

State Literacy and Numeracy Plan

Focus on literacy: Talking and listening

© State of New South Wales through the NSW Department of Education and Training, 2007. This work may be freely reproduced and distributed for most purposes, however, some restrictions apply.



© 2003, NSW Department of Education and Training
Professional Support and Curriculum Directorate

RESTRICTED WAIVER OF COPYRIGHT

The printed material in this publication is subject to a restricted waiver of copyright to allow the purchaser to make photocopies of the material contained in the publication for use within a school, subject to the conditions below.

1. All copies of the printed material shall be made without alteration or abridgement and must retain acknowledgement of the copyright.
2. The school or college shall not sell, hire or otherwise derive revenue from copies of the material, nor distribute copies of the material for any other purpose.
3. The restricted waiver of copyright is not transferable and may be withdrawn in the case of breach of any of these conditions.

SCIS number: 1078995
ISBN: 0 7313 8148 3

Foreword

Focus on literacy: Talking and Listening is the latest document in the State Literacy and Numeracy Plan which has seen teachers produce some of the best results ever for NSW students. The series also includes: *Focus on literacy* (1997), *Focus on literacy: Spelling* (1998) and *Focus on literacy: Writing* (2000).

This document gives teachers current research about teaching talking and listening including: teaching models, suggested approaches to planning and possible assessment procedures. It is a practical and engaging resource which will provide useful ideas to all teachers.

Literacy is the key to young people's success in school. It gives them the confidence to build a bright future.

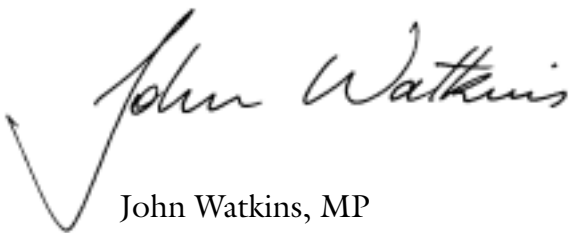
All young people should be articulate. They should have conversational and public speaking skills. They should be able to express their views appropriately in any situation.

Students also need to be good listeners. They need to be capable of not only comprehending but also evaluating what they hear.

International studies tell us that NSW teachers are among the best teachers of literacy in the world.

This document will help teachers to continue this good work and is provided for all teachers K–12 in NSW public schools.

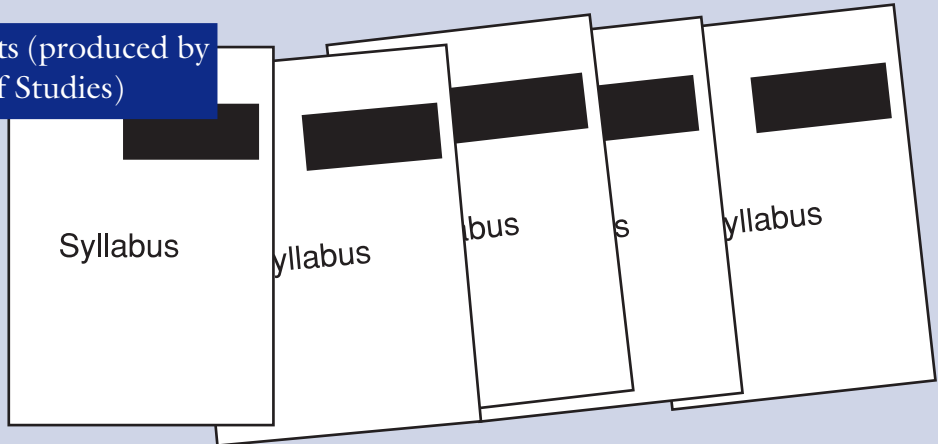
I commend it to you.



John Watkins, MP
Minister for Education and Training

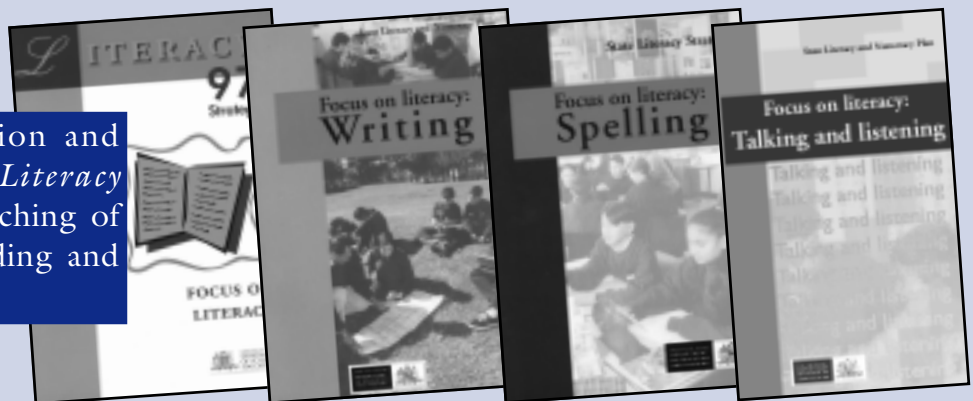
The relationship among syllabuses, *Focus on Literacy* documents and curriculum support material is shown below.

Syllabus documents (produced by the NSW Board of Studies)

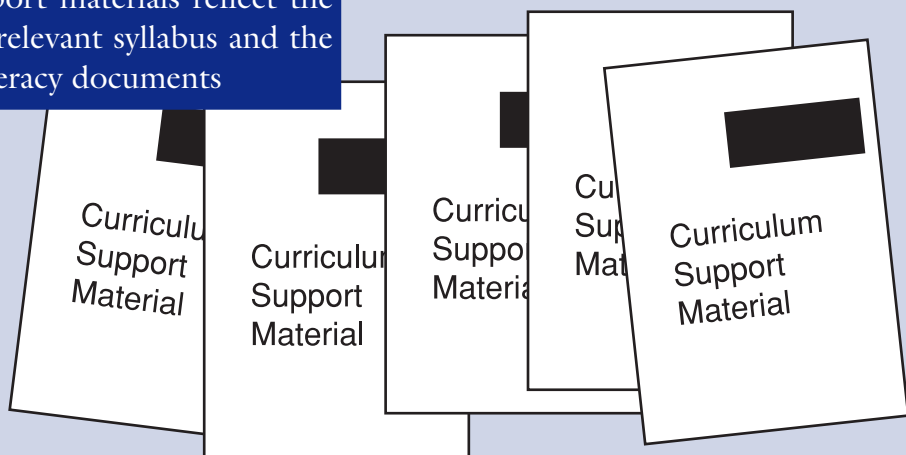


Each subject and key learning area has specific literacy demands

Department of Education and Training *Focus on Literacy* documents guide the teaching of literacy skills, understanding and knowledge K–12



Curriculum support materials reflect the content of each relevant syllabus and the Department's literacy documents



Contents

Foreword	3
Introduction	7
Talking	10
Listening	11
Chapter one	13
Current research and past approaches	13
Language development	13
Home language	13
Second language learning	14
Teacher talk	14
Approaches	15
Traditional approaches	15
Whole-language and process approaches	15
Genre approach	16
Chapter two	17
Social purposes	17
Social contexts	18
Subject matter	19
Roles and relationships	19
Mode of communication	20
Mode continuum	21
Composing and interpreting texts	23
1. Critical understanding	23
2. Language features	24
3. Flexibility	24
Chapter three	25
Teaching talking and listening	25
Explicit teaching of talking and listening	26
Modelled teaching	27
Guided teaching	28
Independent teaching strategies	29
What to teach	29
Where do teachers begin?	30

