Early Childhood

These notes have been written to help teachers use the Accelerated Literacy teaching strategies in Year 1. However, they could also be used in the second half of Kindergarten (first year of school) and in Year 2 where students have difficulties with reading.

Outcomes of the teaching sequence

At the end of this teaching sequence, students should be able to:

- read the story studied fluently and interpret the illustrations at a high level
- discuss the story: give opinions about the author’s language choices; identify the story’s structure, theme and ideology
- spell chosen words and understand related spelling strategies
- use the story as a model for writing.

Notes

- The following notes have been written for teachers who have attended professional development workshops 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 first professional development workshop. Additionally, you could refer to http://www.nalp.edu.au.
- It is also assumed that teachers have read the text on which these notes are based and have a detailed understanding of the text before beginning a teaching sequence.
- Teachers are responsible for ensuring the suitability of the text on which these notes are based for their particular teaching context.

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Teaching Notes

The Old Mouse

Early Childhood
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Using this resource
Year level

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The text

There are different versions of Mouse Tales on the market. These notes are based on the American English edition (HarperCollins, 1972). If you have the British English version, you will find some minor variations from the text described here. For example, the British version talks about braces instead of suspenders, and trousers instead of pants. It is a simple matter to adjust your discussion of the text to take account of these small differences.
One day the grown ups said we were going on a trip.

We would take some blankets, a couple of bullies and some tea and sugar.

They would have a car and some new clothes.
Synopsis of the story

‘The Old Mouse’ is one of seven short stories in the book, *Mouse Tales*. It features an old mouse who doesn’t like children and is quite rude to them when he sees them on his walks. When out walking one day, however, his braces break, and a group of children end up helping him when no one else will. From then on, he is always kind to children when he goes on his walks.

Themes

‘The Old Mouse’ has many of the features of a folk tale. It’s a funny story but one with a message too: a nasty character learns the error of his ways.

Why use this story?

‘The Old Mouse’ is a simple narrative for early readers, with simple word choices to reduce overload for early readers and illustrations providing information that is not included in the text. It can be used to show students:

- the structure of a narrative
- how authors use dialogue and reactions in writing
- how to use time phrases to stage their writing.

Structure of the text

Orientation

*There was an old mouse who went out for a walk every day.*

*The old mouse did not like children.*

*When he saw them on the street he would shout, “Go away, horrid things!”*
Complication

One day the old mouse was taking his walk.
All at once, his braces broke, and his trousers fell down.
Some ladies came by.
“Help, help!” cried the old mouse.
But the ladies screamed, “Your trousers have fallen down!”
And they ran away.
The old mouse ran home and cried, “Help me!”
But his wife only said, “You look silly in your underwear,” and gave him a hit on the head.
The old mouse began to cry.

Resolution

Some children passed by.
“Poor old mouse,” they said, “we will help you. Here is some chewing gum.
It will hold your trousers up very well.”
“Look!” cried the old mouse. “My trousers are up! This chewing gum is splendid.
These trousers will never fall down again!”

Coda

Those trousers never did fall down again. And after that, the old mouse was always kind to children when he went for his walk.

Language features of the text

The easily identified narrative structure alone would not be enough reason for using ‘The Old Mouse’ as the focus of a teaching sequence. Other language features also need to be considered.

How to use reactions to convey emotion

Characters in ‘The Old Mouse’ often react to events by saying something. These reactions provide the means for readers to identify with and understand the characters. Early readers need the function of these language choices pointed out to them, as this event/reaction pattern occurs in much of their reading.
How time can be used to stage a story

Time phrases used as sentence themes (eg _One day_, _When he saw them_, _All at once_, _And after that_ and conjunctions such as _and_ and _when_) stage the text and signal the event sequence.

Other language features

The author uses short sentences to make the event sequence easy to follow (eg _the old mouse ran home and cried, “Help me!”_).

The author has supplied a relatively small range of words in the text. This means that readers can focus on other features of the story without having to cope with a lot of new words. However, such words as _trousers_, _braces_ and _horrid_ may be new to the students.

