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Rainbow Reading Programme and Current Literacy Programmes

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The Rainbow Reading Programme is an audio-facilitated reading programme.

Students practise reading books at their instructional reading level, with audio support. Following a brief orientation the students practise with the same book and audio support until they believe they can read it easily without the support. After an independent practice to confirm this belief the student requests a conference with the tutor. The tutor checks for accuracy, fluency and good understanding, gives feedback then recommends that the student:

- has more practice with the same book and maybe audio support; or
- does an activity to reinforce and extend the skills that have been learned while reading; or
- practises with another book and audio support at the same level; or
- is assessed for promotion to the next reading level.

The students keep a record of their reading in their personal Student’s Handbook. The teacher uses a Progress Chart and a Record of Students’ Work to track the student’s progress.

Students practise at their instructional reading level until they can demonstrate they can read independently at this level and/or the next level is instructional. The students then practise at this new instructional reading level until they can read independently at this level. The students repeat this cycle until they are reading fluently with instructional accuracy and good pace, phrasing and comprehension at an age-appropriate level.
Student’s reading level is assessed using a Running Record. Student’s starting level is established.

Student is oriented to new book.

Student listens to audio support and follows along.

Student is promoted to the next level.

Student fills in handbook.

Student reads book independently and decides:

“Do I need more practice?”

“Should I do an activity?”

“Should I conference with my tutor?”

Student does a CLOZE, Text Sequencing, Word Search, Writing and/or Dice Game activity.

Practice with a new book at current level.

More practice with the same book.

Student reads part of the book to the tutor who listens, praises, pauses, prompts, checks comprehension, focuses on some teaching points, gives feedback and recommends:

More practice with the same book.

Tutor assesses whether student is ready for the next level.

Student reads unseen book at current level with <95% accuracy or at next level with <88–90% accuracy and/or reading is not well paced, well phrased or well understood.

Student reads unseen book at current level with >95% accuracy or at next level with >88% accuracy. Reading is appropriately paced, phrased and understood.
Who can use the Rainbow Reading Programme?

The Rainbow Reading Programme has been designed specifically to meet the needs and interests of older struggling readers and students learning English. There is however, no reason to limit this programme to their use only. Because of the wide range of high interest stories and articles included in the collection, the programme is of interest and of benefit to all students.

The student titles in the Rainbow Reading Programme are designed to cater for the needs and interests of older struggling or reluctant readers and students learning English. Such students need practice at their instructional reading level (the highest level they can read with 90 to 94 percent accuracy) to gain confidence and the skills that will enable them to progress to higher levels and to catch up to their peers at grade level. Once they have caught up, they need further practice at their newly acquired level to consolidate the gains they have made.

With a minimum of organisation, the Rainbow Reading Programme can be used successfully with:

- Small groups of students in class or withdrawn from class.
- Whole class groups.
- Students from non-English-speaking backgrounds
- Students in special programmes with Reading Recovery teachers, Resource Teachers of Literacy, E.S.O.L teachers and Special Needs teachers. As students increase their reading mileage, both with and without audio support, they practise the skills they have been taught during reading lessons.
- Students with autism, dyslexia and exceptional talents can also benefit from the audio support of a text that may be of interest to them yet beyond their reading level or, conversely, beyond their understanding but at their reading level.

The programme can be implemented not only by classroom and specialist teachers but also by teacher aides, paraprofessionals, volunteers and parents. The latter should be supervised by a trained teacher who will be able to give advice about the students’ starting levels and their readiness for promotion.
The Rainbow Reading Programme is designed to complement existing classroom and special reading programmes.

The Rainbow Reading Programme is based on the following beliefs.
- Reading programmes should be student-centred.
- Reading for meaning is paramount.
- Literacy learning must be worthwhile.
- Reading and writing are powerful tools for learning.

- The best approach to teaching reading and writing is a combination of approaches.
- Careful assessment of students’ literacy learning is integral to sound teaching.
- Reading and writing flourish in a supportive environment.

(Learning Media Ltd, Reading for Life)

Who can use Rainbow Reading?

Underachieving students need more reading practice than most students, and Rainbow Reading provides lots of opportunities for reading in a supported environment. Regardless of the approach used in the class reading programme, the Rainbow Reading Programme will be of immense benefit as it provides high interest, supported reading that consolidates skills learned elsewhere.

The Rainbow Reading Programme and Current Literacy Programmes

The Rainbow Reading Programme is most effective when introduced as part of the regular reading programme.
The Components of the Rainbow Reading Programme

All components of the Rainbow Reading Programme are designed to have maximum educational value and also be of interest to students. They are tested with students and teachers then modified where necessary.

Books

Short stories and articles of very wide ranging appeal and high interest have been chosen for use in the Rainbow Reading Programme.

All books are accompanied by audio support for students to use for supported reading. Books are entertaining yet informative and educational. The aim is to provide students with an assortment of topics, styles and genre from a variety of authors. The layout of the text has been kept clear and easily readable.

Levelling

Stories and articles have been levelled by using the Elley Noun Frequency Method (1989) as an initial guide and also by extensive teacher-student testing and recommendation. Many other factors, some exclusive to the individual reader such as interest and background knowledge, affect the readability of text. Therefore the levels are strictly indicative and are for guided reading only. Lower levels should be used for independent reading. Because of the audio support provided, some flexibility in the allocation of books is possible at teacher discretion. Some students may simply need more practice, with or without the audio support, when books are a little difficult for them.

The books are colour coded at different reading levels according to the order of the colours in the rainbow, starting at the Silver level with a reading difficulty of 5-5.5 years through to Violet where text has a reading difficulty level of 11-12 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Equivalent Reading Difficulty Level</th>
<th>Student Interest Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Silver</td>
<td>5- 5 1/2 years</td>
<td>6 years +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>5 1/2 - 6 years</td>
<td>6 years +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>6 - 7 years</td>
<td>7 years +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>7 - 8 years</td>
<td>8 years +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>8 - 9 years</td>
<td>9 years +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>9 - 10 years</td>
<td>10 years +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>10 - 11 years</td>
<td>11 years +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violet</td>
<td>11 - 12 years</td>
<td>12 years +</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the stories have been carefully selected with the needs and interests of older students in mind, the books can be used with students whose chronological ages are higher than their reading ages.

The illustrations and photographs in Rainbow Reading books are attractive and, like the text, representative of a variety of styles and appealing to older students. They are positioned to enhance, not to distract from the text.
Audio Support

The audio support that accompanies the books for supported reading are specially recorded for ease of use and for maximum educational advantage as well as entertainment value.

• A short tune introduces each story or article.
• The student is then cued in to the book title and author.
• Students are instructed to listen to the story and follow along with their eyes.
• Specially trained male and female readers read the books naturally with clarity and expression. They read in phrases, at varying rates for different levels of difficulty, so that students can easily read along.
• A loud page shuffle and pause prompts the student to turn the page.
• Punctuation is observed; for example, there is a brief pause when a comma occurs in the text.
• A tone change will generally indicate a change from narrative to dialogue and vice versa.
• At the end of each story, the students should practise reading along silently until they feel they can read the book well by themselves.
• There are no distracting noises on the audio support so that students can concentrate on listening to the words and following the text in the book.

Training DVD

The training DVD complements the Teachers’ Manual by describing the Rainbow Reading Programme, explaining the process involved and showing the programme in action.

Assessment Sheets

The Assessment sheets are designed to make the assessment process easy for tutors. Full instructions are given on how to take and interpret running records. All the titles in the Rainbow Reading Programme have been presented in a format for tutors to take running records.

Each running record sheet has:
• an introductory statement to be read to students;
• comprehension questions to check understanding.
Activities

Text-related activities accompany each student title. The activities present text from the books in new and refreshing ways. The activities include:

- **Cloze activities**, where students fill in gaps in the text, for assessing and improving comprehension.
- **Text Sequencing** activities, where students read and arrange summaries of text in sequence, for improving comprehension skills.
- **Word Search activities**, where students locate words that are hidden in grids, for improving spelling and identifying words.
- **Dice Game** activities, where the students play dice games, for practising reading and following instructions.
- **Writing activities**, where students use the text as a model and incentive for writing, for improving writing and reading skills.

