This guide provides suggestions for Accelerated Literacy teachers working with students aged three to seven years. It provides extra information about teaching Accelerated Literacy to students in the early years. Each teaching strategy is discussed separately and in three parts (Preschool, Transition and Years 1 and 2) to reflect the progress made by students in the four years between beginning school education (including preschool) and acquiring increasingly competent literacy skills.

Guides

- The guides have been written for teachers who have attended professional development in teaching Accelerated Literacy. The notes presume some understanding about how to teach the program.
- For a detailed explanation of how to implement the teaching sequence, please refer to the teachers' handouts from the professional development sessions. Additionally, you could refer to [http://www.nalp.edu.au](http://www.nalp.edu.au)

The National Accelerated Literacy Program is jointly funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, and the Northern Territory Government through the Department of Education and Training, and supported by Charles Darwin University.
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using this guide</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The National Accelerated Literacy Program (NALP)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundamental principles</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accelerated Literacy in early childhood</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low order literate orientation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High order literate orientation</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformations</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint reconstructed writing</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction
These notes provide suggestions for Accelerated Literacy teachers working with students aged three to seven years.

Year levels mentioned throughout this text refer to Northern Territory schools. The following table shows student age and the names of the year levels in other states and territories. Tasmanian school years are omitted, as the National Accelerated Literacy Program is not being implemented in that state at the time of publication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Name of school year</th>
<th>State or Territory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3–4</td>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>NT, Qld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CPC</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>WA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turning 5</td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>NT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre Primary</td>
<td>WA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Qld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prep</td>
<td>Vic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>ACT, NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–7</td>
<td>Year 1 and 2</td>
<td>NT, SA, WA, Vic, ACT, NSW, Qld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 2 and 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The notes are intended to supplement, not replace, the other Accelerated Literacy teaching resources, including teaching notes on specific books. They provide extra information about teaching Accelerated Literacy to students in the early years. Each teaching strategy is discussed separately and in three parts (Preschool, Transition and Years 1 and 2) to reflect the progress made by students in the four years between beginning school education (including preschool) and acquiring increasingly competent literacy skills.
Using this guide
The information in this booklet can be used for planning your lessons by locating the relevant advice using the table below which explains the structure of this book.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching strategy in the Accelerated Literacy cycle</th>
<th>Task/student level</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low order literate orientation</td>
<td>Preparation checklist</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Years 1 and 2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resources for all year levels</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High order literate orientation</td>
<td>Preparation checklist</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Years 1 and 2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformations</td>
<td>Preparation checklist</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Years 1 and 2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>Preparation checklist</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Years 1 and 2</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint reconstructed writing</td>
<td>Preparation checklist</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Years 1 and 2</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Preparation checklist</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Years 1 and 2</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The National Accelerated Literacy Program (NALP)
Teaching the sequence

The National Accelerated Literacy Program consists of a cycle of interrelated activities based on a sequence beginning with literate orientation and focused on one selected text. The text may vary from a short, illustrated story written for early childhood students to several carefully selected passages from a longer book intended for older students.

Teachers spend, on average, an hour and a half a day teaching Accelerated Literacy. The total number of weeks spent on a text across a sequence of consecutive lessons will vary according to the age of the students and the complexity of the text.

Low and high order literate orientation are carried out before reading. The other strategies use the students’ fluent reading of and common knowledge about a text as teaching resources for extending their literacy competence. Further information on the teaching sequence can be found at http://www.nalp.edu.au.
Fundamental principles

The procedures and activities described in this document draw on the following fundamental principles from the Accelerated Literacy program.

- Students in their first years of formal schooling have to learn a complex range of skills to become literate.
- Acquiring these skills places young students under considerable stress as they learn to decode, interpret meaning, write, spell, speak and listen in ways that are unique to school and may be quite different from their previous experience of life and culture.
- The Accelerated Literacy teaching sequence is designed to reduce this stress as it provides a supportive routine, highly explicit teaching and positive and enjoyable learning based on interesting and engaging children’s books.
- As demonstrated by the Accelerated Literacy reading model, the program includes explicit teaching of phonics as well as providing for the transition to automatic decoding students have to undergo to become competent readers.
- All students need practice to become good at a new skill. Successful Accelerated Literacy teachers use every possible opportunity during a school day to integrate and practise early literacy skills.
Accelerated Literacy in early childhood
Low order literate orientation

This strategy is crucial as a starting point for all lessons. In the low order literate orientation strategy teachers explain what the lesson is about and model the literate approach they will take to the lesson.