As this text has been written for early readers, the language is quite simple. Therefore the pictures add information that is not contained in the written text (eg the implement the old mouse’s wife used to bang him on the head, and the happiness of the old mouse and the children when the chewing gum keeps his trousers up). The illustrations also might help show what braces and trousers look like.
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.
In the classroom

We would take some blankets, a couple of
bottles and some tea and sugar.
In the classroom

The teaching sequence on ‘The Old Mouse’ aims to teach:

- how to read the story at 90 per cent accuracy or above
- how to discuss the story, including the meaning and inferences contained in the author’s language choices
- how to spell fluently and write clearly the words taught as part of the teaching sequence
- how to write, with appropriate teacher support, a short narrative about a nasty character who changes his ways when another character/s reacts kindly.

Literate orientation

Literate orientation is a pre-reading strategy that prepares students to read the study text fluently, accurately and independently. The teacher models a literate orientation to the text and discusses why the author made certain language choices. Literate orientation consists of two components: low order literate orientation and high order literate orientation. Both are equally important.

In low order literate orientation the teacher starts the process of ‘pointing the students’ brains’ at the text by modelling a literate interpretation of the text, including its illustrations when necessary.

In high order literate orientation the teacher shifts the students’ focus from the general considerations in the low order literate orientation to a close examination of the author’s wording in the text. The teacher systematically models how to attend closely to the language features of the text and how they construct meaning.

Low order literate orientation – Whole story

Teaching focus

- The picture shows the mouse father telling stories to his seven mouse boys.
- Mice acting like people (discuss what they’re wearing and the fact that they love stories)
- The title of the book.

Teaching focus

- Discuss what the old mouse looks like and what he’s wearing (braces).
- Discuss what he’s doing (going for a walk) and how he looks like he’s threatening the children.
- Discuss the children’s reaction to the old mouse and how they may feel.
What you could say

On this page, we can see an old mouse and some younger mice as well. We can tell that this mouse is old because he has a long grey beard. He is also carrying a walking stick. Older folk will sometimes use one of these if their bodies aren’t in the shape they once were and they find it difficult to walk. Notice how he is also wearing braces, which a lot of people wore years ago instead of belts to hold their trousers up. Some old people still wear them today. They might be more comfortable than a tight belt.

We can see that this old mouse is going for a walk along the street. He probably likes to get out for a walk every day. A lot of people do. But he doesn’t look too happy to see the children, does he? The look on his face and the way he is holding his walking stick make it look as if he is shouting at them. He is actually shouting ‘Go away, you horrid things!’ Horrid means horrible, or disgusting. So it’s quite clear that he doesn’t like children, isn’t it? The little mice look a little frightened too, don’t they? They are trying to get away from the cranky old mouse. (If possible find a pair of braces to show to the students.)

Teaching focus

• The old mouse’s braces have broken and his trousers have fallen down.
• Discuss how the old mouse must be feeling.

What you could say

One day, when the old mouse was taking his walk, something terrible happened. Who can see what’s happened to him? Yes, his trousers have fallen down, haven’t they? And if you look really closely, you can see why. His braces have broken. See how the buttons are flying off? These are the only things that he has to hold up his trousers, so he is in a spot of bother, isn’t he? He looks very upset about this, doesn’t he? It must be very embarrassing for him to have his trousers fall down while he is out in public taking a walk. You can see the embarrassed look on his face.

Teaching focus

• Ladies out for a walk.
• Discuss what they are wearing and how they look very proper.
• The old mouse seems to be asking for help.
• Ladies’ reaction.

What you could say

Now look, we have some ladies walking down the street towards the old mouse. His trousers are still down and it looks like his braces are gone. He probably just left them when they broke because he was so upset.
It looks like he is calling out to the ladies for help, doesn’t it? We can see his mouth is open and his hand is out towards them. He has a pleading, desperate look on his face. The ladies look shocked and a little horrified at what they see. They were walking down the street enjoying themselves, in their best clothes it looks like, when all of a sudden they came across this old mouse with his trousers down. They probably feel uncomfortable and want to get away from him as quickly as possible. They don’t want to stop and help.

**Teaching focus**
- The old mouse goes home to ask his wife for help.
- She hits him on the head, as she thinks he looks silly.
- The old mouse’s head hurts and so do his feelings.