The Cloze, Text Sequencing and Dice Game activities are designed to:

- reinforce skills learned while reading the text;
- provide the students with opportunities to revisit the text in different formats;
- provide further practice in reading, comprehending, and organising text.

The Word Search activities provide:

- practice in identifying words in a different context;
- opportunities for searching across words in sequence.

The Writing activities provide:

- opportunities to link reading to writing. This helps improve writing and reading and provides for further comprehension practice and checks.
The Rainbow Reading Programme incorporates the most beneficial aspects of the most successful, proven reading programmes, hence ensuring favourable outcomes in reading skills for large numbers of students.

- The books for students are graded according to reading level. This makes them achievable and at an ideal level for students to receive just the right amount of challenge to learn but not be frustrated by difficulty.
- The books are short, which means students will not be put off by masses of text. They can experience the satisfaction of completing an entire book in a session and can read it several times in a session for maximum educational advantage.
- The books are written on a variety of topics, by a wide range of authors. This means students are being exposed to a wide variety of styles so that they are not limited in their experiences.
- The books are written with the needs and interests of older students in mind as it is recognised that the interest levels of underachieving students often exceed their reading levels.
- Audio support accompanies each book so that students can be supported in their reading and provided with a clear model.
- The audio support is of educational value as well as entertaining because it is read fluently yet slowly enough for students to follow along as they read the text.
- The activities that accompany the books are fun yet also educational because they give students the opportunity to further develop the skills they have learned while reading.
- Sheets are provided for assessment purposes so that teachers can monitor progress of students.
- The procedures have been extensively researched, tested and refined by reading specialists, teachers, teacher aides, parents and students.
- The system is used enthusiastically, with proven success, worldwide.

How does the Rainbow Reading Programme Benefit Students?

The Rainbow Reading Programme is effective at accelerating students’ skills in reading, quickly bringing them up to age-appropriate level.

It is:

- encouraging and confidence boosting as it quickly produces observable gains;
- supportive;
- motivating;
- interesting;
- enjoyable;
- learner centred;
- accommodating of different students’ varying and changing needs, interests, learning styles and levels of skill;
- designed with an emphasis on increased exposure to print so that the integration of cue sources is facilitated as familiarity with text is developed through repeated readings;
- focused on reading for meaning, fluency and phrasing;
- individualised yet able to cater for groups;
- aimed at fostering independence.
How does the Rainbow Reading Programme Benefit Teachers?

The Rainbow Reading Programme is effective and enjoyed by students so it is valued by teachers.

It is:
- simple to set up and operate with very little training needed to implement and manage the programme effectively;
- very cost-effective, being reusable and versatile;
- a great complement to existing class and special reading programmes;
- easy to use as it is accompanied by full guidelines and ready to use support material.

Why is the Rainbow Reading Programme So Successful?

Students thrive on a programme that provides support when it’s needed, plenty of opportunities for practice, chances for independent reading and positive, constructive feedback from a tutor.

Students enjoy the programme so are happy to engage in the practice required. The repeated readings foster fluency and confidence, providing practice in bringing reading behaviours together (orchestration).

Repeated readings also allow the reader to attend to different aspects of the print or story during each rereading as increasing control over the text allows attention to shift to features not previously attended to. The carefully prepared activities provide students with another medium with which they can practise and extend skills learned while reading. Teachers, tutors, parents and students value the programme because it produces observable results and is easy to implement.
It is recommended that students practise on the Rainbow Reading Programme for an initial period of eight to ten weeks. If student interest is high, then practice on the programme can continue for much longer. A teacher or teacher aide can typically manage four to six students in a group by withdrawing them from their classrooms for daily practice or supervising them within their classrooms.

Organisation

- Identify which students you believe will benefit from the Rainbow Reading Programme. Students do not need to be all reading at the same level. Ideally students should practise on the Rainbow Reading Programme for 20-30 minutes, 4-5 times a week.
- Assess students to determine their starting level on the programme.
- Make copies of the Student’s Handbook and notes to send home from the Teacher’s Manual.
Assessing Students’ Starting Levels

A student’s instructional reading level is the highest level they can read, after a short orientation, with 90 to 94 percent accuracy.

Choose an unseen Rainbow Reading book at a level you believe the student should be able to read with at least 90 percent accuracy.

Using the corresponding assessment sheet, read the title of the book to the student followed by the introduction. (The Running Record sheet is designed for teacher use only. Students should read from the corresponding book with suitable text and illustrations.)

By taking a Running Record (Clay 1993), or by doing a simple count of uncorrected errors, determine the student’s instructional reading level.

If mistakes are self-corrected they are not counted as errors but if after a 5-10 second pause the student needs to be told a word then it is counted as an error. If fewer than 10 errors out of 100 words are made and comprehension is reasonable, administer a harder text at the next level of difficulty. Continue in this manner until the student finds the text so hard that he or she makes more than 10 errors in 100 words. The level below this hard level is the student’s instructional reading level (ie the highest level that can be read with 90 percent accuracy or more). This is usually the most appropriate starting level on the Rainbow Reading Programme.
Examples:

**Assessment Results for Student A:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Level Text</th>
<th>Accuracy</th>
<th>Errors in 100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red (6-7 year)</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange (7-8 year)</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow (8-9 year)</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student A’s instructional reading level is 7-8 years. His starting level on the Rainbow Reading programme should be Orange (7-8 year reading level).

**Assessment Results for Student B:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Level Text</th>
<th>Accuracy</th>
<th>Errors in 100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red (6-7 year)</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange (7-8 year)</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow (8-9 year)</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student B’s instructional reading level is 7-8 years but with audio support, she may be able to manage Yellow (8-9 year reading level) if Orange does not provide enough challenge.

**Assessment Results for Student C:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Level Text</th>
<th>Accuracy</th>
<th>Errors in 100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red (6-7 year)</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange (7-8 year)</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student C’s instructional reading level is 6-7 years and Rainbow Reading starting level should be Red.

**N.B:**

1. A hard level must be found to confirm that the instructional reading level is in fact the highest level that can be read with 90 percent accuracy or more.

2. Some students can read Rainbow Reading text at a slightly higher level than their instructional reading level (88 percent plus) because of the audio support provided.

If students suffer from poor self-esteem, poor attitudes or if their reading comprehension, self-correction rate, reading strategies or fluency are of concern, then it makes good sense to start them reading Rainbow Reading books at an easier level. Success experienced in the early stages provides a firm basis for later success and builds a positive attitude to the reading programme. Starting at an easier level rather than a harder level generally ensures more rapid progress will be made.

For more detailed information on taking and interpreting Running Records refer to the Assessment sheets.

**Having established a student’s optimum starting level, assign Rainbow Reading books at that level for supported reading. Books at different reading levels are colour coded according to the order of the colours in the rainbow.**
An orientation serves to:
• activate any prior knowledge;
• foster interest;
• help the student to predict what he or she might read about;
• facilitate his or her understanding.

Any potentially difficult terms and concepts can be discussed during the orientation and students can be given a purpose for their reading.

Rainbow Reading books have a few questions on the back cover that can be used as part of the orientation. The orientation will encourage students to predict and to actively interact with the text. This will improve their enjoyment, success and comprehension of the book.

It is desirable, although not essential, that the tutor is familiar with the book he or she is introducing to the student.

During the orientation:
• tell the student the title of the book;
• summarise the story in one or two sentences without giving away the punchline. A useful sentence starter for this summary is “It is a book about …”;
• talk about the illustrations, including the one on the cover;
• encourage as much conversation from the student as possible;
• pose a question or encourage the student to make a prediction and then challenge the student to find the answer during their reading.

When students are from non-English speaking backgrounds the orientation could, where possible, be in their first language. If this is not possible, a more detailed orientation may be needed to ensure that such students are well familiarised with the terms and concepts they will meet in the book.

If time or organisation prevents individual orientation, alternatives may include:
• allowing the student to listen to the audio support while looking at the illustrations but without reading along,
• asking another student who has read the book to discuss the story with the student. Students who tutor others may require special training in how to do this if the situation is likely to recur.
Reading Practice

After a student has been oriented to a new story, the book and audio support are taken to the reading area for supported reading practice.

