

APPENDIX A

THE TARGETED REVISUALISATION PROGRAMME

1.1 Background and Introduction

The Target Revisualisation Programme consists of five levels, in which reading and spelling are introduced as complementary processes. The initial level (or **Level One**) involves the establishment of the alphabetic principle as it is applied in words of one syllable based on short vowel sounds. This level focuses on words that have the five short vowels (a, e, i, o, and u), combined with single consonants and then consonant blends at the beginning and at the end of words. The aim is to introduce the child to a regular (transparent) orthography, through the use of carefully chosen and graded reading material of high image value, accompanied by a spelling programme in which words are introduced in families and accompanying sentences.

Once a basic level of reading, imagery and revisualisation ability involving single words and short sentences has been developed, word families based on vowel digraphs involving long vowel sounds are introduced, again in the context of sentences based on transparent orthography. This is **Level Two**. At this level, a seven vowel system is introduced (a, e, i, o, u, and y and w at the ends of words), following the suggestions made by Sister Mary Caroline in her programme “Breaking the Sound Barrier” (1956). This is done with the aim of increasing the transparency of the orthography to which the child is exposed. As in Level One, the aim of Level Two is to teach the structure of target words involving long vowel sounds, as well as to increase the ability of the child to analyse and remember words both singly and in sequence. In terms of reading development, the child is introduced to a variety of graded texts, which are used to mediate the phonic rules on which English orthography is based. In terms of

spelling development, words involving long vowel sounds are introduced in families, as well as in the context of sentences which are learned and revisualised, using a handwritten and computer-based colour coding system. These are imaged in the mind, and then tested orally and in writing, both as single words and as words used in the context of sentences. This is done in order to train word analytical ability, visual and auditory memory, as well as the sequential memory retrieval necessary to reproduce words in sentences of increasing phonic complexity.

Level Three of the programme is introduced at the time when the child demonstrates sufficient phonic, sequential and memory storage and retrieval abilities to make work with short paragraphs possible. In terms of reading development, the child is introduced to reading materials which include a variety of words based on long and short vowel sounds, as well as polysyllabic words. Besides reading in a mediated situation involving a teacher, the child is encouraged to read daily independently, both in paired oral and silent reading activities involving other adults or children, as well as silently for a short period before going to bed at night. The child is also introduced to a series of graded dictation passages based on both single syllable words involving long and short vowel sounds, as well as polysyllabic words.

In terms of spelling development, word analysis skills introduced at Level Two are developed and expanded to develop syllabication, using both hand-written colour coding and computer-based analysis by vowel structure and syllable. This is done using the graded dictation passages as follows: All words consisting of more than one vowel are listed by the child from the passage, analysed and then revisualised in the context of the passage, through a process which invokes mental imagery. Errors made by the child are noted and then mediated, in terms of the phonic rules on which the words are based. The aim of Level Three is to develop both a rule system for decoding and encoding words as well as an increasingly diverse lexicon of words which have been learned and committed to

memory. These cognitive processes are utilised to read and analyse text, as well as reproductively and creatively in the context of increasingly complex sequenced writing, modeled through the process of analysing words and text, and writing words, sentences and paragraphs from dictation.

As at previous levels in the programme, at Level Three reading and writing are regarded as complementary activities, which are code- and rule-based. The aim is to create an awareness of the fact that written language in English involves a code which is understandable and rule-driven. Words, sentences and paragraph can be created through a process involving the application of rules for using consonants and vowel sounds in words, as well as through a process in which a lexicon of words previously encountered in reading and writing are accessed and correctly used in sequence. The aim is to make the processes involved in the alphabetic code used in English orthography transparent and accessible to the child. This is done through a process of analysis of the structure of words supported by mediation, the success of which depends to a great extent on how well the mediator understands the way in which the alphabetic code is used in English orthography.

Level Four is reached when the child is reasonably fluent at decoding and encoding text, and has established that the code involved in written language is based on the notion that we read to find out what others have to say, and that what we say we write. At Level Four, the child is encouraged to read a wider variety of books, to plan and write stories, and to use written language both descriptively and creatively. Paragraphing and punctuation skills are introduced by exercises in which the child is exposed to the idea that writing is used to reflect the ideas we have in our minds, and that these ideas are often also reflected in mental pictures or images. Similarly, stories or descriptions of objects or events can be reflected both in sequences of words, as well as in sequences of pictures. Each picture normally reflects a main idea, about which one or more than one sentence can be spoken or written.

The child is thus encouraged at Level Four to create and analyse stories as a sequence of main ideas, which can be recorded either as a sequence of pictures or mental images, or in paragraphs on a piece of paper or in a book. Once this skill has been established, the idea of a paragraph as a set of sentences about an image or idea is then formally introduced. This concept is linked wherever possible to the child's imaging process. When the idea or image changes, the paragraph changes.