**What you could say**
Now the old mouse didn’t get the help he was after from the ladies. They ran away from him. They weren’t sympathetic at all. So he ran home to ask his wife for help. Now you would think that his wife would want to help him, wouldn’t you? But look at what she does to him instead. Yes, that’s right; she gave him a hit on the head with her rolling pin and told him he looks silly in his underwear.

Perhaps she just thought that he was being silly and playing a joke, but the old mouse doesn’t look very happy now, does he? He’s feeling very upset because not only have his trousers fallen down, no-one has been willing to help him. Instead, he has frightened some ladies away and his own wife has banged him on the head with a rolling pin.

(If possible, bring a rolling pin to class. Explain what it is usually used for and show the students how heavy it is.)

**Teaching focus**
- The old mouse is crying.
- The children take pity on him.
- They want to help him and give him chewing gum to help hold his trousers up.

**What you could say**
In this picture, we can see that the old mouse has begun to cry. Who can see the tear rolling down his face? He must be very upset now, mustn’t he? He really wants some help to fix his trousers.

Now look at the children. They don’t look very frightened of the old mouse any more. They actually look friendly. They feel sorry for him and want to help him. The children don’t care that he is showing his underwear. Look carefully at one
of the children. He is holding out his hand to give something to the old mouse and the other two are taking something out of their mouths to give to the old mouse. So I wonder what they could possible have in their mouths that could be used to help keep the old mouse’s trousers up. Yes that’s right! Chewing gum! It must be very sticky chewing gum if it is going to keep his trousers up, mustn’t it? And they must also have quite a lot of it if it is going to work.

Teaching focus

- The old mouse’s trousers are back up: the chewing gum worked.
- Discuss how happy the old mouse and children look.

What you could say

Look, it worked! The old mouse’s trousers are up. Doesn’t he look happy now? His arms are up in the air, and his head is thrown back and it looks like he is giving a big cheer. It almost looks like he is having a little dance to celebrate. He must think that this chewing gum is splendid and that the children are splendid too. Not horrid at all.

The children look very happy too, don’t they? They must feel proud of themselves to be able to help the old mouse when he was looking so sad only a few moments earlier. They also look like they are giving a big cheer.

It looks like the problem is solved and the trousers will probably never fall down again because they look so fixed and stuck there now.

Teaching focus

- Contrast the relationship between the old mouse and the children now and before.
- Discuss how the children changed their relationship with the old mouse by helping him.

What you could say

Now look at how happy the old mouse is. His trousers are fixed and don’t look like they are going to fall down ever again. And things have certainly changed in the way he treats the children. He looks very kind and friendly now, walking hand in hand with them, when once he would have shouted and told them to go away. They look a lot happier too. Everyone has smiles on their faces.

There is probably a little lesson we can learn from this story. That is: if we see somebody in trouble and we help them then they may be kind to us in return, even if they haven’t been nice to us in the past.
Read the story aloud

Following low order literate orientation, read the story to the class. Show the students where you are reading with a pointer or marking strip of some kind so that they know you are attending to the words. Read the story expressively and if the students want to read with you allow them to do so, but do not slow down and wait for them. Avoid the reading becoming a chant by consistently modelling fluent, expressive reading.

High order literate orientation – Study passage

Teaching focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure of text and wording</th>
<th>Why language choices were made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation: Introduction of main character and what he does</td>
<td>There was: Arnold Lobel is starting the story with simple language choices. We know that this story happened in the past. An old mouse: Arnold Lobel introduces the main character. Its age is very important as older people often wear braces, and the main complication involves the old mouse’s braces. The fact that the old mouse went for a walk every day is important for two reasons. First, it means he probably shouts at the children every day. And second, it means he really needs his pants to work because he is out in public a lot. If his braces fell down at home it wouldn’t have been such a problem, although his wife might still have been unsympathetic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character’s feeling/attitude</td>
<td>This is in contrast to how he feels about them at the end of the story. It is important information as it shows something about his character and sets him up not to be very nice. The illustration reinforces the text here: the old mouse is waving his walking stick in a threatening way towards three small children. We are not told why he doesn’t like children. Maybe he is just a cranky person or maybe some children were cheeky to him once.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a description of high order literate orientation, refer to page 10.
Elaboration (how he behaved because of this)

When he saw them on the street he would shout, “Go away, horrid things!”