The students follow the steps as outlined in the Student’s Handbook (pg. 45),

- The student listens to the same story and reads along with his or her eyes (not voice), at least twice daily until the student feels he or she can read it alone.
- Reading at this stage should be silent so that the audio support can be heard clearly.
- Pointing to each word should be discouraged as it interferes with fluency. A finger of the left hand moving down the left margin could be used as an interim measure.
- Sliding masks tend to inhibit rereading or reading on, so are not recommended.
- The student writes the date on the table in his or her handbook, alongside the book title, each time they practise with the audio support.
- The student writes the date and circles it each time they practise independently, without the audio support.

Most students can manage their own record keeping and this should be encouraged as it fosters independence and self-management.

Reading Alone

Once the student decides they are able to read the book well without audio support (typically after four to ten listens) the student reads independently, without the audio support.

The student then decides whether to

- practise some more with or without the audio support;
- complete an activity; or
- request a conference with the tutor.

The independent reading without the audio support, before a conference, can be silent or aloud.

Younger students sometimes prefer to hear themselves read but older students should be encouraged to read silently.
Conferences may be initiated by the student or the tutor. Ideally, it is the student who initiates a conference but in the early stages, especially, some students may need encouragement to initiate a conference because they are:

- nervous;
- content to listen longer than necessary;
- unaware that they are ready to conference.

Typical conferences

- last between three and six minutes;
- are positive and rewarding for students;
- are long enough for a tutor to hear the student read the entire book during conference time, when the student is reading the shorter texts at the lower reading levels;
- are long enough for the tutor to hear parts from the longer books. With such longer books, at the higher reading levels, the student could choose a piece to read and then the tutor could select a piece. To minimise confusion, it is advisable for the student to start reading at the beginning of the book. The tutor will need to summarise or question the student to help bridge the gap between where the student finishes reading and where the tutor wants the next reading to begin.

While the student reads the book, the tutor:

- praises occasionally for good reading and using strategies appropriately and well;
- pauses (for at least five seconds) when the student makes an error, to allow time for the student to solve problems independently;
- praises if the student does solve a problem independently or employs a useful strategy to help solve a problem;
- checks for accuracy (by discretely counting uncorrected errors) and fluency.

If the student can’t solve a problem after five seconds the tutor should:

- discern which kind of problem the student is experiencing;
- decide which kind of prompt would be useful, and then
- prompt the student.

When the student has finished reading the book, the tutor checks for understanding using one or more of the following methods.

- Ask the comprehension questions provided on the Running Record sheets in the Assessment Manual or on the back of the book and any others that are deemed appropriate.
- Ask the student to retell the story in their own words.
- Ask questions about and discuss aspects of the story, such as theme, plot, main ideas, sequence, characters and the student’s reaction.
- Confirm predictions made during the orientation.
Prompts for Teachers to Use During Conference Time

The tutor should always remain as detached as possible and give the least support necessary so that the student becomes independent at solving problems. Tutors should not give any comment or prompt until the student has had time to make an attempt or to self-correct. The tutor’s role is to encourage the students to attend to the cues they have missed so they will begin to cross-check and integrate cues for themselves. Tutors should try to avoid repeating the error as this will be what the student remembers and correction will become more difficult. After two unsuccessful prompts the tutor should tell the student the word.

“Try that again,” Prompt

If the tutor considers the student has become tangled or confused he or she could say “Try that again”, if it is considered the student may be able to solve the problem if he or she reruns from the start of the sentence.

“Try that again” is giving minimal help but is signalling to the student that something is wrong and it would be advisable to make another attempt by rereading.

“Try that again” can also be used with the following prompts, cueing the student they need to try again and that it would be advisable to attend to meaning, structure and/or visual cues.

Prompts for Meaning

If what the student reads does not make sense e.g. the student reads “The shadow cut her hands” instead of “The shell cut her hands” then the tutor needs to help the student make sense of the sentence based on context.

That is, the student needs to attend to meaning or semantics.

The prompts a tutor might use include:

- “Did that make sense?”
- “I don’t understand that.”
- “Is that really what cut her hands?”
- “Try that again and think what would make sense.”
- “Try that again and think about what cut her hands.”

Prompts for Syntax and Structure.

If, what the student reads is syntactically incorrect e.g. The student reads “The shell cutted her hands” instead of “The shell cut her hands” then the tutor needs to help the student use what they know about the English language. That is, the student needs to attend to syntax and/or structure.

The prompts a tutor might use include:

- “Did that sound right?”
- “Is that how we say it?”
- “Try that again and think about what would sound right.”
- “Try that again and think about how we say it correctly.”
Prompts for Visual Cues

If the student’s error makes sense and is grammatically correct e.g. the student reads “The glass cut her hands” instead of “The shell cut her hands” then the tutor needs to help the student attend to the visual aspects of text or to use knowledge about letter/sound relationships by using prompts that focus on the way the word looks.

The prompts a tutor might use include:

• “Does that look right?”
• “Try that again and think what word would look right.”
• “Try that again and make sure all the words look right.”

For English Language Learners (ELLs), tutors may need to model correct reading, especially where the miscue is semantically or structurally incorrect, as the student may not have enough knowledge of English to work it out independently. For example, if the English Language Learner reads “The shell cutted her hands”, the tutor might respond with, “We say ‘The shell cut her hands’.”

Prompts for Cross-Checking and Using Multiple Cue Sources

To encourage integrating cues, cross-checking and attention to more than one source of cues the tutor could say, “Try that again and think what would sound right and look right”.

Tutor-initiated Conference

From time to time tutors will want to check how a student is managing a text before it has been thoroughly practised.

The tutor’s purpose may be to:

• find out the kind of miscues the student is making;
• find out what cues the student is attending to;
• find out what strategies the student is using on a book that is, as yet, probably not mastered to the point of being easy;
• teach skills or strategies in which the student is not yet proficient.

Assessment

Although most conferences do not involve any formal assessment, sometimes the tutor may choose to take a Running Record (of 100-150 words) to assess:

• accuracy;
• self-correction rate;
• cues used and neglected;
• comprehension.

In this case the tutor should request the conference before the student has had too many listens (sometimes before the student has had any listens at all).
If the tutor decides to use the tutor-initiated conference for assessment purposes and/or a Running Record is being taken, then no teaching should take place until the session is complete.

The tutor should:

• ask the student what the book is about or, if the student has not yet seen the book, discuss it together as would happen during orientation.

If the student struggles the tutor should:

• pause for five seconds,
• tell the student the word, and
• count it as an error.

For further guidelines in taking a Running Record see the Rainbow Reading Programme Assessment sheets.

Teaching

If the tutor chooses to use the tutor-initiated conference as a teaching session rather than an assessment session, the student should be allowed to do as much of the work as possible independently.

The tutor should:

• praise occasionally for good reading and using strategies appropriately;
• pause when the student makes an error to allow time for the student to solve problems independently;
• praise if the student does solve a problem independently or employs a useful strategy to help solve the problem.

If the student can’t solve a problem after five seconds the tutor should:

• discern what kind of problem the student is experiencing,
• decide which kind of prompt would be useful; and then
• prompt the student.
Deciding What The Student Does Next

At the end of the conference, the tutor advises the student about what to do next and writes a comment in the Student’s Handbook.

- If the student reads easily (with 95 percent accuracy or more) and fluently, with good comprehension, the tutor should praise the student and help him or her choose another book from the current level for practice. The easy, conferenced books can now be used in the classroom or taken home by the student for independent reading.

- If the student does not read easily and fluently, positive advice should be given and the student should be asked to continue practising with the same book (and maybe the audio support) for a little longer before returning for another conference.

- If reading and/or comprehension are poor, further discussion and practice should take place. Alternatively, a text-related activity could be assigned to a student who needs to work further on the text. The Cloze activities, Text Sequencing activities and Dice Games give the students additional opportunities to work on different formats of the text.

Giving Written Feedback

The Student’s Handbook contains pages for teachers to write positive and helpful advice for students at the end of the conference.

The teaching points discussed can be written along with a positive comment about what the student is doing well.

Examples of comments could be:

- “Great reading. Interesting voice. When it doesn’t sound right try to fix it up for yourself. Have one more practice without the audio support.”

- “Well done – you’re noticing when you make a mistake and you’re correcting yourself. Choose a new book from this set.”

