Practitioner Guide

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.

This guide is designed to help teachers and assistant teachers work effectively together in classes where the Accelerated Literacy program is being taught.

It aims to provide practical suggestions for teaching Accelerated Literacy that make the program work better for students so that their literacy skills develop quickly and effectively.

The booklet is in two parts:

**Part 1** Planning effectively for Accelerated Literacy lessons so as to involve the assistant teacher in the planning and in classroom practice.

**Part 2** Support provided by assistant teachers including the activities and games that assistant teachers may participate in or conduct in the classroom.

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

Working with assistant teachers

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Introduction
This booklet is designed to help teachers and assistant teachers work effectively together in classes where the Accelerated Literacy program is being taught. It aims to provide practical suggestions for teaching Accelerated Literacy that make the program work better for students so that their literacy skills develop quickly and effectively.

The booklet is in two parts:

- **Part 1** Planning effectively for Accelerated Literacy lessons
- **Part 2** Support provided by assistant teachers.

This booklet offers suggestions for Accelerated Literacy teaching in literacy lessons only. It does not address the wider field of teachers and assistant teachers working together. For readers interested in this topic, there are already comprehensive booklets such as Working in Teams by Beth Graham. This booklet is available in Northern Territory schools. Other school systems have their own literature and this booklet is not intended to replace these existing useful resources.
Using this guide
This booklet will provide teachers with guidance about how to work effectively with assistant teachers. Sections of the book will also be very useful as a reference for assistant teachers. These sections describe the range of tasks that may form part of the role of the assistant teacher and classroom activities useful to them.
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.
Planning effectively
Planning effectively

Each Accelerated Literacy teaching sequence is based on a reading text, a whole book or passages from a novel. It is strongly suggested that teachers do the following.

- Advise assistant teachers of the study text before beginning a teaching sequence and give them an opportunity to read it through. Read the book with the assistant teacher where this is possible in the case of early childhood books. Where the study text is taken from a longer text or novel, provide the assistant teacher with a copy of the book far enough in advance of the study to read it right through or provide an audio book so that the assistant teacher can hear the book read right through. It is not possible for the assistant teacher to provide any effective help without knowing what the story is about, why it has been chosen for study and what the aims for the teaching sequence are.
- Explain why the text has been chosen. Relate this explanation to the points below.
  - The age of the students in the class and interest level of the text. The text will be a literate text as well as being as close as possible to age-appropriate.
  - The aims of the teaching sequence and the nature of writing techniques that will be taught.
- Seek the advice of assistant teachers when there are sensitive issues dealt with in the book. They may have suggestions for dealing with these issues. Also seek advice where there are difficult or unfamiliar concepts, as assistant teachers may have suggestions for explaining or describing these concepts. Identify, foster and value the particular skills, interests or expertise the assistant teacher may have.
- Allow adequate time for planning lessons. Time is needed for effective Accelerated Literacy training, planning, guidance and feedback. This time needs to be managed in a considerate way that suits both parties.
- When delegating tasks, teachers need to be conscious of achieving a balance between empowering colleagues and overwhelming them. The principles of scaffolding apply here just as well as for the students in the class.
Plans

This section discusses the collaborative production of Accelerated Literacy plans for teaching sequences for chosen books. Assistant teachers may want to plan with the teacher to work one-to-one with a student needing extra practise, work with a small group to free up the teacher to work intensively with a student/s or listen to individual students or the whole class read.

Ideally, planning should occur for about an hour a week. This time should be negotiated with the assistant teacher, and with the support of the school principal.

Choosing books

Teachers should discuss with the assistant teacher why a book is chosen for study. Reasons will be connected to the previous books studied and student Working Level (WL) assessments on these books. They will always be connected with the year level of a group of students and the zone of proximal development for that class.

Discuss what student outcomes will be expected. If there are teaching notes for the book chosen for study, these could be worked through with the assistant teacher to aid collaborative planning.