Preparation checklist

- Big book (preferably laminated) or overhead projector transparencies of the book so that all students in a class can see the text and its illustrations.
- Goals for the sequence of lessons about the study text, including:
  - goals for each individual lesson
  - goals that include concepts about print.

Purpose

Low order literate orientation provides a context for negotiating a literate discussion of the meaning of the story and the effect it has on readers. In low order literate orientation sessions, teachers model how they interpret illustrations and stories. Students are encouraged to participate in the discussion from the first lesson.

Preschool

Special considerations

Students aged three and four years and attending preschool are energetic, curious and bring with them considerable knowledge about their own culture based on all the interactions they have had with members of their families. If interactions around books in the company of adults have not been part of their culture, then preschool is particularly important as a context for learning about why people read books, what fun they are, what we learn from them, how they work, and so on.

We do not expect preschool students to be able to read independently but we do expect them to learn to talk about stories and to interpret, discuss and enjoy them. Low order literate orientation on a wide selection of illustrated children’s books is particularly powerful for this age group. Play with peers and teacher-directed play is important and appropriate for this age group, as is learning about books and enjoying their stories in a social context.
Choice of book/time spent on book

Choose books that allow students to engage with and enjoy language. The time the teacher and students spend with books must be perceived to be fun as well as challenging and highly desirable. Students should see that the time they spend talking about books is important learning and that the teacher enjoys it and values their contributions.

All the books on the Accelerated Literacy book list for the years Transition to Year 2 are suitable for reading to preschool students. Books that have been read to students in the preschool years can still be taught again in Transition, Year 1 and Year 2. New texts for intensive study can be chosen every week or two.

As well as using some books for intensive study, read other books for fun, for information, as examples of a particular type of book or for their links to the book that is part of the more intensive study. Books that are not on the Accelerated Literacy book list that are also suitable for Preschool age students are those that contain literate language, rhyme etc.

Teaching points

- An Accelerated Literacy lesson with preschool students may take 15–30 minutes on average. The teacher negotiates a situation that engages students in an age-appropriate discussion as literate people. It will be similar to the conversation that a parent has with children when reading to them at home, with the teacher aiming to stimulate thought about characters’ thoughts, feelings and motivations as well as to teach how to make inferences from the wording and illustrations of a story. The discussion can include noticing features of the illustrations but will go beyond simply naming objects and characters to a deeper, cultural discussion about why characters act the way they do.

- As you discuss the illustrations, try not to be longwinded. If the students have a short attention span, come back to the book several times during the day. Continue any discussion about the illustrations and story for as long as possible but use a variety of related activities to keep the focus on literacy learning.

- When you first introduce the text, invite your Indigenous teaching assistant to tell the story in his/her first language. Ensure that, after this, the lessons are in English. Encourage your teaching assistant to watch this procedure and, once she/he is confident, invite her/him to plan with you then teach a part of the session.

- Encourage students to talk about the story. Do not correct their language, though; accept their answer and show that you understood the answer through your reconceptualisation of it.
• Model basic concepts about print as you read and discuss the story.
• Read the story each day to show that the words of each story stay the same.
• Point to the words as you read them and explain how you know where to start reading (say ‘We always start to read the words from here,’ while pointing to the word on the top left-hand side of the left page). These conventions can be pointed out in the course of enjoying the story.
• Ask students to help you find where to read, what direction to read, help you find the words and so on.
• Don’t do all these things at once but do them regularly.

For further information see www.nalp.edu.au

Teaching themes
There can be a range of books that teachers read and reread and others that are the central focus of teaching themes. Tailor play activities to suit texts (eg for Fancy That! , make chicken eggs out of playdough or make a big shed and act out the story so that a ‘world’ is created that supports the literate text that you study). This ‘world’ not only supports the text, but is also a powerful force in developing oral language. Children can engage in ‘natural language’ learning because they have had the English resources needed to engage in discourses around a text, modelled through low order literate orientation.