The author expands on the old mouse’s feelings by telling us what he would do when he saw children on the street when he was out on his daily walk. He would shout, “Go away, horrid things!”

Arnold Lobel is making sure the reader knows just how much the old mouse doesn’t like children. Not only does he not like them but also when he saw them he shouted at them. He shouted at the children each time he saw them, so it’s not just on the odd occasion but every time he saw them. The old mouse doesn’t just speak unpleasantly to the children, he would shout. Arnold Lobel has made this language choice to emphasise how strong his feelings are.

Go away is what you would say to someone whom you don’t want around, whom you don’t even want to see. Sometimes people say it as a joke but here it is clear that the old mouse is very serious indeed. He also insults the children by calling them horrid things. ‘Horrid’ means horrible or dreadful. So this is a very strong insult. And the old mouse didn’t even call them children! He calls them things, which is very rude. Readers are going to think the old mouse is a nasty man and not like him very much. So when he gets into an embarrassing situation later, neither the characters nor the reader are very sympathetic.

Complication: When

One day the old mouse was taking his walk.

One day: we don’t know which day exactly; just one particular day in the past the old mouse was taking his walk. We already know the old mouse walks every day as part of his routine. ‘Taking’ here means the same as ‘going on’ or ‘going for’. So this could be just one ordinary day; however, we would have an expectation that something is about to happen.
### Problem

_All at once, his braces broke, and his trousers fell down._

This is the complication of the story. _All at once:_ these words are telling us that it happened very suddenly, it is a surprise. The old mouse has not planned for this at all. Arnold Lobel is creating excitement here with this choice of words, rather than choosing to write something like ‘as he was walking’.

Braces are straps that go over your shoulders to hold your trousers up. His trousers fell down because his braces _broke_. The illustration shows us that they broke in the front and the back. It would be very embarrassing for anyone to have their trousers fall down in public. It would be particularly embarrassing for the old mouse because he goes walking everyday and people would know who he is. He would be desperate to solve this problem as soon as he could. So he tries to get help from the first people he sees.

### Introduce characters

_Some ladies came by._

_Some ladies_ doesn’t refer to any ladies in particular. They were probably just a group out just having a walk. Remember they were mice too. _Ladies_ is often used (instead of ‘girls’ or ‘women’) to mean females who are mature and well-mannered with high standards of proper behaviour. A lady could get very offended at the sight of an old mouse with his trousers down and his underwear showing. They would think it was his fault somehow. The illustration shows their shocked faces. The fact that these ladies _came by_ means they were near the old mouse.

### Main character’s reaction

_“Help, help!” cried the old mouse._

For some reason he hasn’t been able to fix the problem himself. It would be hard to hold up the front and back bit of his trousers and hold his walking stick all at the same time. So he’s cried out to the ladies for help. He doesn’t just say it once but twice, so he really does want their help. Arnold Lobel is emphasising this by using _cried_ instead of ‘said’. The old mouse must be very upset by now.
Other characters’ reaction

But the ladies screamed, “Your trousers have fallen down!” And they ran away.

The ladies didn’t just say ‘your trousers have fallen down’, they screamed it. They are very upset about what they see and they let him know.

Arnold Lobel tells us that they not only react verbally but also physically. These ladies truly must be upset and disturbed by seeing the old mouse with his trousers down because they get away from the sight of him as fast as they can. They don’t even think of helping him.

This is not the reaction that the old mouse was hoping for: the But at the start of the sentence tells us that.

What main character did next

The old mouse ran home and cried, “Help me!”

The ladies didn’t help him when he’d asked them, so the old mouse would feel quite upset and humiliated.

Explain what feeling humiliated involves. He thought the best place to go would be home, for if anybody should help him it’d be his wife. He went home as fast as he could: he ran even with trousers around his ankles and cried, “Help me!”

He is not actually crying. Here cried means he is upset and is calling out in a worried way.

