

Organising for instruction

Teaching spelling in literacy sessions

A significant proportion of teaching time will be allocated to the explicit and systematic teaching of literacy. This could be through the subject English or through the teaching of the literacy skills necessary to gain access to the content of other key learning areas.

The following chart shows the three stands of literacy as reflected in the English K-6 Syllabus (Board of Studies, 1998) and details the teaching strategies within each strand.

Components of a literacy session

Talking and listening	Reading	Writing
modelling and guiding	modelled	modelled
	guided	guided
	modelled spelling focus	guided spelling
applying	independent	independent

Not all of these strands would be treated in every literacy session, although it is important that over time there would be a balance of talking and listening, reading and writing. Particular teaching strategies would be used and emphasised at particular times depending upon the developmental needs of students.

Effective spelling programs use a balance of modelled, guided and independent teaching strategies in the context of integrated talking, listening, reading and writing episodes to support and extend students as they learn to spell.

Focus on literacy: spelling, page 20

A spelling focus could be planned in the context of modelled reading, and modelled and guided writing.

Components of a literacy session

Teacher

Talking and listening	Modelling and guiding	The teacher models and guides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ways to ask questions, make statements and give commands how to prepare and present talks and speeches the effective use of spoken language.
	Applying	The teacher plans and provides opportunities for students to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> create and interpret spoken texts for a variety of purposes and in a variety of situations listen and respond to the comments of others.
Reading	Modelled	The teacher demonstrates reading strategies by modelling aspects of the reading process. These include effective oral reading, using and integrating the four sources of information, text structure and grammatical features and the relationship between text and context.
	(modelled spelling focus)	The teacher explains and demonstrates how to use visual, phonological, morphemic and etymological knowledge.
	Guided	The teacher: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> plans and provides explicit instruction about effective reading strategies tailored to the needs of the students guides and encourages students to respond critically to text and to learn about how meaning is constructed in texts monitors and assesses students' progress and the strategies that they use.
	Independent	The teacher provides opportunities for students to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> revise texts read during guided reading read other materials chosen independently read and reflect, for the pleasure of reading reflect on and discuss their reading with others.
Writing	Modelled	The teacher models the variety of processes involved in constructing texts. These include increasing knowledge of the topic, the purpose of the text, text structure, grammatical features, punctuation and spelling.
	Guided	The teacher assists students to construct a text by implementing writing strategies demonstrated in modelled writing. The structure and development of the text are jointly negotiated by teacher and students.
	Guided spelling	The teacher works with one student or a small group of students who have been grouped according to common spelling needs, to explicitly teach spelling knowledge and strategies that have been carefully matched and sequenced to meet the group's specific needs.
	Independent	The teacher provides opportunities for students to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> take responsibility for their own writing select writing processes for the construction of texts appropriate to the purpose and audience develop confidence in researching information and constructing and publishing their own texts.

Students

Talking and listening	Modelling and guiding	<p>The students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use spoken language to present information • participate in structured talking and listening situations • respond to a variety of spoken texts • listen critically for enjoyment and information.
	Applying	<p>The students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use and respond to spoken language for a range of purposes and situations • articulate ideas in a manner that is easily understood • use vocabulary that reflects knowledge of specific topics • use listening skills to answer and ask appropriate questions.
Reading	Modelled	<p>The students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • critically listen to a range of literary and factual texts • read aloud with a proficient reader • focus on using and integrating reading strategies, such as reading on or referring back to a previously read section
	(modelled spelling focus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use and integrate visual, phonological, morphemic and etymological knowledge • focus on using effective spelling strategies.
	Guided	<p>The students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work in small groups to read texts matched to their instructional level • engage in texts that allow them to use a wider range of reading strategies • discuss prior knowledge of the topic, structure and grammatical features of the text.
	Independent	<p>The students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read, uninterrupted, for a sustained period • engage with a text, including computer texts, at an independent level, on a daily basis • borrow from a library • share and discuss interpretations of texts read • respond to a range of texts.
Writing	Modelled	<p>The students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop and refine their understandings of the structure and features of written texts • understand the importance of correct spelling, punctuation and grammar.
	Guided	<p>The students are actively involved in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building field knowledge of the topic • discussing the purpose of the text • choosing appropriate text structure and language features • employing a range of spelling strategies and editing text.
	Guided spelling	<p>The students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • actively participate to practise, self-correct and engage in spelling knowledge and strategies to learn correct spelling.
	Independent	<p>The students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use skills and display understandings learnt during modelled and guided writing • independently research information, and construct, edit and publish their own texts appropriate to purpose and audience.

