Abstract:

Many students who experience reading difficulties develop a self-concept of themselves as poor readers. Word identification is difficult for them and they depend on intervention for assistance. The learners search for meaning is minimal and their reading is often passive. They seldom re-read, self correct or engage with the text. Many of these students who experience such reading difficulties do not believe they can be successful as readers. The reading attitude of these students requires change and transformation. When interactions with text are meaningful and thoughtful, students perceive themselves as readers. Independence and self-efficacy are built.

The present study investigates the effect of explicit praise on student self-efficacy when students self-monitor during prose reading. Three Year One students were targeted in a two week program devised to enhance their belief of themselves as successful readers. The program utilized the teaching strategies of Marie Clay.

Through analysis of pre and post-test questionnaire responses and through the analysis of Running Records it was shown that the intervention program increased the self-efficacy and ability of students to self-monitor.

The implications for a strategy that can improve self-efficacy of students are evident. Teachers can affect students by providing explicit praise and feedback when assisting them to engage with texts by effectively, demonstrating and supporting their thinking by encouraging self-talk and assisting them to develop a positive self-concept as a reader.

Introduction:

A successful entry into the world of reading makes a child feel confident and intriniscally motivated (Westwood, 2001). A good start where they experience success will compound into further gains and positive learning experiences. Contradictory to this, failure quickly causes frustration, loss of confidence and avoidance (Westwood, 2001). Students believe they will never master reading, no matter how much extra help they are given. They often become passive and dependent learners, unwilling to take a risk and needing to be told what to do at every step (Graves, Jules and Graves 1998, as cited in Westwood, 2001). Educators need to be acutely aware of each student's emotional response to reading in order to assist the student to maximize his/her learning by becoming a confident, effective and self-regulated learner.

Reading is a complex process that requires us to use three cueing systems; graphophonic, syntactic and semantics (Clay, 1993). Students only using the cueing system of graphophonic do not self-monitor as they read. Assisting students to self-monitor meaning and fostering an independence in the use of the three cueing systems is an effective way of assisting students in becoming more strategic and proficient readers. Strategy instruction must be introduced to students in such a way as to bridge the gap between what is read and the ability to transact with the text, peers and teachers as they read (Casteel, Isom & Jordan, 2000). This metacognitive process transfers the control to the students allowing them to realize their ability to self-monitor. During strategy instruction the teacher needs to explain procedures, emphasizing what the strategies are and how they are helpful.

Attention to strategy instruction alone is not enough however, to produce maximum reading growth (Casteel, Isom & Jordan, 2000). Enhancement of student beliefs about their ability to read text, select and use strategies and monitor their own reading is also vital. Self-efficacy is the personal belief that students have about their ability to succeed at a particular task (Mc Cabe & Margolis,

2001). In addition, Bandura, (1977) proposes that self-efficacy affects whether or not an individual will attempt certain behaviours, will persist when meeting obstacles and will exert persevering efforts. Improving student self-efficacy assists reading development. Students who feel efficacious about learning will be motivated to use strategies and self-monitor.

Positive reading efficacy, the belief that one can be successful at reading, is vital to become an active reader (Casteel, Isom & Jordan, 2000). Children's self-perception of their reading ability impacts on the individual's overall orientation to the reading process. Many students displaying poor reading skills have low self-efficacy. They have little confidence in their ability to succeed in reading and little sense of themselves as readers. They avoid reading or read with little reading involvement. They may also experience anxiety when reading aloud in the classroom. Often these students read very little during or outside of school.

It is important to note that there is a difference between the construct of self-efficacy and the term "confidence" and this was taken into account in the construct of the Self-Efficacy in Reading Scale test. Confidence refers to strength of belief and self-efficacy includes both an affirmation of a capability and the strength of that belief.

In order to improve self-efficacy a major task of the teacher is to talk with the student about the strategies used to derive meaning from the text and *attribute active reading to effective strategy use and effort* (Schunk and Zimmerman, 1997 as cited in Walker, 2000). The teacher should model a self-questioning process so that the student will follow the teachers modeling and learn their own self-scripts about how they should solve the reading task. As the student articulates their reading actions the teacher supports their thinking by giving them hints and encouraging them to talk through their thinking. It is important that during the self-talk, students will name the strategies

they are using and reflect on the processes used. During reading events when the student utilizes self-talk they become an independent learner and begin to think of themselves as a reader. The reader controls their own reading and talks through their understandings. Self-efficacy operates through the procedure of self-talk.

