These notes have been written to help teachers use the Accelerated Literacy teaching strategies in Years 4 and 5. However, they could also be used with older students in Years 6 and 7 who have difficulties with reading.

Outcomes of the teaching sequence

At the end of this teaching sequence, students should be able to:
- read the passages studied fluently and with a high level of inferential comprehension
- 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.

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.
Teaching Notes

Yinti: desert child
Upper Primary
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Using this resource
Year level

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The text

Yinti: desert child
Synopsis of the story

*Yinti: desert child* is a collection of short stories about the everyday life of the Walmajarri people in the Great Sandy Desert, before white contact. The protagonist, Yinti, grows from a young boy to an adolescent as the stories unfold. Dramatic and poignant, the tales are illustrated by renowned artist Jimmy Pike.

Themes

The book describes the everyday life of the Walmajarri people in the decades before their final move to stations in the 1960s. It reveals how at home these people were in what is often perceived to be a harsh, uninhabitable environment.

Why use this story?

*Yinti: desert child* was written to satisfy a need for pre-contact stories to support the Aboriginal Studies curriculum being developed for Kimberley schools. The passages studied provide examples of literate language features and can be used:

- as models for recording oral histories in a fictionalised form
- as examples of good recounts which include an orientation, series of staged events and a reorientation
- as examples of narrative structures which can be applied to students’ own oral history stories
- to show how illustrations can add richness to the text.

Structure of the text

*Yinti: desert child* is a series of stories revolving around a central character, Yinti. Each story is a recount with an easily identifiable orientation and reorientation, or a narrative with an orientation, complication and resolution. Events are carefully staged.
As the stories develop there is less need for a detailed orientation to each story. Sometimes there is a prologue setting up the provenance of the story, or a coda. For example, in the narrative, ‘The Baby and The Eaglehawk’:

**Prologue:** When Yinti was a small boy … before Yinti was born.
**Orientation:** One day, a young woman … and try to catch it before she did.
**Complication:** But his attention was caught … and was struggling to take him higher.
**Resolution:** Startled by the woman’s shout … the eaglehawk’s sharp claws.
**Coda:** The baby boy grew up … which means “from the eaglehawk”.

And in the recount, ‘Yinti Catches Birds’:

**Orientation:** Yinti’s mother was camping with the two boys at a jila, a waterhole that lasts all through the year.
**Series of events:** One morning …, Soon …, Then …, When …, Before long …,
While …. After a long time …
**Re-orientation:** Later that day, the family had a good feed.
**Coda:** Yinti, who had caught all the meat … having provided for them all so well.

**Language features of the text**

**Passage one**

Using time to stage a story

In passage one (‘The Baby and the Eaglehawk’), time phrases are often used as sentence themes to emphasise the importance of the passage of time and the sequencing of events (eg One day, Meanwhile, Suddenly, All in a moment).

Telling when, why and where

Phrases that expand on processes (eg from the bushes nearby, in the air, to the coolamon, under a tree on a sandhill) make the writing more explicit and enable readers to visualise settings and actions.

Contrasting characters

The contrast between the characters adds tension. For example, the helpless baby kicking and gurgling happily on the coolamon contrasts dramatically with the strength, speed and power of the eagle. This contrast is set up in the orientation and so the conflict is foreshadowed.
Action/reaction sequences

These describe the events that occur in the stories and provide excitement and suspense. For example, in ‘The Baby and the Eaglehawk’:

Action: At the sound of the eaglehawk’s beating wings,
Reaction: the baby’s mother looked up from her work.
Action: Startled by the woman’s shout,
Reaction: he let the baby drop from his claws, and flew away.
Action: A bird settled on his outstretched hand.

And in ‘Yinti Catches Birds’:

Reaction: Yinti barely moved. He simply closed his fingers on the bird’s claws …
Action: Then another bird settled,
Reaction: and Yinti did the same thing again.

Using verbs or processes that describe how

The author uses words that describe the action vividly (eg gathering, gurgling, circling, settled, swooped, seized, leapt).

Illustrations elaborate on the text

Jimmy Pike’s colourful illustrations enhance the readers’ understanding of the desert landscape which Pat Lowe describes. The illustrations need to be ‘read’, as they often show the same characters twice in different stages of the story. As Pat Lowe notes in the Foreword, His illustrations bring the book to life.

Passage two

Using time to stage a story

In passage two (‘Yinti Catches Birds’), time phrases are often used as sentence themes to emphasise the importance of the passage of time and the sequencing of events (eg One morning, Soon, Then, While, When they had finished, When all was ready, Before long, After a long time, Later that day).

References to the seasons and the sun’s movements also help stage events (eg It was hot weather time, The sun was moving across the sky, The sun had gone well past overhead).
Telling when, why and where

Phrases that expand on processes (eg at a jila, under a tree on a sandhill with their mother, in the trees nearby, from the bushes growing near the jila) make the writing more explicit and enable readers to visualise settings and actions.