Planning overview of Year 2 literacy session: beginning of a unit

		Session 1	Session 2
		Talking and listening	Modelled and guided
Applying	"What do we need to find out about dinosaurs?" Students form questions orally; teacher writes up two charts: "What we know." "What we need to find out."		
Reading	Modelled		Introduce big book. <i>What would we expect to find out from this book?</i> <i>Who might this book be written for?</i> Highlight and explain the purpose of text features: title, contents, index, pictures.
	(modelled spelling focus)		Using topic list, focus on words which can be learnt using phonological knowledge, e.g. <i>neck, long, teeth, flesh, meat, plant, eater, eggs, reptile, roamed, ate, agile, legs.</i>
	Guided	Group A Group works with teacher. Lesson focusses on particular aspect of reading that the group needs to develop e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> interpreting simple diagrams locating and talking about the use of the contents page locating particular information. 	Group B
	Independent	Group D Follow-up from guided reading: Group B Independent reading Group C Reading activity: ordering sentences cut up from an information report on previous topic on pets.	Group A Follow-up from guided reading and independent reading Group C Independent reading Group D Reading activity: ordering sentences cut up from an information report on previous topic on pets.
Writing	Modelled	Start a topic list of "Dinosaur words" for reference during the unit. Explain the types of words which could be added to the list throughout the unit.	
	Guided	With class, sort words from topic list into those which name (nouns) and those which describe (adjectives).	
	(guided spelling)		With group: Identify consonant blends from modelled spelling focus, e.g. <i>neck, teeth, flesh, plant, spikes, claws.</i> Develop lists of words e.g. words ending in <i>-ck</i> or with <i>-th</i> .
	Independent		Students label illustrations of dinosaurs using topic words.

	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5
Talking and listening	Reading to class from another text on dinosaurs. Students listen for additional facts.		
	Recalling facts from reading. Facts listed by teacher.		
Reading		Reread big book. Students identify words that describe. Add to topic word list.	Reread from big book. Look at how headings are presented to provide additional information for the reader, e.g. to find key information and locate needed information
		Develop morphemic understandings of prefixes and suffixes in describing words, e.g. <i>toothless, powerful</i> . Build other examples, e.g. <i>useless, powerless, plentiful, wonderful</i>	Add information to topic list from texts used. Focus on words which could be learnt using visual knowledge e.g. <i>fierce, tough, fast extinct, vicious, tiny, gigantic</i> . Talk about the function of these words i.e. to describe
	Group C Group works with teacher. Lesson focusses on particular aspect of reading that the group needs to develop e.g.	Group A	Group D
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> interpreting sample diagrams locating and talking about the use of the contents page locating particular information. 		
	Group B - Follow-up from guided reading (with STLD) Group A - Independent reading Group D - Reading activity.	Group C Follow-up from guided reading Group D Independent reading Group B Reading activity: ordering sentences cut up from an information report on previous topic on pets.	Group A Follow-up from guided reading and independent reading Group B Independent reading Group C Reading activity
Writing	Jointly construct descriptive sentences using information gathered from texts, e.g. Stegosaurus was a huge, meat-eating dinosaur with a heavy, bony armour. Highlight the use of nouns and adjectives.	Jointly construct descriptive sentences using information gathered from texts, e.g. Stegosaurus was a huge, meat-eating dinosaur with a heavy, bony armour. Highlight the use of nouns and adjectives.	Prepare for joint construction of information report on dinosaurs. Revise structure of reports. Students select and group words from topic list into what they look like, where they lived, what they ate, how they reproduced.
	Students complete cloze activity on sentences describing dinosaurs, inserting appropriate adjectives which could include those used in spelling activities.		Students write own sentences about dinosaurs using descriptive words. (STLD works with group)

	Session 6	Session 7	Session 8
Talking and listening	Model the use of a picture or drawing to describe the features of a dinosaur.	Discuss and revise points from modelled session yesterday.	
	Teacher works with Group D to develop individual talks about a dinosaur using a picture as a prop. Group A (with STLD): Reading activity: ordering deconstructed information report on previous topic on pets. Gps B/C: independent activities	Students from Group D give brief talk using dinosaur picture as prop. Class evaluates, using points discussed.	Students from Group D give brief talk using dinosaur picture as prop. Class evaluates, using points discussed.
Reading	Revisit big book using the list of what we needed to find out. <i>Did we find the information we needed?</i> <i>What other information do we need?</i> <i>Where might we locate it?</i>		
		Model proofreading process using one student's sentences. Discuss how to mark text and what to look for i.e. spelling of nouns and adjectives, and correct punctuation.	
		Group A Group B Group works with teacher. Lesson focusses on particular aspect of reading that the group needs to develop e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> interpreting simple diagrams locating and talking about the use of the contents page locating particular information. 	
		Group D Follow-up from guided reading Group B Independent reading Group C Reading activity	Group A Follow-up from guided reading and independent reading Group C Independent reading Group D Reading activity
Writing	Model the construction of classification for information report on dinosaurs.		
	Conference with students on sentences written in previous sessions. Check for appropriate use of descriptive words.	Conference with students on sentences written in previous sessions. Check for appropriate use of descriptive words.	Jointly construct remainder of information report on dinosaurs.
	Address individual spelling issues in student conferences.	Address individual spelling issues in student conferences.	
	Students add to sentences about dinosaurs using descriptive words.		Students work in pairs to proof-read sentences on dinosaurs, looking for errors in spelling of nouns and adjectives, and correct punctuation.

Planning overview for a literacy session

		Session	
Talking and listening	Modelled and guided		
	Applying		
Reading	Modelled		
	(modelled spelling focus)		
	Guided		
	Independent		
Writing	Modelled		
	Guided		
	(guided spelling)		
	Independent		

	Session	Session	Session
Talking and listening			
Reading			
Writing			

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