He is really desperate for someone to solve his problem. Apparently he just can’t sort it out himself.

What the next character said and did

But his wife only said, “You look silly in your underwear,” and gave him a bang on the head.

Again this sentence starts with But, indicating that the old mouse isn’t going to get what he wants. Readers might have thought his wife would be sympathetic and help him. So, for the second time, expectations are dashed. The only also emphasises that all she did was say something cruel and then do something cruel. She did not help him.

His wife telling him he looks silly in his underwear would have hurt his feelings a great deal. Instead of helping, she insults him. Look at the illustration. He does look silly in his underwear, but you’d think his wife would still help. Maybe she is mean and nasty too.

Not only that but she gives him a bang on the head which would have hurt him physically as well. We can see in the illustrations that he didn’t even get inside his house. He is still being humiliated out in public. And that wooden rolling pin would have really hurt.
Transformations

Transformations is an activity designed to change students’ orientation to the text under consideration from that of a reader looking for meaning to that of a writer learning how the author used various literary techniques to achieve a particular effect or purpose.

In addition, transformations provides a key opportunity for ‘handover’ of understanding about the language choices in the text. The questioning techniques in this part of the teaching sequence reflect the growing common knowledge shared between class members, and between class members and the teacher. A successful handover might mean, for example, that there is less need for preformulation.

Goals of the transformations

Comprehension
The first page of the story is the orientation to the narrative. It sets the scene for the story and introduces the old mouse and the type of character he is. It is important for students to be aware of all the information contained in this paragraph as it positions the readers to feel a certain way about the old mouse.

Word recognition leading to spelling
The main spelling focus for these transformations will be word recognition leading to sound/symbol discrimination and a focus on initial sounds and/or further decoding.

Writing
Joint reconstructed writing on this passage will prepare students for other writing exercises in which they experiment with using Arnold Lobel’s strategy for writing the orientation for this narrative. Dialogue portrays the character in a way which grabs the readers’ attention and makes them want read on. Engaging in joint reconstructed writing allows students to take on the role of the author and consider why Arnold Lobel’s language choices are important in the orientation of this narrative.

Main character’s reaction

| The old mouse began to cry. | The old mouse can’t take it any more and his head hurts so much that he began to cry. This time he is crying real tears. As readers, we begin to feel sorry for the mouse now, even though at the beginning of the story we may have thought him nasty and mean. |
There was an old mouse who went for a walk every day.
The old mouse did not like children.
When he saw them on the street he would shout, “Go away, horrid things!”

Example of text segmentation
Initially, the sentence could be segmented in the following way. Other segmentations may also be used.

There was / an old mouse / who went for a walk / every day / . / 
The old mouse / did not like children / . / 
When he saw them / on the street / he would shout / , / 
“ / Go away / , / horrid things / ! / ” / 

Teaching focus
It is advisable to work on one or two sentences at a time for transformations to avoid overload.

Introduction of main character and what he did
The author doesn’t tell us about the setting of this story much at all. He begins by introducing us to the main character. However, we do know that this story is set in the past, because it starts, There was.

When Arnold Lobel first introduces the main character, he calls him an old mouse because it is the first time the readers have heard of him. From that point on, he is the old mouse, the one we already know about.

Then we find out what the old mouse did and how often he did it. It is important that the author chose to say the old mouse went for a walk every day for two reasons.

It foreshadows that the complication will take place while the old mouse is taking a walk.

And if he walks every day, he would likely be recognised by others who also walk every day and hence be more embarrassed when his braces break.

Main character’s attribute
The author chose to say something about the old mouse’s attitude towards children rather than describe a physical feature. The reader already knows that the mouse is old and the illustrations show what he looks like. Arnold Lobel
chooses to say something about the old mouse’s attitude towards children so that the reader reacts in a negative way towards the old mouse. This makes his later experiences funny rather than sad and his later change of heart towards the children is all the more dramatic.

**Elaboration (how he behaved because of attribute)**

Arnold Lobel elaborates on this attribute, showing the reader how the old mouse acts on his dislike of children. Shouting and calling the children names on the street emphasises for readers how much the old mouse dislikes children and what a grouch he must be. Readers are forming an opinion about the old mouse that will be pleasantly turned on its head at the end of the story.

