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Webinar Series 1  
**Struggling Readers**  
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**Why do some children succeed and others fail?**

**60%**

Will succeed with literacy regardless of method

**40%**

Need a more structured approach



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**Simple View of Reading**  
Gough & Tunmer (1986)

Language  
comprehension

Word  
Recognition

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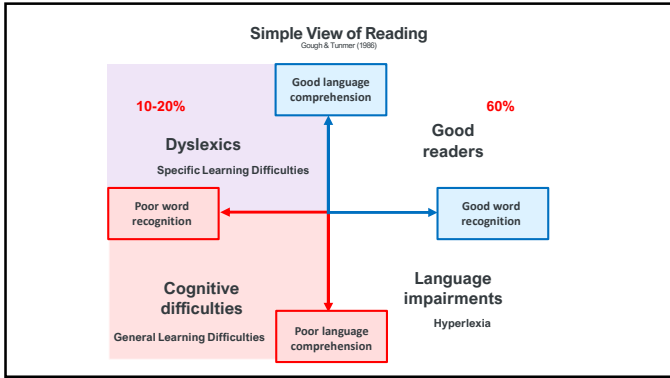
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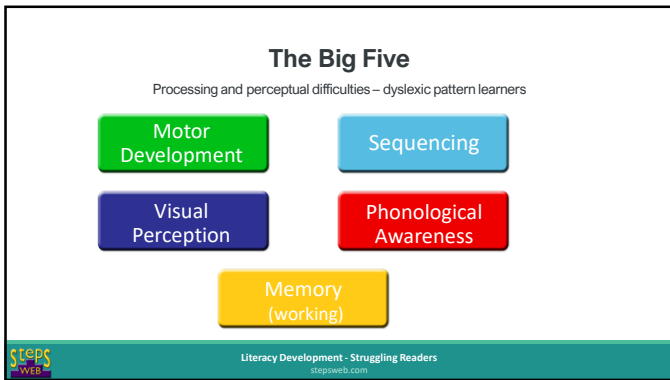
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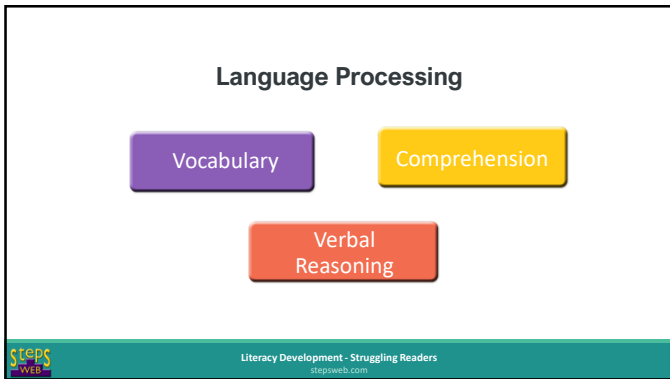
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### Likely response to effective intervention



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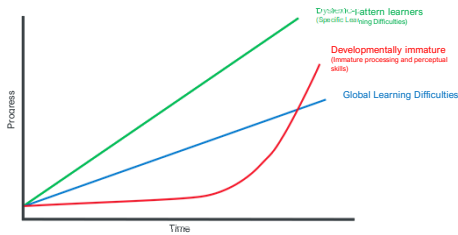
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### Likely response to effective intervention



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### The Big Five

Processing and perceptual difficulties – dyslexic pattern learners

Motor Development

Sequencing

Visual Perception

Phonological Awareness

Memory (working)