Activities
• Dramatic activities: play-acting, clothes to dress up, puppets, plastic figures and other props can all be used to encourage students to ‘play out’ the story with peers and the teacher or helpers or by themselves.
• Art activities: murals, craft activities, painting, drawing can all be used to revisit and discuss the story, its events and their order.
• Play boxes – setting up concrete play materials (eg hungry caterpillar, plastic food, puppet).
• Puppet play-act of books. (Folkmans are a great supplier: see page 18 for address.)
• Set up an attractive reading corner where children’s favourite books are always available.
• Draw large pictures of characters and attach speech bubbles or labels. Fill in speech bubbles to show what characters may be thinking.
• Provide children with the opportunity to respond to stories through drawing, drama or puppets.
• Provide opportunities for children to arrange pictures from a story in sequence, encouraging them to justify the logic of their sequence.
Transition

Special considerations

Transition is the year that children start formal schooling in Australia. In mainstream education, parents have the strong expectation that their children will learn to read when they start school and we also expect these mainstream outcomes for Accelerated Literacy students. Low order literate orientation for Transition students will, therefore, focus on goals for lessons based on the skills they need to control in order to learn to read.

Another important consideration for Transition-age students is related to cognitive overload. Students not only have to know about very basic concepts about print, they also have to learn to recognise and write letters, words and sentences, processes that have the potential to be stressful for young students. Stress makes learning more difficult and so, for these students, each stage of the teaching sequence is carefully planned around teaching literacy skills in the context of social interaction around a chosen book.

Developing the literate mindset to the text (that will support students with the meaning of the text and thus make it more predictable) is an important goal for low order literate orientation. The most powerful goal for low order literate orientation is to teach students to use every cue to meaning available in the illustrations of the study text.
Choice of book/time spent on book

In Transition, more time may be spent on the intensive study of one book than in Preschool because of the time you will spend on other parts of the teaching sequence. As detailed in the notes that accompany the Accelerated Literacy booklist, there are two main types of books that may be the focus of a teaching cycle in Transition.

- First, some books will be interesting, engaging stories for young children with rich illustrations and language. *The Bear’s Lunch* by Pamela Allen is one such book. These books are important to teaching Accelerated Literacy because the language is written to be fun for young children. There are often parts of the story that repeat so that children can ‘join in’. This language is highly predictable but also literate. These books, however, are often too complex for beginning readers to read independently and only the repeating parts of these books or short segments of the story are used in the teaching cycle.

- Second, other books are written specifically for students who are just learning to read. ‘The Wishing Well’ and other stories in *Mouse Tales* by Arnold Lobel are examples. The wording of these stories is short, predictable and linguistically simple to encourage young readers to practise their emerging skills. The illustrations of the book contain much of the complexity and nuances of meaning expressed in the wording of text for older students.

Books of both types should be taught to Transition students. More complex texts are important to teach students how ‘book language’ and literate discussion work. Linguistically simple, shorter books need to be taught to give students opportunities to read whole books and practise their decoding skills.

Time spent on one book could vary from two weeks to four weeks, depending on teaching goals and the students’ interest and enjoyment. Where one book is studied over an extended period of time, read many other books to the class as part of an everyday routine over the same period. Sharing of these stories is fun, it draws links between similar stories, and increases students’ knowledge of how the language of stories works.
Low order literate orientation

Teaching points

- Discussion about the story, and about how its illustrations and wording relate to the characters’ motivations and feelings and the plot, is a crucial element of low order literate orientation for Transition.
- The understandings built up through this discussion support students to use prediction skills that make the complex task of analysing words likely to be more successful.
- Before the lesson, decide the ‘angle’ you are going to use to discuss the story. Early in the teaching sequence you will discuss all the illustrations and outline the whole story but quickly move to more focused discussion. For example, early sessions on ‘The Wishing Well’ would outline the whole story but there is no point in going through that same discussion every day.
- A later lesson could be about the information contained in the orientation to the story. The author only tells us that it is about a mouse and a wishing well. What is the work we have to do as readers to interpret those words in relation to the illustrations?
- Another lesson could be about the complication. The well says ‘ouch!’ when the mouse throws her first penny into it and makes her first wish. What does the word ouch imply about the well and the likelihood of having her wish granted, as well as the story’s relationship to other stories of this type? There is a vast resource of cultural knowledge that experienced readers access when they read. This is also our resource for teaching interesting and powerful lessons.
- During the lesson there will be specific teaching points that relate to the story and teaching points that relate to the reading process.
- Use every opportunity to discuss how a reader thinks (eg how a reader uses illustrations to predict meaning, how the meaning helps a reader work out the words of the text, and how the structure of the story helps a reader know what to expect).

Teaching themes/ Supporting activities

As for Preschool, with the understanding that art activities related to the text would be carried out in art lessons, not in the literacy lesson.
Years 1 and 2

Special considerations

These students will still be developing and consolidating literacy skills. They need careful, consistent monitoring and support to become automatic decoders and competent spellers and writers. We want them to be able to understand reading texts and interpret them as critical readers.

