That Reading Thing
for people who don't know they can

Excerpts from:

Tricia Millar's That Reading Thing literacy intervention for teenagers:

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With notes by Tricia Millar (in italics)

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Executive summary

Headline finding: Young people who participated in TRT made substantial and statistically significant gains, on average, in reading.

This evaluation is based on data collected from 123 young people, mostly of secondary school age, who completed TRT courses in 2009-11 and had very low baseline scores.

Average progress was 3½ times the standard rate, and certainly significant both educationally and in terms of life chances for most of the young people who participated.

Average scores do of course conceal the fact that some participants made little or no progress, but nothing works for everyone, and some of these young people should probably be transferred to another scheme.

(Tricia Millar's note: We included the results of all the young people who were pre & post tested including one with a brain injury and many with social & behavioural difficulties. We also included young people whose results reflect working with a tutor who struggled seriously with delivery.)

A widely-cited rule of thumb is that young people need a reading age of at least 11 to cope with the secondary curriculum and with the literacy demands of today's society. A good number of those in this study reached this benchmark, and others were clearly well on the way to it.

The key factors in TRT enabling many of these young people to make such good progress are (I surmise) the fact that all tuition is one-to-one and not like school, the use of an approach which makes immediate sense to the students and enables them to detect their own steps of progress, however small, and the programme's distinctive feature dubbed 'The Deal' by Tricia Millar (see below).

I recommend that the existing funders should continue to support TRT, and encourage others to join in. Given the reported pressure to alter its approach from one-to-one to group teaching, I also recommend that its providers should resist this pressure vigorously, and should be firmly supported by funders in maintaining this stance.

The nature of TRT

TRT is a synthetic phonics scheme, in the sense of this definition:

> An approach to the teaching of reading in which the phonemes associated with particular graphemes are pronounced in isolation and blended together (synthesized). For example, children are taught to take a single-syllable word such as *cat* apart into its three letters, pronounce a phoneme for each letter in turn /k, æ, t/, and blend the phonemes together to form a word. Synthetic phonics for writing reverses the sequence: children are taught to say the word they wish to write, segment it into its phonemes and say them in turn, for example /d, ɒ, g/, and write a grapheme for each phoneme in turn to produce the written word, *dog*.
> (Brooks, 2003: 11-12)

As such, TRT is in tune with the renewed interest in and emphasis on synthetic phonics since the Rose Report (2006).

Tricia Millar has deliberately designed TRT so that it makes no assumptions about each new student's level of reading and spelling. This has two consequences. First, each student is told 'The Deal': they will not be expected to know anything that they and the tutor have not covered. Secondly, that principle is embodied in the first four Levels of the scheme, which are assessments starting right from absolute zero in literacy terms – three-letter words with totally regular grapheme-phoneme (letter-sound) correspondences to be read aloud, followed by progressively more complicated words. These tests are to ensure that each student starts where s/he is.

Though each student is tested initially from basics upwards and the scheme has early Levels which rehearse the basics of reading (word recognition) and spelling, only those who struggle are put through all these Levels in detail; those whom the literature sometimes calls 'faux débutants' ('false beginners'), and who can move ahead fast, do so. In many cases this will be because they have never before had the basis of the English alphabetic code made explicit to them.

All schemes which claim to teach synthetic phonics and to do so systematically must be based on accurate phonetics, and on an accurate account of the major phoneme-grapheme and grapheme-phoneme correspondences of the complex English orthography. Having seen all the TRT materials I can vouch that the underlying phonetics is 99% accurate – as it should be, given that Tricia Millar once studied phonetics – and that the account of the correspondences is also about 99% accurate, far better than some in the field.

The materials are organised into 50 Levels in all, systematically progressing from the basics to more advance aspects of the code. Levels 5-16 teach the basic code, consisting of only

the most useful and frequent graphemes and their major correspondences with phonemes. Levels 17 and 18 then serve, in Tricia's words, as 'early warning of the Wall they are going to hit at Level 19', where the students embark on the advanced code, in effect the full complexity of the system (though very few people ever do, or need to, master the entire system explicitly).