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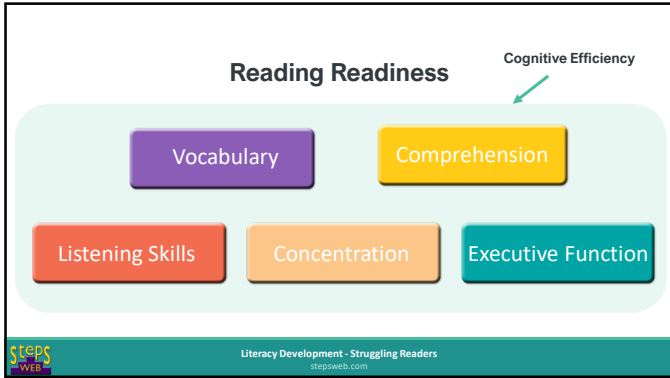
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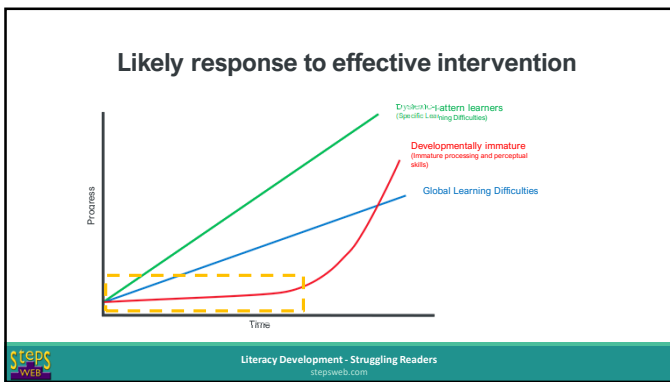
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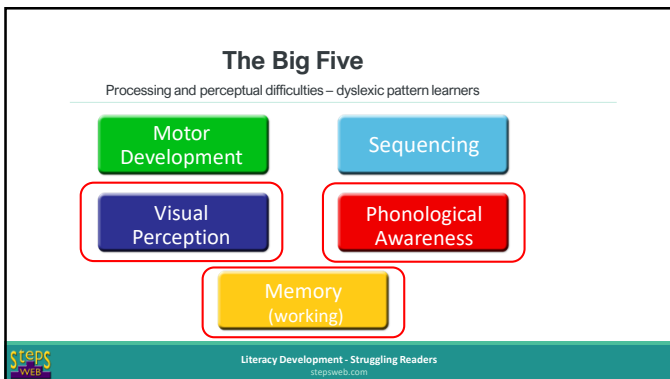
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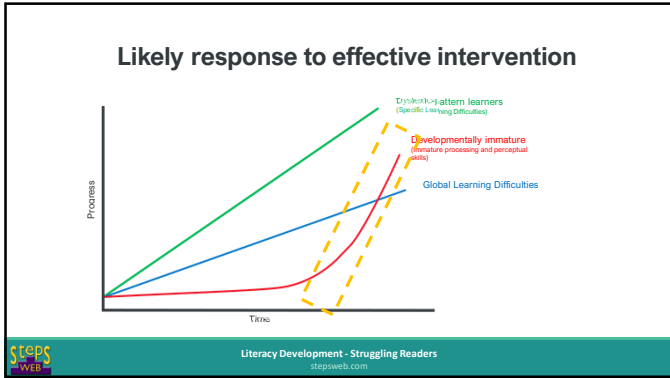
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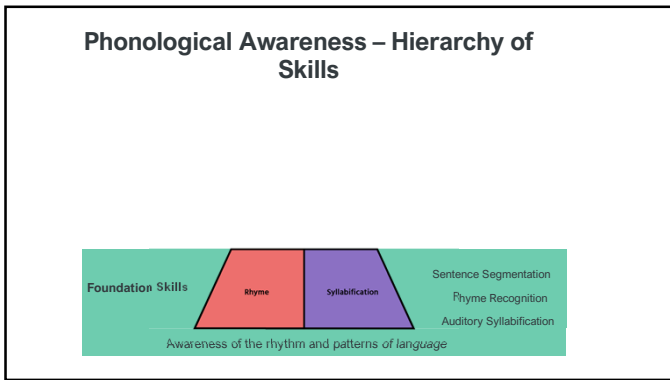
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**Predictors of Reading Success**

USA Study – 1960s

**Research Question:** What are the key predictors of reading success or failure at age 3-5 years?

Looked at a number of aspects, including:

- Intelligence
- Speech/language abilities
- Attention span
- Motor skills
- Phonological processing

**Findings:**  
Phonological awareness is the key predictor of reading success for this age-group.

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**Predictors of Reading Success**  
Bryant & Bradley (1983)

**Research Question:** Which aspects of phonological awareness are the most significant?

Tested 400 4-5 year-old pre-readers on a range of phonological skills.