- “You’re doing well. Have one more listen and do the Cloze exercise. This will help you to think about what would make sense.”

- “Your reading is really improving. Do the Word Search to help you to read some of the tricky words.”

- “Fantastic! Only one listen and it was easy. Try reading a book without the audio support then tomorrow we’ll check how well you can read a book from the next set.”

- If the student’s fluency when reading is poor, then further practice with the audio support should be recommended. Students with poor fluency should be instructed to read “like the voice” or to make their reading “sound like talking”.

Discuss one or two teaching points with the student. These will be skills or strategies the tutor feels the student needs to practise and can focus on using in future readings. It is best to confine the number of teaching or learning points to one or two to avoid overloading the student.
Activities

The activities in the Rainbow Reading Programme have been designed to extend and enrich the skills learned during reading.

Students learn to read by reading and no activity can substitute for the valuable skills learned from interaction with meaningful text. The activities in the Rainbow Reading Programme have been designed for maximum educational advantage but it is not intended that every student should complete every activity for every book.

CLOZE (Text Completion) Activities

Cloze exercises, where students fill gaps in text, are useful for assessing and improving students’ comprehension.

The first part of each Rainbow Reading book (enough to allow for 25 gaps in the text) is presented in Cloze format for student use. After the first sentence, every fifth word is deleted for the students to fill in. Proper nouns and words that are difficult to predict are excluded from this procedure and a neighbouring word is deleted instead.

Cloze activities can be used in a variety of ways, for various purposes, as described below.

- Use Cloze activities after reading, as a comprehension check that will assist with diagnosing the students’ strengths and weaknesses in using semantics and structure cues when reading. By analysing the kinds of answers the students give, tutors will be able to make decisions about what the students need to learn and the books they may read in the future that will address those needs.

Activities are best used:
• for practice in the classroom or at home; or
• when the tutor believes the student needs further practice on text but the student is reluctant to read the book again.

There are several kinds of activities including Cloze, Text Sequencing, Word Search, Dice Game and Writing. The layout on the activities differs from the corresponding books, where text size, illustrations and layout are appropriate to the different reading levels. Because of these differences, for other reading-based activities, students should read from the books and not from the activity sheets.

For more information about using Cloze exercises for assessing and improving students’ comprehension refer to the Rainbow Reading Programme Activities Manuals. NB. This is not a copying exercise so the book should NOT be in sight.
Text Sequencing (Sentence Strips) Activities

Text Sequencing activities require the student to read and arrange a summary of a text in sequence. This improves the student’s comprehension skills.

All texts from the Rainbow Reading books are presented in summary form to be photocopied with the summarised text on one side and the self-evaluating message: “Well done! You’ve got it right!” on the other side.

The card should then be cut along the lines and presented to students before, during or after they have practised reading the book and/or listened to the audio support. The self-evaluating message enables students to flip their arrangement and check the accuracy for themselves.

A different size font and number of strips has been used for each level, in recognition of the different ability levels.

For more information about using Text Sequencing exercises refer to the Rainbow Reading Programme Activities Manuals.

Dice Game

The Dice Games provide students with another opportunity to read the text from the books in a different format. This will foster improved fluency, accuracy and understanding.

Each text from the Rainbow Reading books is presented in Dice Game format requiring students to throw a dice, move their counter then read and follow the instructions. The text used in each Dice Game relates closely to that used in the corresponding book so, by reading the instructions on the Dice Game, students are consolidating their reading and comprehension skills.

The forms are designed to be photocopied, perhaps onto card corresponding in colour to the level of the text.

A template is provided for students and teachers who wish to design their own dice games.

For more information about using Dice Game activities refer to the Rainbow Reading Programme Activities Manuals.
Word Search Activities

*Word Search activities require the students to locate words from a book that have been hidden in a grid of letters.*

By completing Word Search activities students practise:
- recognising words in a different context;
- spelling words;
- searching for words in sequence.

For the Word Search activities words from the Rainbow Reading Programme books have been hidden in grids of different sizes to correlate with the reading level of the book.

**The Word Search activities have the following features:**
- Words are written only from left to right (across or diagonally) or from top to bottom (down) because this is the way students need to remember them.
- Letters are all lower case as this is how students will be expected to read them and identify them when they meet them in text.
- Every word in every grid has its own set of letters, not shared with any other word.
- The letters that are left after all the words have been found form another word from the book for which a clue is given.
- At the earlier levels high frequency words feature more often than interest words. As the levels get progressively more difficult interest or content words are introduced with increasing frequency.
- Answers are provided in the back of the Activity Manuals, as is a template for the grid should the tutor or students wish to make their own Word Search activities.

For more information about using Word Search activities refer to the Rainbow Reading Programme Activities Manuals.
Practice in either reading or writing is likely to result in improved skills in the other area.

In the Rainbow Reading Programme, meaningful, text-related writing activities provide practice and consequently reinforce reading and writing skills.

The writing activities are all directly related to the respective student books. The activities provide the students with a reason to write. They encourage students to:

- think about what they have read;
- comprehend and interpret the text; and
- in some cases, to identify text structures.

For more information about using Writing activities refer to the Rainbow Reading Programme Activities Manuals.
Using the Progress Graph

The Progress Graph (see pg. 47) allows tutors to monitor students’ progress.

To use the Progress Graph tutors should:

• make unbroken lines to indicate reading progress and broken lines to represent student’s chronological age;
• record student’s progress through the reading levels on the graph.

In the following example, Ben started on Rainbow Reading in February, when he had just turned 8 years of age. His reading level, assessed using an unseen title was 6 to 7 years (Red). In May he could read at the 7 – 8 year reading level (Orange) and in August he could read at the age appropriate level of 8 – 9 year reading level (Yellow).
Using the Record of Student’s Work

The record template provided allows teachers to keep a record of students’ work.

Teachers can record which books each student has read, how many times they have listened to the audiosupport, when they have read independently (without the audio support), when they have had a conference and which activities they have completed.

In the following example Ben has listened to the book “The Class Trip” four times and has read the book independently once. He has completed the corresponding Cloze activity and Dice Game before conferencing successfully on 7 April.

His teacher has noted that he has read fluently with good understanding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOOK TITLES</th>
<th>L = Listen &amp; read</th>
<th>I = Independent read</th>
<th>C = Cloze</th>
<th>T = Text Sequencing</th>
<th>D = Dice Game</th>
<th>W = Writing</th>
<th>WS = Word Search</th>
<th>C = Conference</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Class Trip</td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Check" /> <img src="true" alt="Check" /> <img src="true" alt="Check" /> <img src="true" alt="Check" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Check" /> <img src="true" alt="Check" /> <img src="true" alt="Check" /> <img src="true" alt="Check" /></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The record template provided allows teachers to keep a record of students’ work.
Assessment of a student’s readiness for promotion may be checked by one or both of the following means:

1) Choose an unpractised title at the same level the student has been working on.
   - Briefly orient the student to the story by reading the introduction that is supplied on the corresponding Running Record sheet.
   - Take a Running Record of 100 to 150 words or do a simple count of uncorrected errors.
   - Determine the student’s accuracy rate for this text.
   - If the reading is independent, (95 percent accuracy or more, making 5 or less errors in 100 words) promotion to the next level may be warranted. Good comprehension and fluency should also be demonstrated at this current level before promotion is considered.

2) Choose an unpractised title at the level above that which the student has been working on.
   - Briefly orient the student to the story by reading the introduction on the corresponding Running Record sheet.
   - Take a Running Record of 100 - 150 words, or do a simple count of uncorrected errors.
   - Determine the student’s accuracy rate for this text.
   - If the student reads with 90 - 94 percent accuracy (between 6 and 10 errors in 100) at this next level then promotion to this new level may be warranted. It is not so critical that good comprehension and fluency are demonstrated at this next level as they should improve with practice.

NOTE: Because of the audio support provided, it is sometimes acceptable for students to practise supported reading with texts that they can read with only 88 percent accuracy. This may be necessary if there is no easier level for them to practise on, if they have read all the books at the previous level, or if not enough challenge or interest is provided in books at the previous level.

Ideally, students should continue practising on the Rainbow Reading Programme until their instructional reading levels are age-appropriate.
**Home Practice**

Rapid progress is more likely to occur if:

- settings are supportive; and
- the feedback students are given is positive and consistent with that given at school.