Talking about the books

Teachers and assistants should discuss the following points about the book.

- The plot. Who are the main characters? What happens to them and why? Does the book have illustrations? Do the illustrations help to tell the story? What do the students need to focus on in the illustrations?
- The structure of the story: the orientation, the complication and the resolution.
- The writing techniques this author used and why this class might benefit by studying them.
- The passages of the story that best illustrate these particular writing techniques and how they relate to the teacher’s goals for this class.
- The language choices in the passage that support learning to use the writing technique and how long this may take.
- The steps the teacher will go through in reaching the goals for the teaching sequence and the support students will need to achieve these goals.
The weekly plan

See the ‘Teaching notes’ booklets for examples of weekly plans. The teacher and assistant teacher can share ideas about the responsibilities each will take on in the lessons. They can also discuss what students need to know and do each day in each part of the Accelerated Literacy sequence.

The daily plan

Explain the focus or goal of each lesson briefly before it is taught. The teacher and assistant teacher can discuss what students need to know and do in each part of the Accelerated Literacy sequence each day. Teachers shouldn’t overload assistants with information but provide a clear goal to relate to so that they can base their interactions with students to fit that goal.

Reflect on lessons where time can be made to do so, even if the time is brief and carried out over a shared break. Compare observations of students and their engagement in the lesson.

Because of this collaborative planning, the assistant teacher will know which words or sentences they might have to translate into students’ first language. Possibly the assistant teacher will use the students’ first language for the first lesson to help the students understand, but then encourage and model for them using the language in the book so that they will learn to use it well.

Planning low order literate orientation

Talking about the pictures in books for young students

The teacher and assistant teacher can discuss what parts of the illustrations the students need to focus on. Together, they can decide what could be said about the illustrations to help students understand how the words and pictures go together.

Together, the teacher and assistant teacher can:

- decide which parts of the illustrations the students might not understand (time will need to be spent getting the students to look at those parts more carefully)
- identify which pictures give more information or show things that are not in the words of the story (do they help to make the meanings more clear?)
- if appropriate, prepare what will be said in a first language in the first lesson to help the students to understand more easily
- after the first lesson, work out the questions to ask about the illustrations.
Talking about the story
The teacher and assistant teacher can discuss:

- why the author wrote a story like this
- the characters, people or animals in the story
- the actions of the characters and the reactions
- the orientation, complication and resolution of the story, and when to say something about each of these things
- (if appropriate) what will be said in a first language so that the students will understand the story when they hear it.

Planning high order literate orientation
The teacher will choose the parts of the book which the class is going to look at more closely in high order literate orientation. The teacher could share his/her thinking about why this part was chosen. Is it a description? Is it part of the orientation or complication? Are there actions and reactions in it, or elaborations to build up meanings? How does this passage support understanding the rest of the story?

Share with the assistant teacher what will be taught about the way an author uses language to construct meanings in a story, in such a way as to help them to understand how to help the students. The assistant teacher may also know other relevant ways of giving explanations to the students which connect to the students’ experiences.

The teacher and assistant teacher can discuss:

- how the words work together to make meaning
- how the words make readers feel when they read them
- any other meanings in the language that students need to understand
- the punctuation (does it help the reader to read the text the way the author wanted?)
- the structure of the text.

Planning Transformations
The teacher and assistant teacher can discuss:

- what writing techniques have been utilised and why
- the effect on readers of particular language choices or word order
- the function of the punctuation
- how transformations can be used to teach younger students word recognition and one-to-one correspondence
- how to cut the text.
Planning spelling

The teacher and the assistant teacher will discuss:

- each spelling word and the way it can be cut up into chunks or letter patterns (and why)
- words previously learnt which contain this pattern
- the etymology of the word/s.