Tested them on reading and spelling 4 years later (aged 8-9)

**Findings:**  
Rhyme recognition is the key predictor of reading success for this age-group.

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**Later studies**

More recent research studies have identified phonemic awareness as being a crucial predictor.

However, this was at age 6 when children had already received phonological and literacy teaching.

Key point: Phonemic awareness is not a natural stage of phonological awareness. It is a result of correct literacy teaching.

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**Important Quote**

“The majority of preschoolers can segment words into syllables. Very few can readily segment them into phonemes.

The more sophisticated stage of phoneme segmentation is not reached until the child has received formal instruction in letter-sound knowledge.”

*Predicting reading and spelling difficulties (Snowling & Backhouse 1996)*

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### Phonological Awareness – Hierarchy of Skills

re member

re mem ber

*Awareness of the rhythm and patterns of language*

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### Auditory Syllabification

= The ability to hear the beats (syllables) in a word.

Easy way to teach it:

Hold your hand under your chin and say the word.

The number of times your chin touches your hand is the number of syllables.

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### Phonological Awareness – Hierarchy of Skills

*Awareness of the rhythm and patterns of language*

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### Onset + Rime

= The ability to break a word into two chunks.

s/t/r/i/ng      5 phonemes (very tricky)

str    ing      2 chunks (much easier!)

onset                      rime

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### Rhyme or Rime?

w-ing  
s-ing  
r-ing  
br-ing  
fl-ing

str    ing  
onset                      rime

rhyme = sound pattern      bed  
   head  
   said

rime = spelling pattern      bed  
   led  
   red

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### Development of syllabification

sentences → words

words → syllables

words or syllables → phonemes

str    ing  
onset                      rime

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### Development of syllabification

sentences → words  
 words → syllables  
**words → onset + rime**  
 words or syllables → phonemes

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### Why is onset + rime so important?

Breaking a word into onset + rime is a natural stage of phonological development.

Breaking a word into individual phonemes is **not** a natural stage of phonological development.

It only develops as a result of literacy teaching.

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### Why is onset + rime so important?

Easy way of teaching vowel sound variations!

We teach 'a' as in 'cat'.

Then we meet 'a' as in 'all'  
 'aw', 'ar', etc

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### Why is onset + rime so important?



Develops analogical transfer

The ability to apply knowledge acquired in one context to another context.

"If I can spell 'ball', then I can work out 'wall'."

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### Why is onset + rime so important?



You can make over 500 common words with only 37 rimes.

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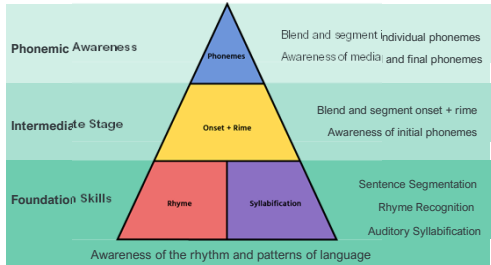
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### Phonological Awareness – Hierarchy of Skills