The materials also recognise the acute potential for boredom and resistance on the part of the disaffected students for whom the scheme is meant. In every teaching session there is intended to be a rapid succession of different activities ('lessons') focusing on different aspects of reading and spelling and designed to move students on as rapidly as possible. The sequence devised by Tricia Millar is also very precisely designed to build up phonics skills logically and in a spirally reinforcing manner.

TRT is also age-appropriate because it incorporates polysyllabic words from the start, for example 'fantastic' in the first session, 'accomplishment' in the second or third session, and words like 'condition', 'description' and 'recognition' a couple of sessions later. This is possible because these words have very regular and frequent correspondences and can therefore be taught within the basic code. This builds students' confidence and, importantly, does not treat them like five-year-olds by presenting them only with single-syllable words.

TRT is intended to be delivered one-to-one, either by (in some cases) paid teachers employed by a local authority which has bought the scheme in, or (more often) by volunteers. All tutors receive two days' training. By agreement and arrangement with Tricia Millar I was able to sit in on training she delivered at Bridge Community Centre, South Woodford, on Saturday and Sunday, 20-21 November 2010. Discounting breaks, the training occupied 10 hours. There were six trainees, one man and five women, ranging in age from 17 (a Year 13 student) to (I surmise) 40+. Two were qualified teachers, three were intending volunteers, and the sixth was a newly qualified graduate who was going to be a paid tutor for TRT while holding an unrelated non-teaching job.

The tutors' manual and the accompanying CD provide them with many more materials and activities than they will ever need to use with any one student, but ample to cope with any student at any Level; and they also provide virtually word-by-word scripts for tutors to follow, so that not even a volunteer taking his/her first session need panic at not knowing where to start or what to do. Thus the scheme is meticulously organised, and from observations (see below) it was clear that much of the approach had become second nature to the tutors very quickly.

Method

      Research design

Of necessity, this was a one-group pre-test/post-test study. There was no possibility of running a randomised controlled trial, that is, of recruiting a reasonably large number of young people suitable to receive the programme and then allocating them randomly to receive the programme or not. Those in the control group would have had to agree to take the pre-test at the same time as the intervention group, then return for the post-test at the same time as the intervention group, and only after that (if it were a 'waiting-list' design) receive the programme; the likelihood of substantial refusal is obvious. And there was no practicable way of defining, let alone recruiting, a comparison group similar enough to the target group to run either a matched-groups quasi-experiment or even an unmatched-groups pre-test/post-test study. This situation is common in educational research, where the

intervention group can only be those who receive the programme and agree to take part in the evaluation of it, and no control or comparison group is possible within the relevant constraints of time and budget.

Where a test yielding standardised scores can be used, the standardisation sample can be treated as an implicit control group – this was not feasible in this case (see below). Otherwise, the best that can be hoped for is that the results will show so large an impact that Hawthorn or halo effects (that is, that the investigators' attention to the participants caused the improvement, rather than the programme itself) can be at least tentatively ruled out. Ideally, however, one-group studies with substantial impacts should be considered as pilot investigations which should lead, if at all possible, to larger-scale and well-funded evaluations with more rigorous designs.

Sample

In early 2012 Tricia Millar provided background and test data collected by her and colleagues on 123 students who had participated in TRT in the academic years 2009-11. This was the number of young people who received TRT in that period and completed the programme, in the sense that they took the post-test as well as the pre-test. The data came from projects in Birmingham, Ellesmere Port, Huddersfield and the London Boroughs of Redbridge, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest.

Though various amounts of the requisite information could not be obtained, Table 1 shows the background characteristics of the sample, and Table 2 shows their age range at the start of the programme.

Table 1:   Characteristics of the sample of young people

	Distribution		(Unknown)
Gender	Males: 65	Females: 43	(15)
English as first/additional language	First language: 70	Additional language: 29	(24)
Free School Meals	Yes: 50	No: 33	(32, + 8 not applicable because over 16)
Special Educational Needs	Yes: 33	No: 36	(54)

Table 2:   Age-range of the sample at the start of the programme

Age	Number
11	9
12	17
13	29
14	26
15	25
16	6
18+	8
not known	3

The participants' average age was 13 years 11 months (13:11) at the beginning, and 14:3 at the end. All but the eight oldest were of compulsory secondary school age. Almost all were attending mainstream schools, but three (aged 15-16) were attending Pupil Referral Units,

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and three others were young people who were not in education, employment or training and were being supervised by Youth Offending Teams (one of these was aged 20; the ages of the other two were not supplied).