Sample notes for home are included in the appendices for photocopying onto school stationery or retyping with appropriate adjustments.

Ideally, students will use the Rainbow Reading Programme for independent or supported practice at home as follows:

- Students who can be trusted to return them could take books and/or audio support home. Send with them a bookmark (provided) copied onto coloured card, which indicates to the parent the kind of practice that the student needs and the involvement that is expected of the parent.
  
  - For independent reading practice, students take home a well-practised, easy, conferenced book for silent reading or for reading to a parent, along with the corresponding bookmark.
  
  - For supported practice, the student takes home a book and audio support, as well as the corresponding bookmark.
  
  - If practice in hearing and reading a book is needed and you know the parent or an older sibling is capable of it, the student takes home the book they are currently practising with a bookmark that asks the parent/sibling to read the book aloud to the student at a speed that allows the student to read along silently.

A student should not be expected to read a book at home unaided, unless it is known to be easy. That is, the book will have been conferenced, or will have been well practised and due to be conferenced next day.

Send home the note explaining the “Praise, Wait, then Tell” technique (provided) to ensure that students are not taught confusing strategies at home and to foster parents’ involvement in the programme. Parents appreciate being informed about their children’s involvement in the programme and how they can best support them. Parents could be invited to attend a Rainbow Reading session and discuss it afterwards. The Students’ Handbook gives parents more detail about how the Rainbow Reading Programme works.

The text-related exercises are ideal for home practice, especially if tutors are concerned that resources won’t be returned to school. The Dice Game, especially, fosters family involvement. Students can work at the Cloze, Text Sequencing, Writing and Word Search activities independently at home. Bookmarks are provided that explain the kind of practice required with the text-related activities.
Fluent oral reading is well understood by both reader and listener. Fluency is a reliable indicator of the development of reading skills.

**Teaching Fluency**

Fluency can be taught in many ways. These include engaging students in direct instruction, reading a variety of high interest books at an appropriate level of difficulty and including different text types, repeated readings, listening to fluent models, and supported reading practice. Opportunities for students to engage in positive performance reading and to respond orally and/or in writing to what they have read also contribute to fluency. Above all, the development of an awareness of fluency and an ability to monitor it (meta-fluency) gives students the means to become self-extending readers (Clay, 2001).

**Building Fluency with Rainbow Reading**

The Rainbow Reading programme is based on the above understandings about the importance of fluency and the ways that it can be taught. Listening to audio support while reading the books provides students with a fluent model for supported practice. Students are introduced to each book by their teacher and have opportunities to respond either verbally and/or in writing to the books that they read. Rainbow Reading requires the student to make repeated readings of the books and to demonstrate their fluency by reading aloud to the teacher during conferences.

Used together, these approaches create a synergy that makes the Rainbow Reading programme greater than the sum of its parts and, most importantly, it creates the conditions for students to experience success.
Assessing Fluency

Fluency can be assessed using a variety of quantitative (numbers) and qualitative (behaviours) measures. Student fluency norms based on words correct per minute have been published and used to assess reading pace, but reading rate alone is not a sufficient measure of fluency. A combination of quantitative and qualitative measures to assess accuracy, comprehension, and the three key measures of fluency – smoothness, phrasing, and pace is recommended in the Rainbow Reading programme.

Methods for measuring accuracy and comprehension can be found in the Activity Manuals under Assessment. The following information outlines a method for measuring pace and provides a rubric for rating students’ fluency.

Measuring Pace

Procedure

In a quiet and comfortable one-to-one setting, have the student read aloud at their normal pace for one minute from an unseen title in the Rainbow Reading stage that they are working from.

Discretely keep a tally of the number of words that the student reads incorrectly. Self-corrections are not counted as errors. If the student stops or struggles with a word for three seconds or more, tell the student the word, and count it as incorrect.

Count the total number of words in the passage read within the one-minute period. Subtract the number of incorrect words. This will give you a words-correct-per-minute (WCPM) score.
Analysis and Interpretation

Compare the student’s score with the norms on the WCPM chart below. This will give an indication of the appropriateness of the student’s pace at their instructional reading level (not their Year level). If the student reads at the lower end or middle of the norms for their set, they should continue to practise from this set. If the student reads at the top end or higher than the norms for their set, and if their comprehension is good, they should be assessed using a book from the next set up. If the assessment shows that the student’s comprehension is also good at the higher level, practice with books from this set may be appropriate.

Example:
Samuel is in Year 4. He has an instructional reading level of early Year 2, so he is reading books from Rainbow Reading White series. When his reading pace was assessed using an unseen title from White series, he read with forty-eight words correct per minute. His teacher judged that this was an appropriate instructional level for him to practise his reading.

The teacher or student can fill out the pace chart each time pace is assessed. The pace chart can be copied for every student using the Rainbow Reading programme and attached to their Student Handbook.

Students who are reading significantly (20 percent or more) below the stated norms for their actual Year level are at risk. Rainbow Reading can be used to provide these students with extra support.

Student Fluency Norms Based on Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rainbow Reading set and equivalent instructional reading level</th>
<th>WCPM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Silver (5 – 5.5 year reading level)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (5.5 - 6 year reading level)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red (6 - 7 year reading level)</td>
<td>60 - 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange (7 - 8 year reading level)</td>
<td>65 - 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow (8 – 9 year reading level)</td>
<td>90 - 115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green (9 - 10 year reading level)</td>
<td>100 - 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue (10 - 11 year reading level)</td>
<td>105 - 125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violet (11 - 12 year reading level)</td>
<td>120 - 145</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the research of Hasbrouck and Tindal (1992)
**Pace Chart**

**Name:**

- Write the date and the Rainbow Reading set in the space at the bottom of the chart.
- Find the nearest number to your reading pace.
- Shade the box where the pace meets the date.
- Fill in the graph each time your pace is assessed to see your progress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>180</th>
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Date and Rainbow Reading level

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**Pace Chart**

**Name:**

- Write the date and the Rainbow Reading set in the space at the bottom of the chart.
- Find the nearest number to your reading pace.
- Shade the box where the pace meets the date.
- Fill in the graph each time your pace is assessed to see your progress.

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Date and Rainbow Reading level
Another method for measuring fluency is the Multidimensional Fluency Scale (Zutell and Rasinski, 1991). The scale can be used to rate reader fluency on the four dimensions of accuracy, phrasing, smoothness, and pace. To rate the reader’s accuracy, you will first need to conduct the Rainbow Reading assessment to find their accuracy score. This will be expressed as a percentage.

**Total scores across the four dimensions will range from 4 to 16. Scores of 9 and above indicate that fluency has been achieved at the level of the passage read. Scores below 8 indicate that fluency may be a concern.**

**Procedure**

Copy the Multidimensional Fluency Scale Template overleaf.

In a quiet and comfortable one-to-one setting, listen to the student reading aloud from a Rainbow Reading title that they have been introduced to but have not yet practised with the audio support. This can be the same title that was used for assessment of accuracy. Pay particular attention to phrasing, smoothness, and pace. Using the fluency rubric descriptors, choose the one that best matches the student’s fluency in each of the measures. Circle the appropriate numbers on the fluency rubric scales. Add the scores for each measure and record the total score.
Circle the number that best describes the student’s reading on each measure, using the fluency rubric descriptors below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accuracy</th>
<th>Phrasing</th>
<th>Smoothness</th>
<th>Pace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total score:** ______

### Fluency Rubric Descriptors

#### Accuracy
1. Word recognition is poor: accuracy score below 85%.
2. Word recognition is marginal: accuracy score of 86%–89%.
3. Word recognition is good: accuracy score of 90%–95%.
4. Word recognition is excellent: accuracy score of 96% or above.

#### Phrasing
1. Monotonic with little sense of phrase boundaries; frequent word-by-word reading.
2. Frequent two and three word phrases giving the impression of choppy reading; improper stress and intonation; fails to mark the ends of sentences and clauses.
3. A mixture of run-ons, mid-sentence pauses for breath, and possibly some choppy reading; reasonable stress and intonation.
4. Generally well-phrased, mostly in clause and sentence units, with adequate attention to expression.