In low order literate orientation, these young readers still need meaning prediction support. Their books may have fewer illustrations and more text. The illustrations may be artistic interpretations of the text and make greater demands on the reader, who may expect them to be literal interpretations of the text. Low order literate orientation is important for these readers, as they have to cope with more complex and linguistically demanding texts with fewer illustrations.

Choice of book/time spent on book

Books to be studied in Year 1 and 2 may be books that were previously read to preschool children and had low order literate orientation carried out on them at that time. Students then have some familiarity with the books that can be a resource for teaching them to read that book independently. Examples of books that may have been read at Preschool level are The Bear’s Lunch by Pamela Allen and The Doorbell Rang by Pat Hutchins.

Books with predictable vocabulary that builds on earlier text are the Arnold Lobel books such as Mouse Soup and the ‘Frog and Toad’ series. These books are highly supportive of readers in Year 1 and 2, particularly when the Mouse Tales have been used in Transition.

The ‘Happy Families’ series of books are also highly supportive reading for students early in Year 2. They are fun and well-illustrated, but also have longer text pertinent for developing reading skills appropriate for slightly more complex structures. Similarities across the series create expectations in readers that make each book easier to read.

The time spent on each book will depend on the complexity of the story and the language. It may be as short as two weeks or as long as a term, depending on these issues as well as on the individual class.
Teaching points

Again, all efforts in teaching early childhood students of this age are directed towards teaching reading skills. Effective low order literate orientation reduces mental overload for young learners and allows them to practise their developing skills.

Important knowledge for Year 1 and 2 includes an outline of the story and its structure including who the characters are, what their context is, where the complication begins, who it involves, what they do about the problems they encounter, and how the problems are resolved. The explicit use and teaching of the metalanguage of narrative writing is important here.

Plan to ask questions that challenge students to make inferences about the illustrations and wording of the story. These inferences should be drawn from previous sessions on the book.

Use preformulation when necessary to cue students in to possible answers to questions and broadcast common knowledge through reconceptualisation.

Teaching themes/activities

- Themes across the curriculum can be taught to link the story to a wider base of knowledge about the story.
- Activities based on themes can be particularly supportive for students from ESL backgrounds as they situate the story in a particular culture and provide additional understanding of unfamiliar contexts.
- Provide children with the opportunity to respond to stories through drawing, drama or puppets.
- Additional activities should support the literacy program, not replace it.
Resources (for all year levels)

Folkman Puppets, supplied by Elizabeth Richards Pty Ltd
2/34 Prime Drive
Seven Hills NSW 2147
Ph: 02 9838 0865
Fax: 02 9838 0302

Kesco Educational Pty Ltd
7 Grosvenor Place
Brookvale NSW 2100
Ph: 1300 139 974
Fax: 1300 139 954

- Rosie’s Walk magnetic story
- Who Sank the Boat? magnetic story
- Billy Goats Gruff magnetic story
- Alexander’s Outing tape and book

JUDIUS Pty Ltd
PO Box 316
Rosebery NSW 1445
Ph: (02) 9557 5144

- Little Red Hen felt set
- Billy Goats Gruff felt set
- Very Hungry Caterpillar board game
- Caterpillar/butterfly reversible puppet

Reading to the class

Following low order literate orientation, teachers read the story to the students. Read fluently and expressively. Where students ‘read along’ with the teacher do not slow down markedly and wait for them. Encourage them to keep up with you.

Teachers can point to the text as they read to show where they start to read, the direction they read and how they end one line and return to the start of the next line. However, do not slow down and point to each word at the expense of fluency and expressiveness. There are other strategies for teaching one-to-one correspondence and it is hard to maintain meaning when reading is word by word.
High order literate orientation

Preparation checklist

- Big book (preferably laminated) or overhead projector transparency that shows the text of the story. You may need to enlarge the text to make it visible to a group of children seated on the floor in front of the teacher.
- Pens to mark the text.
- Students seated so that they can see the text; possibly with students that need most support near the front.
- Prepare possible preformulations for key points in the story if necessary.

Purpose

Studying and interpreting the wording of the text is the central purpose of high order literate orientation. Where low order literate orientation provides students with an understanding of possible meanings of the story, high order literate orientation examines the actual words the author used to construct it.

Preschool

Special considerations

Because of the age of the students, high order literate orientation is incidental to Accelerated Literacy. The focus of the program is low order literate orientation and teaching a literate orientation to books for young children.