The self-efficacy of students can also be improved by the verbal conveyance of positive appraisals that they possess the capabilities to master certain activities. The provision of explicit praise and specific positive feedback regarding performance when students have utilized effective strategies and skills; strengthens and sustains their efforts. As readers experience success, receive positive reinforcement and build self-efficacy, they are more likely to engage positively in reading situations, increase their skills and learn additional strategies. There have been studies of self-efficacy in which verbal acknowledgement of student performance has been used. One such study was conducted by Fall and McLeod (2001) where the relationship between children's self-efficacy, as measured on a Self-Efficacy scale and intervention of six sessions of play therapy was determined. The study showed that unless children believed that they had caused the desired outcomes, they had little incentive to act. Also noted in the research was the necessity of teachers having knowledge of student acquisition of self-efficacy for learning and about adjusting teaching methods to maximize efficacy in students (Bandura, 1997; Schunk, 1986 as cited in Fall & McLeod 2001).

Similarly, McCabe and Margolis (2001) discussed the crucial need to assist poor readers by developing their belief that *they can do well in reading if they make the effort to learn and apply what they are taught*. Without such a self-efficacious attitude, students will make only minimal effort and progress. Their article suggested struggling students be provided with an *informed, focused, systematic, persistent, emotionally supportive and carefully monitored* program and they include twenty-two practical suggestions for teachers to implement. One of their major suggestions

was to provide students with *frequent*, *immediate feedback and assistance that is sensitive*, *positive* and *discreet*.

The present investigation aims to extend earlier research by examining the effect of explicit praise on student self-efficacy when they self-monitor during prose reading. The variables under investigation in this study are reading self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; McCabe & Margolis, 2001), self-monitoring strategies (Clay, 1993) and praise (McCabe & Margolis, 2001). Based on this review of literature , the following prediction is offered: Providing explicit praise when students self-monitor during prose reading increases self-efficacy.

Method:

Design:

This study uses a case study OXO design in which the improvement in self-efficacy is measured following teaching intervention. Students were given explicit praise when they demonstrated self-monitoring strategies during prose reading.

Participants:

The study took place in a primary school in an outer eastern suburb of Melbourne. The school participates in the CLaSS project. The three participants were all Year One students; two females and one male. At entry to the project the students were operating at Instructional Reading Level 18. They have not reached the teaching target of Level 20 for their year level and all three students are reluctant, passive readers with below class average reading ability (Level 24). They have not had access to the Reading Recovery program, but have received Literacy support on a weekly basis in a small focus group with the Literacy coordinator for the past two terms.

The students demonstrate poor self-efficacy in that they avoid reading, have a low sense of self worth and compare themselves with the more competent students. It is likely that this is accentuated because the students are in a Year 1/2 composite class with bright Year 2 students.

Child 1 was pre-tested and permission was obtained for intervention. He was then absent from school due to illness and missed all eight teaching sessions. He is therefore used as the Control group for this research. His Record of Oral Language score of 22 (taken in November) was considered *at risk*.

Child 2 is a student with an ESL background (second generation Italian). She displays poor sentence structure in conversation; using incorrect tense and grammatical structures often. Her parents were very enthusiastic for her to participate in the project.

Child 3 is a student displaying "learned helplessness" (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). She depends on others to support her reading. She relies heavily on teacher and parent intervention when reading and displays poor self-management skills. She has a high level of absenteeism and is late for school, often arriving when the Literacy teaching session is more than half way through. Her parents gave consent but were reluctant and hesitant for her to participate in the project, thinking it unnecessary that she required assistance or remediation.

Materials:

The following materials were used in this study:

Self-efficacy test (Adapted from Chapman & Tunmer, 2000) (See Appendix).
 This was used as both Pre and Post Test. This scale included 26 items, measuring the sub-scales of Reading Self-efficacy (9 items), Reading Attitude (5 items), Reading Self-monitoring (8 items), Reading Recognition (3 items) and Reading Avoidance (2 items).
 Students were required to answer 'yes' or 'no' to each statement.
 For the purpose of analysis, scores on these sub-scales were re-coded as follows:

- Reading Self-efficacy level: Low = 8-10 Medium = 11-13 High = 14–16;
- Reading Attitude level: Low = 5-6 Medium = 7-8 High = 9-10;
- Reading Self-monitoring level: Low = 8-10 Medium = 11-13 High = 14–16;
- Reading Recognition/praise level: Low = 3-4, High = 5-6;
- Reading Avoidance level: Low = 2, Medium = 3, High = 4.
 - Running Records Sheets (Clay, 1993). These sheets were used to ascertain each child's Instructional Reading Level.
 - The following texts were used as reading material for the students:

Child 2	Child 3
Session 1: Choose Me (Longman) Level 14	Session 1: In The Zoo (Reading 360) Level 12
Session 2: When Dad Goes Fishing (Cambridge) Level 16	<u>Session 2:</u> Granny's Teeth (Cambridge) Level 16
Session 3: The Puppy Chase (Cambridge) Level 17	Session 3: When Dad Goes Fishing (Cambridge) Level 16
Session 4: Sam's Snacks (Cambridge) Level 17	Session 4: Apples (Cambridge) Level 18
Session 5: The Little Elephant Who Liked To Play (Reading 360) Level 18	Session 5: Nibbles (Cambridge) Level 18
Session 6: The Ugly Duckling (Alphakids) Level 20	Session 6: The Treasure Cave (Cambridge) Level 20
Session 7: Fun With Magnets (Nelson Focus) Level 19	Session 7: Jake, the Grumpy Cat (Scholastic) Level 20
Session 8: The Treasure Cave (Cambridge) Level 20	Session 8: Google Eyes (Crackers) Level 20

- Prompt charts were used to cue the student to identify the strategies they have utilized.
- Teaching Focus Sheets were used to provide a record of the explicit praise provided and teaching foci.
- Smiley Stamper/Highlighter texta
- Document wallets for each student.

Procedure:

Pre and Post testing procedures comprised the administering of the adapted Self Efficacy in Reading Scale.

Running Records were also administered prior to intervention commencement and during each session. Table 1 (see Results) records student texts, text levels, error rate, accuracy and self-correction rates.

The intervention procedures were conducted with each student individually. Sessions lasted for approximately 20-25mins and were undertaken during the morning Literacy block within the classroom. Interruptions were kept to a minimum.

In **Session 1** the student was asked to select a few books from the Home Reading boxes that they had read previously, had enjoyed and would like to share with the teacher.

The student then read these books aloud and the teacher recorded observations of the child's reading on the focus sheet. No Running Record was taken at this session.

The prompt chart was introduced to the child and then they were given a wallet to store their chart and books.

Sessions 2-8 followed the procedures outlined below:

Activity	Task Description	Time
Prompt chart	Teacher and student discuss prompt chart.	1-2 mins.
	Cue student to think about good strategies they already use when reading. <i>"What do you do when you are reading?"</i>	
	Direct student's attention to strategy that will be practiced in today's reading. <i>"What new reading action will you try this time?"</i>	

SESSION OUTLINE

Easy familiar reading	 Student reads prose aloud: Revisit briefly previous days/ familiar text. Read new text Teacher takes running record of new text. Teacher takes notes of relevant observations on teaching focus sheet. Did the student segment, blend, correct errors, read reversals, repeat, re-run, hesitate, look at the pictures, self-correct? 	4-6 mins.
Positive feedback	After reading, teacher provides explicit praise for at least one self -monitoring strategy that has been used effectively. Use positive cues from focus sheet and any other relevant behaviours identified in running record: "I like the way youpoint to the words when you are reading" "look at the pictures to help you with your reading" "think about the story before you start reading" "look at the start of the word and make the first sound" "fix your own mistakes" "make sure your reading makes sense" "look at the end of the word to check it is right" "go back to the start of the sentence to get help" "make your reading sound like talking" "read with expression" "think about the story when you are reading"	2-3 mins.
Selfmonitoring	Cue student to verbalise what successful strategies they used whilst reading: "As I read I listen to what I say and make a picture in my mind" "As I read I ask myself "Does this make sense?" "As I read I think about what will happen next" "As I read I think about what I will do if I can't recognize a word" "If I make a mistake, I can re-read" Cue the student to tell why the use of the strategy helped.	1-2 mins.
Prompt chart	Teacher cues student to think about the positive actions they are taking while reading: "What reading actions did you take today?" "What did you do when you were reading?" "What are you getting better at? Build positive feelings about the reading. Student record positive actions on prompt chart by using a smiley stamp beside the reading action.	1-2 mins.

