

Testimonials



Mary Merrisen

Copyright © Mary Merrsén 2024
Buyinformation@protonmail.com

You have been granted the non-exclusive, non-transferable right to access and read the text of this ebook on screen and in print, and to print a copy for your personal use, as well as printing any pages you need for teaching your student/s. Otherwise, no part of the book may be stored, printed, reproduced, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the express written permission of:

Mary Merrsén
Buyinformation@protonmail.com

To access additional materials, go to:
Teachreadingathome.com

To ask questions about the Course, email:
Teachreadingathome@proton.me

Cover Image by: 200 Degrees from Pixabay

Testimonials

"My friends are amazed at how well my children read now, after all the trouble they've had." *Caterina*

"Jason's confidence has improved out of this world. Even his maths marks have improved." *Jenny*

"You were right about it suddenly going click. Jack got into trouble with his Nana because he read a letter she'd left laying around. I never taught him to read script, but he can - Oops!" *Nina*

"Zac was able to read one of the Readings at his Grandfather's funeral last month. He couldn't have done that even three months ago. He also read a poem he'd written specially for the occasion." *Ruth*

"Carrie is still sounding out words, but she's understanding what she reads now." *Evie*

+++

"When I emailed you last time, I said how my husband was interrupting me a lot at night when I was practising the children's lesson for the next day.

I know you said I didn't need to do that, but I'm not a teacher and I do a lot better teaching the lesson if I've gone through it the night before, saying it aloud.

You said to use him as a guinea pig. I did and he's already got a promotion at work because he can read much better. We're all so proud." *Sharon*

+++

"I went to Josh's school and told them they'd had ten years to teach him to read. Now I was going to take him home and when I had him reading, he'd be back and not before.

We slaved day and night and he was back at school in 3 weeks. You should have seen their faces." *Lyn*

"I was so annoyed at the school Open Day when Cassie's teacher used her as an example of how well they teach their students to read, when I'm the one who taught her.

But when some of the other parents congratulated Cassie on how well she read, she told them her mum had taught her to read!" *Anne*

+++

"I must admit, I had my doubts about this new course. The old one had worked well for my boys, and they'd liked reading sentences right from the start.

But when I took my nephew through the new course, he was reading in half the time. In one term he went from not reading at all, to reading books. We won't need the Reader. Sorry!" *Jess*

+++

"I used your previous course when I tutored at [...] School. So when my son was getting ready to start school, I got a copy of the new course, and now he's up to the advanced code I'm just letting you know because you said you'd need a bit of notice so you could prepare some Reader material for him. No probs so far. He's so proud of himself." *Jo*

"My parents always complained about the fact that my husband and I homeschooled our children, but over the holidays they heard all the grandchildren reading, and mine are by far the best readers, thanks to your book." *Annie*

"Tommy's teacher told me she didn't expect he'd be able to learn to read and he was right there when she said it. I was so angry. So I started him on your book that I'm using with his big brother. Can you do some Reader stuff for Tommy. He's 6." *Ronnie*

"When you told me how sooner or later my son would start reading labels on tins and the back of cereal packets, I thought you were just doing a sales pitch. But you were right. He's started reading everything he can get hold of." *David*

"I contacted you the other day about how I was taking my teenage granddaughter through your book, and how she wasn't keen (a major understatement) because there were no pictures, and you suggested I pointed out words she could now read on road signs, shops and flyers.

She's particularly enjoying reading the junk mail. I suspect she's using the information to indulge in a little parental blackmail once she gets home!"

Mary

Testimonials: Daniel's Story

Let me tell you about Daniel. I remember him because his mother needed a lot of extra help to teach him to read.

One day, I received a phone call from a particularly outraged mother. She said she and her son, Daniel, had been to the local school to attend Daniel's Assessment Interview.

An Assessment Interview takes place about 6 months before students begin at a new school, and at that interview the School Principal allocates the student to one of three classes (advanced, average, or remedial).

At the beginning of the interview, the mother had explained to the School Principal that her son had a hearing problem that caused his speech to be a bit unclear.

The Principal's immediate response had been:

"Disabled students have to attend our Special School!"

And he put Daniel's name down for the Special School next door. He wouldn't listen to the mother's arguments. He hadn't even heard Daniel speak!