Purpose and audience	30
Types of talk	31
Talking to learn	31
Talking as process	31
Talk as performance	31
Interpreting oral texts	32
Purpose and audience	32
Critical understandings	33
Roles of the listener	33
Providing a balanced approach	34
Talking and listening, reading, viewing and writing	35
Building the field	34
Analysis	35
Joint construction	35
Independent construction	36
Providing opportunities for students to learn through talking and listening	36
Chapter four	37
Whole-school approach	37
(a) Resources	38
(b) Teachers' knowledge and understandings	38
(c) Students' achievements	38
Stage or faculty planning	39
Class planning	39
Meeting the needs of diverse learners	40
Extending talented speakers and listeners	40
Supporting students experiencing difficulties	41
Students who study by distance education	41
Developing links between home and school	41
Home language	43
Chapter five	45
Assessing students' talking and listening achievements	45
What to assess	47
Consistency in teachers' judgements	48
How does talk improve?	48

Introduction

Focus on literacy: talking and listening is relevant to all teachers in all key learning areas, from Kindergarten to Year 12. The policy recognises that learning to speak and listen effectively is a life long process that consists of accumulating knowledge about language and using language to explore social, cultural and academic worlds.

The definition of literacy, which has guided the Department of Education and Training since the beginning of the State Literacy Strategy in 1996 is the following:

Literacy is the ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately, in a range of contexts. It is used to develop knowledge and understanding to achieve personal growth and to function effectively in our society. Literacy also includes the recognition of number and basic mathematical signs and symbols within text.

Literacy involves the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing. Effective literacy is intrinsically purposeful, flexible and dynamic and continues to develop throughout an individual's lifetime.

All Australians need to have effective literacy in English, not only for their personal benefit and welfare but also for Australia to reach its social and economic goals.

*Australia's Language and Literacy Policy,
Companion Volume to Policy Paper, 1991*

Talking and listening play a vital role in all learning. The skills, knowledge and understandings in talking and listening require the same focus in the classroom as reading and writing.

Teachers are encouraged to teach talking and listening in the same explicit and systematic way they teach all other literacy skills and understandings, while valuing and acknowledging what students can do through talking and listening. Teachers also need to be aware of the central place talking and listening hold throughout

primary and secondary learning. The key elements of teaching talking and listening are similar to the key elements of the State Literacy Strategy.

The expectations are as follows:

- the knowledge, skills and understandings for effective talking and listening will be taught in an explicit and systematic way
- all students will be taught to use talking and listening through teachers making aspects of language explicit for all students
- talking and listening will be valued and emphasised in all subject areas as a tool for learning
- students' home languages and diversity of backgrounds will be valued and students will be encouraged to use their home language where appropriate
- students will be taught to use Standard Australian English appropriate to their stage of development and differing language contexts
- talking and listening will take place between teachers and students, between students, and between students and the wider community
- the development of students' talking and listening will be monitored
- students who are experiencing difficulties will be identified early and given appropriate support
- a planned whole-school approach will ensure continuity in the development of students' knowledge, skills and understanding about talking and listening
- effective learning partnerships will be developed with parents and caregivers
- teachers will be given support for effective practice in the teaching and assessment of talking and listening.

It is important to consider the diversity of students' cultural backgrounds, variations in students' experiences of the world and individual personalities. Most students will already have had extensive experience and tacit understandings of talking and listening prior to Kindergarten through their interactions with family and community members, day care, pre-school, religious rituals and other experiences. These understandings continue to develop, refine and expand throughout their years of formal

schooling as a consequence of their interactions with other people, texts and the mass media.

The policy recognises the vital place of students' home language in their talking and listening development. It requires teachers to provide an environment that values the language resources that students bring to school and to build on this resource to facilitate learning in all subject areas.

Talking and listening are crucial tools for clarifying thinking and reflecting on learning. Talking and listening play a significant role in all subjects, as students actively transform information into knowledge.

Meaning is generated between new information and existing concepts... If students are to “get” knowledge, they have to process information: they have to do things with it in relation to what they already know... The word knowledge expresses this. Its roots are Greek and ancient Norse, and it means, literally, “to have sport with ideas”...

Simply giving students information, or asking them to read, will have no impact on understanding unless they can “have sport” with this information.

Gibbs and Habeshaw 1988, *Preparing to teach*.

As students progress through each stage of schooling, talking and listening tend to move from the familiar to the less familiar, more abstract, generalised and objective. The demands on students range in complexity from classroom talk, centred on a particular event or activity, e.g. packing up after a design task, to students collaboratively researching information, undertaking a problem solving activity or conducting an experiment and reflecting on their findings. The complexities within each task make varying linguistic and cognitive demands and cannot be portrayed as a linear progression.

Skills, knowledge and understanding of talking and listening skills change as students progress through school. Spoken texts are more complex, demonstrating complex reasoning and synthesis of ideas. Texts students are expected to listen to tend to be longer, more technical, with often a range of meanings embedded in them. Talking about texts (written, oral or visual) is inextricably linked to the expression of a student's knowledge and understanding.

Different areas of work and study use different oral texts. Spoken language has different functions and can be distinguished by the use of different kinds of language. In the classroom, oral texts tend to be in the following categories, with some overlap:

- interactional language used to develop and maintain social relationships and exchange, build on and clarify ideas
- transactional language used to transfer information or exchange services
- poetic and creative language used to engage and entertain.

When we consider talking and listening in the classroom we are concerned with:

- what is being said (the topic, the sub-topics and vocabulary choices)
- the relationship between speaker and listener(s) in that particular context
- how it is being said (sentence structure, gesture, intonation, pausing and pitch).

Talking

A significant change from home to school is the audience for students' spoken texts (from those who know them well to adults and peers who are less familiar with them and their experiences). Students acquire the specialised language of school learning, new experiences and new knowledge through sharing experiences with peers and adults. The language of school makes many demands on all students. Students need many focused opportunities to talk and listen. In school, students learn a broader way of expressing meaning through language and more formal ways of expressing themselves than they may have experienced in their home, pre-school settings, social and other environments.

Talking and listening will develop as a consequence of:

- their use in meaningful activities that enhance and support reading, writing, viewing and critical thinking
- learners being actively and dynamically engaged for a defined purpose
- students' monitoring and reflecting on progress.

Listening

Through listening, students learn what is expected and how to act upon information and instructions. Listening is an active skill and needs to be taught. Students also need to listen to ideas and information provided by adults and peers in order to extend the range of responses from which to choose. Responses might include silence but this would be a conscious choice on the part of the student.

In order to listen effectively, students will need relevant background information, including an understanding of the perspective of the topic and cultural understandings, a purpose for listening and an understanding and knowledge of the patterns, dialectal differences and phonology of the language system.

Note that a significant number of young students are affected by otitis media (intermittent hearing loss). This is often difficult to detect. These students may have difficulty hearing, understanding or following instructions. Further information can be found on page 11 of the *English K–6 Modules* (NSW Board of Studies, 1998) and *Otitis Media and Aboriginal Children—A handbook for teachers and communities* (NSW Board of Studies, 1994).

Chapter one

Current research and past approaches

Talking and listening play a vital role in learning. Research has added to our knowledge about what children do when they learn to use language and the teaching of talking and listening has been influenced by this research. Teachers continue to develop and refine the ways they teach as well as incorporate elements of earlier approaches. In recent years the place of talk has shifted from being the major means of teacher instruction, to students being given talking opportunities to interact and collaborate with teachers and other students to facilitate learning.