**Phonemic Awareness**

phonemes

Blend and segment individual phonemes  
Awareness of medial and final phonemes

**Intermediate Stage**

Onset + Rime

Blend and segment onset + rime  
Awareness of initial phonemes

**Foundation Skills**

Rhyme      Syllabification

Sentence Segmentation  
Rhyme Recognition  
Auditory Syllabification

Awareness of the rhythm and patterns of language

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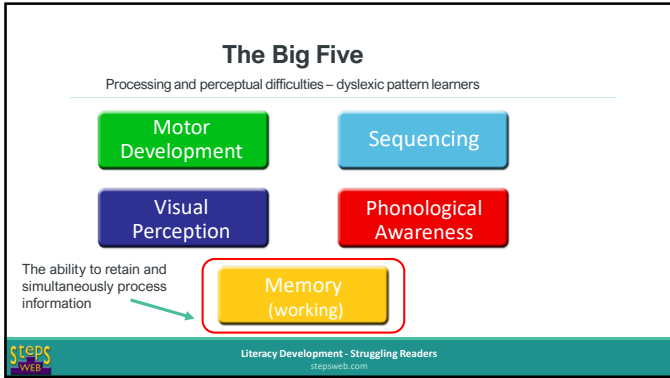
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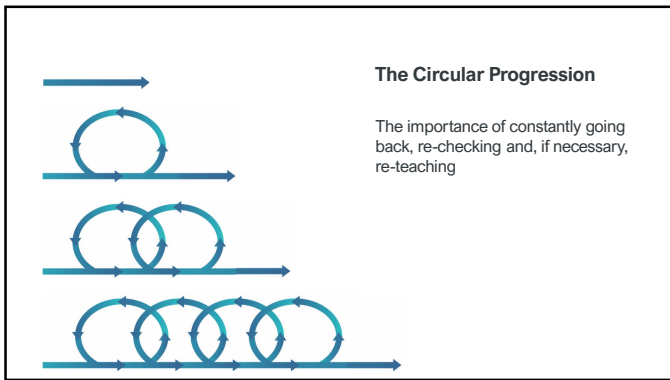
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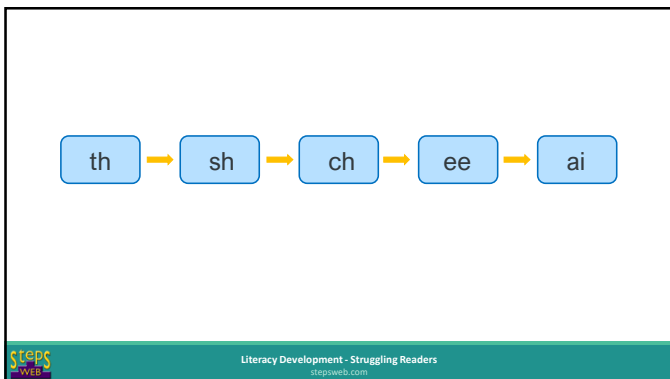
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**The Matthew Effect**

The *average* skilled reader read approximately three times as many words per session as the *average* less skilled reader.

Words read during a week of reading sessions in Year 1 – the extremes!

Struggling student 16 words      Top performer - 1,933 words

Matthew effects in reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy, Reading Research Quarterly, Keith E Stanovich, 1986

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**The Matthew Effect**

**Number of words read per year in the middle grades (mid primary years)**

The least motivated children might read 100,000 words pa.

Average children might read 1,000,000 words pa.

Keen readers might read 10,000,000+ words pa

Matthew effects in reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy, Reading Research Quarterly, Keith E Stanovich, 1986

