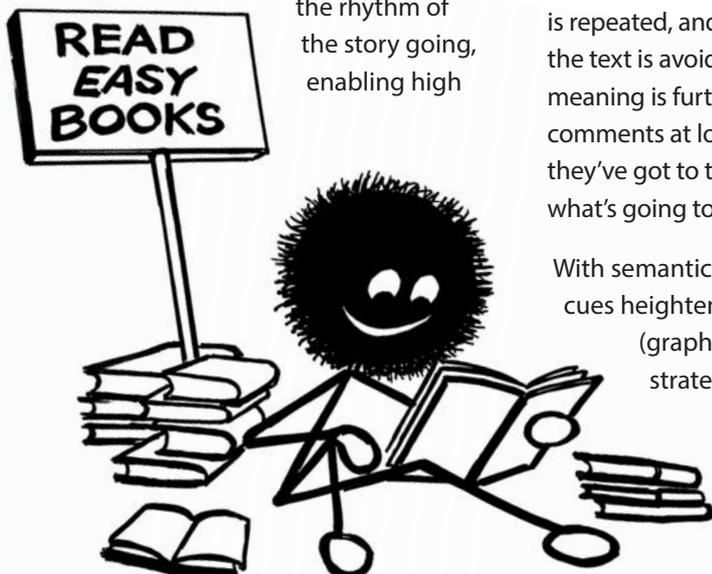
Experiment with Echo Reading. Try it with different children. It's a powerful system maximising meaning cues, and ensuring most reading time is spent on successful reading. Children gain far more from the words they read successfully than the words they struggle on when reading books. By keeping the rhythm going and reducing time spent on difficult words, children read far more words correctly, have working memory free for enjoying the text's meanings, and usually 'enjoy reading the book and want to read another one'.



FREE RESOURCES

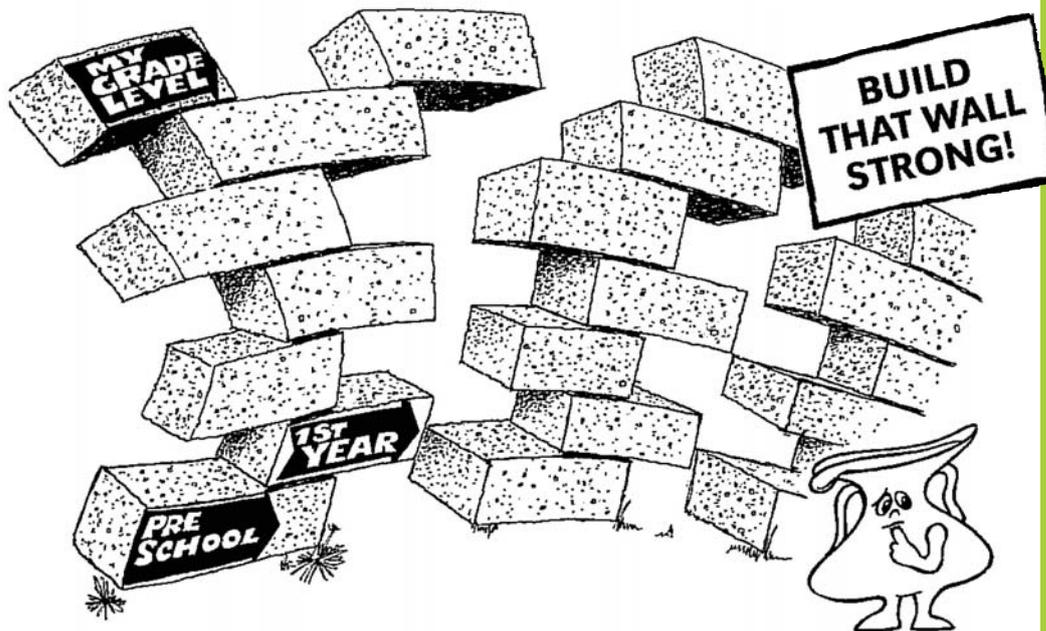
These three downloads focus on empowering children's text reading. One is for adults and two are for use with children:

- *Use Echo Reading to Build Successful Engaged Text Reading*, a handout for teachers and parents
- *Reading is a Brick Wall*, an Understanding Why section from *Sounds & Vowels*, p. 92-93
- *Read Easy Books*, an Understanding Why section from *Sounds & Vowels*, p. 97-99



Build That Wall Strong! NO WOBBLES!

If reading and spelling are tricky for you,
you've probably got a wobbly literacy wall.



Start from the bottom to make your wall strong.
You know how to learn now so it won't take long!

Easy
Books

Sound
Skills

Vowels
& Words

PRACTICE
MAKES
PERFECT

AUTOMATIC!
FANTASTIC!



Watch yourself make
great progress as you fill
in some bricks today.

Next Newsletter

Reading Fun with Common Vowel Graphemes

Our next newsletter is focussed on the topic Reading Fun with Common Vowel Graphemes. It discusses the 29 commonest vowel graphemes, and our commonest vowel sound.

FREE DOWNLOADS will include two Postergames, and a free test useful with children in all year levels: *The Galletly Diagnostic Vowel Word Reading Tests*.

Coming Seminars

Brisbane: March 2015

This brings us to the end of our first newsletter. We hope you've enjoyed reading it and that it's given you food for thought and ideas to try with at-risk readers.

Feel free to share this newsletter with your colleagues or perhaps discuss it at a staff meeting.

Take advantage of our website launch special (25% off Value Packs*) at www.proedaust.com.au

I look forward to our next newsletter.
Kind regards,

Susan Galletly
BSpThy GradDipTeach MEd PhD.

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