These principles will assist you to adjust your literacy teaching for individual students who are experiencing some difficulty with reading and writing. They are based on what research tells us about struggling readers and writers. All teachers are teachers of literacy. Teachers in the secondary sector are discipline experts and bring their knowledge of disciplinary literacy to support all students gain expertise in that discipline and transfer this learning to other areas.

Learn what students can do and build on their strengths
Teach them to use what they know and work from there. This is a difference model, not a deficit model that focuses on what students do not know.

Have high expectations for student performance; be sure that tasks are within students' control.
Assign tasks they can accomplish and expect that they will perform. Research shows that in effective educational programs teachers find ways to reach and teach every student. In reading, writing, word study, and the content areas, present students with tasks they can do with your support. That includes reading texts that offer only a few challenges and writing about topics that they know and understand.

Promote high levels of student engagement
Pitching your teaching to ensure success increases engagement. Ask students to sit front and centre, which helps them to see, hear, and participate. Help students get started by working with individuals or a small group, guide students through the beginning of a task and discuss next steps. Break down long, complex tasks into smaller steps. Explain the goal of each task and how it will help them to grow as a learner. Check in with them before releasing to independent tasks. Highlight and applaud their work. Offer encouragement and feedback for diligence, productivity and products that show improvement/progress.

Provide predictability and routine
The literacy focus time or reading and writing workshop provide predictable routines that make learning possible. Take extra time to walk students through the procedures of each new task and provide support until they know how things go. Make sure students participate in flexible, heterogeneous groups, such as research groups, literature circles, choral reading groups etc.

Invite students to make choices
Struggling students need to learn how to make good choices in the books they read, the topics they write about, or the poetry they choose to read aloud. Guthrie and Humenick (2004) in their meta-analysis, found that the two most powerful instructional design factors for improving reading motivation and comprehension were (1) student access to many books and (2) personal choice of what to read. Research has demonstrated that access to self-selected texts and time to read improves students' reading performance (Krashen, 2011). There is no evidence that indicates that workbooks, photocopies, or computer tutorial programs are effective (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; Dynarski, 2007).

Provide opportunity to talk with peers about reading and writing
Research has demonstrated that conversation with peers improves comprehension and engagement with texts in a variety of settings (Cazden, 1988; Chambers, 1993). Such literary conversation asks students to analyse, comment, discuss, predict and compare – in short, to think about what they've read, rather than merely focus on recalling or retelling what they have read.

Increase the number of high-quality texts which are exemplary for their genre that students encounter
The more texts students encounter, the greater the background they can bring to understanding new texts they read. Reading to students will increase students' background knowledge of texts, vocabulary and assist them to internalise language structures. Use reading as a means of extending knowledge ('reading to learn') using books to discover new information, raise questions and solve problems. Ensure texts are culturally inclusive.

Read aloud
Students should have regular opportunities to listen to a fluent adult read aloud. Listening to an adult model fluent reading increases students' own fluency and comprehension skills (Trelease, 2019), as well as expanding their vocabulary, background knowledge, sense of story, awareness of genre and text structure, and comprehension of the texts read (Wu & Samuels, 2004).

Ensure the students engage in successful reading practice
Use meaningful texts that are at the student's independent reading level. Sustained and intensive practice is the single most important ingredient in helping all learners improve their reading fluency and confidence. It's not just the time spent with a book in hand, but rather the intensity and volume of high success reading, that determines a student's progress in learning to read (Allington, 2009; Kuhn et al., 2006). When students read accurately, they solidify their word-recognition, decoding, and word-analysis skills. Perhaps more important, they are likely to understand what they read – and, as a result, to enjoy reading.

Use technology to support students, for example, electronic books can help students who struggle with reading. All platforms and devices now have universal access design features to deliver accommodations to students with disabilities or difficulties.

Teach students to use effective strategies in their reading and writing
Demonstrate effective strategies for them and provide extra support to help them eliminate ineffective strategies and adopt the new effective ones. The findings from brain research align well with what we've learned from studies of reading interventions that accelerate reading development: routinely devote at least two-thirds of the time to reading and rereading rather than isolated or contrived skill practice (Allington, 2011).