Planning writing

- The teacher and the assistant teacher will have already worked out how the transformations can be used to teach about the structure of the passage and the writing techniques employed by the author.
- Teaching the transformations will lead to a writing plan.
- The teacher and the assistant teacher could both practise writing a story using this writing plan so they are prepared for the writing part of the lessons (this activity is purely optional).
The role of assistant teachers
What types of assistance?

Classroom teachers are responsible for teaching and planning Accelerated Literacy lessons. They are responsible for ensuring the success of lessons, for class organisation and student assessment, as well as for all educational decisions regarding their students.

Assistant teachers have the potential to support teachers and students with Accelerated Literacy in many ways that do not involve actually teaching parts of the teaching sequence or carrying out formal assessment protocols. The assistance they can give falls into the following categories:

1. Community relations and local knowledge
   • Perhaps one of the most powerful roles of assistant teachers (particularly in remote schools) is to act as an advocate for Accelerated Literacy in the community.
   • The assistant teacher can:
     – tell parents about the goal of a teaching sequence and why a study text has been chosen
     – show parents what students have learned about a book
     – show writing examples to parents, explaining their significance
     – make parents welcome in the Accelerated Literacy classroom.
   • The assistant teacher may also know the language backgrounds of students and know when to provide translation or an extra explanation of issues to particular students.
   • They may be able to visit families in consultation with the teacher and negotiate plans for student attendance or behaviour.

2. Classroom management and organisation
   • Assistant teachers can assist with classroom management and because they know the students and their families well, they can recognise body language and subtle signals that indicate that a student may need assistance. If a student seems unhappy or stressed, the assistant teacher could try to encourage them to participate in lessons and let the teacher know if there is a reason for a student’s behaviour.
   • Assistant teachers can model how to participate in an Accelerated Literacy activity by simply participating in the lesson themselves – enjoying the story, sitting among the students and carrying out some of the activities. Where activities are carried out in small groups, the assistant teacher can join a group and participate in the activity.
Assistant teachers may also assist with the preparation of materials for lessons (eg transformations strips, whiteboards, dusters and pens, writing paper, books, pens and pencils). This support ensures the progress of lessons is smooth and stress-free for everyone. This is an important role and successful lessons owe some of their success to the effort put into preparation. Where there are groups the assistant teacher can assist in getting students into their places and working quickly.

3. Teaching sequence assistance

- Assistant teachers can provide many opportunities for students to practise literacy skills that have been taught in class. This role is absolutely crucial to the development of fluent reading skills. To carry out this role effectively, the assistant teacher will need to have read the book and been in the classroom during Accelerated Literacy lessons.
- While assistants are not expected to teach formally, they can provide valuable follow-up assistance through such contributions as:
  - sitting with students and hearing them read the study passage
  - revisiting the transformations carried out during the Accelerated Literacy lesson with an individual or a group
  - playing word recognition games to encourage students to focus on attending to the details of words
  - going over spelling words that were taught in the Accelerated Literacy lesson, reading them, discussing their chunks and writing them fluently
  - in Early Childhood classes, sitting in the book corner with a student or small group and enjoying the book together in the way that parents do with their own children: talking about the story, allowing students to comment and generally going back over the points the teacher made in the lesson
  - assisting students who have been absent by reading the text to them and summarising the purpose of the study.
Assistant teacher activities

The following suggestions provide additional detail about activities that can be carried out by assistant teachers either during or following Accelerated Literacy lessons. This section expands on the ‘teaching sequence assistance’ section referred to and outlined above.

Literate orientation

Low order

During low order literate orientation, the teacher will:

- explain the focus of the lesson
- explain what is important about the study text that will be worked on in the lesson
- explain the writing technique (or techniques) that will be studied
- ask questions about the story or illustrations and encourage students to contribute to the discussion
- build common knowledge about the story that everyone shares and understands.