She went home stunned. She knew her boy had a few problems, but he wasn't disabled! She rang a friend, who told her to ring me.

She told me:

"My son isn't disabled, so he shouldn't have to go to Special School!"

"I've spoken to his doctor, and he says there's absolutely no need at all for Daniel to be put into Special School.

"I want you to help me teach him to read. Because if he can read, the school will know he's not mentally disabled, and he'll be able to go to mainstream classes instead of Special School!"

So, I asked her: "How bad is Daniel's hearing? What is his speech like? Do other people have trouble understanding what he says?"

The doctors had told her, she said, that her son heard words as though they were spoken underwater.

That explained why his speech was unclear. Now, I needed to know exactly which sounds he couldn't say. But she couldn't tell me. She could tell me words he had trouble saying, and said that other people could usually understand him.

While she was still on the phone, I emailed her a list of the sounds in the English language, and instructions on how to test him - to see exactly which sounds he couldn't say. (I needed to know straight away whether or not this problem would be too big for the mother to handle.)

She said the friend who had referred her to me would be able to tell me how well other people could understand Daniel's speech. That lady (an ex-customer of mine), said to me:

"I'm absolutely staggered anyone would think Daniel was mentally disabled! I know the School Principal, and I can't imagine what went wrong in that interview.

"If I didn't know my friend better, I'd think she made it up. But I've never known her to tell a lie. And, anyway, I can't imagine what anyone would have to gain by lying about this situation!

"He's a perfectly normal boy! And he chatters like a magpie!

"I can understand him most of the time, but I've known him all his life.

"When he gets excited, he's harder to understand.

"His mother says he's as 'bright as a button', and she's quite right.

"I hope you can help!"

I hoped so, too. I waited for Daniel's mother to contact me about which sounds he couldn't say.

She rang back a couple of days later and told me the sounds he couldn't say properly. They were the quiet sounds, the one's he'd have extra trouble hearing. That made sense. It sounded as though Daniel wouldn't need specialist tutors.

Then, this lady asked one of those "How long is a piece of string?" type questions, that has no honest answer:

"Is it possible to teach Daniel to read before the new school year starts in six months?"

I replied, "It takes some people twelve months, but others have done it in less than six months. It's not the teaching time that's different - it takes about 25 – 50 hours to TEACH the course.

"But some people just need more practice before they've really understood what they've been taught. And until they reach that stage, there's no point at all in going on to the next page of work. Rushing someone faster than their brain can learn is a total waste of time."

I told her to ask her doctor to refer Daniel to a speech therapist, and while we waited for that appointment, we started.

Well, that's not exactly true. Since my Learn to Read Course is taught by parents and tutors, what I really mean is:

They started!

Phonemic Awareness Course

Due to his hearing difficulties, I started them off with the *Phonemic Awareness Course*. His hearing problems did cause the Course to be a bit of a struggle - so it took about six weeks. (Normally it takes anywhere from a few days to a couple of weeks.)

But they did a little each day, and just plugged away at it. Rushing was not going to help in the long-term, so they had the sense to just plod gently along doing a bit most days.

Then they started the Reading Course

As he learnt a letter and its sound, Daniel learnt to focus on the position of the lips. He became far better at "seeing" what people were saying.

Having to sound out the words he was reading helped him understand that letters are just representing the sounds in a word. This helped him understand how to say words he'd had difficulty with in the past, because now he could SEE which sounds to make, and in which order to make them - so he learnt to speak increasingly clearly.

There were lots of little problems along the way, but whenever they got stuck, his mother would analyse the problem carefully, and email me. I'd email her back with suggestions, and she'd choose the solution she thought would work in their situation.

Occasionally, we had to go back to the drawing board a couple of times before we came up with a workable solution. Then, off they'd go again.

Daniel ended up being able to say all the sounds, except one - the sound at the beginning of *thin*, *think* and *thimble*.

We couldn't manage to teach him that sound, but I wasn't worried. I believe there's no point sacrificing overall progress because of a few sticking points, so we just found a way around the problem.

How we got around that problem is a good example of 'thinking outside the box'. I sent the mother to the local newsagent to get some rubber thimbles - because the sound that begins *thimble*, is the sound he couldn't say. And whenever his mother said that sound, she'd point to the rubber thimble she had stuck on her thumb, and say the correct sound.