The test used

This was the Burt Reading Test (1974 revision). This is an individually-administered word recognition test – that is, testees are asked to read a sequence of single words aloud to the tester. The reliability of the test is 0.97 (the absolute limit is 1), thus virtually ruling out regression towards the mean as a possible explanation for any observed gain, even for a very low-scoring sample.

There are 110 words in the test, of which the last 10 are:

phlegmatic   melancholy   palpable   eccentricity   constitutionally

alienate   phthisis   poignancy   ingratiating   subtlety

Very few people would reach these words – as soon as a testee does not attempt, or makes errors on, 10 consecutive words, testing stops. Each individual's score is the number of words read correctly, and that number is then converted to a reading age using a conversion table. The table provides reading ages in the range 5:3 to 14:3. Although many of the students in this sample had chronological ages above 14:3, very few scored near the top of the scale even at post-test, and there was therefore no appreciable ceiling effect.

This is an old-fashioned type of test (indeed, this was one of the very first psychometric tests; Cyril Burt published the original version in 1920). Tricia Millar had chosen it because it is quick and simple to administer, and anything more complicated (and valid) might have frightened some potential participants off. Also, both the test itself, and the accompanying administration instructions and scoring key, are available free on the web.

The test has only one form. When a test is re-administered to the same people after too short an interval, they may get some items right through remembering them from the first occasion. However, the psychological literature shows that such practice effects are extinguished after at most three months, and in this study the average interval between pre- and post-test was just over four months. Any difference between the average scores at the two points could therefore considered a reliable measure of progress.

Quantitative results

Overall

The overall results are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3:   Quantitative results overall

	N = 123	Pre-test	Post-test	Change
		(years & months)	(years & months)	(months)
Chronological age (c.a.)	average	13:11	14:3	4.4
	range	11-24		1-16
Reading age (r.a.)	average	8:5	9:9	15.6
	range	5:11-14:0	6:2-14:1	-4 to +71
Average gap between c.a. and r.a.		5:6	4:6	-12

Note: The amounts of change expressed in months to one decimal place are more accurate than the apparent differences in average c.a's and r.a's, which have been rounded to years and whole months.

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Thus the students improved their reading age, on average, by nearly 16 months, and the gain was highly statistically significant (paired t-test, p<0.001). Allowing for the fact that they had also on average aged by just over 4 months, they had reduced the gap between their average chronological and reading ages by about a year. An appropriate measure of the overall impact of the programme is the 'ratio gain' (RG), also known as 'average monthly progress', that is, the average gain in months of reading age divided by the time elapsed between pre- and post-test in months. For this sample the RG works out at (15.6 / 4.4) = 3.5: this means that the students had on average made 3½ months' progress for every month the programme lasted, a substantial rate of improvement. The 'normal' rate is by definition 1.0, one month's progress for every calendar month.

The changes in reading age ranged from minus 4 months to plus 71 months. There were two spectacular individual RGs: 36 months' gain in 28 days, RG = 39.1; 59 months' gain in 29 days, RG = 61.8. A total of 83 students (two-thirds of the sample) had personal RGs of 2.0 or more, or at least double the normal rate of progress. Another 23 made modest gains (RGs between 1.1 and 2.0), which at least meant that they were not falling any further behind. Of the remaining 17 (14% of the sample), 14 did make small gains, but two had the same reading age at the end as at the beginning, and one had regressed by 4 months.

A reading age of 11 is widely accepted as the threshold of functional literacy, the level at which people can cope with everyday reading demands as individuals, family members, citizens and employees. It is also widely accepted as the level need to cope with the demands of the secondary school curriculum. Of this sample, only 13 (11%) were already at or above this level at the start of the programme, but 32 (26%) had reached at least this level by the end. Judging by their progress in TRT, another 18 would reach this level if they attended TRT or a similarly effective programme for another term – or if they had 'caught the reading bug' sufficiently to develop their reading independently – and a further 20 could do so within two more terms. The remaining 53 would need to persist for longer still, and some of these young people might get a boost from being transferred to another scheme.