#### Smoothness
1. Frequent extended pauses, hesitations, false starts, sound outs, repetitions, and/or multiple attempts.
2. Several “rough spots” in text with frequent and disruptive pauses, hesitations, and the like.
3. Occasional breaks in smoothness caused by difficulties with specific words and/or structures.
4. Generally smooth reading with some breaks, word and structure difficulties resolved quickly, usually through self-correction.

#### Pace (during sections of minimal disruption)
1. Slow and laborious.
2. Moderately slow.
3. An uneven mixture of fast and slow reading.
4. Consistently conversational.

*Adapted with permission from Zutell and Rasinski (1991)*
Learning English with the Rainbow Reading Programme

The Rainbow Reading Programme is an ideal programme for students learning English as they are immersed in the English language when they use the audio support and the book.

Features of the Rainbow Reading Programme that support the English Language Learner (ELL):

- Clear, accurate, rich, fluent, but unrushed models of the spoken language are available on the audio support.
- Students can rewind and listen as often as they like, whenever they like.
- Levelled books ensure that reading is achievable for most students. Students can work at their appropriate level.
- Students can work at their own pace on individual programmes.
- The audio-facilitated method allows students many opportunities for supported practice, independent practice, rehearsal, and demonstration of reading skills in private situations.
- The books are authentic and uncontrived and are based on natural language and everyday events that students can relate to.
- Short books allow students to experience the satisfaction of finishing a book. They are able to gain a complete understanding of a whole book.
- The audio-facilitated approach concentrates on developing a student’s ability to read with fluency, speed, and comprehension.
- Students are exposed to large quantities and a wide variety of texts, which assist oral development in English, as well as improving reading in English.

- The activities enable students to revisit the text and to understand what they have read. This is important for English Language Learners who are often able to decode English at a more sophisticated level than they can comprehend.
- In the beginning texts especially, vocabulary is repeated throughout the books and activities. This increases the likelihood that this vocabulary will quickly become part of the students’ functional vocabulary.
- The varied reading, listening, and writing components cater for and appeal to different learning styles.

When using the Rainbow Reading Programme with students learning English tutors should:

- Spend more time on the orientation phase with ELL students, placing increased emphasis on ensuring that they understand the vocabulary. Accessing their background knowledge may help them to understand the meaning.
- Anticipate possible problems. Be prepared to provide concrete examples or pictures to demonstrate concepts that may be difficult to explain. An illustrated dictionary is a useful resource if students are taught to use it effectively and economically.
- Set a time limit when introducing an activity, as an indication of how long it should take to do but be flexible if the student needs more time.
- Allow plenty of time for students to read and respond to questions and instructions and to complete activities.
- Show students the follow-up activity you may be recommending before they read the text so students are prepared for what is to come and so they know what sort of reading is required of them, for instance, skimming for understanding, pronunciation practice, or practice in reading fluently.
In the classroom, generally, teachers should:

- Be prepared to rephrase an explanation or question if it’s clear the student has not understood.
- Adjust their language to suit the student’s understanding of English.
- Say only what is necessary.
- Avoid speaking loudly or unnaturally. It may be seen as patronising.
- Use helpful, consistent gestures.

- Specifically demonstrate to students how to transfer knowledge and strategies acquired in their first language to reading and speaking English, for example reading for meaning.
- Involve parents and others who speak the student’s first language in the early stages of a student’s using the Rainbow Reading Programme. They could be asked to orient the student to a book in the student’s first language.
- Allow the books and audio support to go home where the rest of the family as well as the student may use them.

- Spend more time on conferencing to ensure that students have fully understood the book. Be aware that comprehension levels are usually lower than accuracy rates, so use comprehension rather than accuracy as an indicator of a student’s reading level.
- Be prepared to demonstrate and model rather than question or prompt. For example, if the English Language Learner student reads, “The shell cutting her hands” the tutor may need to respond with “We say ‘The shell cut her hands’.” This is different to the response made by a teacher of the “fluent in English student” who may be prompted with “Is that how we say it?” or “Did that sound right?” The English Language Learner may not know if it sounds right.

- Recognise that prior learning (especially the ability to read in the first language) assists learning to read in English.
- Foster a warm relationship that ensures students want to participate, are willing to take risks, realise they are valued and know they are perceived as capable learners.
- Be sure that students realise they have something to contribute and their contributions are valued.
Management of the Rainbow Reading Programme

Time Required for the Rainbow Reading Programme

Ideally, the students work on the Rainbow Reading Programme five days a week.

It is recommended that the students practise on the programme for an initial period of 10 weeks. If student interest is high, then practice on the programme can continue for much longer than the initial 10-week unit.

A group of four to six students can work with a teacher for a 20 - 30 minute session daily. The students can be withdrawn from their classrooms for daily practice or can be supervised within their classrooms.

(Extra time may need to be allocated to English Language Learners and/or if writing activities are to be completed during the session). Students work in a group but each is reading their own book or doing their own activity at their own level and moving at their own pace. Teachers need to allocate approximately 30 minutes to each group of students, each day.

Withdrawing the Students

The advantages of withdrawing the students are as follows:

- The students have a private learning environment.
- Tutors are dedicated to the task and do not experience other distractions.
- The students can be withdrawn from different areas of the school.
- Set timetabling means that the students can be withdrawn at the same time each day to a convenient space.
- The tutor does not need to be the classroom teacher. Tutors running the programme can be trained teachers, teacher aides, paraprofessionals or volunteer helpers; perhaps parents of the students involved. Volunteer help is best used in conjunction with a teacher to oversee the programme and provide continuity.
Students Working within the Classroom

The advantages of having the students work within their classroom are as follows:

• The students feel included and not singled out.
• The classroom teachers are involved.
• The timetables may be flexible. Teachers and students can use unexpected free time to practise using the programme and the programme can be slotted in around other classroom activities when necessary.

The students working on the Rainbow Reading Programme in their classroom should practise in a place that is free from visual distractions. The headphones associated with the audio support eliminate most extraneous noise so that a student working in a corner of a busy room can easily manage the practice required.

Working in classrooms allows for more flexibility when organising and delivering the programme. Classroom teachers can be more involved. A student’s sense of inclusion increases when the programme operates in the classroom. If a regular daily time slot is allocated for the Rainbow Reading Programme and if conferencing is possible when needed, then students can be expected to make gains similar to those made by students in withdrawal groups.

Managing the Rest of the Class

When students are working on the Rainbow Reading Programme in the classroom and no extra help is available, teachers will need to develop a programme that involves the rest of the class in ongoing independent activities. This will allow the teacher to spend uninterrupted time with students on the Rainbow Reading Programme who need orienting to new books or conferencing. The literacy activities suggested (at right) should engage most students for a sustained period of time while teachers work with students on the Rainbow Reading Programme.

• Independent reading
• Reading plays
• Partner reading
• Directed reading
• Alphabet and spelling games
• Computers
• Sentence strips
Using Tutors and Volunteers

A classroom teacher who has concurrent responsibilities may need help with the orientation and conferencing phases of the Rainbow Reading Programme. This may be provided within the classroom by:

- another teacher;
- a teacher aide/paraprofessional;
- volunteer helpers, such as parents or grandparents; senior students;
- more capable readers from another class or within the class.

All tutors should be trained to:

- recognise fluent, easy reading;
- use the “praise, wait, and then tell” technique if help is needed;
- use appropriate questioning to gauge comprehension.

Prompting is best left to teachers, unless helpers are trained in this complex teaching procedure.

NOTE:

- A trained teacher is able to manage five or six students together, per 20 - 30 minute session.
- A teacher aide or paraprofessional is able to manage four or five students together, per 20 - 30 minute session.
- Volunteer helpers can manage three or four students together, per 20 - 30 minute session.
Managing the Resources and Equipment

The students who are reading at different levels each need a personal audio player, or regular use of an audio player with headphones, and a copy of the book and audio support. The students who use personal audio players (rather than listening in a group) are likely to make the most progress as they can move at their own pace, having as much practice as they need when they need it. (It is perfectly acceptable for students to share equipment, providing they have access to it when they need it.)

Suggestions for Storage

- Store the sets of books and audio support in storage boxes or on shelves. Use a plastic zip bag to store the book, audio support and all activities relating to the title.

- Store the books and audio support that students are currently using and their Student’s Handbook in personal boxes for each student.