There are times, however, that preschool teachers can teach their students to attend to the words of the text and the work they do.
Teaching points

- As the students become familiar with the text, point to words that recur in the text and explain how they are recognised. ‘Look at this word. It says Rosie, can you see the $R$?’
- Where books have words that rhyme, comment on them and think of other rhyming words. (eg ‘Can anyone hear the word that rhymes with *Bottomley Potts*? *Bottomley Potts all covered with sp*…? That’s right. *Potts* and *spots* rhyme. Parts of each word sound the same.’)
- With very familiar stories practise breaking some of the words into parts. (eg ‘This story is about Rosie the Hen. Let’s see if we can find that word. See how it has three letters: *h–e–n*. We can stretch it out and break it into its letters.’)
- Relate words to students’ names with the same first letter. (eg ‘Spot starts with s. Let’s see if we can work out which names of people in our class start with s.)
- Picking out familiar words (like spot) helps students to learn about the difference between a word and a letter and is a starting point for 1:1 correspondence.
- Draw attention to the fact that, when you read, you are reading the words on the page and that they are the same each time you read or reread a story.

Transition

Special considerations

There is a gradual change from high order literate orientation being incidental to listening to, talking about and enjoying the story, to the words and reading them being the whole point of the lesson. Avoiding stress and cognitive overload is crucial as this change is incorporated into lessons.
Teaching points

- Teachers of Transition students draw students’ attention to important words in the text by ‘thinking out loud’ about how to find these words. This conversation usually starts with identifying first letters and the work they do. Persist with discussing the initial letters – their names and their sounds – even when students don’t seem to notice. Observe occasions where students start to comment on letters as an indication that they are developing an understanding of the importance of the words and letters in the text.

- Ask students to underline initial letters or commonly occurring words before phrases.

- Ask students to read and underline words by pointing to words as you read. (e.g. ‘Can you see the word that says hen? Watch my finger as I read.’)

- Ensure you have a phonic focus for your lesson as well as one to do with meaning and understanding. You can do a letter a week. (e.g. In The Very Hungry Caterpillar, you could introduce the letter m for moon, morning and Monday in Week 1. Do lots of support work around the letter, putting up wall charts with pictures of things that begin with m. Ensure you teach the children the name of the letter as well as the sound it makes. If your students are ready you could also introduce the letter c for caterpillar during the same week.)

- Provide many opportunities for students to use the language of the text in other subject areas.

- An alphabet frieze is a necessary resource in an early childhood classroom. You need to refer to this resource constantly and link it to the beginning sounds of words and the names of these sounds (letters).
  - Ensure this is at a level that students can easily see (not along the top of the blackboard).
  - Ensure eye level for students is recommended.

- As you complete each page of the text, place an enlarged copy of it up in the classroom where it is easy for students to see and read together.

- Regularly go on print walks around the classroom with your students.

- Make story maps or wall murals about the text with your students. Place sentences from the text on these.

- As you discuss the text, remember to discuss inferences implied by the wording. By keeping the discussion at a challenging level of comprehension, it is easier to keep the interest of the students in the task of high order literate orientation.

- The orientation, complication, resolution, coda and structure of narrative text can be discussed and used as a resource that students can use to predict the development of the story.
Year 1 and 2

Special considerations

During Year 1 and 2, students will develop enough competence in integrating meaning and decoding skills to start to read books at an individual level. The books they start with are usually ones that they know something about. At this stage they are still quite fragile (Marie Clay believed it took three years for students to learn all the skills they needed to read competently) and high order literate orientation provides them with the meaning support they need to develop their decoding skills. The strong sense of meaning that they gain from literate orientation reduces the mental overload often caused by decoding.

Teaching points

- As students begin to recognise high frequency words and gain control of 1:1 correspondence, ask them to underline phrases and groups of words that go together, as well as single words.
- Keep discussing the meaning of the text – not just words but the possible inferences implicit in the wording of the text.
- Continue to discuss the structure of the text, particularly as it becomes more complex in longer stories.

Activities

These activities are designed to foster attention to wording in high order literate orientation. Always ensure that students have access to the original text when playing these games. In this way the students can locate the word in the text if they are not certain of the words.