In key stage 3

In order to support the comparisons of effectiveness presented in a later section, I also analysed the data for the 81 pupils aged 11-14 separately. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4:   Quantitative results for pupils aged 11-14

	N = 81	Pre-test (years & months)	Post-test (years & months)	Change (months)
Chronological age (c.a.)	average	12:11	13:4	4.5
	range	11-14		2-16
Reading age (r.a.)	average	8:5	9:7	14.2
	range	5:11-12:6	6:2-13:11	-4 to +71
Average gap between c.a. and r.a.		4:6	3:9	-9

Note: The amounts of change expressed in months to one decimal place are more accurate than the apparent differences in average c.a's and r.a's, which have been rounded to years and whole months.

For this sub-sample the RG works out at (14.2 / 4.5) = 3.2: this means that the students had on average made just over 3 months' progress for every month the programme lasted, still a substantial rate of improvement even though slightly lower than for the full sample. Again, the gain was highly statistically significant (paired t-test, $p<0.001$).

The changes in reading age again ranged from minus 4 months to plus 71 months. The 13-year-old boy who achieved the gain of 71 months took the post-test only 77 days, or 2½ months, after the pre-test, thus achieving a very high individual RG of 28.0. Within this sub-sample a total of 52 students (two-thirds of the sub-sample) had personal RGs of 2.0 or more. Another 16 made modest gains (RGs between 1.1 and 2.0). Of the remaining 13 (16% of the sub-sample), 11 did make small gains, but one had the same reading age at the end as at the beginning, and the other had regressed by 4 months.

Of this younger sub-sample, only 10 had a reading age of 11 or above at the start of the programme, and only two more had reached this level by the end. Judging by their progress in TRT, another 17 would reach this level if they attended TRT or a similarly effective programme for another term, and a further 12 could do so within two more terms. The remaining 40 would need to persist even longer, or transfer to another scheme.

But it has to be accepted that a few struggling readers may never make much progress, however hard they and their tutors try. No programme works for every student, and TRT has achieved excellent progress for most of this sample.

Qualitative findings

Testimonials

Interview with Tony, March 2012

The following transcript, supplied by Tricia Millar, gives a flavour of how TRT has worked for this young man.

Tony (aged 20) started That Reading Thing with his volunteer tutor in May 2011 and they're still meeting up to read almost a year later.

Q: What have you got out of That Reading Thing?

A: Confidence. Like at work 'cos I have to read forms, etc.

Q: How did you feel about reading before you started?

A: I couldn't read. I could read words here or there. College work was really hard. Eventually I finally got help and they read the questions to me but I felt embarrassed. Before that I would either skip the question or I had a go at a few. I was used to not reading but I wanted to be able to read as well. I didn't think That Reading Thing would go this well. I was a bit nervous. I didn't think I'd be able to get to read this fast.

Q: How do you feel about reading now?

A: I feel proud of myself.

Q: What's changed now that you can read?

A: I feel different in myself. I know from when I was in school, I was meant to get help a long time ago but everyone kept letting me down but now I've done it myself (through TRT). I can read books. That's good 'cos you learn things from books. It's helped with my job 'cos I had to read few things I had to sign: I had to read them and then they asked me questions about them: like health and safety things and what to do and not do customer-wise. Before That Reading Thing I wouldn't have been able to read my letters about housing. I was ignoring them; I had about £2000 of fines from landlords, etc., which I didn't know about. I had opened the letters and tried to read them but didn't understand it. I put them in the drawer and left them and hoped everything would be fine. A letter would come a couple of months later and I would do the same thing. Now when letters arrive I read them. If I can't understand them now I take them to my aunt's and she helps me deal with them. I understand most of them now.

Q: What's your tutor been like?

A: Helpful, understanding, has a lot of patience. She praises me.

Q: Did TRT help you pass your college exams?

A: No – it was too soon. [The exams were in June 2011.]

Q: Did TRT help you look for work?