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**Comprehension** 5

**Vocabulary** 4

**Reading Fluency** 3

**Phonic Knowledge** 2

**Phonological Awareness** 1

First Gap

USA National Reading Panel, 2000

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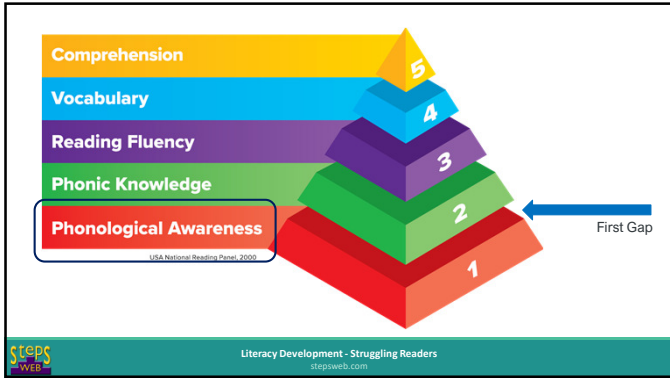
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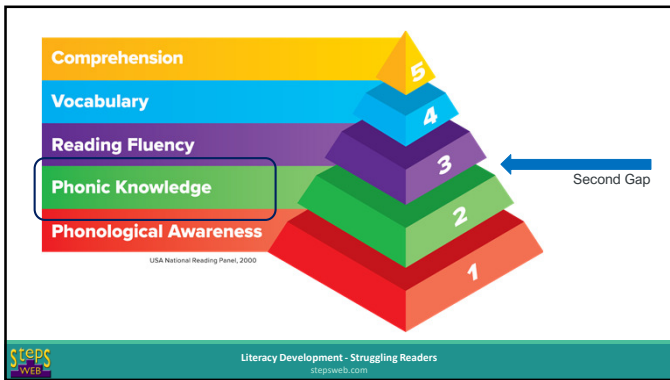
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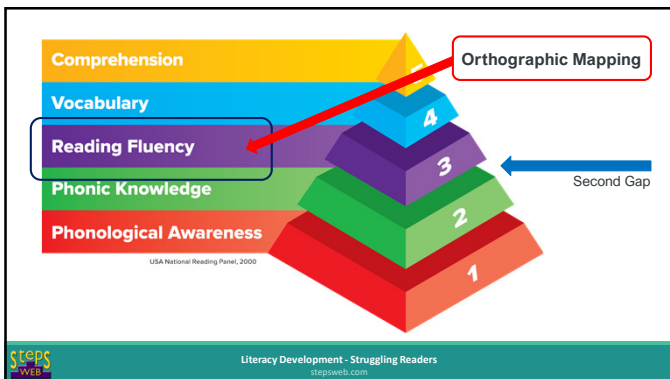
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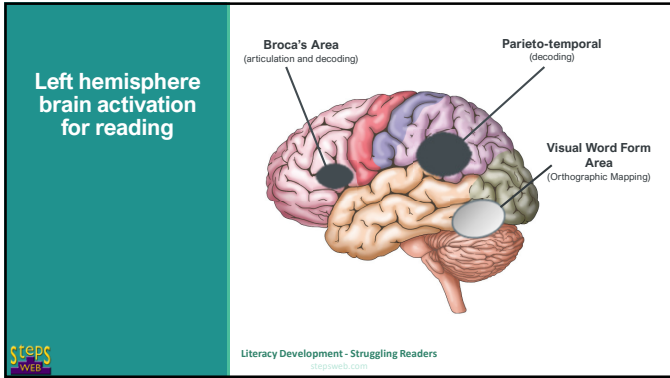
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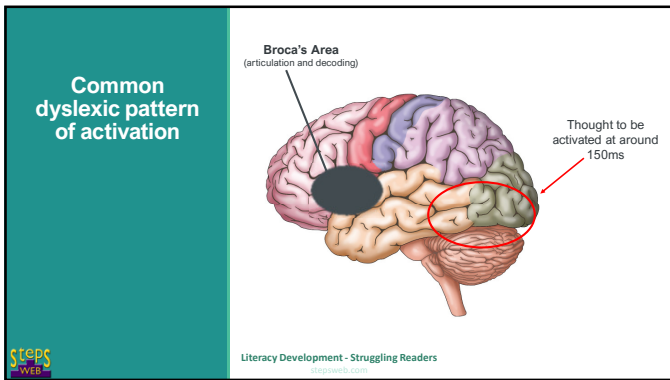
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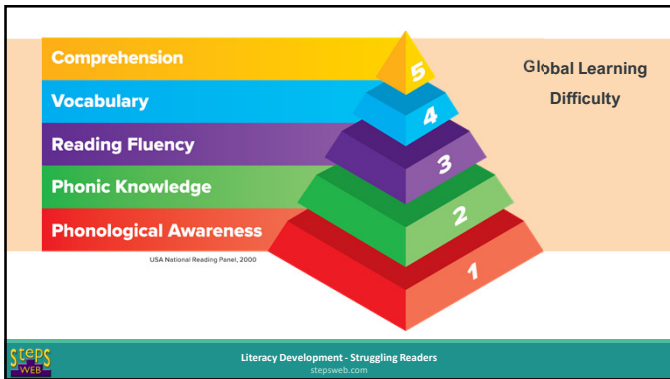
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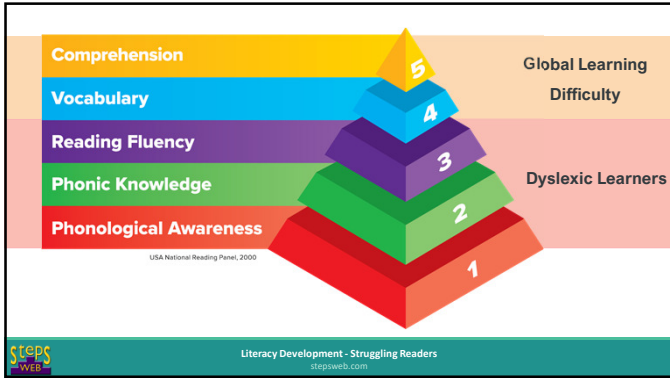
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**Big Danger!**

In the early stages of literacy, comprehension and vocabulary are developed primarily through listening to language.

