Annual Professional Development Program
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The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne
Education Institute

Children with Learning Disorders:

Supporting School Progress and Engagement

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Bridging the Gap – health & education

Learning Disorders

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A. A group of disorders characterised by **difficulties in learning basic academic skills** (currently or by history), that are not consistent with the person's chronological age, educational opportunities, or intellectual abilities. Basic academic skills refer to accurate and fluent reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Multiple sources of information are to be used to assess learning, one of which must be an individually administered, culturally appropriate, and psychometrically sound standardised measure of academic achievement.

B. The disturbance in criterion A, without accommodations, **significantly interferes with academic achievement** or activities of daily living that require these academic skills.

http://www.dsm5.org/ProposedRevision/Pages/proposedrevision.aspx?rid=429

Learning Disorders

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- Struggle with learning early in school years
- Difficulty learning basic skills in reading, writing, math or language
- Some students with learning disabilities may easily learn basic skills but have difficulty applying skills in problem solving or higher-level school work
- A student has a learning disability when ability to learn an academic area is much lower than expected given estimated aptitude
- May co-exist with other conditions
- Significant gap: 12- 18 months
- Gaps between teaching and learning, or LD?

LD's Formal Assessment Why?

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- Assessing academic abilities for placement, programming and identification of difficulties
- Assessment can range from formal/standardised, to informal/teacher-made assessments
- Standardised tests are normed, results are compared across ages and grades statistically
- Provision of objective, reliable data in relation to age/year level expectancies
- Determine existence of academic gaps and where possible explanations for them
- To target and provide intervention strategies and programs
- To measure progress & effectiveness of intervention
- For reporting to parents, teachers and key stakeholders

How to assess for LD's?

- Special Education : Literacy, Numeracy
- Cognitive Assessment
- Hearing
- Vision
- Speech Pathology
- Occupational Therapy
- Background and history
- Paediatric opinion

Post Assessment

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- Reporting: results, summary, recommendations and follow up
- Communication with parents and teachers
- Moving forward: choosing the intervention & following up recommendations
- Managing the case: identifying a key school contact, setting up an ongoing platform for review, retest & modify

What to do now? Educational Recommendations

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Learning Support - general

- Good teacher !!! (self esteem, encouragement, reassurance)
- Identify and address the gaps: teaching to strengths & filling in gaps/weaknesses
- Classroom modifications (environmental)
- Withdrawal & in-class options
- Integration/government funding for eligible students
- Repeat or progress? (McGrath 2006)
- Setting goals, realistic expectations
- Regular routines
- Explicit, effective and targeted teaching strategies
- Individual, small group teaching
- Progress based on individual rate
- Variety of options to demonstrate learning
- Aids for learning – scribe, reader, ICT, graphic organisers etc.
- Individual Education/Learning Program(IEP/ILP) and the SSG/PSG

Individualised Targeted Intervention

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- Individual one-to one or small group
- Early identification
- Qualified tutor
- Strengths v Weaknesses, sequenced and structured
- 2-3 times a week V too little, too late
- Recording & reporting
- Re-assessing for program effectiveness
- When to stop, long term monitoring and follow up
- Working with the class teacher
- Setting suitable homework

Private Professional Support

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Private tutors (Special Education Teachers)

SPELD

Learning Difficulties Australia

Speech Therapy/OT

Psychologists

Kumon

Technology (SPELD, Edusoft, Spectronics)

Effective Intervention

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Keys to Instructing Students with Learning Difficulties

Teaching should be…

- ***structured**: with teacher direction in the initial stages of learning*
- ***goal-oriented**: students must be clear about what needs to be achieved*
- ***practice-laden**: new information and skills are repeated and applied many times to ensure acquisition and maintenance*
- ***strategy-laden**: students taught how to attempt tasks*
- *oriented towards independence: students expected to acquire knowledge and skills which will enable them to later work independently*