A: Yes it helped me on the internet, looking for work on the internet. I needed help before but after TRT I could do it on my own.

Q: Did TRT help with getting a job?

A: Yes. I could read the questionnaire on the internet to apply for the job. My sister helped me but it was less help than I had before.

Q: Has doing That Reading Thing affected your behaviour?

A: I remember when I was in one class and the teacher asked me to read a book or something and I read it bad and at lunchtime the other students they took the p*ss out of me for it. I had a fight and got excluded for about two weeks. People used to pick on me when someone would ask me to read. It happened two or three times a week. Now I try to avoid fights with people. I've grown up now – there's no point in fighting. The change came when I started getting used to reading. It was partly the job and partly 'cos I could read. I don't hardly get angry now at all – apart from with my sisters! I don't really get frustrated any more. Now I know I can ask for help from family and friends. That's as a result of working with my tutor.

Q: How would you describe yourself in three words?

A: Confident, more dedicated and kind.

Q: How would you describe yourself before you started That Reading Thing?

A: 'A little sh*t'.

Observations of teaching sessions

In order to gain some sense of how TRT works in practice I observed it in use over two days, first at a boys comprehensive school in Bow, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, in March 2011, and then at a girls comprehensive school in the Handsworth area of Birmingham in April 2011. On each occasion I sat in on three one-to-one sessions. Sessions are intended to last between 50 and 60 minutes; one of the six sessions observed lasted only 28 minutes because the student had not turned up and the tutor had to go in search of him. The other five sessions ranged from 48 to 65 minutes. Anonymised transcripts of the observations are presented in the Appendices.

The tutors were delivering TRT very much according to Tricia Millar's intentions and scripts. The second tutor, younger and less experienced than the first, could have been more generous with praise, which is important to keep the students engaged, but all six students seemed willing to focus and concentrate, with few digressions. The second tutor also did not mention 'The Deal' while I was present, but may well have done so in previous sessions. Both tutors kept up a brisk but manageable pace, handled the phonetic aspects of phonics almost completely accurately, and switched between aspects of reading and spelling frequently to avoid boredom. It was also clear that the sequence of phonics skills devised by Tricia Millar did indeed build up phonics skills logically and in such a manner that insights learnt in reading and spelling reinforced each other.

Overall, I was very impressed by the clear evidence that the students were learning quite rapidly, and by the skills and professionalism of the tutors. Too often there is a noticeable gap between how a scheme's deviser intends it to be implemented and trains teachers to deliver it, on the one hand, and the enacting of it in practice on the other – but there was barely any difference between the intentions Tricia Millar stated at the South Woodford training and what I observed in Bow and Handsworth.

While I was at the school in Bow the tutor (who is not on the staff but visits to teach TRT) introduced me to a colleague who does work at the school and also teaches TRT, as intended, one-to-one. She was under pressure to teach it in groups, which TRT is not suited to and will, she maintained, make the task more difficult. I return to this under Conclusions and recommendations.

Observations in Bow, 22/3/11 *(Tricia Millar's note: Student 1 is working at the Foundation Levels, 2 is working at the Advanced Levels and 3, also at the Advanced Levels, only had time to do some reading.)*

Key: T = tutor
       S = student

The school is very near a Docklands Light Railway station and Bow Church. It is off a side road from the main road, down a short cul de sac which splits the site in two; security is heavy; all visitors check in and out at main reception in the southern part of site. TRT takes place in a small ground floor room in a two-storey building that was once a house right by the entrance to the northern part of the site.

All three students were young teenage boys of Asian appearance and family background.

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1) Foundation Levels Student is in Y8 (age 12-13), r.a. is 6:11. His English seemed so non-native (slow, inaccurate, 'Asian' accent) that I asked the tutor whether he was a recent immigrant – but no, he was born here and so was his father. We speculated that he must have been brought up speaking little English and mostly Urdu/Punjabi.