Teaching, coaching and modeling the strategies	Draw students attention to one strategy that they may be making consistent errors with or that requires specific attention. Encourage problem-solving. <i>"There was a tricky part on this page. Can you find it? What was it? Does that make sense? Does it sound right? How can we make it sound right?"</i> Teacher records on focus sheet the new foci for next session.	1-2 mins.
Orientation to new text	Teacher introduces new text to student. This will be read in the following session. Encourage the student to think about their thinking. Cue the student to think about the front cover, title, what they already know about the topic: "What do think the story will be about? What does the title tell you? What do the illustrations tell you? What do you know about the topic already? Cue the student to tell what they use to make the predictions.	1-2 mins.
Analysis	Teacher analyses Running Record to gain further clarification of strategies being used by the student. Plan instruction and context of next session.	3-5 mins.

Each day in sessions 2-8, teacher selects the new text for the following day, carefully matching it to the teaching focus of the next session.

The teaching focus sheets and daily Running Records provided insight into the reading actions and strategies the student was using. They also portray the improvement in reading ability that occurred as instruction and praise occurred. (see Appendix for focus sheets, observations, and student prompt charts.)

Results:

Student performance is described in six sections:

- 1) Self assessment of Reading Recognition
- 2) Reading accuracy, level, error rate and self-correction rate
- 3) Self assessment of Reading Self-Monitoring

- 4) Self assessment of Reading Attitude
- 5) Self assessment of Reading Avoidance
- 6) Self assessment of Reading Self-Efficacy

The dimension of Reading Recognition was structured to reflect student self-assessment of their performance in the eyes of others; and related to the desire to be favourably regarded by the teacher. Trends of the group are indicated in Figure 1.

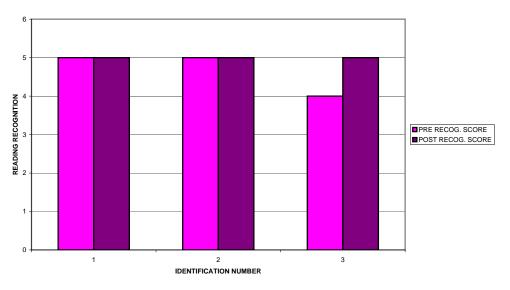


FIGURE 1. READING RECOGNITION SCORES

This area alone reflected little change between pre and post testing for all students. All other categories reflected improvement in the measures. Student 3 made some improvement, however only minimal. Students 1 and 2 remained at the same level. It is considered that the students did not improve markedly here, as the attitude or regard of others (teachers or peers) was of lesser significance to them compared to their own self-concept.

Data recording each student's reading accuracy, reading level, error rate and self-correction rate (Table 1) was collected daily through the taking of Running Records (Clay, 1993).

Table 1: Record of student reading

	OL'ILI	C1:110	01:11:2
	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3
Pre test	Apples	Nibbles	Apples
	(Cambridge)	(Cambridge)	(Cambridge)
	Level:18	Level:18	Level:18
	Error rate: 1:11	Error rate: 1:16	Error rate: 1:10
	Accuracy: 90%	Accuracy: 94%	Accuracy: 90 %
	Self-correction rate:	Self-correction rate:	Self-correction rate:
	1:3.6	nil	nil
Session 1		Choose Me	In The Zoo (Reading
bession 1		(Longman)	360)
		Level:14	Level:12
		Level.14	Level.12
Session 2		When Dad Goes	Granny's Teeth
50351011 2		Fishing	(Cambridge)
		(Cambridge)	Level:16
		Level:16	Error rate:1:40
		Error rate: 1:20	
			Accuracy: 97%
		Accuracy: 95%	Self-correction rate:
		Self-correction	1:2
a i a		rate:1:2	
Session 3		The Puppy Chase	When Dad Goes
		(Cambridge)	Fishing
		Level:17	(Cambridge)
		Error rate: 1:16.6	Level:16
		Accuracy: 94%	Error rate: 1:16.9
		Self-correction rate:	Accuracy: 93%
		1:4	Self-correction rate:
			nil
Session 4		Sam's Snacks	Apples
		(Cambridge)	(Cambridge)
		Level:17	Level:18
		Error rate: 1:18.5	Error rate:1:19.6
		Accuracy: 94	Accuracy: 94%
		Self-correction rate:	Self-correction rate:
		1:3	1:2
Session 5		Who Stole the Fish?	Nibbles
		(Cambridge)	(Cambridge)
		Level:19	Level:18
		Error rate: 1:14.8	Error rate: 1:31.7
		Accuracy: 93	Accuracy: 97%
		Self-correction rate:	Self-correction rate:
		nil	nil
Session 6		The Ugly Duckling	The Treasure Cave
		Alphakids	(Cambridge)
		Level:20	Level:20
		Error rate: 1:14.7	Error rate: 1:11.4
		Accuracy: 93%	Accuracy: 90%
		Self-correction rate:	Self-correction rate:
		nil	1: 21
Session 7		Fun With Magnets	Jake, the Grumpy Cat
		(Nelson Focus)	(Scholastic)
		Level: 1:19	Level:20
		Error rate: 19.5	Error rate: 1:12.8
		Accuracy: 95%	Accuracy: 92%
		-	
		Self-correction	Self-correction rate:
0		rate:1:2	1:13
Session 8		The Treasure Cave	Google Eyes
		(Cambridge)	(Crackers)