The literacy demands of society, schools and workplaces continue to evolve. Employers expect students to come to the workplace having developed a number of key competencies, many of which rely on students having well-developed talking and listening skills. The modern workplace requires flexibility, as the nature of the work is often diverse and changing. For example, interviews are often a pre-requisite for employment. Most jobs require collaborative teamwork to take place, and most jobs include aspects of successful interactions with clients. These changes have facilitated a greater emphasis on the need for students to develop communication, presentation and interaction skills as well as to extend their understanding of language use and its effect. The development of student talk in the classroom has long been acknowledged as a powerful way to develop students' skills in responding to changing literacy demands. Talk in the classroom explicitly addresses the changing nature of workplace requirements and the increasing focus on productive talk.

Language development

Home language

Students' experience of language is rich and diverse. Students come from a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. We recognise the benefits of maintaining the home language for students for whom English is a second dialect or language. This includes languages other than English and Aboriginal English.

Aboriginal English is recognised by linguists and educators as a valid variety of English with its own rules. Aboriginal English encompasses gestures, body language, eye contact, sounds, expression and tone. Cultural values are often reinforced verbally and non-verbally. Teachers need to be aware of home contexts for talking and listening.

The home languages of all students play a major role in literacy development. Schooling makes new demands on students' oral language. Often the talking and listening demands of home and school might be different, which makes systematic and explicit teaching and communication with parents and community of paramount importance.

Sometimes students' home language will be a different social dialect of English, with distinct accents and pronunciations. Again, it is important to accept and value these differences. It is also important to teach students about the social implications of these differences.

Second language learning

The teaching of talking and listening in classrooms has been greatly influenced by investigations in second language acquisition theory and practice. There are significant differences between the language demands of the playground and daily routines and those of the curriculum. Research highlights the need for all learners to explore and be competent in different types of language use. Students' prior experiences of learning a language and culture are seen as resources which students can draw on in learning a second language and culture.

Teacher talk

The early research work on teacher-student interaction focused attention on instructional interactions. Findings were that most classroom-based exchanges typically were in three parts: that of the teacher as Initiator, the students as Responder, then the teacher closing the interaction with Feedback. More recent area of research on teachers' talk in the classroom invites teachers to examine and reflect on the values and views they bring to their interactions with students. Teachers of students from marginalised groups (low SES, NESB and Aboriginal students) tended to give students fewer

opportunities for classroom talk than teachers of other groups of students. Teachers should focus on the amount and nature of the talk that takes place in classrooms. The language the teacher uses to communicate with students also indicates the teacher's expectation of students. No matter what stage their students are in, teachers should avoid talking down to students and modelling language that is babyish, because this implies that such language is expected of students and deprives them of the opportunity to experience good models.

Approaches

Traditional approaches

Traditional approaches concentrated on skill development and literacy was seen as reading and writing. In the traditional classroom teachers often taught by talking, while students listened and responded to questions. Students had few opportunities to use their own language. Interaction with the teachers and peers in the classroom tended to be limited, both in frequency and the length of each exchange. Longer spoken texts were usually monologues, primarily focused on presentation skills.

Attention was given to how well students spoke in Standard Australian English. Students' home language was often not acknowledged and not encouraged. Students engaged in formal spoken presentations, oral recitations and debates.

Whole-language and process approaches

These approaches brought about major changes in how talking and listening were viewed in the classroom. Teaching and learning were seen as processes that involved collaboration and the construction of meaning. The connections among reading, writing, talking and listening came to be recognised and each mode was recognised as enhancing the other.

The aim of the whole-language classroom was to create an environment conducive to learning where the focus was on language in use. Students began talking and listening for clear authentic purposes with real audiences. Teachers were encouraged to immerse their students in language in all curriculum areas.

Genre approach

The genre approach described how people typically use language in texts for particular purposes and audiences. In the area of written language particularly, the genre approach supported teachers in recognising that texts which shared the same social purpose tended to “unfold” in similar ways (their structure supported the purpose they set out to achieve), and they also tended to use similar language features, again linked to the purpose of the text. The genre approach used in schools was partly born of a belief that in school and the wider community certain texts are given power. Explicit teaching of how to construct these texts was of particular benefit to diverse learner groups, e.g. ESL, low SES and Aboriginal students.

Teaching focused on examining the ways in which different areas of study make use of different oral texts. The approach paid attention to how written language differs from spoken language and focused on explicit teaching of the typical structures of oral texts.

Current approaches

Current approaches to the teaching of talking and listening have been influenced by what has been learned from previous approaches. Approaches have also been influenced by the inclusion of talking and listening as part of being literate, and part of the literate tradition. A social view of language underpins the current approach to the teaching of talking and listening. A social view of language recognises that texts are socially constructed. This view of language is based on insights gained from developments in sociology and linguistics.

Outcomes-based education

Outcomes-based education has provided syllabuses with a framework to describe the knowledge, skills and understandings the students demonstrate when learning in a subject or key learning area. Outcomes are achieved when the students engage successfully with the content of a syllabus. Syllabus outcomes assist in developing the appropriate teaching, learning and assessment which needs to take place in the classroom in order to improve the students’ achievement of those outcomes which require effective talking and listening. Talking and listening are tools for the student to demonstrate their knowledge in all subject areas.

Chapter two

Social view of language

A social view of language describes how language is used in texts. A text is defined as any meaningful act of communication, of any length, whether written, spoken or visual. A social view of language allows us to understand how a particular text works to achieve its purpose in a particular context. A social view of language enables us to construct and interpret spoken, written and visual texts through making all aspects of language explicit. It provides a description of how language is structured for its use, how it works and how it is used in different social contexts. It recognises the relationship between a text and the context in which it was generated.

Social purposes

Every text has a social purpose. We make language choices depending on the purpose for using language in a particular context. Social purpose influences the overall structuring of a text. For example, thanking a visiting speaker and engaging in a conversation with a peer have different social purposes and therefore take different forms. Some of the purposes for using talk in the classroom include questioning, explaining, persuading, describing, comparing, negotiating and entertaining. These purposes place a range of linguistic and cognitive demands on students.

Listening requirements will vary according to the purpose for listening, e.g. listening for specific information, for the overall gist, for others' ideas, for feedback, for entertainment etc. Listening in classroom situations is often an independent activity, often not explicitly taught. Support needs to be provided for students to develop their listening skills, including skills in note-taking, documenting their ideas and a range of retrieval skills. They need to be explicitly taught about the different purposes for listening and given opportunities to practise their skills in listening for a purpose.

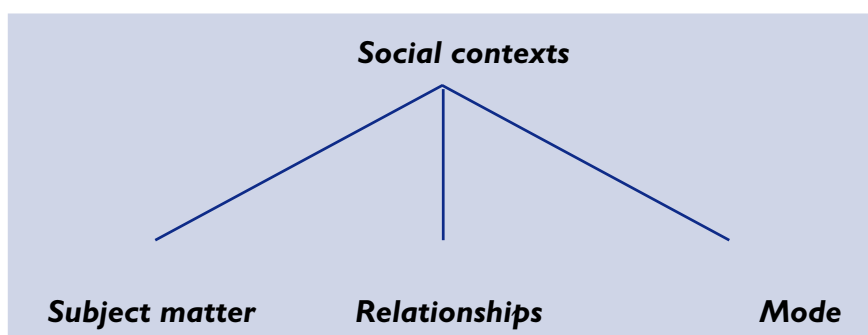
Social contexts

Talking and listening takes place in a particular situation or context. The context in which a text is produced effects the language used. In order to understand and interpret a text we need to consider its cultural context and also the specific situation in which it is produced. When considering the cultural context speakers must consider:

- their purpose
- what is considered appropriate to talk about and with whom
- the ways in which a text might be structured to support the listener, as well as support the speaker's purpose
- any techniques the speaker might use (e.g. formal debating techniques).

