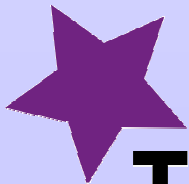


## **The Basic Principles Behind**



**ThatReadingThing**

**for people who don't know they can**

An “older struggling reader” is someone who has reached the age of 10 without being able to to engage in everyday activities which require reading.

At any age, they come to a learning situation with a wide range of

- attitudes towards learning
- educational experiences
- acquired reading skills
- natural ability
- motivation for improving their reading

The following is about what all struggling readers need regardless of what they bring to the learning situation.

Here's a passage from an imaginary GCSE history text.

“One of the lasting effects of the conflict was the drowpatisation of young people.”

For the purpose of this exercise, pretend “drowpatisate” is a common word which means “to lose the right to an education”.

**A struggling reader will do one or all of the following things with the unfamiliar multi-syllable word**

# 1 guess by shape & initial letters

**drowpatisation**

regardless of sense

**dramatisation**

This is the number one strategy employed by older struggling readers. Unfortunately, it is used without thought for meaning. The end result is that the student scans a page of text, says he or she has “read it”, but gets no meaning from it.

## 2 omit

One of the lasting effects of  
the conflict was the

-----

of young people.

Omitting the word equals deleting the meaning of the text. After facing this situation continually, it's easier not to bother with reading at all. Research has shown that even good readers can accurately guess only 10% of deleted content words.

### 3 look for words within words

pat sat on

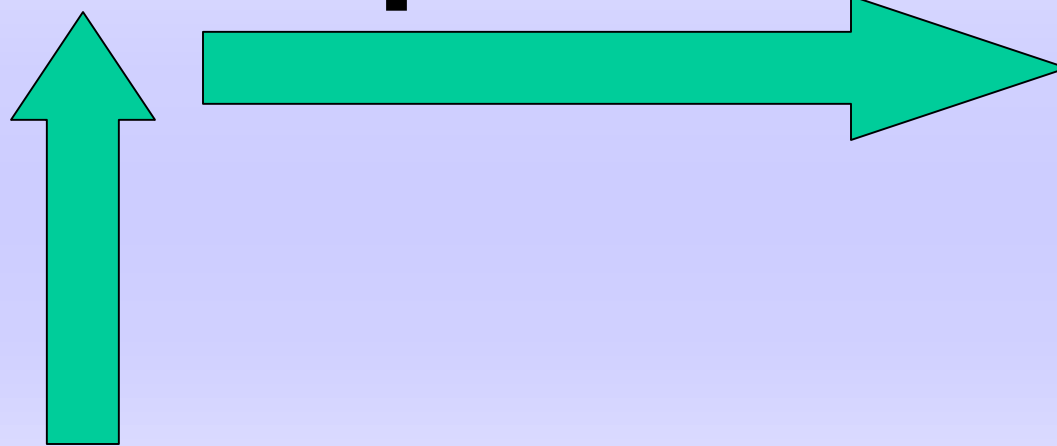
drowpatisation

There is some sense to this strategy when the reader understands what they are looking for. A mature reader could isolate the root from the suffix in order to find the meaning of the word. (drowpatisate + tion) Struggling readers, however, take this to mean looking for any word that they've seen before; hence: "pat sat on". This is virtually never helpful and always discouraging for the struggling reader.

**An accomplished reader will  
bring all of the following things  
to the unfamiliar multi-syllable word**

# 1 orientation

**drowpatisation**



An accomplished reader knows to start at the left and move to the right through the word. This is not something we're born knowing and is not automatic for a reader who is used to guessing by the shape of the word. It usually takes only the point of a pencil and "start here" to get the student oriented.

**2 sounds may be**

**segmented**

(picked out separately)

d r ow p a t i s a tion

**blended**

(put together to form a word)

drowpatisation

All accomplished readers have an understanding that words are made up of sounds but we don't feel as though we read sound by sound because we rarely encounter unfamiliar words. Interestingly, research suggests that we always read sound by sound but do it so quickly that we feel as though we are simply recognising the word.

# 3 syllables

**drow pa ti sa tion**

Struggling readers don't relate speaking to reading and spelling. They all speak in syllables but usually try to recognise a long word as a whole object. Spelling is attempted by reciting letter names then checking to see it looks approximately correct. Remember is often spelled <remember>.

**4** a sound can be spelled with 2 or more letters (d**row**patisation)

**ll** in bell

**ck** in back

**air** in chair

**eigh** in eight

Without understanding this principle, a struggling reader will try “sound out” the word “chair” by saying each letter as a separate sound.

“cuh” “huh” “a” “i” “ruh”

This can also be the result of partial or poor phonics teaching.

## 5 A letter or letters can:

look the same but sound different

### Spelling Clones

drowp**a**tis**a**tion

<a>

**c**an    **t**able    **f**ather    **w**ater

A struggling reader needs to practice encountering the various pronunciations of letters or groups of letters.

## 6 A letter or letters can:

sound the same but look different

### Sound Clones

more common

“ae”

less common

tape play

they weigh

sail table

break vein

A struggling reader is probably a struggling speller and needs to discover the most common ways to spell the 44 or so sounds of English.

**7** patterns – We all thought:

**“ayshun”** at the end because we know the words:

n**ation**

rel**ation**

specific**ation**

popul**ation**

**BUT: r**ation**-** patterns aren't rules

Experienced readers have a wealth of knowledge to draw on when it comes to reading and spelling. We need to give developing readers the chance to discover the patterns of English through exposure to both controlled and “real” text.