		Level:20	Level:20
		Error rate: 1:20	Error rate: 1:14.4
		Accuracy: 95%	Accuracy: 93%
		Self-correction rate:	Self-correction rate:
		1:2	1:3
Post test	Fishing Off The	Mrs Bubble's Baby	The Wind and the
	Wharf (Ready To	(Ready To Read)	Sun (PM)
	Read)	Level: 20	Level: 21
	Level: 17	Error rate: 1:16	Error rate: 1:13.9
	Error rate: 1:14.4	Accuracy: 94%	Accuracy: 92%
	Accuracy: 93%	Self-correction rate:	Self-correction rate:
	Self-correction rate:	1:6	nil
	1:4		

Student 1 (Control group) was absent for all intervention sessions and made no significant improvement in his reading ability. He talked throughout his reading making comments such as: "oh, this is hard" " I can't work that out" " I don't know that word, can you tell me?" His Running Records demonstrated that he did not monitor his own reading or read for meaning. When he inserted errors that did not make sense, student 1 did not re-read or self-correct often. His errors were primarily initial visual. His reading level remained at between Instructional 17-18 over the intervention period.

The data of the other two students, on the contrary, indicate significant improvement in reading level and reading accuracy. Both students made significant gains. Student 2 progressing from Instructional level 18 to level 20 and Student 3 from level 18 to level 21. They began to strategically apply self-monitoring strategies, self-correct, re-read, use punctuation and read with improved fluency and expression. They both used the prompt chart effectively to articulate the strategies they had used and could also identify an area they required assistance in. Their use of self-talk increased dramatically. Figure 2 shows the pre- and post-test results for reading self-monitoring. Once these two students learnt to apply a few key strategies well, their skills as readers increased. Both Students 2 and 3 were enthusiastic to attend each session. Figure 3 shows the pre- and post-test results for reading attitude. They no longer avoided reading tasks and were actively

engaged in all reading sessions as reflected in their post-testing results. Figure 4 shows the pre- and post-test results for reading avoidance.

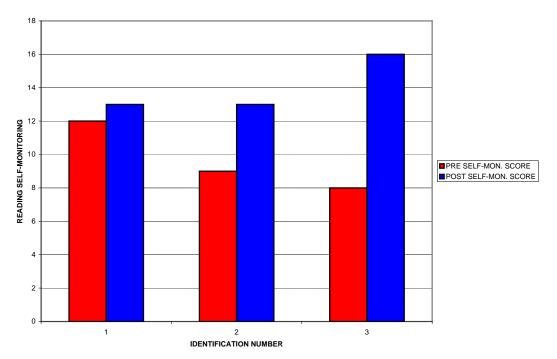


FIGURE 2. READING SELF-MONITORING SCORES

FIGURE 3. READING ATTITUDE SCORES

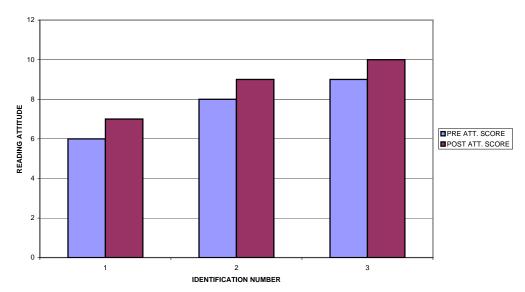
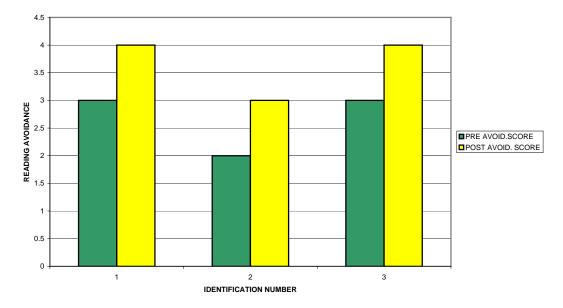