- Short cloze activity where students write or paste key words in the correct place.
- Other big books and picture books relating to the text study should be regularly read to the students (outside AL time) to further enrich and develop students’ understandings of reading as well as deepen their knowledge about the topic in the text being studied.
- Between the stages of the teaching sequence, dramatisation can assist student’s understanding of the meaning of the story and also serves to provide another opportunity for using the language of the text.
Transformations

Preparation checklist

- Transformations board and scissors easily accessible.
- Selected part of the text written on cardboard strips.
- The book or text of the book should be where it can be referred to easily.

Purpose

In an early childhood context, Transformations provides a context for:

- further work on the meaning of the story (with students knowing more about the story and its events from the preceding literate orientation activities)
- work on manipulating words in the text in a way that allows teachers and students to discuss the meaning of the text from different angles, including the way in which authors choose words for different purposes
- games that teach one-to-one correspondence of spoken and written word, word recognition, letter identification, using initial letters as a cue for identifying words and so on
- discussing grammatical conventions
- identifying and learning about punctuation.

In addition, transformations has the potential to be used to divide up whole texts into stages (such as orientation, complication, resolution) or to divide paragraphs into their constituent sentences. In these forms, transformations provides opportunities to reread the text and to order it whilst discussing this order and the meaning it makes.

Preschool

Transformations activities are not usually part of a preschool literacy routine, although words may be written on cards as a focus for teaching names, word identification of familiar objects etc.
Transition

Special considerations

Students in their first year of school have to learn the most basic concepts about print and phonics. Transformations allows teachers to take a piece of text and divide it into single words and units of punctuation that can then be manipulated and discussed.

Teaching points

- While students may not be able to recognise some words out of context, they can often use their memories to work them out from their position in a sentence. Alternatively, a teacher can read each word whilst pointing so that the student can say the word when the teacher reaches it. This routine ensures that students always identify words correctly, so building confidence.
- Provide many opportunities for students to come out and read text on a transformations board whilst pointing to the word they are reading. This activity provides information for the teacher about each student’s ability to point to the word he/she is reading as well as other concepts about print.
- Cut sentences into single words and jumble them so that students have to attend to the details of words to sort them out and rearrange them.
- Turn some words over and have students work out from the context what each word is. Check by looking at letters and also by matching with the word in the original text.
- Jumble words and play Tic-tac-toe or ‘memory’. Do not use too many words though.
- Take words with the same first letter and try to sort out which is which (eg went and walk). This activity encourages students to check past the first letter.
- Take out punctuation and ask students to come and put it back in whilst discussing how they know how to do so.
- Take content words that are likely to appear in other books and place them on alphabetically arranged lists when students can recognise them easily.
Years 1 & 2

Special considerations

Students at these levels are still making many basic skills of reading automatic. They still need opportunities to practise what they know to take it to an automatic level. Transformations provides many opportunities for using all the early reading skills.

Teaching points

- Continue to carry out games and activities as described above.
- It would be expected that students at this level will have established an understanding of concepts about print such as matching a written word with a spoken word (one-to-one correspondence), knowing the difference between a letter and a word and knowing what direction to expect writing to go on a page. However, where there are students in a class with little experience with literacy, learning to understand and use these concepts about print is a priority.
- Substitute words with similar meanings for the words in the actual text and discuss the difference; eg Replace *scampered* with *went*. What difference does this make to the image-building power of the wording?

Activities

- Cutting and pasting transformations sentences in order (short sentences are best so that there are not too many bits and pieces to fuss over).
- After transformations, word recognition games can be played to consolidate the learning that has occurred in the earlier parts of the teaching sequence.
  - Memory
  - Your pile, my pile
  - Matching (one teacher wrote the word on paper lolly bags and had the words from the transformations mixed up on the floor and the children had to match and put the words in the bag)
  - Flashcards
  - Bingo
  - Finding the word the teacher calls out
  - Frogs in the lily pond
  - Tic-tac-toe
Spelling

Preparation checklist

- Small whiteboards and pens, or small blackboards, chalks and dusters.
- Words written on card.
- Scissors.

Purpose

Spelling activities provide the context for learning and teaching about spelling, both for writing and decoding. Spelling activities are carried out as far as possible with words students can recognise out of context. They allow for teaching how to recognise and write letters and words correctly according to the writing conventions in each jurisdiction.

Preschool

Spelling is not usually taught formally in preschool but teachers can use word and letter cards to discuss words from stories and from words used often in their class.

Transition

Special considerations

Many, if not all, students in their first year at school enter at the pre-communicative stage of spelling, with some having no experience of writing at all.