During low order literate orientation, the assistant teacher can:

- take note of the discussion about the text so that the points can be reinforced when an opportunity occurs later on
- encourage students to listen and take part (when this can be done without distracting them or other students from listening)
- be prepared to add comments or explanation in the students’ first language where appropriate.
After the Accelerated Literacy lesson, the assistant teacher can assist students with developing an understanding of the points discussed during low order literate orientation by:

- sitting with a group or a student and going over the points the teacher made in the low order literate orientation. The assistant teacher could add other points of their own that would help these students understand the meaning of the text at a deeper level, as well as the goals of the lesson
- taking a student or students who were absent in previous lessons and helping them to catch up on the points or explanations they missed
- rereading the story to the students who found it difficult to understand or concentrate. This discussion is particularly useful if it helps students participate in the next lesson more competently
- for younger students, photocopying the illustrations from the text onto cards, mixing them up, and getting students to put the cards in the order of the story. This activity always generates useful literate discussion.
High order

During high order literate orientation, the teacher will:

- ask students to underline words or groups of words in the text and explain what the aim of the high order will be. The aim will relate to the actual language choices in the text, how they make meaning and what the significance of the meaning is in this story
- give students information about the author’s language choices and the possible reasoning behind it. The text can be shown on an overhead projector and students may have a copy of their own. Younger students may have the text shown to them in a ‘big book’
- ask students to speculate, reflect on and discuss the reasons for language choices in the text
- ask students to read parts of the text with her/him (so that the students read the words that have been underlined and the teacher reads the other words).

During high order literate orientation, the assistant teacher can:

- listen to the way the teacher identifies the goal of the lesson and particularly notice the words underlined and the discussion about them. Even if the language choices have been discussed in previous planning sessions the way they are presented in the actual lesson will be designed to engage the students. Later, the language choices and their meaning can be reinforced whenever an opportunity occurs
- allow students time to identify high order words when they have their own sheets. Help where absolutely necessary but try to let students follow the teacher’s instructions first
- add explanations in the students’ first language where appropriate
- observe students’ participation carefully (taking note of students who are having problems identifying language choices so that they can be given additional help later on)
- discuss any such observations with the teacher later.
After the Accelerated Literacy lesson, the assistant teacher can use the following methods to help students develop an understanding of the language choices discussed during high order literate orientation.

- For older students, work with a small group of students or an individual. Give each one a copy of the study text worked on in the lesson. Go through it again, identifying at least some of the language choices that were discussed in the lesson.
- Read and reread the text aloud, with students reading the underlined parts and the assistant teacher reading the other parts. Swap so that eventually the students have read the whole text.
- Where there is a group, ask students to take turns reading the study text to each other.
- Provide particular praise when students read fluently, expressively and accurately.
- Discuss the meaning of language choices and add explanations in the students’ first language where appropriate (i.e. earlier in the teaching sequence).

**Transformations**

During transformations, the teacher will:

- use text written on cardboard strips before the lesson starts
- explain what the purpose of the transformations is in the lesson, including the language choices that are the focus of the strategy and the writing techniques used by the author in the text and why they have been used
- ask students to cut off phrases and words from the strips in response to questions
- discuss the meaning and effect on readers of the words under discussion
- carry out activities with the cut up transformations including:
  - turning parts of the text over and asking students to remember what the text should say and how its meaning changes without those words
  - mixing up the order of the words and ask individual students to put them back in order
  - enjoying word identification games (explained in more detail below).
During transformations, the assistant teacher can:

- arrange to write the words out on the cardboard strips to help the teacher prepare for the lesson and put them on the transformations board
- ensure that there are scissors available so that students can cut the strips
- observe the progress of the lesson, taking note of any parts that students find difficult so that they can be dealt with again later on
- discuss with teacher after the lesson any difficulties students were experiencing as they attempted to engage with the lesson.