Dyslexics

Dyslexics In later stages, comprehension and vocabulary are developed primarily through exposure to books and other printed materials.

USA National Reading Panel, 2000

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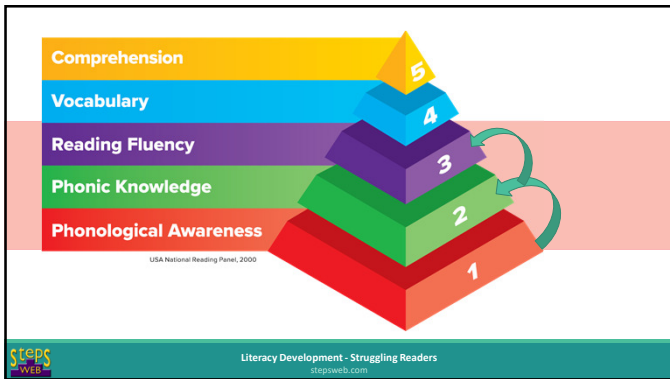
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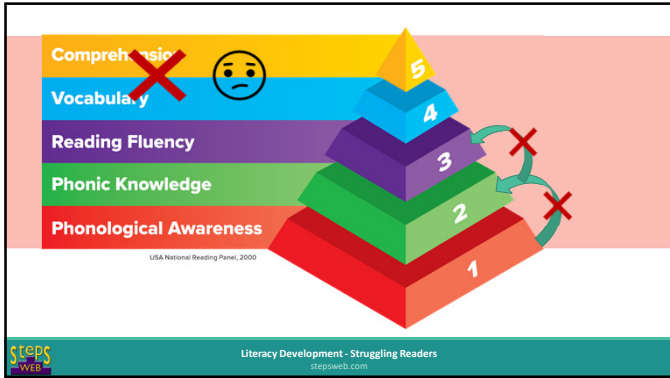
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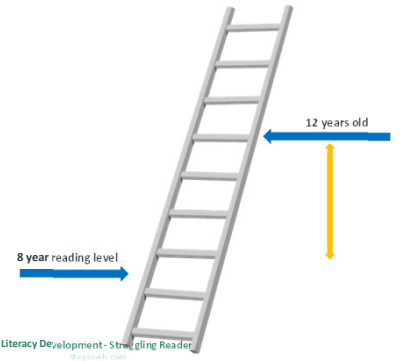
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The Reading Ladder

8 year reading level

12 years old

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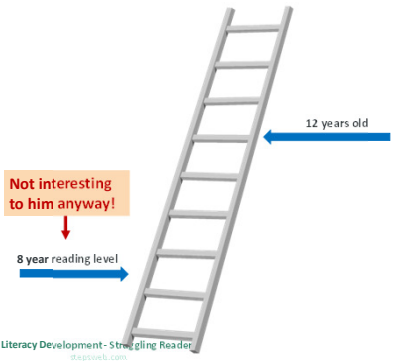
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The Reading Ladder

Not interesting to him anyway!

8 year reading level

12 years old

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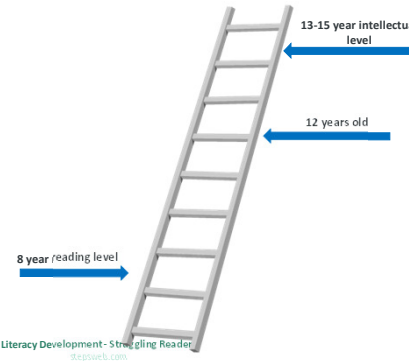
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The Reading Ladder

8 year reading level

12 years old

13-15 year intellectual level

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**The Reading Ladder**

13-15 year intellectual level

8 year reading level

Overwhelmingly negative process!

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**The Reading Ladder**

13-15 year intellectual level

8 year reading level

Intellectual aspects:  
comprehension  
reading for information  
enjoyment!