Students should be aware that they need to vary their listening according to the situation and teachers need to provide a variety of situations where students have to listen in different ways. Providing a number of tasks that involve listening in different situations provides students with opportunities further to develop listening knowledge, skills and understandings. Contexts could include listening to a short talk for specific information, listening to a narrative on audio tape, taking notes while listening to a lecture and listening for the purpose of relaying the message. Following oral instructions involves listening, and this type of listening needs to be continually practised as instructional texts get longer and more complicated.

A social view of language draws on the concepts of the subject matter, relationships and mode to describe how a text makes meaning within a particular context. These concepts are seen as three features that influence the way language and grammatical patterns are used in a text.



Subject matter

The subject matter is concerned with what the text is about, the topic under discussion and therefore the appropriate language and understandings required to gain meaning from texts about the topic. This requires students to be aware of the language needed to construct and understand the particular content of a text. This includes subject-specific vocabulary, technical vocabulary and everyday usage. Students develop their knowledge of the subject matter through exploration, problem solving, research, explanation and discussion. When we consider subject matter in the classroom we ask questions like:

- What new concepts, knowledge or vocabulary do we notice?
- What unfamiliar cultural references might be involved?
- What relationships or patterns are evident in the text?

Roles and relationships

When students speak and listen they need to consider the relationships between the speaker and listener. The roles and relationship of the speakers and listeners are factors that determine the appropriate language choices students make. These roles may change from one interaction to another. Interpersonal skills need to be considered to enable students to participate in groups, pairs and whole class. Students need to be aware of the language choices they can make to build different relationships and influence the tone of an interaction.

The interpersonal aspects also include body language, expression, intonation and other non-verbal forms of communication exhibited by the speaker.

When we consider roles and relationships, we ask questions such as:

- What roles will the students and teacher adopt?
- What is the power relationship in the classroom or particular activity?
- What skills and understanding will students develop and demonstrate about responding to their audience?
- What skills and understanding will students develop and demonstrate about influencing their audience?

Mode of communication

This refers to the kind of text being made. In some language exchanges, such as an oral narrative or a formal speech, the spoken language is quite dense and might have more in common with the language features of a written text, while in an conversation between close friends, language use is less formal.

Spoken texts might be spontaneous face-to-face conversation, structured debates, a monologue or a loosely structured group discussion.

When a set of texts has similar topics, relationships with audience and form of communication, we can say they share the same register.

Some students find speaking to more than one person at a time quite daunting. A sense of intimidation is often influenced by language background, gender beliefs, cultural interpretation, assumptions about other learners and individual personality.

Students need to be taught how different oral texts are usually constructed. Sometimes there are familiar activities that are embedded in a physical context (game playing, an excursion or constructing) while at other times formal or distant language (oral report or formal presentation) used in a task requiring particular consideration of audience, purpose and potential structure. When we consider the role of language in interactions in the classroom, the following questions could be considered:

- Have I prepared my students adequately for using language in this way?
- Is the language used typical, familiar, too dense, too abstract?
- Are students moving from the familiar to more reflective and abstract use of language?

The use of equipment (microphone or overhead projector), pictures and other materials has a direct impact on the way language is used. The choice of the task and the way the task is set up influence the language requirements. It is important for students to be exposed to a range of oral texts, combined with reading and writing, in order to expand their literacy in all subjects.

Equally important is a teacher's understanding of the language demands of each task, making expectations clear to students. The

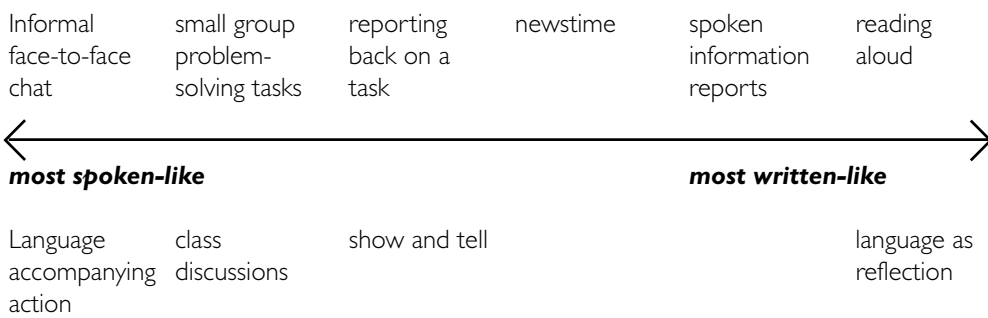
language opportunities for tasks also need to be considered, giving students scope to experiment and use exploratory language.

Students’ understandings of social purpose and context will influence how they compose a text. Students need to be aware of how a text can be structured according to the demands of a task in a particular situation and the impact of the structure on the listener. Students need to experiment and try out different structures, experimenting with and challenging structures at other times.

Mode continuum

There are clear differences between spoken and written language use. Writing is usually highly organised, linear, economical and explicit. Speaking on the other hand, often appears disorganised, circular and implicit (Halliday, 1985). Like written language, spoken language has different purposes and hence significantly different grammatical features. The skills, strategies and specific language needed to participate in a group activity that involves problem-solving orally, differs from those used in delivering an oral report.

The mode continuum below plots spoken texts on a continuum from texts which are informal and closest to spontaneous oral interaction (language accompanying an activity) through to language that is crafted, edited and organised more written like (spoken presentations). However, the representation below is only one aspect of using language, and needs to be considered alongside aspects such as the relationship between speaker and audience (who has status in that particular situation, how often they speak to that person, how they regard that person and how they feel that person regards them). These factors affect the role of language in each interaction.



*The mode continuum (reflecting the use of spoken language)
Pauline Jones (Ed) (1996) Talking to Learn, PETA, Sydney*

The mode continuum provides a useful framework for planning spoken language tasks in all subjects. It provides a way to examine the variations that occur depending on whether the speakers are face-to-face talking about something they are doing, or whether the audience is less familiar and the text is more written like, e.g. a formal report.

As we move along the continuum the shape of the text and the language choices change. As we move towards the written end, language tends to use more content words per clause and fewer reference words external to the text. Language is used more sparingly, and meanings are abstracted, nouns represent actions and processes (e.g., communication), qualities (e.g., integrity) and attributes (e.g., finesse or silence) instead of concrete things.

The mode continuum can be used as a planning tool as preparation for writing and for discussing and engaging with texts that are read across the curriculum. Students need to be able to use language effectively right across the continuum. It is important to note that one end is not better than the other. Students need to discuss and understand texts they are reading as well as prepare for writing texts.

Composing and interpreting texts

Students must be aware of how the context and the purpose influence what they are doing. When composing and interpreting spoken texts three core considerations are:

1. Critical understanding

If students learn to reflect on how meaning is constructed in what they are hearing and saying, they will be better placed to compose effective texts and interpret the texts they are hearing. Like all texts, oral texts position listeners in certain ways. Developing a critical understanding of texts teaches students to question and challenge the texts they hear and use. It also helps students to make appropriate choices about how to make an exchange successful, and the effect of particular structures and language features (including vocabulary).

2. Typical features

It is important for students to be aware of the overall structures that are evident across a range of oral texts, such as answering a phone, negotiating in a group, conducting an interview or addressing an assembly. Language features in spoken texts differ from written texts, partly because, in spoken texts, listeners usually have one opportunity only to grasp the meaning of the text. Written texts can be drafted and re-drafted, read and re-read.