After the Accelerated Literacy lesson, the assistant teacher can use the following methods to assist students with developing an understanding of the language choices and writing techniques discussed during transformations:

- work with an individual student or a small group to recreate the transformations worked on in the lesson (perhaps just focus on one sentence from a larger passage)
- discuss the way the sentence was cut up. Discuss what effect the words in the sentence have on the reader by reflecting on what was discussed during earlier lessons. This may require rereading some of the study text
- play some of the following games with individual students (they are described in more detail below)
  - ‘Your pile, my pile’
  - jumbled sentences
  - tic-tac-toe
  - word bingo
  - letter bingo (for young students).

Through all these activities, remember that the purpose is to provide practise for students in actually noticing details of words, so be prepared to point out initial letters, final letters, letter patterns etc.
Spelling

During spelling, the teacher will:

- take some words from the transformations that are well known to most students and discuss their meaning. Explain why each word has been selected
- cut the words into chunks according to their letter patterns
- practise writing each part and then the whole word
- add the word to a list of similar letter patterns (where appropriate)
- revise some words taught previously
- discuss the origins of some of the words
- with younger students, practise recognising and writing initial letters
- practise letter formation and fluency
- jointly reconstruct the study passage (or parts of it).

During spelling, the assistant teacher can:

- observe how the teacher cuts each word into chunks so that it can be practised with students at another time
- observe which students find the spelling activity difficult and be prepared to do some extra work with them. Identify these students and discuss their difficulties with the teacher later (difficulties could include saying the word in chunks, incorrect letter formation, copying letter by letter, or being left behind because of poor handwriting or other issues)
- take a whiteboard of their own and be prepared to sit with students who are having problems to show them how to write the word in its letter pattern chunks (show the student then rub off the letters so that the student has to write from memory)
- try not to repeat the word over and over to the student, but remind him or her once then let the student say the word.

Note that, before the lesson, the assistant teacher can assist the teacher by making sure the whiteboards (or blackboards) are accessible and that there are sufficient working pens (or chalk) and dusters for each student.
The role of assistant teachers

After the Accelerated Literacy lesson, the assistant teacher can assist students with developing correct spelling and handwriting skills by:

- working individually with students who need extra help
- providing opportunities for students to practise saying words in their letter pattern chunks as they write (assistant teachers can use the cut up words the teacher used in the lesson or write their own and cut them in the same chunks with the student)
- using whiteboards to practise both correct handwriting and correct spelling, aiming for fluency and correct letter formation. The assistant teacher can demonstrate the writing of the word or letter, ask the student to watch, explain what to notice, clean the board, then ask the student to try.

Writing

The writing component of the Accelerated Literacy teaching sequence is only as successful as the preparation for it. This preparation needs to have taken place over a series of lessons. To be successful the teacher will have described the writing aim of the sequence from the beginning.

During the writing segment of the teaching sequence, the teacher will do the following.

- Explain clearly what the writing task will be. It may be a workshop in which students practise using a writing technique they have learned from their study text (for example, a description of characters or places that influences a reader’s emotions). A writing workshop can be joint construction, where the teacher and students work together to use the writing technique they have studied, or independent construction, where students use a writing technique individually. At other times, writing may involve students planning and writing their own individual free composition.
- Ask students to say what they are going to write in the words they will use. The act of putting into words what the students want to write is an important step in the process of composing a piece of writing.
- The teacher will then work on a whiteboard or butcher’s paper to jointly construct a piece of writing or set students a writing task. Students will then work individually or there may be times when they work with a partner or small group to discuss and plan their writing.
During writing, the assistant teacher can assist students with their writing where appropriate. Where a class has been carefully prepared to write students should be given time to work individually. When some students still have problems the assistant teacher, who will also have worked through the teaching sequence in the class, can remind students of what to do and then can:

- provide support with spelling (remember to chunk words students need help with and remind them of patterns they know – don’t spell words out for students letter by letter)
- provide support with scribing where the physical task of writing is demanding for a young student. The assistant teacher can write some of the text for them, but make sure that the student writes the words they know
- work with a group of students on rehearsing and planning their writing
- listen to students read their writing when they have finished (give positive feedback where students have used appropriately the writing technique they have been taught).