A priority for students in Transition, then, is learning to recognise and write the letters of the alphabet. Students need to know that each letter has a constant name while its sounds depend on the word in which it is located. They also need to be able to write letters fluently and correctly. This is not to say that they should only write single letters. High frequency words such as the, was, for, a and I can also be taught, along with words with a simple structure such as three-letter words with a consonant/vowel/consonant structure (eg cat, dog, man). Other words can be added as students’ writing fluency increases over the year.

It is not necessary to find words beginning with every letter in the alphabet in texts (eg to write the, students have to learn to write t, h and e).
Teaching points

• Over time, point to words that reoccur in the text and explain how you can recognise them. (eg ‘I know this word says Rosie and one of the ways I know is because of this letter R at the front. Let’s see if we can find Rosie somewhere else.’)
• In the spelling stage of the teaching sequence, use the whiteboard to show students exactly how to form letters.
• Always make sure that you distinguish between the name of a letter and its sound.
• Use small whiteboards or small blackboards for letter-writing practice. These small boards do not need lines as students need to be able to practise the shapes of letters before seeking to confine those letters to lines.
• Use knowledge taught in spelling sessions to practise decoding unknown words with similar elements. (eg ‘We know this word says mouse. If we take the m off and put h at the beginning, I wonder what the new word will be. We know this word mouse starts with m, let’s see if we can find all the words that start with m in this story.’)
• Take every opportunity to talk about letters, words and the work they do. Write the day of the week every morning and discuss the spelling and writing as you do so. (eg ‘Can anyone work out the letter we will need to write to start Monday? Yes, an m. Remember that it has to be a capital m to start a day of the week. Now let’s see what other letters we need to write this word.’) Talking through the letters needed to write words and modelling the way writers think as they work out words is important in all year levels.
• Use every opportunity to notice similarities between words. (eg all the days of the week include the word day.)
• Provide opportunities for students to write in free activity times (eg a writing corner, times to draw and write journals). Undertaking writing activities provides an opportunity for students to practise spelling.

Activities

• Art activities – students use playdough to make the letter that makes one of the sounds they are learning. They can also write letters in sand or paint them. They can paint them in water on cement and watch them disappear or they can write them on small blackboards with wet chalk and watch them appear.
• Music activities – alphabet songs and games provide opportunities for practice with letters.
• Alphabet cards that students select from and discuss can be used for short periods during the day to provide practice.
• Alphabet charts should be put up in the classroom. Words from the text that begin with the letter you have been focusing on can be added as you progress through the book. Other words the children are familiar with can also be added to these lists. Try to position alphabet charts at eye level for students to see easily.
Years 1 & 2

Special considerations

Students at these year levels will usually be in the phonetic stage of spelling, though some will be starting to negotiate the transitional stage of spelling and others may still be in the pre-phonemic stage. In addition, students at these levels are still new to reading and need time to practise and consolidate their skills.

Teaching points

Many of the points made for Transition apply to this age group as well.

- As with Transition, teach spelling, as far as possible, from words students can read.
- For this age group extend the range of patterns discussed and learned into those larger patterns required for students to negotiate the transitional stage of spelling.
- Regularly spend time reading and rereading words from earlier lessons.
- Regularly revise and rearrange lists of words in letter pattern groups. (eg fall, tell and hill may all start in a ll list, but can be rearranged into groups of all, ell and ill words when other words such at tall and call come up. Similarly, mouse and ouch could start on the same ou list but be rearranged into mouse, house and trousers when these words occur in reading.)
- Add words that do not occur in reading to lists with similar patterns sparingly, but discuss them and what they might be often. For example, when learning to spell ouch, discuss other words that have ouch in them. See if you can ‘trick’ the class by writing crouch and couch and having them work out those words. The extra words won’t go on the class lists though, until everyone can read them. Connections between words with similar patterns have to be built over time and understood by all students.
- Students in these age groups do not always see a connection between the words they read and the words they write. Monitor students’ independent writing so that spelling sessions can keep pace with students’ spelling development.
- Model writing whenever possible and ‘think aloud’ to tackle spelling in the writing. Explain how writers make decisions about how to spell words.
- Keep a record of the spelling patterns taught so that they can be revised regularly.
Joint reconstructed writing

Preparation checklist

- Butcher’s paper
  or
- Handwriting book
  or
- Small whiteboards and pens, or small blackboards, chalks and dusters

Purpose

This activity provides a context for writing that combines spelling, reading and writing. It involves the teacher working with the class to reconstruct parts of the text they have been studying. It presents opportunities for discussing meaning, structure, spelling and the thinking that a writer might do when deciding how to word a story.