Here is an opportunity to discuss the range of options authors have to describe how a character says something. Here, the old mouse *shouts*. It would also be useful to talk about the exclamation mark.

**Spelling**

The spelling segment of the Accelerated Literacy teaching sequence follows transformations once the teacher is reasonably sure that students are able to recognise many of the words from the text out of context. Teachers are then able to use the students’ ability to hold a stable image of a word in their memory to show how that word can be broken into letter pattern chunks. Spelling activities include joint reconstructed writing.

**How to choose spelling words**

Keep the following points in mind when choosing words to work on in spelling.

- Are there any words that have patterns (or letters) that students have worked on before?
- Are there any new patterns that occur more than once or are commonly occurring?
- Are there any words that have interesting origins or roots that will help students develop an understanding of English?
- Which words will help students with joint reconstructed writing?
- Which words that students have already been taught need revision?
- Consider students’ age and stage of spelling development.
Suggestions for spelling

This text has been benchmarked at Year 1. Students working at this level would range from being semi-phonetic spellers through to being transitional spellers. So teachers would need to make a judgement about whether they teach just the initial letters of words or larger chunks and patterns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From the transformations</th>
<th>High Frequency words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>m/ou/se</td>
<td>there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sh/out</td>
<td>was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w/ould</td>
<td>day</td>
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<tr>
<td>w/alk</td>
<td>went</td>
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<tr>
<td>d/ay</td>
<td>them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>th/ing/s</td>
<td>saw</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Etymology

Etymological information on selected words is always interesting for students. Many websites, as well as dictionaries and other books, provide etymological information. Two informative websites are http://www.etymonline.com and http://www.thefreedictionary.com

Example

Horrid: origin late sixteenth century in the sense of ‘rough, bristling’ from Latin horridus, meaning ‘tremble, shudder, hair standing on end.’

Joint reconstructed writing

Joint reconstructed writing provides a transition from spelling activities to writing activities and works best when taken from transformations. Joint reconstructed writing involves the teacher and students working together to reconstruct the text using the same words as the author. It successfully reduces the stress associated with working out what to write about, what to write and how to write it. Stress associated with spelling is greatly reduced, giving students the mental space to think about subject matter and language choices.

The teacher ‘thinks aloud’ to reconstruct a passage with the students, using the writer’s language choices. This is a culmination of all the shared knowledge built up so far about language choices used in the construction and positioning of particular phrases and includes the dimensions of letter formation, the role of initial consonants and blends, and visual patterns.
Students in the phonetic stage of spelling

Students in their first year of school, in the phonetic stage of spelling development, will still be learning to recognise words and write letters. The physical demands of forming letters are quite high for many of these students, especially when combined with the cognitive demands of remembering the names of letters and sounds, so they will need support with word recognition, handwriting and spelling.

Joint reconstructed writing is undertaken using either a blackboard or whiteboard, or a sheet of butcher’s paper that everyone can see. The students write some letters of each word and the teacher writes the rest. Students could also write letters on small whiteboards or blackboards before they contribute to the joint writing.

Students in the transitional stage of spelling

These students, who are usually in Year 1, may be able to write many letters and some words independently. These students can work with the teacher on jointly reconstructing parts of the text, with the teacher working on the blackboard, whiteboard or butcher’s paper while they write in individual writing books.

Example

Concentrate on drawing on the common knowledge developed so far with students about the first page of the story. Encourage students to contribute as much as they can about their understandings of how Arnold Lobel wrote this text and why during the activity. This is the ideal time to monitor ‘handover.’

Important points:

- Introduction of the old mouse and what he did
- How the old mouse felt towards children (how the author is positioning the reader to think about the old mouse)
- Elaboration on the old mouse not liking children, showing how strongly he felt and why this is important.
What you could say

T: Okay, remember how Arnold Lobel started his story? He told us *There was an old mouse*. This is the way lots of authors introduce their characters. So if we were to think and write like Arnold Lobel, we would start like that too. What letter do we start writing *There* with?

S: *T*.