After the Accelerated Literacy lesson, to assist students with developing writing skills, the assistant teacher can:

- help students type their work onto the computer to share with others
- encourage students to choose writing as a spare time activity (there will need to be paper and writing materials available in the classroom)
- remind students of the writing techniques they know when they are planning to write any text at other times of the day.
The role of assistant teachers

Working one-to-one with students

Reading

Assistant teachers will often be asked to work with individual students. Listening to students read the study text that has been worked on in class is one of the most common tasks assistant teachers do and one of the most important. Listening to students read provides individual students with important practise in automatic decoding, word recognition and fluency. So sit somewhere quiet, allow the student to hold the book and turn pages and say as little as possible as the student reads.

Remember that listening to reading provides practise and that teaching about reading is not useful when the student is actually engaged in the task. At this time the listener must listen.

Explain beforehand that, if the student comes to an unknown word, it is best to read up to it again from the start of the sentence or the sentence before, or miss the word out and read on.

If the student comes to a word and stops, wait at least 10 seconds before saying anything then ask them to reread the sentence or miss the word out and read on.

Discourage the student from looking to you for help by looking at the reading text. Don’t make eye contact or say anything except ‘Just go back to here (point to starting point) and read this sentence again’, or ‘Leave the word out and keep reading.’

If the student is struggling, say ‘Let’s read the rest together, shall we?’ Then read up to the end of the paragraph with the student.

After the reading, praise the student for reading fluently, expressively and accurately. Offer praise for working hard and self-correcting.

Assistant teachers may complete a Working Level assessment that is discussed with the teacher later or make some notes relevant to the student’s reading to be discussed with the teacher later. Working level assessments are discussed in ‘Assessing literacy development’.
Word recognition games

Following are procedures for useful word games that could be played using the words from the transformations activities. These games support the students to practise reading and word recognition.

Activity 1

Put the transformations sentence strips and words out on the table or floor.

- Ask the students to point to the words and read the sentence. If they need help, read along with them.
- Next, turn one of the words over and ask the students to read the text again and predict the word that is turned over. Then they can turn the word over and see if they are right.
- If they are right, ask how they recognise and read the word. Can they recognise it from the first letter or any letter patterns in the word?
- Talk to the students about the way this word helps to make meanings in a sentence. If it is not there, the sentence might not make sense. Or the sentence might have a different meaning.
- Do this with different words so that the student will read the text lots of times.
- Let the student have a turn at turning a word over.

Activity 2

Ask the student to close his or her eyes, then take out a word and hold it in your hand. Ask the student to look at the word and read it, then put it back in its right place. Let him or her read the whole sentence. Do this with different words a few times.

Activity 3

Put all the cut-up words upside-down into one single ‘teacher’s’ pile and explain that you are going to play ‘Your pile, my pile’.

Ask the student to turn over a word. If they can tell you what it is, they get to keep it.

If they don’t know the word, open the appropriate page of the text and ask them to find the word. Ask if they know what the word is now. If they know the word after they have found it in the text, they keep the word.
If the student cannot find the word in the text, say, ‘I'll read this sentence here and you see if you can tell me where the word is.’ If they can identify the word now, they get to keep it.

If they can't do this, read the text to the student and point to the words as you read it. Ask whether the student can find the word now. You may need to read the sentence more than once and point to the words as you read.

The aim of the game is for the students to make ‘your’ pile ‘their’ pile by successfully identifying all the words.

Activity 4
Write out all the words twice on separate cards (so that each individual word has two cards). Turn the words over so they are hidden and spread them in lines on the table.

Now ask the student to turn over one card and read out the word on it. Then tell them to leave that card still turned up and to turn over another card. If the second card has the same word on it, the student can take those two cards and put them in a pile of his or her own. If the second card has a different word on it, ask the student to read that word. Then turn both the cards over again.