In familiarising students with the typical features of texts, teachers need to clarify the purpose for interactions. Having frequent opportunities to practise talking and listening supports learning to talk and listen.

3. Flexibility

A text is effective when it achieves the speaker or listener's purpose and is appropriate to the social context. It is important to make students aware of the typical structures and features of a range of oral texts. Often a presentation may not contain the language features typical of texts, which have the same purpose. Students should be encouraged to manipulate the typical features of a text in various ways and recognise and allow for this flexibility.

Teachers need to provide examples of a range of spoken texts where multiple purposes are employed. Students should be encouraged to experiment with a variety of different types of texts and their own style and delivery.

The success of a spoken text is influenced by a number of factors. Relationships will change in classroom interaction as students take on different roles. Examples include: expert to interested novices; sharing information with peers who have similar topic knowledge; posing a different stance to a popular viewpoint; report back of a shared experience.

Students must also be aware that many oral texts are spontaneous; not every text can be or should be planned.

Chapter three

Teaching talking and listening

Students need to be taught how to talk and listen with different audiences and for different purposes. In all subjects students will be required to compose and interpret a range of oral texts. The demands of talking and listening increase in complexity and sophistication as students move through school. Talking and listening are the foundations for reading and writing, and are both necessary for supporting the continued development of skills, knowledge and understanding in reading, writing and viewing.

The teaching of talking and listening should aim to provide a balance of learning through language and learning about language, providing students with the ability to use language effectively and talk about the language being used. Focused group work will give students increased opportunity to talk and listen with their peers. Both listeners and speakers need to have specific roles and experiences in taking turns, changing the subject, asking for exemplification and clarification and recording notes from spoken interactions. All students need to be provided with opportunities to reflect on effective group work strategies, as many school-based activities will involve more than one speaker, rather than one-on-one interactions.

Talking and listening are dynamic processes. Teachers have a significant role in providing a range of contexts for talking and listening so that students expand their experience and knowledge.

All students need to practise and experiment with the language of interaction and the specialised language of subjects. This is especially important for disadvantaged students. Carefully constructed pair and small group work is essential to facilitate a friendly, non-threatening environment in which to try out new ways of expressing meanings. This includes pronouncing new words.

An important consideration for teaching talking and listening is the layout of the classroom, i.e. the furniture moved to facilitate an interactive environment. Interactive classrooms are fertile grounds for talking and listening and the growth of ideas. It is important to have high expectations and make them clear for students.

Explicit teaching of talking and listening

Classroom talk is crucial in influencing what students learn about literacy. It is important to reflect on teacher talk about talking and listening to ensure that it is explicit.

Explicit teaching will provide links between knowing how language works and using language. Teaching about the purpose and features of a particular text provides students with the knowledge and understandings necessary to apply the skills when talking and listening.

When choosing a speaking activity it is important to consider its purpose and what needs to be taught and demonstrated. Cooperative skills and presentation are an important aspect of any talking and listening program and these skills need to be explicitly taught and practised. Cooperative skills on their own do not ensure that purposeful talk will take place, so the design or selection of the particular activity will have a direct influence on the type of language that is used.

Teachers should explicitly and systematically teach about:

- the purpose of a text (e.g. entertain by telling an anecdote, to gather information by interviewing)
- the audience for a text and the role that audience is taking on (e.g. an assembly of Year 7 students, an audience that holds opposing viewpoints)
- the form of text and its characteristic features (debate, oral survey, advertising)
- the conventions required to engage in and interpret particular texts (taking turns in formal class meetings, clarifying points in class discussion)
- the type of language used in specific texts (subject-specific vocabulary, formal, informal)
- the appropriate background knowledge needed to participate in a spoken task or activity
- the strategies for solving problems in a group interaction (negotiating effectively, reaching a consensus)
- strategies for dealing with errors (e.g. repairing a conversation or presentation)

- contextual and cultural differences (eye contact, body language etc.)
- contextual and cultural differences concerning topic choice (including taboo areas), gender roles
- the effectiveness of specific listening skills for the speaker and the listener (e.g. previewing main points for audience, listening for key words)
- the messages conveyed through body language
- the purposes and contexts for which Standard Australian English is appropriate while supporting continued development of home languages and dialects (e.g. discussing task requirements with group members prior to undertaking the task).

As oral interaction is often an instance where the language is spoken and it is “gone”. It is more sensitive to the mood and emotional state of the speaker and the listeners. Factors such as nervousness and levels of emotional response to situations need to be considered and discussed with students, where appropriate. Part of their development as speakers will be for them to recognise their emotional state and that of their audience, and to make conscious choices about ways they might deal with various concerns.

Modelled teaching

Modelled talking and listening involve presenting students with oral texts and discussing how they make meaning. Throughout the school day as teachers and students interact, talking and listening are also being modelled. Modelled talking and listening involves demonstrating how to compose and interpret a text, and seeing and hearing the language in action. Modelling demonstrates for students what good speakers and listeners do. It includes explicit teaching about the processes involved in composing oral texts.

Modelled teaching may include demonstrating and discussing:

- collaborative skills
- presentation skills
- the speaker’s and listener’s purpose and how the purpose is reflected in their behaviours
- the role of body language to signal purpose and reinforce aspects of the text

- verbalising the thinking processes that take place in preparation for speech.
- what language helps to convey a message, convince an audience, make a request, entertain, promote a response
- how to move language from spoken to written forms or from written to spoken, using the mode continuum as a guide
- the organisation of the text and how this organisation supports the message and the listener.

Guided teaching

Guiding talking and listening involves drawing on the knowledge, skills and understandings discussed and demonstrated during modelling. It may involve the whole class, small groups or individual students. Activities should be created that support learning and facilitate the development of students' linguistic resources and conceptual knowledge. Guiding talking and listening is valuable teaching for all students but is crucial for supporting students with specific needs. Students with specific needs required more guided practice and more opportunities for independent practice and explicit support.

Activities should move students from familiar spoken language to less familiar, more academic language. Talking and listening should take place around a written, spoken or read text. Using video or audiotape and developing criteria with the students to enable them to observe and monitor their own talking and listening is a valuable strategy. Having students interact around a computer, or use a listening post, construct oral questions to be answered by peers, observe a group interaction or jointly completing a matrix are useful guided activities.

Guided teaching of talking and listening should demonstrate for students how to:

- participate and contribute
- practise
- experiment
- reflect on self and learn from others
- monitor self and others
- self correct
- assess
- evaluate.

Independent teaching strategies

Independent teaching strategies for talking and listening should include many opportunities to use talking and listening in connection with the other modes of language. Teachers need to ensure that students have the appropriate subject-specific vocabulary required to participate in a task.

The teacher should construct activities that require students to independently:

- verbalise and share their ideas
- apply their knowledge
- practise and use their skills.

Independent tasks are those which students undertake without the teacher's support. These would include: reporting about independent research, about what has been learnt after a lesson or activity, presenting a short talk, conducting a debate, presenting to an assembly or speaking at student council.

What to teach

The subject area and students' background knowledge will inform a teacher's program for talking and listening. Activities in talking and listening need to be as purposeful and focused as they are in other areas of literacy.

Teachers need to improve students' confidence in talking and listening by ensuring there is a balance of *learning to* talk and listen and *learning about* talking and listening. Skills, knowledge and understandings are the ultimate goal. Talking for learning and thinking needs to be part of all subjects and used to assist students to explore their knowledge.

Teachers need to be clear about the language demands of the curriculum or individual activity. Working with partners or groups and presenting to an audience require students to use a variety of skills in both talking and listening. Teaching programs should include both formal and informal talking and listening activities.