**Older struggling readers need:**

## **to change their minds about reading**

- Reading is initially about speech and sounds
- Readers use their ears as well as their eyes
- English is a code which can be decoded for reading and encoded for spelling.

# **new strategies to replace guessing**

**The best way to attack an unfamiliar word:**

- **decode by reading sounds**
- **say the sounds and listen for a word**
- **check for meaning in context.**

# confidence

- All learning needs to be both challenging and safe. An honestly earned sense of accomplishment leads to a willingness to take a risk. Reading is risky for most of our students.
- “The Deal” is that students don’t have to know anything that they haven’t learned on the programme. The result is that they know they won’t be “dropped” and always exceed expectations.

## age-appropriate materials

Nearly all older struggling readers have a memory store of words that they “just know”. Therefore,

- a 5 year old might need a sentence such as:  
“A fat cat did run up a hill.”
- but an older reader can deal with more natural sentences like, “Fran was upset. She had to admit that she had lost her bag.”
- multi-syllable (long) words are essential from the 1<sup>st</sup> lesson.

# to learn by **DOING** rather than listening

Lessons need to be FAST-PACED and EXPLICIT to help the learner to discover the English code by using it in a variety of contexts.

building with charts & puzzle pieces

writing and saying the sounds

spelling

sorting by sounds

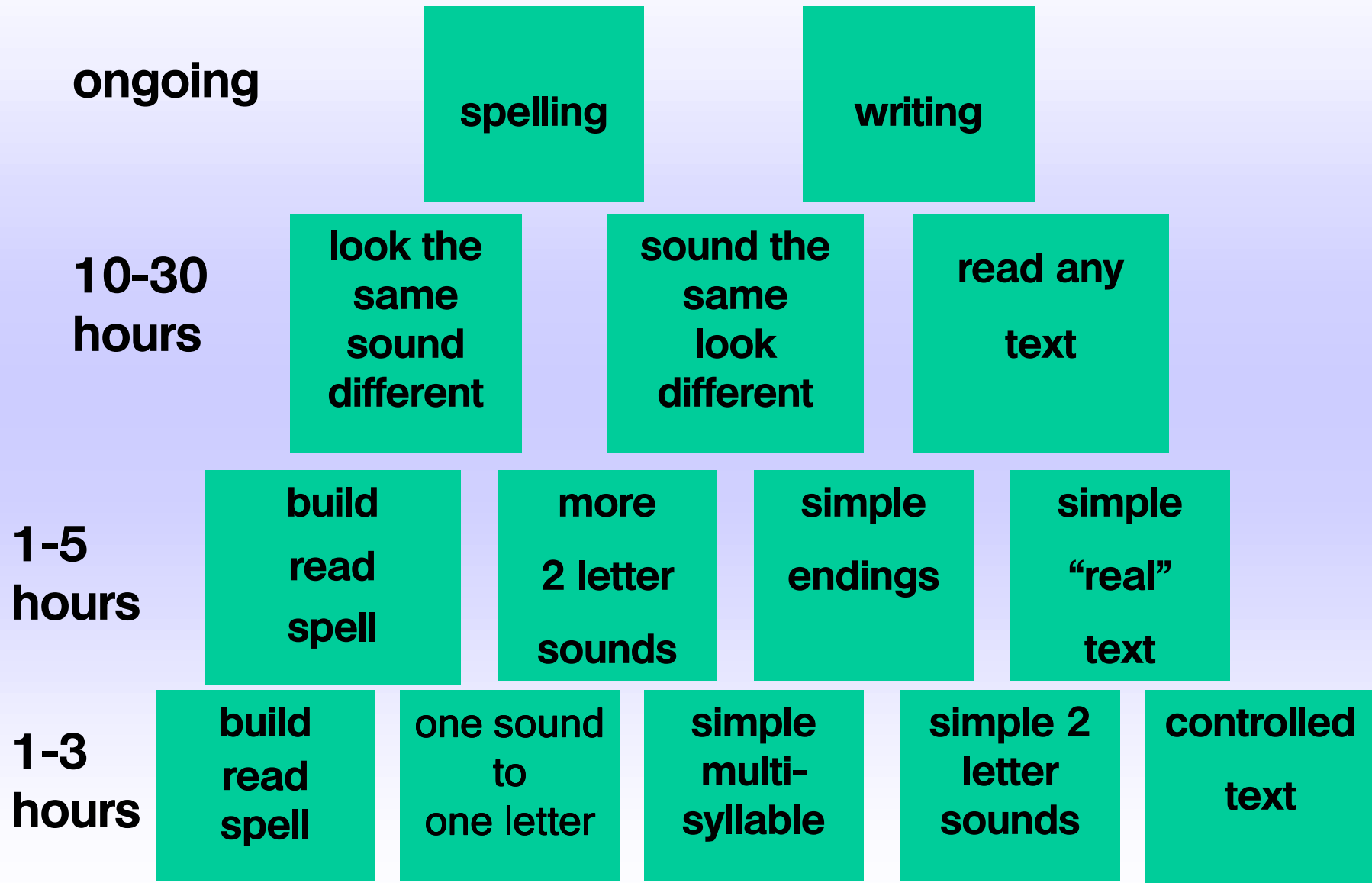
sorting by spellings

using new skills and information

**READING**

**WRITING**

# systematic teaching a bit at a time from the bottom up



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