1108	S	arrives & he & T talk about his TRT record card
	T	'If you get to level 18 today you'll get 2 certificates next week'
1109		social chat about S's brother
1110	T	'We're working on <y> - at the end of a word it's not /j/ but /iː/'
	S	gets 'happy' before T finishes writing it
1113	T	sets various words, including 'misty', which S doesn't understand. T explains 'winter, a little foggy'. She also explains ' blossom, spring'
1114	T	sets 'lucky', S gets <ck> for /k/
	T	sets 'sticky', S gets it right
	T	sets 'fuzzy', S gets it right, including <zz>
	T	sets 'snappy', reminds S about <pp>
1116	S	reading appropriate words, e.g. 'smelly, lippy'
1118	S	reading sentences with the words, plus 'cranky'
1120	T	helps him sound out 'carry', & talks about 'lucky penny'
1121	T	'We're moving on to another sound (S: /ɜː/), but it's /ə/.' She sets 'sister', insists S listens to /ə/
1122	T	sets 'canter' & defines & splits syllables – 'When you split syllables it's so much easier' & asks number of syllables
1123	T	sets 'winter, butter'
1125	S	reading words out
	T	explains meaning of 'stagger'
	S	reads out 'litter, bitter'
1126	S	reads out sentences including 'Tupac, rapper, stammer'
	T	talks about George VI & The King's Speech
1129	S	reads sentences including 'clubber, gritter, better, spender, sister, printer, computer'
		T often marks digraphs etc on texts S is reading
1132	T	'We're getting on to really long words' & moves to using Puzzle Pieces
1133	S	is checking watch in left trouser pocket
1134	T	'Let's start with 'happening' – How many syllables?'
	S	says 2, then 3
	T	pronounces it /ˈhæp - en –ˈɪŋ/
1135	T	refers to Fox in Socks & Seuss for later
	S	has seen Cat in Hat & 'wouldn't mind' reading it
1137	T	sets 'intending' with Puzzle Pieces. 'How many syllables?'
	S	'3'
	T	'What are they?'
	S	'in – tend – ing'
	T	'Say them as you write them down'
1138	T	sets a 'really difficult word' – 'suspending'. 'How many syllables?'
	S	'3'
	T	'What are they?'
	S	gets them right
	T	pronounces them /ˈsʌs - ˈpen - ˈdɪŋ/
	S	assembles words, but reads it as 'suspecting'

	T	explains 'suspension, suspend' via Clifton Bridge – 'I'm from Bristol' – then 'suspense' in East Enders
1141	T	sets 'suspecting' – usual process
1143	T	sets 'finishing' – usual process
1144	T	'Do you need a breather?' She rubs board clean, S does same. 'You're doing very well'
1145	T	'Let's read some words', & talks about breaking long words into syllables
	S	gets 'accomplishing' right & theyHi-5, then also 'confessing'
1146	S	gets 'expressing, astonishing' right – T says 'brilliant'
1148	S	gets 'expecting'
	T	'You're doing extremely well'
1150	S	reading sentences
	T	explains that 'comic' = 'comedian' after S explains it as 'book'
	S	reads sentences including 'insulting', which he explains as 'rude', & 'extending'
1151	T	'I applaud your commitment.' Moves on to <tion> - 'This is /ʃən/ - it doesn't look like it, does it?, but it comes up all the time'
1152	T	'Write /ʃən/ for me – Brilliant – once more'
1153	T	'OK, we're going to do 'action'. How many syllables?'
	S	'2'
	T	'What are they?
	S	builds them up
1154	T	'Do you like maths? Fractions? How many syllables?'
	S	'2', & assembles them with Puzzle Pieces
1155	S	does 'injection'
1157	S	does 'election'
1158	S	talking about politics
	T	explains 'coalition'
1200	T	explains national debt, including the Treasury argument, & problems of where to cut. She & S discuss raising of Participation Age
1201	T	asks S what he wants to be
	S	'fixing cars'
	T	talks about apprenticeships, etc.
1203	T	mentions Japan
1204	T	talks about earthquake, tsunami, fault line
1205	T	'I promised you you were going to do a really long word – it's 'conditional'. How many syllables?'
	S	'4', and sounds it out
	T	'How do we do /ʃən/? This is how we do a really long word', & praises S. 'Let's read some /ʃən/ words'
1206	S	reads 'attention, description, instruction'
1207	S	reads 'recognition'
1208	S	reads sentences including 'action, instructions, condition'
1211	T	finishing up with praise
1213	S	leaves

2) Advanced Levels   Student is in Y7 (age 11-12), r.a. is 6:8. His mother asked for him to be on TRT.