Teachers may need to provide outlines or prompts and in some cases the language for students to use when composing and interpreting texts. All spoken texts use language structures and features, which need to be investigated, understood and challenged, where appropriate.

Where do teachers begin?

Teachers need to identify the assumptions the curriculum makes. Not all students will share the assumptions about talking and listening practices that the curriculum demands and the teacher requires. While small group work is effective as a way to promote collaboration, initially some students may prefer to listen and make fewer contributions. Many students may not feel confident enough to make a presentation to an audience. However, students who prefer to work alone need more opportunities to interact in non-threatening environments, as interaction is a necessary skill for learning and sharing ideas. Teachers need to consider differences among individual students and facilitate an environment where students feel safe and have a sense of belonging.

For some students, oral language features such as syntax or pronunciation may need to be explicitly taught. Where possible, teachers should make connections between the written word and its pronunciation through verbal rehearsal, and reading aloud, including choral reading. Older students who have encountered specialised words in research may be uncertain and reluctant to say the words, despite knowing meaning and usage.

Teachers need to be aware of the structures and language features used in composing particular texts. When composing oral texts it is important for students to work collaboratively, use presentation skills effectively and integrate talking and listening with reading and writing.

Purpose and audience

Explicit teaching involves making clear:

- how the purpose of a text, the subject matter, and the roles and relationships of the speaker and audience influence the choice of language
- how to use language for a range of purposes, e.g. to negotiate, collaborate, amuse, inform, shock
- what is said and the logical progression of ideas (information communicated, relevant vocabulary)
- the interpersonal skills that promote successful and productive interaction
- how it is delivered (engaging the audience, pronunciation, stress, pausing, speed, pitch, volume, intonation)
- what is appropriate for the audience.

Types of talk

Talking to learn

This type of talk is exploratory and refers to the “first draft” type of talking that occurs when students are formulating and verbalising their ideas, often for the first time, including working out the demands of a task. Although we are able to hear the interactions and can note and assess whether students are contributing and respecting the input of others, it is important that the more exploratory and tentative nature of talk is allowed to take any form. This type of talking is part of working out the task, their ideas and the contributions of others. Students need to be able to try some ideas out with peers before having their discussion documented in a report back session or a written text.

Talking as process

This refers to learning experiences in which talking and listening are associated with other learning activities and is usually task-oriented interaction. This may include students handling a range of objects in science, discussion about a text in English, problem solving in mathematics or constructing a design brief in technology.

Talking as process requires explicit teaching about its role in tasks. Students need to learn ways to interact productively in discussions and recognise talk as a valid tool for learning. Often discussions and findings will be recorded in note form. Talking as process will often precede a written task, and is a valid part of student learning.

This type of talk:

- assists teachers to lead students through an understanding about curriculum topics, ideas and texts
- gives students unrehearsed opportunities to make their own meaning and come to their own understandings of concepts and the ways in which texts work.

Talk as performance

Talk as performance refers to the crafted, spoken language activities that take account of an intended audience. Teachers might already know and share information about the type of audience the students can expect, or in some cases, the students will be expected to do background research to find out about the audience.

Formal spoken tasks often have an identifiable structure and in some cases predictable language (news, debate, advertisement). Talk as performance needs to be explicitly taught in the same way we teach students to prepare for, and write texts. Models should be provided for students by teachers and peers, e.g. through video and audio tapes or transcripts.

Talk as performance:

- assists students to improve their confidence and build self esteem
- provides teachers and students with an easily observable view of talking and listening skills
- allows students to monitor their own progress.

It is important not to make talk as performance the only form of assessment of students' oral language skills. Talking and listening skills can be easily obscured when viewed as performance and may not provide adequate insight into specific student needs in talking and listening.

In some talking and listening programs greater emphasis is placed on talk as performance. Effective programs will provide a balance of different types of talk, so that students encounter a range of realistic texts and comprehensive assessment of the students' skills and abilities can be made.

Listening to and interpreting oral texts

When interpreting oral texts it is important to identify the listening skills needed for the particular situation. To interpret spoken texts students will need to have the relevant background knowledge to be able to extract meaning. This may include being familiar with the purpose of the text, the topic, the situation, specific vocabulary and cultural context. It also involves knowledge of the aspects of language system: sound-symbol relationships, meanings of words and word order in phrases and chunks of meaning.

Purpose and audience

Teachers should discuss with students:

- the purpose of a text and its effectiveness

- the roles and relationships of the speaker and listener in that particular context (as students may take on a variety of roles)
- the impact of the language choices and how they influenced the listeners
- the type of listening skills required.

Critical understandings

Developing a critical understanding when interpreting texts requires teachers and students to discuss:

- the effect of different types of language in oral texts
- the view of the world that texts portray
- whose views are heard and whose are not
- how the text positions the listener, and the intended response
- how to question and challenge what is heard
- how to respond to the views constructed in the text
- how the text is structured.

Roles of the listener

Listening is often seen as an incidental skill that continues to develop over time. Reading and listening are closely related language processes. Like reading, listening requires the listener to be active and thinking. Listening tasks need to be varied to ensure students practise listening in different ways.

Written texts can be processed at a rate determined by the reader. However, spoken text is often controlled by the speaker and the listener may process the meaning in a number of ways as the text proceeds. Students need to have the skills to vary their listening according to the situation.

The following aspects of listening need to be taught explicitly:

- ways of listening (for detail, or for the gist)
- strategies for recall
- constructing meaning
- identifying main ideas and notable information

- identifying evidence of a particular stance of a speaker
- identifying strategies of a particular stance of a speaker.

Teachers need to provide opportunities for students to perform a variety of listening tasks. These might include:

- listening in order to pass on information to someone else
- listening to identify a particular piece of information
- listening to act on information (e.g. following directions).

Providing a balanced approach

A balance of types of talk should be incorporated into talking and listening programs. Using modelled, guided and independent teaching strategies can facilitate learning about language and learning through language. Teachers should provide opportunities for students to consider the context of culture and situation when focusing on creating and interpreting oral texts. A balanced approach involves students in constructing meaning from texts, developing spoken language and examining the conventions of spoken language.

When providing a balanced talking and listening program consider:

- what skills are required and provide appropriate models and explicit teaching
- whether language learning is taking place in meaningful events
- whether talking and listening are undertaken as isolated language activities or in support of reading, writing, viewing and critical thinking
- whether students are involved in monitoring their own progress
- employing a broad range of teaching strategies to address all students' needs.

Talking and listening, reading, viewing and writing

Giving students opportunities to read, listen, jointly construct, interpret and respond to a range of texts across the curriculum as a whole class, in a small group and in pairs, ensures that students

talk about and develop their understandings. Talking is the channel of communication where students discuss and reflect on their understandings of constructing and reading texts.

The following is a useful model, based on the teaching of writing but adapted for teaching talking and listening and for integrating talking and listening with reading and writing.

Building the field

Building field knowledge about a topic can be assisted through talking and listening by having students brainstorm, predict, categorise, list, research, use diagrams, pictures, objects, written texts, videos and radio broadcasts. Using talking and listening at this stage builds familiarity and appropriate use of new vocabulary. In some cases, students can see and hear the language required and are provided with a scope and purpose for their study. Depending of the purpose of the tasks, a model might not be available.

Analysis

Analysing a text may involve looking at the topic, the audience for the text, highlighting text structure or features such as opening, terms of address, how new topics are introduced, and links with any visuals or captions. Students will discuss whole-text structural features, more specific language features as well as aspects of the social and cultural context that are relevant to the task.