T: Exactly. So to start *there*, we need a *t* but to make the *‘th’* sound we need an *h* as well, don’t we? *T* and *h* go together in many words to make the *‘th’* sound. Also it’s the beginning of the sentence so we need a…?

S: Capital letter.

T: Yes, sentences always start with capital letters. In this case we have *T*, so we write this bit from the top to the bottom, and then the bit that goes across from the left to the right. Excellent. Now don’t forget the *h* to make the *Th* sound. What comes next?

Teachers may allow some time for students to try to write the word themselves for example to write *Th/ere*, before the teacher writes it. Students can then choose to use what they know or wait for the teacher, who is careful that they don’t copy letter by letter but write words in their chunks.

**Writing**

Writing activities should not be based only on patterning, but on a principled understanding of why writers use specific techniques. For example, it is not much use substituting words to write a ‘new’ sentence or paragraph if students do not know what the skill they are learning is about or when to use it.

Writing goals consist of goals for the whole teaching sequence (overall goals), as well as goals for individual lessons (short-term goals).

Goals for ‘The Old Mouse’ would include:

- overall goals such as writing a jointly constructed class book about a character who changes his/her disposition when treated kindly
- short-term goals such as writing an orientation or writing about an event, both followed by reactions in speech.
Activities

Workshop one

Write an orientation to a story followed by a statement and expansion, including a speech to illustrate a character’s attitude. For example:

**Who and what he did**
There once was a young lion who liked resting in the afternoon sun.

**Character’s feeling/attitude**
The young lion didn’t like dung beetles.

**Elaboration (how he behaved because of this feeling/attitude)**
Every time a dung beetle walked by he would growl, ‘If you come any closer I will gobble you up, little pest.’

Workshop two

Write about an event followed by reactions in speech. Do these jointly in early childhood classes. For example:

**Event**
The old lion is caught in a trap.

**Reactions**
Some lionesses walked past.
“Help me,” growled the lion.
“You are caught in a trap!” they screamed.
They were afraid and wouldn’t help the lion.

Joint construction

Joint construction allows the teacher to assist students by ‘thinking aloud’ about the way an author plans and writes short narratives. Joint construction of class books is a particularly appropriate writing activity for Year 1 students, for whom the physical and cognitive demands of writing are great. Students of this age not only have to think about what to write, they also have to remember how to form letters and spell words correctly.

For students in the transitional stage of spelling, negotiating the possible spellings of words takes confidence and a range of spelling resources.

For students at the semi-phonetic or phonetic stage, spelling and writing activities need to be very focused.

Joint construction allows the teacher to ‘think aloud’ the way an author has to plan and execute the writing of short narratives.
Possible steps in jointly constructing a class book

- Read other folk tales that involve characters learning lessons or changing their ways. Discuss the orientation, complication and resolution structure of these folk tales as you read them.
- Discuss how authors of folk tales must have planned their story.
- Explain that you are going to write a folk tale and that you are going to plan it the way all authors do before you write.
- Discuss a character who is nasty or mean and speculate how other characters’ kindness could change his/her ways.
- Discuss the event sequence. It could even be based on a story you may have already read or worked on in class.
- Have students work in groups to illustrate the sequence (carry out illustration tasks in art lessons). Sequence the illustrations and discuss.
- Discuss what you might say for each illustration. Don’t start to write yet; you are reaching agreement on the story sequence that will be common knowledge for all the class.
- When everyone has agreed on the story sequence and how it will work, start to write.
- Carry out the writing jointly and remind students about the strategies you can use. For example, using character’s reactions to allow readers to know what they are thinking. Use butcher’s paper and work together, allowing students to write words they know.
- Writing the jointly constructed folk tale could take up one or more complete sessions of Accelerated Literacy.
- For a joint construction of this nature, the teacher needs to have some possible examples prepared ahead of the lesson to help get the activity started. See above for examples.
- The outcome of the joint construction will be a class book that everyone can read. More than one joint construction can be attempted before students are asked to write independently and, in fact, it would be not be necessary for students in Year 1 or younger to write a folk tale independently.
Appendices
Sample plan