0956	S	arrives, won't take coat or rucksack off. 'We went to our cousin's home at the weekend.'

	T	engages him in social chat
0958	T	checks where they last got to, apologises she wasn't there the previous week
0959	T	'We're going to do things that sound the same but look different, at the sound /əl/, e.g. in 'apple' /ˈæpəl/. What makes the /əl/ in 'apple'?'
	S	'l - e'
	T	'in metal?'
	S	'a – l'
	T	'in level?'
	S	'e – l'
	T	praises, & gets him to sound out the whole words
	S	can't get 'April' because of <a> = /eɪ/ but does get <il> = /əl/
1001	T	'So those are 4 ways of writing /əl/, & we're going to put words in the right columns. When you have double <t> you don't have to say them both – they make one sound, & in the next word it's the same with <gg>'
	S	eventually gets 'struggle' & T praises
	S	sounds out 'little' /lə - ɪ - tə - əl/
1003	S	gets 'evil' – sounds it out & writes it
1005	S	tries 'circle' – sounds <c> as /k/ & can't generate /s/
	T	eventually gives it because it's difficult
	T	'Perfect, well done, brilliant' over 'handle'
	T	'<ou> makes the /aʊ/ sound in 'council' – do you know what 'council' means?'
	S	gives meaning of 'cancel'
	T	accepts this as a homophone & explains 'council(lor)'
1007	S	gets 'gravel' & T explains meaning
	S	gets 'capital' – T 'brilliant'
1008	S	pronounces 'sample' as /ˈsæmpəl/
	T	says 'That's a Manchester sound, but here in East Enders land we say /ˈsɑːmpəl/' & explains word via samples of wallpaper
1010	S	sounds & writes
1011	S	mis-pronounces 'noodle' & T gives it
1012	S	gets 'total', then 'label' with T prompting <a> = /eɪ/
	S	gets 'impossible' straight off
1013	S	gets 'political' – T 'very good'
	S	gets 'responsible' – T 'absolutely brilliant'
	S	gets 'middle'
1013	T	'Which word did you look at & think you'd never get it?'
	S	'Very few'
	T	'What is the most common way of spelling /əl/?'
	S	'<le>'
	T	'& next is <al>, so try <le> if you don't know'
1015	T	writes the graphemes for 'council' on separate strips. 'We're going to write 'council' – how many syllables?'
	S	sounds out the syllables, then the phonemes, then assembles word, then writes the syllables & word in separate columns
1016	T	checks his memory of the meaning. 'Let's try a harder one', writes graphemes for 'impossible'
1017	T	'How many syllables?'
	S	says 1, 2 – T sounds it out with him, S says 4
1018	S	sounds out, assembles word, writes 4 syllables as <im – po – ssi – ble>