- If it does not need to be shared store the audio player a student is using in each student’s personal box as well.

- Store homework and activity sheets in a plastic bag, fabric “home bag” or folder within the students’ personal boxes. This keeps them together, clean, and easy to find.

- Store shared audio players in compact plastic containers close to the storage boxes for the sets.

- If more than one group of students needs access to the same sets of equipment and resources, these may need to be returned to a central storage area after each session.
Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How many times should the students practise with the audio support?
A: Students differ considerably in their needs, levels of confidence and skill levels. Some will need a lot of support (maybe listening up to 10 times) especially when they have just started a new level. Others will feel confident enough to practice independently after listening just once or twice. With encouragement, and as they experience success, students will require less support especially on books they feel confident reading. Students should be aware that the audio support is an interim support and the aim is to have them reading independently (without audio support) as soon as possible.

Q: Is there a risk that students will memorise the text so that it’s not a reading exercise at all?
A: Familiarity with the text is precisely the aim: it builds confidence and encourages students to read easily, without conscious effort. It’s unlikely that any student would memorise more than 100 words. Very few of the authors who have written the books and spent many hours interacting with the text would be able to quote the text verbatim. However, if you believe a student is becoming too familiar with a book that their attention to the print is suffering then it would be wise to limit the number of times they are permitted to listen.

Q: Is the Rainbow Reading Programme suited to all types of reading difficulties?
A: All students, regardless of their challenges, learn to read by reading. All will benefit from the Rainbow Reading Programme as it provides interesting, supported reading practice at a suitable level of difficulty at which students gain satisfaction and success. Remember that the Rainbow Reading Programme is not intended to replace the normal classroom reading programme. It works best alongside regular and specialist intervention programmes as it complements and adds value to usual practices in reading instruction.

Q: What should I do if a student lacks or loses interest in the programme?
A: Check:
- Whether teachers, parents, and other students give the programme a positive profile. Allow a wider range of students to use the programme, especially a highly regarded student.
- Whether the student is reading at a level that is too hard or too easy.
- That the texts interest the student. Allow for more personal choice.
- That the student understands the texts.
- Whether the student needs a change of approach or more variety. Consider introducing the Toxic series or Choose a Path series.
- Whether the student feels some other highly regarded activity is being missed because of their involvement with the Rainbow Reading Programme. If so, reschedule the activity or the time at which the student uses the Rainbow Reading Programme.

Q: What should I do if a student consistently needs more than 10 practices with audio support before conference reading is easy?
A: Check:
- Is the level too hard? The student should be able to read an unseen text at the current level with 88 percent accuracy or more. If not, the difficulty level should be reduced.
- Is the student reading along as well as listening?
- Is the student lacking in confidence to initiate a conference? If so, limit the number of practices allowed before conferencing.
- Ensure conference feedback is positive and full of praise.
- Does the student understand the stories? Initiate discussion that checks the student’s comprehension and make explanations where necessary.
**FAQs**

**Q** What should I do if a student has read every Rainbow Reading book available at the appropriate level but is not yet ready for the next level or for discontinuing the programme?

**A** Check:

- Is the student reading along in the book as well as listening to the audio support?
- Is the student getting plenty of other appropriate reading practice?
- Is the current Rainbow Reading level really appropriate or is it too difficult?

**Try:**

- Asking the student to reread books at the current level without audio support or with reduced audio support.
- Asking the student to read stories at an easier level without audio support or with just one or two practices.
- Promoting the student to the next level but expect more practices to be needed.
- Training the student in how to orient and conference students at lower levels. The target student will need to become very familiar with the books that are being conferenced. This provides a good reason for the student to revisit easier levels and becoming a peer tutor boosts their confidence.

**Q** What should I do if a student has trouble following the text?

**A** If a tutor listens closely it is usually possible to hear where the audio support is up to or students can be asked to indicate where they are up to when the tutor stands close by.

- Discourage the student from pointing to each word as this interferes with fluency but they could use a finger of the left hand moving down the left margin of the text as an interim measure.

- Sliding strips under the text tend to inhibit the eyes from moving ahead of the voice so should not be used.

- Similarly, a sliding strip placed above the text inhibits the useful technique of rerunning so should not be used unless the strip is made of clear, rigid plastic.

- If a student is too easily distracted, withdrawing to a quieter place or using a polling booth style carrel is recommended.

**Q** What should I do if a student does not read fluently?

**A** Recommend that the student practises more with the audio support, perhaps reading aloud if accuracy is not a problem. When reading independently, the student should be advised to read “like the voice”. Promoting the student to a new book should not take place until the student can read a book easily, with good understanding, and fluency.

**Q** What should I do if a student is a teenager or adult?

**A** Try:

The Selections series which is designed to appeal to the interests of older readers who are 14 years and older, with topics such as driving, employment, exams and relationships.

**Q** What should I do if a student is a new learner of English?

**A** Try:

Lingomagic which is an audio-assisted resource designed for people of all ages in the early stages of learning to speak and read English.

**Q** What should I do if my student is a pre-schooler or in the early years of schooling?

**A** Try:

miniRAINBOWs which is an audio-assisted resource designed to support young children to learn the early concepts about print.

**Q** What if my student struggles with comprehension?

**A** Try:

CSI (Comprehension Strategies Instruction) which is an interactive literacy resource for teaching comprehension, vocabulary, writing, oral language and fluency. It is available from csi-literacy.co.nz
The benefits of audio-facilitated reading have been documented over several decades by a number of researchers and teachers. They describe the advantages of providing audio support to support struggling and reluctant readers, English language learners (ELL), and learning-disabled students.

Research on repeated reading and listening to text began in the early 1970s. Chomsky (1976) implemented an audiotaped reading system with five eight-year-old students who were all reading one or two years below their grade level. Over the course of ten months, the students’ fluency and reading comprehension improved. Chomsky also noted that “passivity about reading declined dramatically, confidence increased, and they began to pick up new books of their own choosing.” (page 296)

Blum et al. (1995) explored the benefits of increasing first-grade ELL students’ access to books and giving them the opportunity to practice reading with audiotapes at home. The study found that when second-language learners were given the opportunity to reread books with audiotapes at home, they showed a substantially improved ability to read increasingly difficult books both fluently and accurately. Teachers and parents also reported that these students read more and demonstrated an increased confidence and independence in literacy activities.

In a larger study with 162 first-grade ELL and non-ELL students, Koskinen et al. (2000) also found that ELL students benefited from having access to an audio model. The students daily reread books at home with audio support. Parents reported positive effects on their children’s reading motivation and achievement and became more involved in literacy activities.

Carbo (1978) noticed substantial gains in word recognition and oral reading skills when using “talking books” with eight learning-disabled students. “With talking books, students can experience immediate success … Not only have all the youngsters made excellent gains in reading compared to previous performance, but they have become more interested in reading, more willing to try, and more helpful toward one another.” (page 273)

The Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement analysed a number of studies on the effectiveness of repeated reading and assisted reading in improving students’ reading fluency (Kuhn and Stahl, 2000). Assisted readings involved the student’s repeated reading of a text with a model of fluent reading, such as an audiotape, to provide support. The authors found clear improvements in oral reading and comprehension. They also found that both repeated and assisted readings “enable children to read more difficult material than they might otherwise be able to read, or may provide a manageable structure to enable increased amounts of reading.” (page 24)

Put Reading First (2001) has also endorsed this approach. “Researchers have found several effective techniques related to repeated oral reading: students read and reread a text a certain number of times or until a certain level of fluency is reached … and oral reading practice is increased through the use of audiotapes, tutors, peer guidance, or other means.” (page 24)

The effectiveness of Rainbow Reading has been demonstrated in several research studies. In Rainbow Reading, the audio-facilitated reading experience is enhanced by including other well-known, successful procedures.
Among these are orientation to the book, grading the reading material (which is short and of high interest), repeated readings, independent practice, and conferencing. Pluck (1995) found that forty-three underachieving students, ranging in age from seven to twelve years, made average gains of twenty-six months in their reading level in seven months of half-hour daily lessons on the Rainbow Reading Programme.

In another study using the Rainbow Reading Programme, Langford (2001) reported that fifteen students, ranging in age from twelve to seventeen years, thirteen of whom were from non-English-speaking backgrounds, made average gains of fourteen months in their reading level during two months on the programme.