Joint construction

Jointly constructing a text in the two phases of preparation of joint construction and the construction itself can be done through students working together to problem solve, explore the topic, and analysis the grammatical patterns and vocabulary. Using talking and listening to jointly construct a text ensures that students share what is known and serves to generate language and negotiation skills. It enables students to contribute ideas and suggestions.

The dynamic nature of interaction means new ideas will emerge and likely influence the construction of a text. Teachers have opportunities to build on responses, perhaps reformulate if required, and model active listening.

Independent construction

Independent construction in talking and listening will involve having an audience. Students will be required to compose more written-like texts. The joint construction provides a model for students in preparing an individual spoken text. The previous phases will have generated a great deal of talking and listening, but in the independent phase it is the students who produce a spoken text independently.

There are many opportunities for talking and listening to be integrated with reading, and writing. Talk can be used as a bridge to writing and to understanding texts.

Providing opportunities to learn through talking and listening

Providing opportunities for students to use talking and listening across the curriculum makes them aware of the particular language requirements of different subjects. It makes them aware of their own and others' understandings of the subject, as well as providing insights into the process of developing their ideas. Concepts and ideas become known or understood through interactions among students, teachers and texts.

Constructing lessons that combine talking and listening provides support for students to:

- interact and jointly construct meanings in a range of texts
- see each mode of language supporting and developing each other
- develop language in relation to the context in which it is being used, the situation, the topic under discussion and the relationships between the participants
- make sense of the world and reflect on a range of cultural understandings and values
- listen for specific purposes.

Chapter four

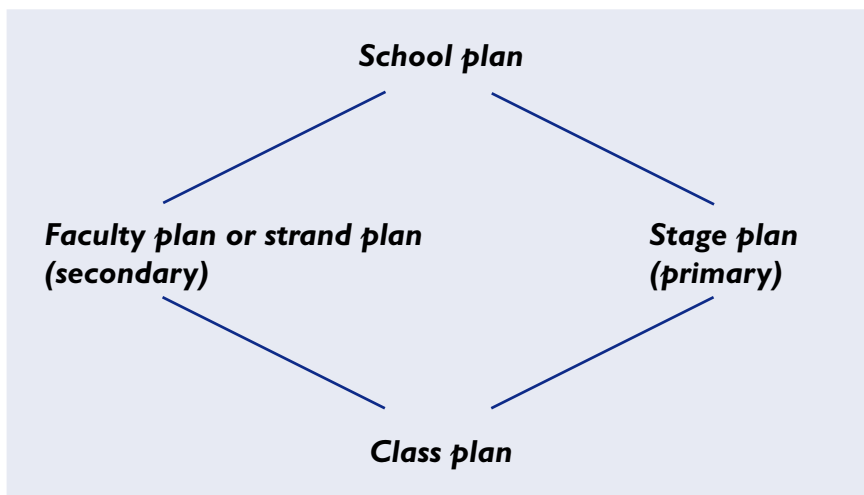
Whole-school approach

The content and strategies described in the previous chapter need to be implemented within a planned, whole-school approach.

Guided by the school's literacy support team, and as part of its management plan, each school has the responsibility of developing a whole-school plan for the teaching of literacy, which includes the teaching of talking and listening.

This plan will include a statement of the school's priorities based on students' demonstrated achievements in talking and listening in all subject areas. This statement should be developed in consultation with parents, staff members and students, where appropriate.

To achieve a cohesive, whole-school approach to the teaching of talking and listening a school plan should be reflected in stage or faculty plans or programs. Coordinated planning of the teaching and assessment of talking and listening is necessary in order to ensure that all students speak and listen effectively to demonstrate the achievement of syllabus outcomes in all subjects.



(a) Resources

How will resources be allocated to address school priorities?

How might parents and the community contribute to whole school planning in order to support the school's talking and listening program?

How can the expertise of various personnel such as ESL teachers, STLDs, teacher librarians and Aboriginal Education Assistants be used strategically?

What opportunities will there be for the continuing professional development in the various aspects of talking and listening?

What information will be provided for parents about the teaching of talking and listening?

(b) Teachers' knowledge and understandings

How do teachers' own beliefs, experiences or assumptions with talking and listening tasks inform their practice in using talking and listening in the classroom.

What is the role of talking and listening in the various subjects?

How will teachers make explicit links with syllabus documents in each subject area?

How will the school ensure that teaching provides a balance between developing knowledge about talking and listening and the skills of talking and listening?

How are talking and listening, writing, reading and viewing related to each other?

How will students with diverse needs be catered for?

(c) Students' achievements

How will achievements in talking and listening be monitored and assessed?

How will information about the progress of individual students be collected, organised and made available to those who require this information?

What kinds of evaluation strategies will be developed?

What achievements are students demonstrating in talking and listening?

Do students demonstrate the achievements consistently in all subject areas?

What are the effects of learning difficulties?

Stage or faculty planning

To support a cohesive, whole school approach to the teaching of talking and listening, a stage plan should consider the following elements:

- How can all syllabus outcomes be taught effectively over the stage?
- How can teaching within a stage support students and build on what they know and can do over the two years?
- What talking and listening are required of the students to enable them to achieve syllabus outcomes in this stage? What teaching of talking and listening is therefore required?
- How can explicit teaching of talking and listening in each subject within a stage prepare students to engage in learning at the next stage of schooling?

A stage plan is necessary to ensure that all outcomes are taught in a stage. Stage planning might best be achieved in faculty groups in high schools.

Class planning

Class plans are designed to meet the specific learning needs of all students in class.

Teachers will need to develop a flexible, responsive plan far enough ahead to know where to go and one that is linked to a cohesive, whole-school approach.

A class plan should take into account the following elements:

- the needs of groups or individuals
- authentic purposes for talking and listening
- the explicit and systematic teaching of processes that lead to achievement of syllabus outcomes
- the modelled, guided and independent teaching strategies that will be used
- strategies for monitoring and assessment
- how increased student knowledge of talking and listening will inform class planning
- specific support needs within the class.

Meeting the needs of diverse learners

There should be a whole-school approach to meeting the needs of different learners. Teachers should maintain high expectations of all students and ensure that talking and listening is equally visible and valued across the full range of purposes, contexts and subject areas.

Students are entitled to become effective speakers and listeners of English. Each student has individual needs. All students bring skills, understanding and knowledge for negotiating their world and many of these experiences have talking and listening as a focus. We need to acknowledge what students can already do through talk and at the same time be aware of the different talking and listening demands of home and school.

It is particularly important to consider differences in students' cultural practices, learning styles, forms and varieties of home language and individual personalities. Using talking and listening as a tool for learning is of particular importance for diverse learners. Students' home languages play a major role in literacy development particularly for Aboriginal students, students from language backgrounds other than English and students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Gender issues may also impact on students' participation in talking and listening activities. The interplay of gender issues with Aboriginality, culture or race and socio-economic status might also affect interactions.

Extending talented speakers and listeners

Students with diverse needs include those who are gifted and talented.

Talented speakers might benefit from enrichment activities in talking and listening. This may include giving students the opportunity to experience a greater range of texts not only in talking and listening but also in reading, writing and viewing. Greater opportunities for students to experience and to use their talking and listening skills can be provided inside and outside the school.

Students may use their skills with a wider audience, in a student council, or as class representative. Students may be encouraged to enter district debating teams, and public speaking competitions.

Supporting students experiencing difficulties

It is particularly important to identify and support, as early as possible, students experiencing difficulties with talking and listening at each stage of schooling. It is important to keep extending the students' knowledge base and experience beyond the familiar and everyday, while still addressing the areas requiring further support.