The following weekly plan is included as a *guide only* to the way teachers could move through the teaching sequence over a period of time. The plan’s content has been condensed. In reality, working through this text will take some weeks, and the following one-week plan could actually take two or even three weeks to complete. Parts of a session that are not finished in one lesson can be picked up in the next. Teachers will need to introduce the subsequent lesson/s carefully so students know what to expect, what the purpose of the lesson is, and where they are in the teaching sequence.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Low Order Literate Orientation</th>
<th>High Order Literate Orientation</th>
<th>Transformations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Begin high order on first page. There was an old mouse... Focus on characters first.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model an interpretation of the story. Discuss facts and lessons taught in them.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brief order on passage and next part of text to high order (discuss its job).</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss the purpose of orientation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revise transformations from previous day.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Revision and then continue from previous day.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There was an old mouse... Focus on what characters did.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss characters and lessons taught in them.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revise transformations from previous day.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Continue from previous day, if appropriate.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There was an old mouse... Focus on characters and lessons taught in them.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revise transformations from previous day.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Further revision.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus on why author describes the old mouse like this.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus on the problem for the old mouse.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revise transformations from previous day.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Continue from previous day.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There was an old mouse... Focus on characters and lessons taught in them.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revise transformations from previous day.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus on the problem for the old mouse.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revise transformations from previous day.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Term: 1**

**Teaching Focus:** Focus on an orientation of the story

**Week: 1**

Class: Year 1

Text: 'The Old Mouse' in Mouse Tales by Arnold Lobel

Sample weekly plan
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spelling</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>m/ou/se</td>
<td>Revise previous words:</td>
<td>Revise previous words:</td>
<td>Revise previous words:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sh/out</td>
<td>d/lay</td>
<td>th/ing/s and</td>
<td>street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>w/alk</td>
<td>w/alk</td>
<td>2 High Frequency words.</td>
<td>h/br/id</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Practise initial sounds and handwriting OR if appropriate</td>
<td>Practise initial sounds and handwriting OR if appropriate</td>
<td>Practise initial sounds and handwriting OR if appropriate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>JRW: There was an old mouse who went for a walk every day.</td>
<td>JRW: The old mouse did not like children.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Joint class exercise writing an Orientation introducing a character, saying what he did and what he didn’t like with an elaboration or example of this.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Text:** ‘The Old Mouse’ in *Mouse Tales* by Arnold Lobel

**Teaching Focus:** Focus on orientation of the story
We would take some billys, a couple of bullocks, and some tea and sugar.
There was an old mouse who went out for a walk every day.

The old mouse did not like children.

When he saw them on the street he would shout, “Go away, horrid things!”

One day the old mouse was taking his walk.

All at once, his braces broke, and his trousers fell down.

Some ladies came by.

“Help, help!” cried the old mouse.

But the ladies screamed, “Your trousers have fallen down!”

And they ran away.
The old mouse ran home and cried, “Help me!”

But his wife only said, “You look silly in your underwear,” and gave him a hit on the head.

The old mouse began to cry.

Some children passed by.

“Poor old mouse,” they said, “we will help you. Here is some chewing gum. It will hold your trousers up very well.”

“Look!” cried the old mouse. “My trousers are up! This chewing gum is splendid. These trousers will never fall down again!”

Those trousers never did fall down again. And after that, the old mouse was always kind to children when he went for his walk.
Early Childhood

These notes have been written to help teachers use the Accelerated Literacy teaching strategies in Year 1. However, they could also be used in the second half of Kindergarten (first year of school) and in Year 2 where students have difficulties with reading.

Outcomes of the teaching sequence

At the end of this teaching sequence, students should be able to:

- read the story studied fluently and interpret the illustrations at a high level
- discuss the story; give opinions about the author’s language choices; identify the story’s structure, theme and ideology
- spell chosen words and understand related spelling strategies
- use the story as a model for writing.

Notes

- The following notes have been written for teachers who have attended professional development workshops 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 first professional development workshop. Additionally, you could refer to http://www.nalp.edu.au.
- It is also assumed that teachers have read the text on which these notes are based and have a detailed understanding of the text before beginning a teaching sequence.
- Teachers are responsible for ensuring the suitability of the text on which these notes are based for their particular teaching context.

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