Explicit teaching of syllabification strategies in reluctant readers in Grade 4 improves prose reading.

**TEACHING STRATEGIES**

The following sets of lessons aimed to improve the student's ability to identify, segment and blend syllables in multi-syllabic words with a closed short vowel and silent e syllable pattern. The reading behavior targeted relates to the word level cell in the Multiple Levels of Text Processing model of reading. It utilized their ability to recognize letter clusters and recode efficiently, segment words into functional units and match text word with stored letter cluster knowledge. It also tried to instill in the students a belief about why it is important to work out words.

**Lesson 1:**

| Introduce | Review the closed vowel syllable patterns and remind students that there are many closed vowel patterns and in each one the vowel usually makes the short vowel sound  
| in (vc) |  
| pin (cvc) |  
| inn (double consonant vcc) |  
| ink (consonant blend vcc) |  
| pink (cvcc) |  
| inch (vccc) |  
| clinch (ccvccc) |  
| splat (cccvcc) |  
| splash (cccvc) |  
| 5 mins |  
| Model | Review two-syllable words made up of closed vowel pattern syllables e.g. tablet, bandit, picnic  
| Model | the circle and split strategy with each word and practise the pronunciation with students  
| 2 mins |  
| Model | Then write single syllables that have the silent e pattern on the board.  
| Remind students that this pattern usually makes a long vowel sound.  
| Practise pronunciation of each word: bake, mice, Pete  
| 1 min |  
| Scaffolding | Today you are going to build on what you already know about the closed vowel pattern and the silent e pattern. You are going to learn how to read and write words that have a combination of a closed vowel pattern syllable with a silent e pattern syllable  
| 1 min |  
| Model | Display poem “The Umpire’s Advice” on A3 sheet or overhead projector  
| Only show the title.  
| Read the title and summary to the students.  
| Select the word umpire from the title and write on another sheet of paper.  
| I am going to break this word into syllables using the same circle and split strategy when we worked with two syllable words that had the closed vowel pattern.  
| First circle all vowels to make sure I have a vowel in each syllable. Then split the word between the m and p consonants. This will give two syllables.  
| Circle the vowels and draw a line between the consonants as you speak.  
| Say: These are the two syllables I have segmented. I am going to underline the closed vowel with a dot and the silent e syllable with a line. When I read the syllable I will use what I already know about the vowel sounds. When I say the syllable with the closed vowel pattern, I will say the short vowel sound and when I say the syllable with the silent e pattern, I will say the long vowel sound. I now blend these two syllables together to read the word correctly.  
| Ask: What do you notice that is different about the silent e pattern syllable than the other syllable? (It has two vowels) What do you know about the sound of the second vowel in the syllable? (It is silent)  
| Write the word backstroke on the board. Repeat the above procedure to break the word into syllables. Explain what you are doing carefully, because there are five consonants between two vowels. Compare the similarities and differences between the words. | 20 mins |
### Lesson 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>Review circle and split strategy with the words umpire and backstroke and question children on whether the vowel makes a short or long sound and ask them to give reasons why. Make a chart HOW TO BREAK WORDS INTO SYLLABLES.</td>
<td>5 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>Now we are going to look at a more difficult word. It has three syllables. It seems more difficult because it has more syllables, but the same rules apply. Write the word compensate on the board. Say: There are some three-syllable words with a silent e pattern and two closed vowel syllable patterns. They follow the same pattern as the other words we have looked at. The only difference is that the three-syllable words have an extra closed vowel syllable at the beginning. You break these syllables in the same way. Demonstrate circle and spit strategy.</td>
<td>5 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multisensory Activities</td>
<td>If students still have difficulty working out how many syllables try using multisensory activities such as clapping or tapping. As well you could them to use a mirror. Hold the mirror in front of them and say a two syllable word. Their mouth should open wider when they say a vowel sound. Count how many times this happens and this is how many syllables there are in the word. Similarly you can get the students to put their hand under their jaw. Their jaw will move downwards with each vowel sound. Count how many times this happens and this is how many vowels sounds and syllables there are in the words.</td>
<td>5 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shared</td>
<td>Further demonstrate and teach by writing illustrate and infantile on the board. Get the children to volunteer to circle the vowels and split the syllables. Then pronounce each syllable together and blend them into the word. Remind students that double consonants such as ll in illustrate must stay together.</td>
<td>2 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read To</td>
<td>Read the poem The Umpire's Advice to students. Ask them to listen for two-syllable words with a closed vowel pattern syllable and a silent e pattern syllable.</td>
<td>2 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shared</td>
<td>After completing the reading have volunteers one at a time come to the poem and use a highlighter to mark examples of multi-syllabic words that have the pattern just taught. Read poem again, inviting students to join in. Discuss the plot</td>
<td>5 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent Reading and Practise</td>
<td>Students read the poem by themselves. Copy the words highlighted on the class poem and then practise the circle-and-split strategy on each one. Share your paper with a partner and compare how you broke into syllables separately and blending them into words.</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
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### Lesson 3

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>Re-read the poem The Umpire's Advice. Review the multi-syllabic pattern referring to chart made previously Identify multi-syllabic words with the syllable pattern taught. Write on a chart or make a word wall. Ask students to volunteer to practise circle-and-split strategy on chart of words.</td>
<td>5 mins 10 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apply and assess</td>
<td>Ask children to write words on paper with the syllable pattern taught (from poem and on)</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Articulation</td>
<td>Ask students what helped them to remember the words.</td>
<td>5 mins</td>
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**Lesson 4:**