Next, you do the same. Turn a card over and read the word on it. Then turn a second card over and, if it has the same word on it, take those two cards. If the word was different turn both cards back so the words are hidden.

Then it’s the student’s turn again. The person with the most cards at the end is the winner.

The aim is to try to remember where the words were in the lines on the table. That way, if you turn up a word you have already seen, then you will know where the other card is with the same word.

Activity 5
Using words from the transformations, play bingo using words instead of numbers. There are other games you can play with the words from the transformations; it is useful to have a collection of them to use at different times.
Spelling

If the assistant teacher is working one-to-one with a student, they will need:

- small white- or blackboards
- whiteboard markers or chalk
- white- or blackboard erasers
- the spelling words written on cards
- scissors.

The assistant teacher will have all the spelling words written out on cards for the student. Together, the assistant teacher and the student can practise reading each of the words until the student knows them well. If necessary, the book or passage that the words come from could be used to help the student read and identify the words. When the student knows the words and can read them even when they are mixed up, the spelling session can begin. The assistant teacher can follow the procedure below.

- Hold the card with the first word on it, so the student can see it.
- Ask them to read the word and check they are correct.
- Say the word clearly.
- Now say it in its chunks or letter patterns.
- As you say each chunk, point to it.

Next:

- Ask the student to cut off the first chunk or letter pattern.
- Read the chunk to the student.
- Ask the student to read the chunk to you.
- Show the student how to write it on the board.
- Say the chunk while writing it on the board.
- Ask the student to write just that one chunk.
- Get the student to say it as he or she writes it.
- Ask the student to write the chunk or letter pattern three or four times.
- Check that he or she has written it correctly.
- Ask the student to practise writing the chunk from visual memory until he or she can write fluently and correctly without support.

Then:

- Now ask the student to cut off the second chunk or letter pattern.
- Read the chunk to the student.
- Write the second chunk on the board while saying it.
- Ask the student to write that second chunk on the board three or four times.
- Ask the student to say it aloud as he or she writes it.
- Check that it has been written correctly.
- Cut off the rest of the chunks in the word and repeat the process.
Next, the student is asked to write the whole word.

- Tell the student to write each chunk down while it is being said until he or she has finished spelling the word.
- Ask the student to say the chunks or letter patterns as he or she writes them down.
- When the student has written the word on the board, ask him or her to say the chunks while the assistant teacher writes them on the board.
- The student can check his or her spelling word with the one that the assistant teacher has written on the board correctly.
- If the student has made a mistake, he or she can rub it out and write the correct version.

The same procedure is applied to each of the other spelling words. The student needs to be reminded to say each of the letter patterns or chunks at the same time as they are written.

When the spelling lesson is finished, the assistant teacher can carry out some of the following spelling activities.

**Activity 1**

Take the chunks that make up one word and mix them up. Let the student look at each chunk and read it, then put the chunks together to make the whole word. Check that the student has put the chunks or letter patterns together correctly. This can be done with each of the spelling words.

**Activity 2**

Help the student to look at another word with the same patterns, and together think of words that have it too. Tell the student to write down each word, saying each chunk as he or she writes it.

**Activity 3**

Another time the student can be shown each word cut into its chunks or letter patterns. Then:

- turn the pieces over so that the writing is hidden
- ask the student to write the word without looking
- ask the student to say the chunks or patterns as he or she writes them
- let the student check for him or herself without saying if he or she has made a mistake
- ask the student to rub out any mistakes and write the words correctly
- ask the student to say the words and chunks out loud each time.
Glossary
Actions and reactions
In stories, writers will tell us the things that their characters do. These things are called ‘actions’. When someone does something in response to an action, this is called a ‘reaction’.

Author
A person who writes books for other people to read.

Context
A word is in context when you can see the other words it is written with. The words in a text all work together to make meanings. That is why the meaning of one word can change when it is used with other words. A word is out of context when it is all by itself with no other words used with it to make meanings.