Lloyd (1988) cited in Westwood 1994

Differentiation, modifications & adaption

Adapt

- size
- the way instruction is delivered
- participation
- Level of difficulty
- Goals or outcome
- Level of support
- Output, how the students responds
- Substitute curriculum

Deschenes, Ebeling & Sparague, 1994

Adapting teaching strategies for Inclusion

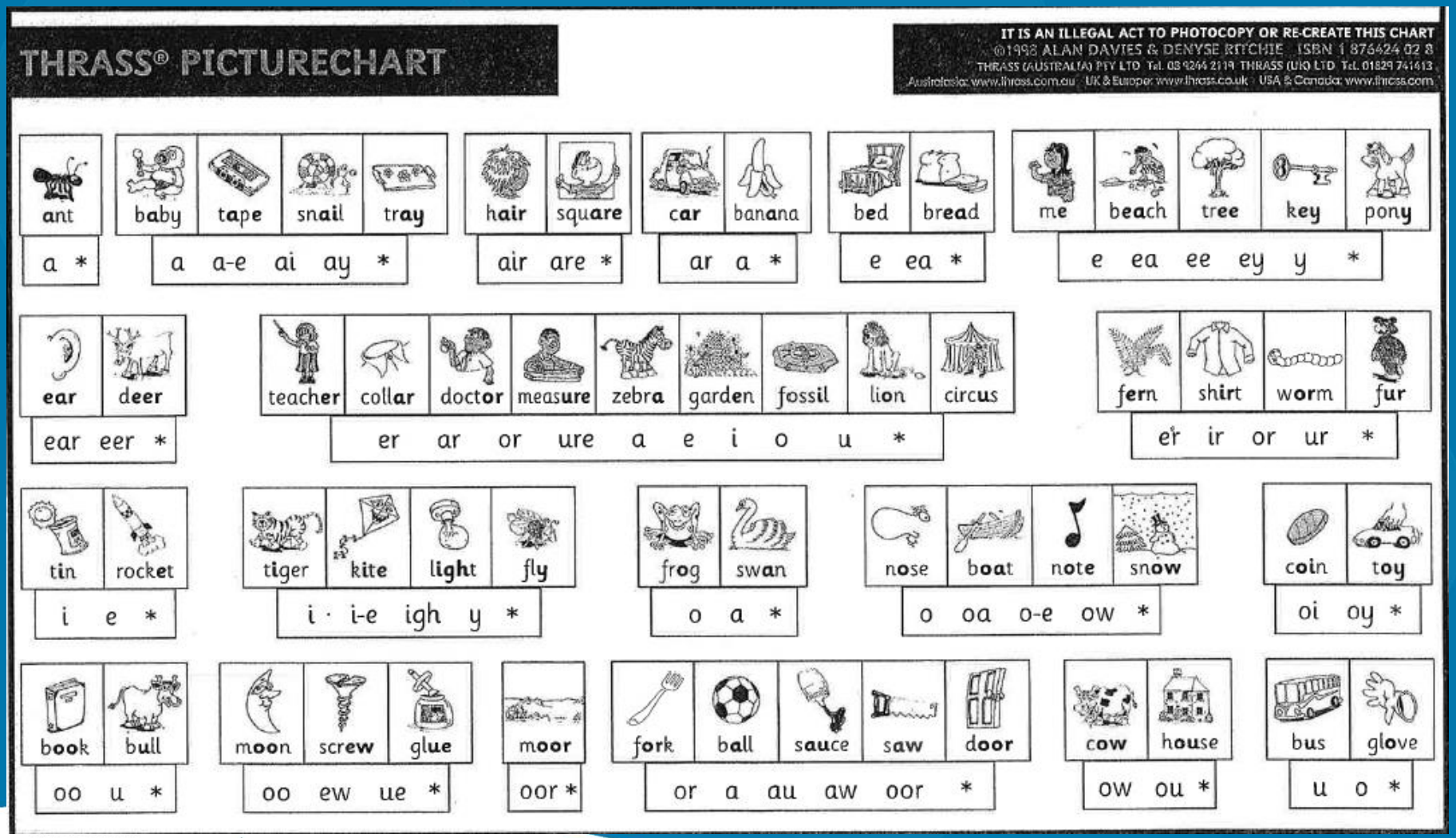
Nine Types of Adaptations

SIZE	TIME	LEVEL OF SUPPORT
Adapt the number of items that the learner is expected to learn or complete. For example: Mind map, label diagram, &/or brainstorm topic; this may be the initial task for most students & the only task for some students to complete.	Adapt the time allocated and allowed for learning, task completion, or testing. For example: Allow students to over learn, give time off task breaks, space task completion over a number of sessions, allow untimed response, or allow extra time.	Increase the amount of personal assistance with a specific learner For example: Provide additional support through group work, education support staff 1 to 1 or group support, peer or volunteer tutoring; pair with a more able student.
INPUT	**DIFFICULTY**	**OUTPUT**
Adapt the way instruction is delivered to the learner. For example: Power point, show an example of a successful final product looks like, unpack the key elements, provide a glossary of terms of key language, provide a selection of mixed ability books for research & inspiration, demonstrate, provide hands on activities.	Adapt the skill level, problem type, or the rules on how the learner may approach the work. For example: Provide student with individual task list for them to tick off as completed, allow the use of a talking calculator to figure maths problem; break down & write simple task directions on the board, provide hard copy version of key terms & definitions for students to cut, match & paste in their book, provide graphic organiser such as a story board for the student to describe the plot.	