Scaffold learners into texts beyond their independent reading ability
Teach students 'up' into more complex texts rather than teach 'down' and lose the rich content and meaning (Adoniou, 2019). Before looking at a text, make sure students have sufficient knowledge, experiences, and vocabulary to engage with the text. Explicitly teach about language features of written texts. Monitor the pace of your teaching, but don't 'slow down', remember learning is cumulative and students benefit from revisiting previous learning.

Increase the time students spend writing about things that are personally meaningful
Struggling writers need to write more. Invite them to talk about their writing before they sit down to write. Using a computer may make writing and editing easier. When students write about something they care about, they use conventions of spelling and grammar because it matters to them that their ideas are communicated, not because they will lose points or see red ink if they don't (Cunningham & Cunningham, 2010). They have to think about what words will best convey their ideas to their readers. This process is especially important for struggling readers because it produces a comprehensible text that the student can read, reread, and analyse.

Provide extra support to help students perform well in front of the class
Set aside extra time to help them practise so that they can participate fully in the life of the classroom.

The Foundation for Learning and Literacy has written a partner article to this, *Meeting the needs of struggling readers and writers particularly in the later primary years and secondary years*, which can be found on the website in the Useful Articles section.

References:
Adoniou, M., (2019), *Raising expectations and rediscovering the wonder of learning,* Presentation at the Leading Edge Conference, Education Directorate, ACT.

Allington, RL, (2009), If they don't read much … 30 years later. In E. H. Hiebert (Ed.), *Reading More, Reading Bette*r, pp. 30–54. New York: Guilford.

Allington, RL, (2011), 'Research on reading/ learning disability interventions', in SJ Samuels & AE Farstrup, (eds.), *What Research Has to Say about Reading Instruction* (4th ed., pp. 236–265). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Allington, RL, & Gabriel, R, (2012), 'Every child every day', *Educational Leadership*, vol. 69, no. 6, pp. 10-15', http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar12/vol69/num06/Every-Child,-Every-Day.aspx

Cazden, CB, (1988), *Classroom Discourse: The Language of Teaching and Learning*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Chambers, A, (1993), *Tell Me. Children, Reading and Talk.* Newtown: Primary English Teachers Association.

Cunningham, PM, & Cunningham, JW, (2010), *What Really Matters in Writing: Research-based Practices Across the Elementary Curriculum.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Cunningham, AE, & Stanovich, KE, (1998), 'The impact of print exposure on word recognition', in J Metsala & L Ehri, (eds.), *Word Recognition in Beginning Literacy,* pp. 235–262. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Dynarski, M, (2007), 'Effectiveness of reading and mathematics software products: Findings from the first student cohort,' Washington, DC: Institute for Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20074005

Fountas, I, Pinnell, G, (2001), *Guiding Readers and Writers Grades 3-6,* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Guthrie, JT, & Humenick, NM, (2004), 'Motivating students to read: Evidence for classroom practices that increase motivation and achievement.,' in P McCardle & V Chhabra (eds.), *The Voice of Evidence in Reading Research,* pp. 329–354. Baltimore: Paul Brookes.

Krashen, S, (2011), *Free Voluntary Reading*. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited.

Kuhn, MR, Schwanenflugel, P, Morris, RD, Morrow, LM, Woo, D, Meisinger, B., et al. (2006), 'Teaching children to become fluent and automatic readers', *Journal of Literacy Research*, vol. 38 no., pp. 357–388.

Trelease, J, (2019), *Read-aloud Handbook* (8th ed.). New York: Viking-Penguin.

Westwood, P, (2001), *Reading and Learning Difficulties*. Victoria, Australia: ACER.

Wu, Y, & Samuels, SJ, (2004, May), *How the Amount of Time Spent on Independent Reading Affects Reading Achievement.* Paper presented at the annual convention of the International Reading Association, Reno, Nevada.