FIGURE 4. READING AVOIDANCE SCORES



As their competence improved, intrinsically and extrinsically motivated, student efficacy beliefs improved and increased. Student 3 also began coming to class on time as she became more motivated.

Initially, all three students were rated as medium to low on the scale of self-efficacy. Added to their reading improvement, the dimension and the pleasure of receiving a tangible form of success

contributed to significant increase in their self-assessment scores of self-efficacy. In the post-test phase students demonstrated improvements in self-efficacy, as shown in Figure 5. Students 1 and 3 recorded as high and student 2 as medium. Noteworthy is the point, that even though Student 1 did not undergo the research treatment, an interview with his mother revealed that the child has recently been working with a private tutor, two times a week, in preparation for the family's relocation in December to the U.S.A. This is a probable cause of his improvement in self-efficacy as he had been receiving target teaching to strengthen his academic skills.

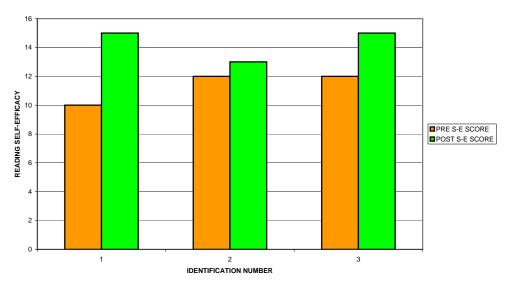


FIGURE 5. READING SELF-EFFICACY SCORES

Trends for the group indicate that students who participated in the intervention made significant progress in self-monitoring and subsequently developed an improved self-efficacy. This suggests that as the students received regular explicit praise their subsequent reading of texts demonstrated greater use of meaning cues, self-monitoring strategies and self-talk, therefore supporting the prediction that students would develop an improved self-efficacy.

Discussion:

The data collected in this study support the previous research by Casteel, Isom and Jordan (2000), Fall and McLeod (2001) and McCabe and Margolis (2001); that teachers can build student selfefficacy by providing feedback and support, specific to performance. Therefore, the prediction made for this study was supported. Students receiving positive comments that are focused, timely and encouraging will promote attention to correcting errors, persistence and the employing of simple self-monitoring steps. As stated in McCabe and Margolis (2001), encouraging comments that provide important information can transform pessimistic mindsets into optimistic expectations.

This study has several practical applications for teaching practice:

- Students who do experience reading difficulties could be provided with ways to selfevaluate their own reading and the self-monitoring of their reading. Specific, small goals could be devised and set.
- 2. Teachers could provide a model of providing explicit, positive feedback, which may prompt student use of *similar* self-talk.
- 3. Students engaged in relevant, achievable tasks that assist in building personal beliefs about competency can achieve success.

One of the unexpected and interesting outcomes of the study was the outstanding improvement made by both students who participated in the intervention but more particularly by Student 3. It is obvious that the daily, individual attention and instruction provided during the intervention acted as a catalyst; raising the reading ability, use of strategic reading actions and self-efficacy of the student. If this student could be given the opportunity to continue receiving intervention, perhaps in Reading Recovery, she may very quickly accelerate to the class average. Indicated in the results of the study are some possible directions that are pertinent to follow up. These include the provision for all three of the students to receive additional diagnosis and remediation in phonemic awareness. Running Records taken, demonstrate poor segmenting and blending skills. Primarily there is much evidence of use of initial visual clues when decoding vocabulary. The students are prevented from automatic and confident identification of words. The provision of assistance in learning these skills would lead also to greater "thinking space" being left available for reading actively with meaning, engagement and understanding.

Variations to the intervention that may be useful could include the use of introducing student models who are able to verbalize the strategies they use. This may act as a prompt and reinforcer of success in reading.

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