Adapt how the student can respond to instruction. For example: Student formulates responses to task which is presented by another student. Student demonstrates understanding by labelling a diagram, constructing a Powerpoint, building a model, writing in point form instead of an essay, answer a cloze exercise, illustrate, select visual to express a preference or opinion, answer multiple choice.
PARTICIPATION	**ALTERNATE**	**SUBSTITUTE CURRICULUM**
Adapt the extent to which a learner is actively involved in the task. For example: Student runs for student who hits the ball, student paints the backdrop for the play, student stands out the front, holds & reads the double sided cue card while the class is asked by the teacher for the meaning, student works with teacher & another student on the science experiment.	Adapt the goals or outcome expectations while using the same materials. For example: Student is to list the main parts of the human body whilst the rest of the class is expected to be able to name major and minor parts. Student is asked to answer every second multiple choice question.	Provide different instruction and material to meet a student's individual goals. For example: Source special education curriculum as needed or write specific goals appropriate to the student's needs which are individual & targeted (be mindful any visuals are age appropriate), use 'social stories' to assist understanding of what is required, scaffold sequential steps starting from completed task backwards to the start, use written task list supported by visuals.

The nine types of adaptions is borrowed from Deschenes, C., Ebeling, D., and Sprague, J., 1994
Adapting Curriculum and Instruction in Inclusive Classrooms: A Teacher's Desk Reference. **The examples are original – Sue Pickett author of Right To Learn – Disability Inclusion in Schools. Section 5 - Page 3**