1019	T	'Now we're going to do 'responsible'.'
	S	sounds out syllables, writes it without using the graphemes, mis-writes <spon>, sounds <on> as letter names
	T	accepts but says /ɒ - n/
1020	S	writes whole word
	T	'That is excellent work. Let's do another word that's quite tricky – 'circle'
1021	T	'How many syllables?'
	S	'2', writes <c>
	T	prompts /ɜː/ = <ir>
1023	S	struggling with 'struggle', including <gg>
1024	T	'Have you ever thought why some words have 2 letters instead of 1?'
	S	'to make it longer'
1025	T	explains tongue-twisters, shows S Seuss book Fox in Socks
	S	knows nothing about Seuss or any of his books
1028	T	reads it *("Tweetle Beetles");* at end of book S is amused
1029	T	teaches <…VCCle> v. <…el> patterns, with S writing words in correct columns
1030	S	notes he hasn't yet got 'bottle'
1033	T	at end of task, asks 'What can we learn from this? Is your brain ready for something tricky?'
1034	T	talks S through long & short sounds of <a e i o u>, points out that 95% of the time it's CC after a short vowel
1035	T	says 'Let's work out 'cattle' – after the /k/ what's the next sound?'
	S	'/æ/'
	T	'long or short?'
	S	'short'
	T	leads him to <tt> & <le>
1037	T	proposes 'shuttle'. 'What's the first sound?'
	S	'<s – h>'
	T	'Right' [I was amazed that the tutor didn't correct this – S is working letter-by-letter and needs to recognise <sh> as a digraph]
1038	T	proposes 'little', then 'cable' with long sound
1039	T	says 'The rule isn't 100% - we know English …'
1040	T	'Try writing 'circle'.'
	S	gets it right & T claps & says 'Very good'
1041	T	opens reading book ('The Adventures of Captain Underpants' by Dan Pilkey) at p.49, gets S to recap point in story – chapter 9, titled 'Four to six weeks later'
1042	S	reads aloud but hesitant, fails 'slave'
	T	explains 'split vowel', gives him 'gruelling'
1043	T	re-reads para because 'There are lots of long words' & checks S's comprehension
1044	T	asks for meaning of 'gruelling', 'humiliating' – S gives quite good explanation
1045	T	gives 'Hallelujah' & explains it
1046	S	reading, a bit hesitantly
1048	T	asks S if he thinks the '3-D Hypnoring' will work
	S	'No' & reads
1049	T	gives 'escorted'
1052	T	gives pronunciation of 'picture' & re-reads relevant sentence
1054	T	'We'll have to stop, it's the end of the lesson' & praises S, who leaves

3) Reading at the Advanced Levels *(short lesson due to student forgetting)*   The student's right hand was bandaged (T told me afterwards she had not seen him for 2 weeks – he was stabbed in the hand and was then in hospital) – we shake left-handed. He is in Y8 (age 12-13), r.a. is 8:1.

0928	T	'S has reached level 30 & we're just reading a book' – The Enemy by Charlie Higson.
	S	reading hesitantly, mainly word by word
	T	running her finger along above the words, regularly reading phrases & words for S, giving guidance on unfamiliar words/ sounds, e.g. (1) 'Make that an /aɪ/ sound'; (2) scorpion 'Can you tell me anything about [name of character] – her clothes?'
	S	'Yes, should've been pink but they were filthy'
	S	knows about zombies as in films, blank faces, breathing through mouth
0932	S	reading again, now on p.2. T calls attention to full stop, gives 'fear' (I think), /æ/ sound
0935	S	hesitates over 'everywhere', then says it & continues.
	T	explains 'It's a group led by [name] & they're out scavenging for food'
0937	T	explains 'you're' is short for 'you are'. 'When we write it we cross off the <a> and put in this little mark here to show there's a letter missing,' and contrasts it with 'your', e.g. in 'your blanket' even though they sound the same
0938	T	now using pen to point to words as S reads
0940	T	reading well ahead
0943	T	checking S's comprehension & memory of characters & plot 'How are they feeling?'
	S	'Sad'
	T	'Yeah, sad - why?'
	S	'Don't know what's happening'
	T	'Why do you think she's a good fighter & she's not the best fighter but she can organise & get people to rally round – that's why she's chosen as deputy leader – she's in charge'
0945	T	looking at other contracted forms, finds 'Let's', 'couldn't', & says 'little mark' & gives full-out of Let's & elicits 'not' for 'n't'
0946	T	'Do you think you're gonna like this book? Not sure yet? Ready to read again after the break?' She explains word 'booster'
0947	S	resumes reading
0948	T	explains 'shrivel', 'literally', explains adults in story have a disease which literally makes them burst – the characters have come across a man lying in the road
0950	T	'What do you think it smells like? Ever had something rotten in your house?'
	S	'No'
	T	talks about bad smell in fridge
	S	reads
	T	gives 'growth' /grəʊθ/. For next word T says 'Say the sounds' to get S to sound out 'snigger(ed?)'
0951	S	reads
0952	T	tries to explain 'Holloway Road'
	S	doesn't know Emirates, Arsenal, reads on
0953	T	'We have to stop – it's the end of the lesson. You have read extremely well. There's a couple of things will link to the Level.' She fills in his yellow record card – he's on report
0954	S	leaves

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