Description
An author will describe a person, place, thing or action by telling us maybe what they looked like or what they sounded like. That is a description.

Elaborations
The details that a writer gives about people, places or actions in the story so that we understand more about them.

Expansion
Expansion adds to a topic and expands on it so that the reader has a better understanding of what is being written about.

Literate English
This is the English that good writers use in their books. It is also the English that many people use when they are talking in a formal meeting. Literate English doesn’t have to be Standard Australian English. Literate English is also used by authors of well-written books in other countries where English is spoken.

Letter patterns
English words can be cut up into pieces or chunks. Lots of words have the same pieces or patterns in them (eg rice/nice, teach/reach, right/night, walk/talk/chalk). Good readers know these letter patterns and can look at new words and work out how to say them.
Narratives

Narratives are stories in which something goes wrong and the characters have to work out how to put everything right again. These kinds of stories are usually exciting to read. Narratives have three or four main parts to them.

- **Orientation.** At the beginning (or close to the beginning) of a story, writers will usually tell us who the characters are, where the story is taking place, what is happening and when. Sometimes they will also tell us why the action was happening. Sometimes we have to work that out for ourselves.
- **Complication.** All good narrative stories have a part where something goes wrong. The characters find that they have a problem and have to find out how to put things right again.
- **Resolution.** This is the part of the narrative where the problem or trouble is put right and the characters are happy again, or order is restored.
- **Coda.** Sometimes there is a coda at the very end of the story when the writer tells us how things in the story finished and why. Sometimes the coda is in the form of a moral and reminds readers about what they were meant to learn about life from reading the story.

Punctuation

The marks that help us to read the meaning of a text correctly, fluently and with good expression (eg full stops, commas, capital letters, question marks, quotation marks).

Words specific to Accelerated Literacy

Preformulation

Preformulation sets students up to answer questions correctly. It gives students an idea of what the teacher wants as an answer. All teaching notes provided in Accelerated Literacy provide examples of preformulation.

Questioning

The teacher in the Accelerated Literacy class will ask questions to find out what the students know and understand about the text. He/she will ask questions about the words and meanings in the story. The teacher will be trying to promote a class discussion about the text. In this way everyone, including the teacher, learns and can contribute to the knowledge about the texts studied.
Reconceptualisation

After the teacher has asked the question about the part of the story he or she is focusing on, the students will usually be able to answer correctly. This is because they know what words to look at and read. The teacher will then talk to the students about the answers they gave and explain more about the meanings that the words make. This will help the students understand more about the words they are reading. This is called reconceptualisation.

This is an important part of the classroom talk because it allows all students to know the correct answer to the question and it makes this answer common knowledge that everyone understands.

Scaffold

The teacher will give help to students so that, working together, they will be able to read and understand books written in literate English. With scaffolding, they are able to use books at a level that is right for their ages.

Sequence

A sequence is when things come one after another in a proper order. So, in Accelerated Literacy, the low order literate orientation comes first, then the high order literate orientation, the transformations, the spelling and then the writing. All these parts usually follow each other in the sequence, although sometimes teachers will vary this depending on their goals.

Standard Australian English

This is the English that is used in Australian books, on Australian radio and on Australian TV programs. It is also the English that teachers speak in schools, meetings and professional development times.
Practitioner Guide

This guide is designed to help teachers and assistant teachers work effectively together in classes where the Accelerated Literacy program is being taught.

It aims to provide practical suggestions for teaching Accelerated Literacy that make the program work better for students so that their literacy skills develop quickly and effectively.

The booklet is in two parts:

**Part 1** Planning effectively for Accelerated Literacy lessons so as to involve the assistant teacher in the planning and in classroom practice.

**Part 2** Support provided by assistant teachers including the activities and games that assistant teachers may participate in or conduct in the classroom

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)

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