Early reading: strategies and stages

Read the text and number the stages according to the numbers of paragraphs.

Description		Stage	
1	In many countries the first step for students is to understand the direction that text is read and written; moving from left to right across the page and from the top to the bottom. That is, starting at the top left-hand corner. This is called directionality. Along with directionality comes the actual movements made by the pen, and often zigzag and circular motions are practised, moving from left to right across the page. This can be done free hand or by tracing dotted lines.		Word recognition – 'look and say' approach
2	Once this concept is understood, the letters are introduced one-by-one in small groups of five or six at a time. It is not advisable to overload and introduce too many at one time and it is essential to keep reviewing letters and their sounds before moving on to another batch. This sound and letter correlation is called 'phonics'. Once the pupils have learned six to ten letters, they can start to put them together in different patterns of two and three to start blending the letter sounds together to make short and easy words. A high percentage of English words can be blended		Dividing words into syllables. Segmenting for reading longer phonic words and for spelling
3	However, not all words can be blended and some have to be learned by word recognition method 'look and say'. However, the number of these must be kept low as it is cognitively taxing to memorise too many words in either the L1 or the L2. It is best to work from the Dolch or similar list of high frequency words in children's literature.		Word picture matches
4	Once children have mastered the basics of the initial letter sounds and blends you can play many different games for beginner readers, such as word card games, picture card matching games or running games to find the letter card with the correct sound. There are many great games that are very motivating and keep up the interest of the child while developing their decoding and reading skills.		Long vowel sounds and more advanced phonic rules and blends. Spelling rules
5	Learning about syllables often makes it easier for pupils to divide up words (segmenting) and work out the sounds within the words. Games for clapping out the syllables are very helpful. This is a great help when they start to write and need to spell.		Directionality
6	Once single letter sounds are mastered then longer letter combinations can be tackled, such as initial consonant blends or diphthongs. These often link into spelling patterns which need to be taught.		Phonics and blending

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