Furthermore, Nalder and Elley (2002) researched the effectiveness of Rainbow Reading with twenty-nine students ranging in age from seven to twelve years. Fourteen of the students were from non-English-speaking backgrounds. The authors found the students made, on average, gains in their reading level of twenty-six months in four and half months on the programme. The struggling readers and ELL students made similar gains in reading level, but the ELL students progressed faster on the other literacy measures. The figures below illustrate the gains.

In more recent years teachers of Rainbow Reading from around the world consistently report average progress of 12 months in reading level every 10 weeks of 20 - 30 minutes practice 4 - 5 times weekly.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodology/Delivery</th>
<th>Pedagogy/Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student is orientated to new book.</td>
<td>Orientation to the book is an extremely effective means of activating prior knowledge, fostering interest, helping students to predict what they may read about, and facilitating a better understanding of reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student listens to audio support and follows along.</td>
<td>Independent reading supports fluency. Audio support provides students with valuable self-controlled access to a good, fluent model, that when read at a suitable speed allows them to follow the text. For struggling readers, the use of audio support is very beneficial as it is supportive, private, and non-threatening. Using models of fluent reading, such as audio support, to assist students with repeated reading of text has a positive effect on students’ oral reading and comprehension. Listening to an expert reader helps students who struggle with word identification or who are slow comprehenders to build vocabulary, fluency and meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student fills in Student Handbook…</td>
<td>Students who take responsibility for their own record keeping and learning are more likely to become active learners and better readers more quickly. Teachers who have ready access to information on how much practice students require before achieving competency can make informed decisions about what their students need to make maximum gains quickly. Students with reading delay need to be meaningfully engaged at all times to ensure maximum acceleration in reading skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student reads book independently and makes a decision …</td>
<td>Students who monitor their own skills, proficiency, and possible readiness for promotion are becoming active learners and are acquiring the skills needed to become competent readers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do I need more practice?</td>
<td>Repeated practice of the same text is important for the orchestration and consolidation of skills. Repeated practice results in higher levels of accuracy, better fluency, and improved comprehension of reading. Reading a book competently is proof to a student that success is achievable, and this sets a precedent for future successful reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should I do an activity?</td>
<td>The most effective reading activities are text-related, meaningful, integrated with writing, and involve reading. They provide further practice in reading as well as variety and an opportunity for consolidation of skills learned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should I conference with my tutor? Student reads part of the book to the tutor, who listens, praises, pauses, prompts, checks fluency and comprehension, focuses on some teaching points, gives positive oral and written feedback, then recommends …</td>
<td>Regular, positive, appropriate feedback is essential to the acceleration of reading skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
more practice with the same book ...

practice with a new book at the same level.

Repeated readings and assisted readings may enable students to read more difficult material than they might otherwise have been able to read, or they may provide a manageable structure to enable increased amounts of reading.

Students learn best with the correct degree and balance of support and challenge, that is, reading books at their individual instructional reading level.

Where there is consistency of practices between home and school, acceleration of reading progress is more likely to result.

**References**

**STUDENT’S HANDBOOK**

**Rainbow Reading Programme**

**BOOKS WITH AUDIO SUPPORT**

| Pace Chart | Date and Rainbow Reading level
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0  20  40  60  80  100  120  140  160</td>
<td>Name: [Student's Name]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Write the date and the Rainbow Reading set in the space at the bottom of the chart.
- Find the nearest number to your reading pace.
- Shade the box where the pace meets the date.
- Fill in the graph each time your pace is assessed to see your progress.
Choose a story that interests you.

To start with:
Your teacher will tell you what colour books to use.

Discuss the story with your teacher.

Listen to the audio support and read along with your eyes, not your voice.

Mark on your graph each time you practice.

Repeat at least twice a day until you think you are ready to read the story by yourself, fairly fast and without many mistakes.

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To start with:
Your teacher will tell you what colour books to use.
Conference

- Choose a part to read to the teacher.
- The teacher will choose a part for you to read, then discuss what you have read with you.

Your teacher will write some conference comments in this booklet and advise you to:

- Practise some more with the same book (and maybe audio support).
  - OR Do an activity.
  - OR Read another book of this colour.
  - OR Read a book of a different colour. (They’ll tell you what colour.)

If you take home a book and/or audio support, be sure to return them for practice at school the next day.

Stories you can read easily can go home and into the classroom for Easy Reading Practice.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Signed</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Feedback about accuracy, strategies, fluency, comprehension and advice given)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Practices</th>
<th>Book Title &amp; Colour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/7</td>
<td>Popcorn (Red)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write the date inside the square each time you practice.

Conference

Record of Practices
# Record of Student’s Work

**Student’s Name** .....................................  
**Colour:** ........................................

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOOK TITLES</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L = Listen &amp; read</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I = Independent read</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cl = Cloze</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T = Text Sequencing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D = Dice Game</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W = Writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS = Word Search</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C = Conference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Checklist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please read to me</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Read this to me while I watch and listen.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Read at a speed that lets me follow along.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I need to return the book and bookmark to school the next day.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I read and listen to the audio support</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I need to read this silently as I listen to the audio support.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I need to return the book, bookmark and audio support to school the next day.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I read to you</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Please listen to me reading this book.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Please remember to Praise, Wait, then Tell me words if I need help.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I need to return the book and bookmark to school the next day.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloze</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I need to fill in the gaps with words the author would have used, without looking at the book.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I can use an eraser. I should try to spell words, by myself, as best I can.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I need to return the sheet and this bookmark to school the next day.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Sequencing</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I need to read these sentence strips and put them in the correct order.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I can look at the message on the back only when I'm finished.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I need to return the strips and this bookmark to school the next day.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dice Game</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I need to play this game with someone else, reading as much as I can by myself.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The instructions are all on the sheet.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I need to return the sheet and this bookmark to school the next day.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Search</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I need to find words hidden in this grid.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The instructions are all on the sheet.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I need to return the sheet and this bookmark to school the next day.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Activity</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I need to read and follow the instructions on this sheet.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I'm allowed just a quick check of the book but no copying.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I need to return the sheet and this bookmark to school the next day.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear ................................................

Your child ................................. is taking part in the "Rainbow Reading Programme" at school, to provide extra practice in reading. Children in the programme listen to stories with audio support as they read along silently.

Other children on the Rainbow Reading Programme have made big improvements in reading, comprehension and attitude to reading.

If your child brings home a book and/or audio support, please follow the instructions on the bookmark enclosed. If you would like to know more about the programme, or would like to see it in action, please contact us.

If your child struggles with the word they are reading, please praise, wait, then tell them the word. Please listen to your children reading, please:

- when they try hard
- when they correct mistakes
- when they use an interesting voice
- when they point at words
- when they ask for help
- when they repeat words
- when they ask questions

The child should hold the book, if pointing is needed, you shouldn’t touch the book. Not to every word, but with the left hand down the left margin question and discuss to check understanding.

Signed ........................................

When you listen to your children reading, please:

- REPEAT
- PRAISE
- WAIT
- TELL THEM

Dear ................................................

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Signed ........................................

When you listen to your children reading, please:

- REPEAT
- PRAISE
- WAIT
- TELL THEM

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Signed ........................................

When you listen to your children reading, please:

- REPEAT
- PRAISE
- WAIT
- TELL THEM
References


Learning Media Limited School Journals


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This Teachers’ Manual accompanies books, audio support, training DVD and text-related activities which comprise the Rainbow Reading Programme. The manual is a comprehensive guide to setting up the Rainbow Reading Programme. It includes printable teaching aids, such as Student’s Handbook, graphs and notes for parents. The Rainbow Reading Programme has been designed to present readers with a variety of topics, authors, styles and illustrations. Stories and articles in the programme have been carefully selected for their educational advantage and attraction to a wide range of students with varying needs and interests including struggling readers and students learning English.

The Rainbow Reading Programme has been thoroughly researched and trialled by qualified, experienced reading specialists in Nelson, New Zealand. Research has shown that Rainbow Reading can be effectively used to help struggling readers and English Language students significantly improve their reading fluency and accuracy, word recognition, writing fluency, spelling and oral language.