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<tr>
<th>Review and Articulation</th>
<th>Display Poem <em>The Umpire’s Advice</em> and ask students why we highlighted some words. Students articulate the multi-syllabic pattern taught. If they do not then you may need to demonstrate the circle-and-split strategy.</th>
<th>2 mins</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Introduce <em>Ignite</em> by giving students a brief synopsis of the story.</td>
<td>1 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify word patterns</td>
<td>Cut the story into paragraphs. Give students different paragraphs and ask them to identify multi-syllabic words that have the closed vowel and silent e pattern. Cut out these words and stick onto word chart or word wall.</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apply and practise</td>
<td>Students volunteer to demonstrate the circle-and-split strategy using the chart made previously as a prompting tool if required. Group practises pronunciation of syllables and blending them together. Use multi-sensory activities if required.</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent reading</td>
<td>Students read text silently to themselves.</td>
<td>5 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading By</td>
<td>Ask children to read <em>Ignite</em> to you individually. Do a running record of the text. Analyze how well they have been able to transfer knowledge of blending multi-syllabic words to oral reading.</td>
<td>10 mins +</td>
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**Lesson 5:**

| Review | Shared reading of list of multi-syllabic words with closed short vowel sound and silent e pattern. The words are from Poem *The Umpire’s Advice* and story *Ignite*. (These words have also previously been copied onto cardboard and laminated) | 2 mins |
| Word sorts | Using the prepared cards ask the children to sort the words into groups: 1. First syllable with short vowel sound 2. Second syllable with long vowel sound Can you think of any other ways of sorting the words? | 10 mins |
| Making and breaking words | Cut each word card into syllables. Mix cards up and ask students to remake words use display list as a prompt if required. The cards are all tuned up the correct way. Play memory | 15 mins |
| Home Connection | Students are encouraged to take home game to play at home. | |

**Lesson 6:**

| New Text orientation | Give synopsis again of the new text: *Ignite*. Peter and Kate witness a fire that starts in a campground. They talk to Blake, a firefighter, about it. Discuss what *witness* means. | 5 mins |
| Auditory and visual discrimination | The story should be enlarged onto A3 paper and cut into paragraphs. Cut out pictures as well to use later. As you read each paragraph ask children to tell you at the end of the paragraph, which words have the syllable pattern we have been discussing? Refer to chart made as a prompt. Practise breaking and blending these words to encourage correct pronunciation. | 10 mins |
| Shared Reading comprehension | As a group read each paragraph. After reading discuss what happened. Choose the correct picture that goes with each paragraph. | 10 mins |
| Consolidating | Play memory games with game made in previous sessions. | 10 mins |
### Lesson 7

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<th>Reinforce</th>
<th>Give children a copy of the play <strong>Ignite</strong>. Explain that this is the same story as read yesterday but it is a play to be acted out. List the characters in the play and their role in the story. Ask children who they would like to be.</th>
<th>5 mins</th>
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<tr>
<td>Practise</td>
<td>Ask children to highlight their parts in the story so it will be easier for them to know when it is their turn. Read silently to themselves and ask them to take notice of the words that have the syllable pattern we have been discussing and to practise pronouncing those words. Let them know that you are going to tape the play for them to hear themselves.</td>
<td>5 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading out loud</td>
<td>When children are ready tape the play reading. Listen to tape and ask children what positive things they heard each other doing to help them read well as well as how they could improve themselves.</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Assessment</td>
<td>Tape children again. Listen to tape again and ask children how they think they had improved.</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
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### Lesson 8:

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<th>Shared reading</th>
<th>Read words on group chart made with the syllable pattern of closed syllable and silent e syllable.</th>
<th>5 mins</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual and auditory discrimination. Vocabulary building</td>
<td>Ask children to scan the materials provided for words with the syllable pattern we have been studying. Materials are fiction and non-fiction texts, magazines, newspapers and poems. As new words are found write them on the chart.</td>
<td>15 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Articulation and comprehension</td>
<td>Discuss pronunciation and meaning of the new words on the chart</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
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These lessons were instructed to two year four students. They were withdrawn from their classrooms and worked together four days a week. During pre and post testing times the students were withdrawn individually.
HOW TO BREAK A WORD INTO SYLLABLES

1. Teacher/child says the word

2. Circle the vowel sounds you can hear
   
   t a d p o l e

3. Count how many syllables by
   - Clapping it out
   - Tapping it out
   - Look in a mirror to see how many times your mouth opens
   - Put hand under jaw to feel how many times your jaw drops

4. Listen to where syllables end and split the word
   
   t a d /p o l e

5. Look at consonants and vowels and decide if the vowel has a short or long sound. Is there a silent e or closed vowel pattern?
What strategies do you use when you are reading and you come to an unknown word?

What is a syllable?

Can you give me an example of a syllable?

Do you use syllables when reading?
CLOSED SHORT VOWEL AND SILENT E LONG VOWEL PATTERN

SYLLABLES

tadpole
reptile
complete
backstroke
athlete
insane
umpire
collide
advise
trombone
pancake
mistake
ignite
stampede
immune
compensate
entire
escape
landscape
admire
advice