The aim at Level Four, as in previous levels of the programme, is to invoke the process of mental imagery¹ in the learning of reading and spelling. Text is thus constructed and deconstructed, using stories in books for deconstruction into main and supporting ideas, and using comics and mind maps as avenues for sequencing images and ideas to create stories. At Level Four, the programme targets creative and descriptive writing in particular, by working from summaries of written text or picture-stories generated by others to create a sequence of main ideas which can then be built on, and by working from sequences of images and ideas generated by the child and turned into picture stories or written text. The aim is to expand the skills of the child in using written language for communicative purposes, through a process in which the child is trained to create stories and descriptive passages, which are constructed and deconstructed, paragraph by paragraph.

In terms of reading and spelling development, errors made in the child's reading, writing and schoolwork are targeted at Level Four. A number of target words based on the child's errors are identified and mediated (starting with five words daily – this number then increases as the child's skills improve). The target words are used in sentences over a three-day cycle, and then tested on the fourth day.

¹ The procedures used for invoking mental imagery in the learning process are based on Piagetian theory, which suggests that the processes of copying and drawing are central to the development of perception and imagery, and that the processes of perception, imagery and language form the foundations on which cognition is based. The child is thus encouraged to draw as well as read and write, using activities in which images and sequences of images related to concepts and stories introduced in the reading programme.

Errors made are then mediated and brought forward into the next cycle. The aim of the programme as a whole at this stage is to develop the child's ability to utilise both an expanding rule system for generating words and text, and an expanding lexicon of words stored in memory, and apply these to the task of creative writing of stories and descriptive passages. Level Four activities are thus conceptualised as an extension of Level One, Two and Level Three activities, and Level Five an extension of Level Four Activities.

Level Five in the programme is reached when the child's descriptive and creative writing reflects integration, as reflected in the ability to use a variety of regular spelled and irregularly spelled words, and a variety of language registers, in different reading comprehension and written language contexts. Level Five then focuses on introducing and mediating for the child the type of structural and communicative activities to which he or she would normally be exposed as part of a mainstream classroom language arts programme. Level Five activities thus aim to provide the child with an increasing variety and complexity of skills in using the conventions of the English grammar, literal and figurative word meanings, and different language registers. By the end of Level Five, the child should be able to function independently on the variety of tasks involved in the English language arts programme taught at the particular school in which he or she is being educated.

1.2 Assumptions of the programme

While being broadly sequential, the programme as a whole is a flexible one. It is thus possible to mix and match the different levels of programme, depending on the skills, needs and progress of the child. One of the decisions which will need to be made is the stage at which descriptive and creative writing (Level Four) tasks are introduced. Decisions will also need to be made as to whether to reinforce or over-learn previously introduced skills, and also the degree of variety needed in the programme in order to keep the child motivated, as well as

appropriately targeted. As with all programme activities, the child's response to particular activities and the child's errors will influence the decisions as to the next appropriate skills to introduce, and whether to keep to or deviate from a previously planned sequence of instruction.

At each level in the programme, the assumption is that contextualisation is important and that reading and spelling not only involve the ability to work with individual words, but also with words in the context of sentences, sentences in the context of paragraphs, paragraphs in the context of texts, and texts in the context of communicative activities. The underlying premise of the programme is that the majority of children will need to work to a certain degree of competence in the activities used at a particular level of the programme before exercises and activities relating to the next level are introduced. In other words, the programme assumes at Level One that a child has reached a basic level of readiness for reading and, in particular, has established a level of phonological awareness. At higher levels of the programme, assumptions are made concerning levels of competence in reading, writing and understanding of understanding of the alphabetical principle as applied in English orthography. Similarly, assumptions are made about the child's sequential abilities, memory abilities and the amount and type of accessible words in his or her lexicon.

The aim of the tests used both in initial assessment as well as in periodic reviews of the child's progress is to establish the level of development of the child, with respect to the rule systems needed to decode and encode text, to understand the way in which the child uses these rules in reading and generating text, and to establish the size of the child's lexicon of previously encountered words correctly stored in accessible memory. This is assessed through a series of Phonic Inventories, used in conjunction with other tests of reading, spelling and dictation.

Once an idea of the child's skills has been established through analysis of the way in which the child reads and creates words (both individually as well as in the context of sentences and paragraphs), an individual programme is then

planned based on error analysis. The aim is to target particular rules, which have not yet been established by the child, and to teach the analytical and memory skills involved in decoding and encoding written language. This is done hierarchically. Errors with short vowel and consonant blends and clusters are targeted before errors in using vowel diphthongs and digraphs. However, there is flexibility in the programme, in that while a certain sequence of activities is planned, the sequence actually followed may vary according to the child's response to the programme and the need to maintain their interest and motivation.

It is recognized in particular that certain children may need a more flexible programme, in which activities relating to different and higher levels in the programme are introduced simultaneously with activities at a lower level, either to extend skills introduced at a lower level, or for variety. Whether or not to mix and match in this way in building a particular child's programme will depend on the child's individual pattern of learning, and the way in which he or she acquires the rules pertaining to written language.

The rules the child has learned and has not yet learned are established through error analysis of the phonic inventory protocols, which is done in conjunction with error analysis of the other instruments used during the assessment process. Based on the pattern of errors and information available from other sources such as reading and spelling tests as well as analysis of the child's schoolbooks, a programme is then developed. This targets the specific errors made by the child, and introduces reading, writing and spelling skills in terms of the hierarchy summarised above.