Nuts and Bolts : Literacy Support

- Let's read together: Source Unknown
- "The Literacy Debate" Phonics V Whole word
- Some relics from the past
- Reading for meaning "The Charns"
- Frameworks for Phonics: How many "or" s do you know? www.thrass.com.au 44 sounds 120 combinations
- High Frequency Word Lists
- Letters and Sounds : Phonemic Awareness
- Reading aloud, choosing reading material
- Aides: scribes, readers, technology, charts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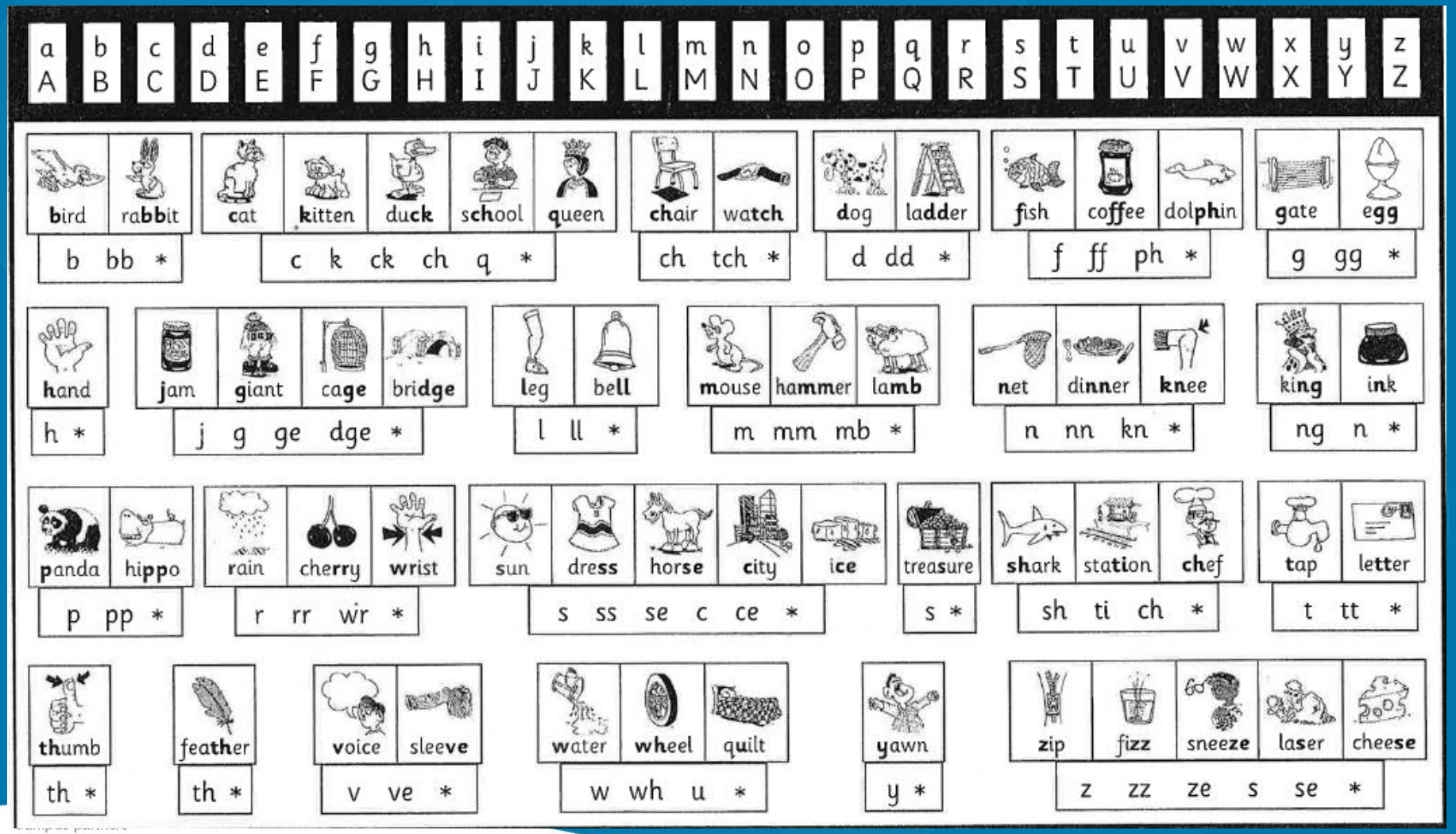
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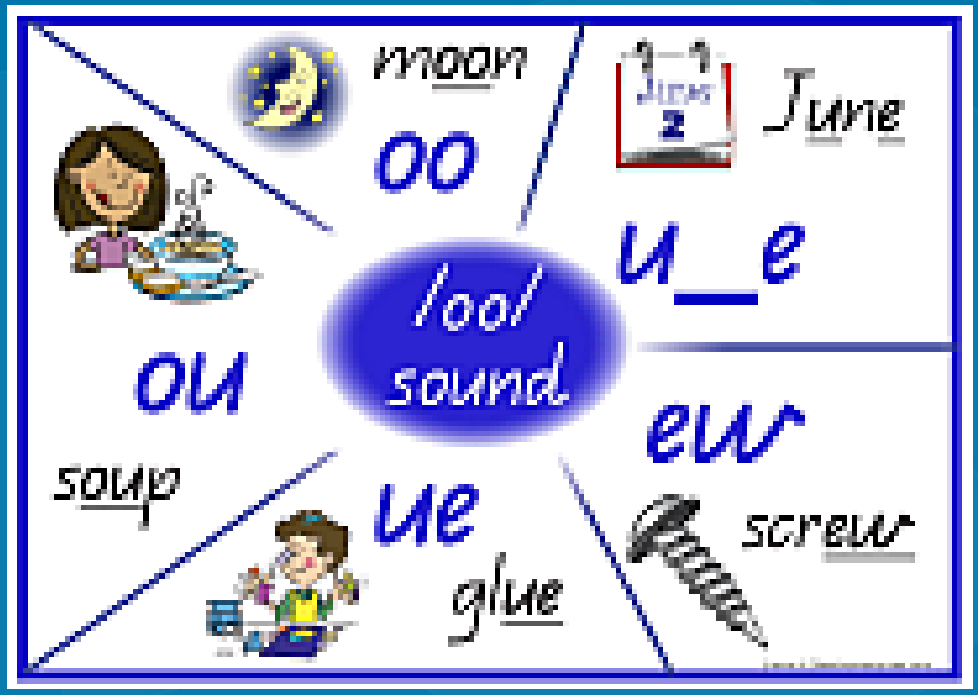