Whenever Daniel was supposed to say that sound as he read aloud, he'd point to the rubber thimble on his thumb - but he'd say the sound at the beginning of *the*, *these* and *them*. (It was the nearest he could get - but they each knew what the other one meant.) (When he finally saw the speech therapist, she solved this problem in no time at all!)

Five days a week, month after month - they made progress!

After completing the Reading Course, they moved on to reading. Many people don't need my Reader, but we thought it would be a good idea to use part of it for Daniel.

One day Daniel's mother rang to tell me Daniel could read! So, he read to me over the phone. I understood every word! (Daniel couldn't hold a conversation with me over the phone, because he couldn't hear me over the phone.)

What an achievement for them both. Their family was so proud of them! They were thrilled! And so was I!

They didn't need me anymore, so I said goodbye and wished them well.

Starting School

A few days later, on Enrolment Day for the new school year, they went to enrol in the school, and the School Principal looked at his records and said:

"At the Interview, I put Daniel's name down for Special School, so that's where he's going! Here are the forms. Fill them out and hand them in at the front desk when you bring him to school on Monday."

There was no way the mother could get through to him. He didn't even want to hear Daniel read! Or even speak!

She rang me.

I was horrified.

She talked about appealing. I cut her short. I'd come across this attitude before, and knew from bitter experience that things might get really nasty now. I told her the School Principal was going to be difficult, and said:

"Forget about sending Daniel to that school. Is there another school he can go to? Find a new school and promise me you'll enrol Daniel immediately!"

She promised she would.

Then I said: "Don't mention this problem with the School Principal. Do tell the new school Daniel has a hearing problem and minor speech difficulties. And say he's only recently become a fluent reader."

The Head Master of the school they approached chatted with Daniel, and listened to him read - complimenting him on his expressive reading and clear diction!

Daniel started at that school a few days later, and loved it.

Yes, there were difficulties. The teachers had to remember to face Daniel when they spoke, and class discussions had to be arranged in a circle so he could see everyone's faces. But no-one regarded these changes as problems - they saw them as minor adjustments, as helping each other out.

A month later, when Daniel's father was home on his day off, a visitor knocked on the front door - the local Truant Officer! The School Principal had reported them because Daniel hadn't been attending the Special School!

Recalling his wife's heartache over the whole business, the father was rather short with the Officer, telling him to make sure Daniel wasn't enrolled somewhere else before accusing them of neglecting their son's education! He refused to answer any further questions, and shut the door in the official's face!

That night, the mother rang me again, really frightened. I told her Daniel had been in school for a month, that his school would have records showing how well he was doing, and that the school would show these records to the Truant Officer.

It would be OK.

I said to warn the Head Master that the Truant Officer was likely to visit. Sure enough, he turned up a couple of days later.

The Head Master told Daniel's parents afterwards, that he wasn't sure who'd been more annoyed, Daniel's teacher or the Truant Officer!

The Truant Officer had looked at the school records showing how Daniel was progressing. Then he'd questioned Daniel's class teacher so persistently that she'd called the Head Master in - before asking the Officer outright whether he thought she was lying about how well Daniel was doing!

He explained he'd been told Daniel couldn't speak properly, and was so mentally disabled he would never be able to learn to read.

Daniel's teacher informed him rather tartly, that he'd been informed incorrectly!

She explained that Daniel joined in class discussions enthusiastically, and, as a rule, everyone could understand what he said. He showed no sign at all of being mentally disabled! AND, he was already a fluent reader!

By the time the Truant Officer left the school, he was convinced he was being told the truth. The parents never heard anything more about the matter. (But I bet the School Principal did!)

Did Daniel have further problems? Yes, but he knew from experience that with hard work, a bit of thinking outside the box, and his mother's "never say die" attitude, he would succeed - even if he did have to go around a few obstacles rather than over them.

I still shudder when I think of what could have happened if Daniel's mother hadn't taken matters into her own hands and made the effort month after month, or if Daniel hadn't been willing to do all that hard work.

You might be wondering how old Daniel was. Daniel was 4 1/2 years old when his mother was told he'd have to go to Special School. He was 5 when he became a fluent reader.