Mechanical aspects:  
decoding skill  
word recognition  
understanding text

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**The 5 Big Ideas in Beginning Reading**

5  
4  
3  
2  
1

Comprehension

Vocabulary

Reading Fluency

Phonic Knowledge

Phonological Awareness

Mechanical Aspects  
decoding skill  
word recognition  
understanding text

USA National Reading Panel, 2000

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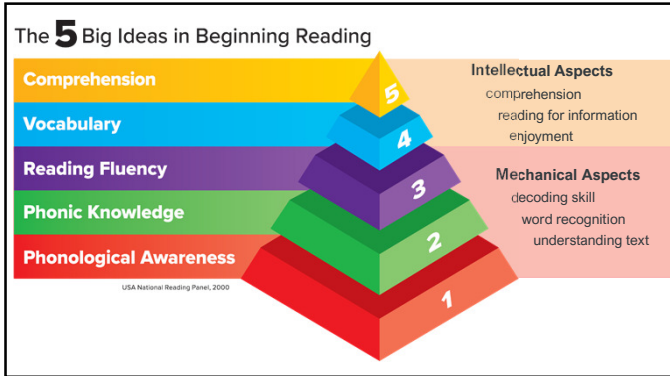
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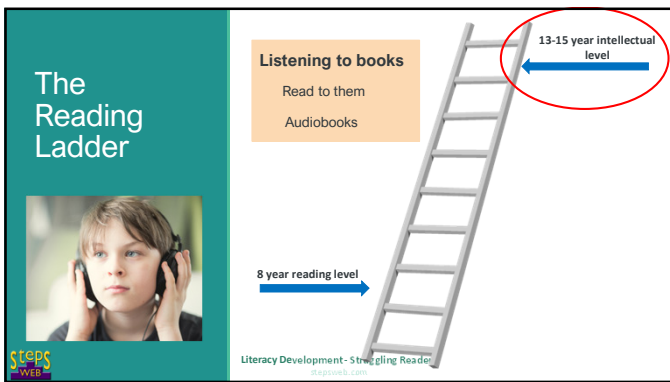
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### Developing comprehension and vocabulary

Listening to books is every bit as good as reading them for yourself.

Arguably even slightly better in some respects!

- Auditory processing
- Listening skills
- Auditory memory

USA National Reading Panel, 2000

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The Reading Ladder



Our 40% need a more spelling-based approach

8 year reading level



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The Reading Ladder



If a spelling-based approach is done in the right way, it will:

- Develop all the processing and perceptual skills needed for reading.
- Develop all the understanding of text needed for reading.
- Include the right kind of incidental reading to activate and develop the Visual Word Form Area.

**Genuine reading fluency**

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The Reading Ladder



Questions which arise:

**Where do decodable readers fit in?**

A structured phonics-based literacy approach needs to include decoding words in context.

**BUT:**

Be aware that you're only targeting the 'mechanical' phonic aspects – not the 'intellectual' ones. Don't do too much – or make this their only experience of books.

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**The Reading Ladder**



**Questions which arise:**

**What about listening and following the text at the same time?**

May be beneficial with some learners, if there isn't a huge discrepancy between reading age and intellectual age.

Of limited use with most learners in this category – and doesn't replace the other aspects.

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**In conclusion**



New entrants vary hugely in their reading readiness – and many need a lot of help to acquire the core perceptual skills needed for literacy.

Struggling learners progress at their own individual rates. Some have only fallen behind because they couldn't keep pace with whole-class teaching.

The speed of the whole class is unrealistic for students with perceptual difficulties, but it's also crucial that they can progress at their own rate within a remedial group.

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**In conclusion**



Our 40% need a more spelling-based approach – providing that it includes the key elements and is an integral part of the literacy curriculum.

We need a literacy programme – not a spelling programme!

Dyslexic-type learners need to be able to access books and other text at their intellectual level – assistive technology or audio books!

We need to understand the development of processing and perceptual skills – and not expect 'fast' progress from our developmentally unready learners.

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## Keys to Success!



A structured literacy progression with words and phonic patterns taught and used in context.

Repetition (but with plenty of variety!)

Enabling every learner to progress at his/her individual rate.

Creating an environment where enjoyment of books is a high priority.

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## In conclusion.....

Thanks for joining us – and we hope you've found this useful.

Feel free to send us any questions and check out answers on the link we'll be sending you.

Don't forget to join us again for the next webinar – we'd love to see you here again!



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