Can you say the phoneme?

Consonants: Row 1

bird	rabbit	cat	kitten	duck	school	queen	chair	watch
b bb *	c k ck ch q *	ch tch *

Phonological Awareness (PA)

- Sutherland Phonological Awareness Test – Revised Dr. R. Nelson, Australia, 2005
- "A Sound Way" and others by loveandrilley.com
- The ability to attend to, identify and manipulate the sounds in spoken words
- Research supports the relationship of PA to reading development
- Intervention in PA enhances reading and spelling
- Teaching PA is a critical component of early literacy education

Thinking and learning about print - "Beginning To Read", Marilyn Jager Adams, 1991

Nuts and Bolts; Numeracy Support

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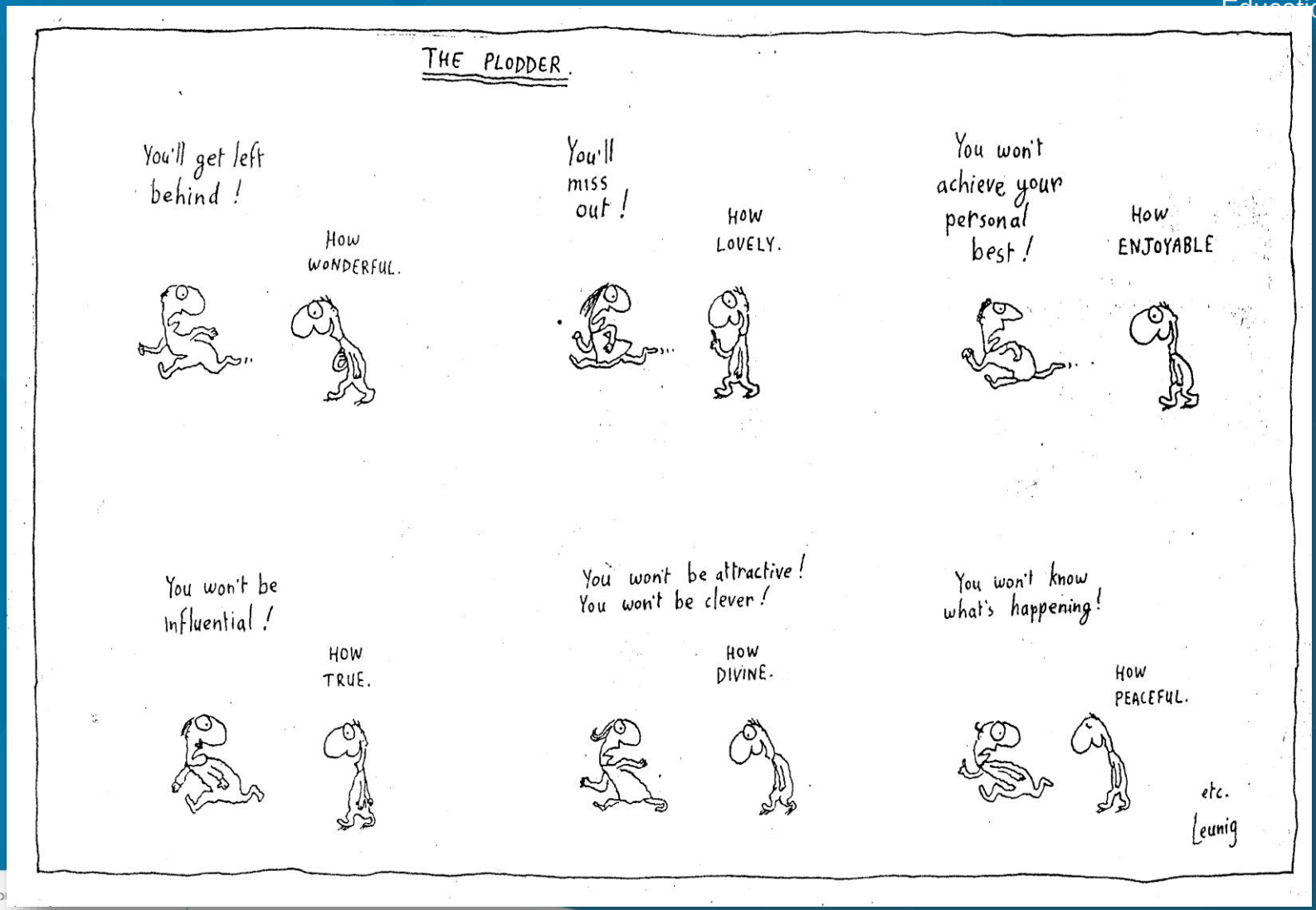
- Mastery: thoroughly learn each stage before moving on, facts learned to fluency
- Set students up for success, challenging not too easy or too hard
- Use manipulative devices to promote conceptual understanding before moving on to representational and then abstract levels
- Teach students cognitive strategies, mnemonics
- Modify - quantity, complexity, repetition, time, core
- Include fluency building devices & use supportive tools: charts, tables, checklists, calculators, computers
- Consider the language of maths
- Link maths skills to the real world
- Assist recall by giving prompts, use visual displays and have the necessary information available to refer to
- Provide and use various models of representation
- Advance organiser, demonstrate, guided practice, independent practice

Reassurance……..



In Good Company

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Long term outcomes - Cured?

Whoopi Goldberg	Nelson Rockefeller
Thomas Edison	Harvey Cushing
Michael Phelps	William Hewlett
Richard Branson	John Irving
Ingvar Kamprad (IKEA)	Winston Churchill
Erin Brockovich	Walt Disney
Princess Beatrice	Alexander Graham Bell
Tom Cruise	Albert Einstein
Orlando Bloom	George Patton
Jamie Oliver	Cher

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