Preschool

Joint reconstructed writing would not be carried out in preschool.

Transition

Special considerations

Early in Transition, students may have little experience with writing but they will be able to write the letters and words that have been taught. This activity allows opportunities for students to participate when they can.

Teaching points

- Have the illustrations from the book displayed where the students can see them with space for writing on butcher’s paper or something similar.
- Discuss the illustrations and retell the story in relation to these illustrations. Sometimes the teacher may choose to reconstruct the whole story, other times, just part of it.
- Ask students to help you write the story the way the author did.
- Ensure that students ‘help’ wherever they can. They can help remember the wording of each part of the story and they can help the teacher write. Their contribution may just be first letters for a start or high-frequency words. As they become more competent writers, they can contribute more.
- Keep the book handy to refer back to when necessary.
Year 1 & 2

Special considerations

These students still need support with handwriting and spelling in many cases and their writing may not be entirely fluent. Joint reconstructed writing for Year 1 and 2 students may be carried out as for Transition or it may be in the form of writing lessons in a handwriting book or it could be combination of both methods.

Teaching points

These are the same as for Transition, on page 29.

Where joint reconstructed writing is carried out in writing books, writing would include a discussion of the meaning of the text, its job in the story, its spelling and the formation of letters as well as punctuation. It would never just be a mechanical writing lesson.
Writing

Preparation checklist
Materials depend on the activity at this stage of the teaching sequence. They could include:
- butcher’s paper and markers
- writing books or paper and pencils
- illustrations of story elements
- writing plans.

Purpose
Students put into practice the writing techniques they have learned from their reading text. This activity takes place with various levels of teacher support, including joint construction, writing workshops and free writing.

In general, preschool students do not participate in writing activities although they would certainly need to have writing materials available in their preschool setting.

Transition
Special considerations
These students need considerable support to carry out the physical task of writing and spelling. They often have interesting and colourful writing ideas but the challenge of writing them down means that they are often inclined to do little actual writing themselves.

Joint construction is a very powerful activity for them. They also need writing opportunities to practise their skills where they draw and write freely. Stories written for students in Transition have illustrations to do some of the work of description and so writing activities need to include illustrations.

Teaching points
- Joint construction is one of the most powerful strategies for teaching writing for this age group.
- Carefully planned joint construction allows teachers to model effective writing and spelling strategies at the same time as producing interesting extra class reading material such as class books based on the texts being studied.
Independent writing during writing workshops can be used to provide opportunities for students to produce short pieces of writing.

Free composition can also be encouraged and writing materials should always be available for students who want to practise writing.

Activities

- Students need many opportunities to experiment with writing, and to apply their knowledge of sound/symbol understandings.
- Use art lessons to produce illustrations for joint reconstructed writing and joint construction. Make sure that all students can order illustrations into a story sequence and say what they are going to write before the actual writing takes place.
- Allow students to participate in joint construction sessions by writing words or letters they know into the joint effort.

Years 1 & 2

Special considerations

These students will be able to write letters and words more fluently. As writing individual letters and high frequency words becomes automatic, students will be able to write more and spare more cognitive ‘space’ for composing an interesting or well-crafted narrative.

Teaching points

- Joint construction continues to be important for this group but their increasing skills with reading and spelling mean that they will be more able to participate in independent writing workshops.
- As these students still read and enjoy the support of illustrated story books, they still need the support of illustrations to write.

Activities

- Continue joint construction activities and allow students to write where they can.
- Joint construction of illustrations and agreed interpretation of them can be an important part of the activity.
- Provide ample opportunities for independent writing workshops where students learn about and practise writing techniques.
- Provide opportunities for students to write freely and practise narrative writing skills.
This guide provides suggestions for Accelerated Literacy teachers working with students aged three to seven years. It provides extra information about teaching Accelerated Literacy to students in the early years. Each teaching strategy is discussed separately and in three parts (Preschool, Transition and Years 1 and 2) to reflect the progress made by students in the four years between beginning school education (including preschool) and acquiring increasingly competent literacy skills.

Guides

- The guides have been written for teachers who have attended professional development in teaching Accelerated Literacy. The notes presume some understanding about how to teach the program.
- For a detailed explanation of how to implement the teaching sequence, please refer to the teachers’ handouts from the professional development sessions. Additionally, you could refer to http://www.nalp.edu.au

The National Accelerated Literacy Program is jointly funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, and the Northern Territory Government through the Department of Education and Training, and supported by Charles Darwin University.