Some students who need additional support in literacy have delayed language development. Some have significant language difficulties or disorders that impact on learning in talking, listening, reading and writing. It is important to identify what students experiencing difficulties know and can do in order to implement intervention strategies to address their specific needs. Explicit teaching of knowledge, skills and understanding will support these students in achieving syllabus objectives and outcomes.

Early intervention, based on systematic needs analysis and assessment within a supportive learning environment, is the key to improving achievements in talking and listening. The demands of the curriculum as students get older may mean that some students will be identified with language-related difficulties that will need intervention later in schooling.

Students with disabilities who experience significant difficulties in communicating may require alternative communication modes such as signing or adaptive technology to enable them to access the curriculum.

Students who study by distance education

Some students are unable to attend schools for a variety of reasons and many study from Kindergarten to Year 12 through distance education. Distance education students are a diverse group that includes the full range of learning abilities. The provision of

opportunities for verbal interaction with a range of audiences is a particular challenge for distance education teachers, and student supervisors for K to 6 students.

To allow distance education students the opportunity to practise and refine their talking and listening skills, a range of media may be used: audio tapes, telephone interaction and teleconferencing, satellite television, radio, videos, video conferencing, CD-ROM audio material and online audio material. Using these media will enable teachers to model and then students to practise their talking and listening skills.

Distance education teachers will also need to provide extended contexts for talking and listening. Strategies may include exchange of spoken texts with other students to take advantage of authentic, curriculum-based opportunities for talking and listening. Opportunities will need to be provided for students to modify their language for different audiences.

Developing links between home and school

Some students are more likely than others to find school a familiar and reassuring environment, which confirms their worldview and their orientation to language. For those students, talking and listening become an extension of the language practices they experience at home.

Students whose home language does not closely match with the values and practices of the school will need a bridge to link the home and school context. Making these links enriches the talking and listening experiences for all students because recognising different social and cultural backgrounds makes it possible to introduce into the classroom social contexts that might not traditionally have been part of school learning.

It is important that the school and parents work together to reach common understandings about the outcomes of the talking and listening program. It is important that parents are encouraged to contribute to their children's talking and listening development at school and to support the school's talking and listening program.

Home language

Many students come from homes that combine more than one language or dialect. Every home language, whether Aboriginal English, Standard English or a language other than English, represents a valuable cultural heritage and a teaching resource to extend and build upon. It is important to recognise and consider cultural differences among students when planning talking and listening activities. Equally important is the exposure of all students to diversity and to be aware that there are many ways of making meaning through talk.

Teachers should look for opportunities where students can use their home language. It is important to recognise the value of home language as a means of improving students' acquisition of concepts and content. Students from different language backgrounds need to take part in programs that make explicit the literacy demands of the classroom and use talking and listening activities to create a bridge to writing and reading.

Practices that value students' linguistic and cultural resources can have a powerful effect on students. Making the links in an atmosphere of mutual respect between the home and school, plays an important part in the development of students talking and listening knowledge, skills and abilities.

Explicit teaching of how to construct oral texts is important for all students. Some students from diverse learner groups may need additional support to comprehend and participate in talking and listening in classrooms. Talking and listening activities need to be critically reviewed to ensure they are appropriately supporting students in achieving syllabus outcomes.

Chapter five

Assessing students' talking and listening achievements

The main purpose of assessing is to enhance teaching and learning. Assessment of students' achievements in speaking and listening needs to be based on evidence from a variety of sources.

Assessment of talking and listening should be done in whole class settings, group interactions and individual presentations for a range of purposes, on a variety of topics across the curriculum.

Assessment should be focused, systematic and curriculum-based. Evidence of students' achievements in talking and listening can be collected as they engage in modelled, guided and independent teaching tasks.

Teachers should use criterion-referenced assessment, developed with the students, to assess talking and listening. The process of developing criteria also support students in peer-assessment and self-assessment.

Assessment tasks should be developed and used at various points in a unit of work, and as a summative assessment tool. During modelled talking and listening, teachers can observe students in class discussions, during specific lessons observing how often they interact, and respond to questions and discussion points. In guided and independent talking and listening teachers can capture students' oral texts in real time where practicable, as this conveys body language, response to audience, facial expressions, use of extra material such as charts and objects. Teachers can also consider using video or audio equipment.

Assessment is better if it is based on contributions from a variety of sources that cover the range of syllabus requirements. This coverage needs to provide information about students' knowledge, skills and understandings. These will more clearly link students' demonstrated achievements to the achievements of syllabus outcomes.

There are a range of contexts that provide teaching and learning and assessment opportunities for talking and listening, such as:

- small groups (problem solving)
- whole class (class discussion)
- communicative activities (barrier activities)
- individual talk (topic presentation)
- role play (dramatisation of scene from a text)
- special presentations (speaking at assembly)
- visiting speakers (asking questions and clarifying information)
- dictation (taking notes)
- using radio broadcasts (listening for specific information)
- carry out an activity from a set of instructions.

Evidence should be gathered in a variety of ways, such as:

- conferences
- interviews
- discussions
- direct questioning
- listening
- self-assessment and peer assessment
- observation.

Recording techniques need to be easy to manage and time efficient. Recording techniques include:

- anecdotal records
- checklists
- questionnaires
- inventories
- audio and video.

What to assess

Students should be assessed on their skills of interpreting and responding to texts, their ability to recognise a variety of spoken texts and use language for a variety of purposes on a range of topics. Attention should be given to students' communication skills in informal and formal classroom activities. This information contributes to planning for effective learning for all students.

When assessing talking and listening, it is important to be clear about what is being assessed. Teachers should be aware that instant success is rare: expertise takes practice. Samples of students' achievement in speaking and listening should be selected over time and provide evidence of progress. To ensure this evidence is useful in teaching, students' speaking and listening should be assessed against criteria.

Criteria should be developed for focusing on the different types of talking and listening taking place. Criteria for assessment must be shared with students when assessment tasks are set. Teachers need to make sure students are clear about what is required of the set task, how achievement will be assessed and how this links to achievement of syllabus outcomes. Syllabuses and the *ESL Scales* should be used in assessing ESL students.

All the different aspects of talking and listening should be assessed, from spontaneous language to rehearsed presentations. The criteria that teachers use should vary according to the task, and should emphasise different aspects. It is important to consider how the relationships between the students and observation by teachers or peers may affect students' performance and behaviour.

When assessing the spoken language of students with disabilities it is important that they have the opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do. It may be necessary to implement special provisions or make appropriate adjustments in assessment situation to ensure this occurs.

Consistency in teachers' judgements

Teachers need to develop criteria and discuss their understandings of how a Stage syllabus outcome will be achieved and what is expected of students at each Stage. Teachers need to ask questions like:

- What are the expectations?
- Will certain tasks disadvantage a student or group of students?
- What skills do I expect students to demonstrate?
- What outcomes do these tasks assess?
- What criteria will be used to assess students' achievements?

How does talk improve?

Students' talk will improve with practice, appropriate and expanding models and modelling, and with students becoming more aware of their audience. As they become more confident in their subject matter, their delivery and their ability to read their audience, students and teachers can expect that speakers and listeners will take themselves more seriously and become more aware of their roles and behaviour in group situations. Active and attentive listening cannot be separated from talking in that the dynamism of interaction makes demands on language users that are difficult to accurately predict.

Spoken texts will:

- go into more relevant detail with appropriate examples
- convey a speaker's confidence
- be responsive to a wider audience
- be more organised and coherent
- respond appropriately to misunderstanding
- cope with contradiction and disagreement
- become more complex
- flow between group members.