Using verbs or processes that describe how something occurs

The author uses words that describe the action vividly (eg perched, piled, notice, settled, floated, drowning, collected, raked, provided).

Illustrations elaborate on the text

Jimmy Pike’s colourful illustrations enhance the readers’ understanding of the desert landscape Pat Lowe describes.

Books with similar themes

Lowe, Pat with Jimmy Pike 2000, Desert Cowboy, Magabala Books, Broome, WA. Follows Yinti to a station and into adulthood.

Lowe, Pat with Jimmy Pike 1997, Desert Dog, Magabala Books, Broome, WA. Provides a dog’s perspective on desert and station life.

Richards, Eirlys, Hudson, Joyce & Lowe, Pat (eds) 2003, Out of the Desert, Magabala Books, Broome, WA. A collection of stories and art from the Walmajarri people, describing their remarkable exodus from remote desert country into modern society.

Accelerated Literacy teaching
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
The teaching sequence on *Yinti: desert child* aims to teach:

- how to read the study passages at 90 per cent accuracy or above
- how to discuss the passages, 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, about known incidents in a gripping narrative or recount format.

**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 general considerations 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**

**Teaching focus**

In the Foreword, Pat Lowe makes the following comments about the book’s illustrations:

- Jimmy Pike has made one picture to go with each story. Sometimes these illustrations show a single incident from the story, but many of them show more.
- Because of this, some pictures may seem to have more people in them than are in the story itself – maybe four instead of two. If you look at these pictures carefully, however, you will be able to see that there are still only two people in the illustration, but they are shown twice, at different stages in the story.
- Once you get used to this way of looking at the pictures, you will easily see which scenes each picture is showing.

Use the illustrations to help students discuss the main points during the low order literate orientation to each story.
Teaching focus

- Pat Lowe grew up in England and came out to Australia as an adult. She met Jimmy Pike in Perth and they returned to his childhood home in the Great Sandy Desert. They lived there for a number of years before moving to Broome.
- Jimmy and his family told Pat many stories of their childhood in the desert. These are the basis of this book. These events occurred to a range of people over a long period of time but Pat has changed things to have the stories relate to a central character, Yinti, who, like the children reading the stories, is growing and maturing. While the focus is on desert life in general, rather than Yinti’s character in particular, enough is written about his thoughts and feelings for children to be able to relate to him.

The stories are loosely grouped around particular events and times. For example, stories set in hot weather time, stories that involve eaglehawks, the influence of stations.

Teaching focus

- We meet Yinti and his family. He has more than one mother, a traditional Walmajarri arrangement.
- Yinti’s second mother decides to go night hunting.
- Yinti’s help is a bit misguided. Examine the illustration to predict and discuss what goes wrong.

Read ‘Yinti Goes Hunting’ to the class and then briefly discuss the following inferences.

Inferences

- Yinti still has a lot of bush skills to learn.
- His mother was a skilled hunter who, despite the fire, hung on to the possum.
- Desert people had ingenious hunting methods.

What you could say

**Preformulation**

In this first story we meet the main character Yinti and his family. We can tell that Yinti is still quite a young boy because he does something a bit silly. The moon is up and Yinti and his mother go night-hunting. They are carrying a firestick. Yinti’s mother asks him to do something to help her better see the possum she has found.

**Question:** Can you see what Yinti has done?
Reconceptualisation

Yes, he’s lit the grass under the tree to give her some light, but what problem can you see? Yes, the whole tree has caught fire! How will she get out of the tree?

Teaching focus

- This story occurred when Yinti was very small. He doesn’t remember it, but his mother told him what happened.
- Like most toddlers, Yinti was constantly on the go.
- It was hard to keep him in one place at night.
- Yinti’s night time wanderings resulted in injury one night.

Read ‘A Falling Star’ to the class and then briefly discuss the following inferences.

Inferences

- Children walking around at night was a concern.
- There were no doors or gates to shut to keep children from wandering.

Teaching focus

- Some of Yinti’s relations travelled long distances to work on cattle stations by the river. They periodically returned with unfamiliar gifts.
- This particular time, something special is brought back from the station.
- One day it is missing.

Read ‘The Story of Darby’ to the class and then briefly discuss the following inferences.

Inferences

- Life in the desert could be harsh and dangerous.
- If an eaglehawk can take a small dog, what about a baby?

Teaching focus

- This is a story Yinti heard about his grandfather.
- Eaglehawks often accompanied hunters, so as to seize any game that they might flush out.
- A woman is out gathering seeds.
- She leaves her young baby lying in the shade in a coolamon.
- The eaglehawk sees the movement of the baby.
- Examine the illustration: will the baby be hurt?

Read ‘The Baby and the Eaglehawk’ to the class and then briefly discuss the following inferences.
Inferences

- The baby was luckier than the little dog.
- The story could easily have had a different end.

Teaching focus

- Eaglehawks could be used to help people hunt and people liked to have them around.
- This story illustrates how eaglehawks helped hunters.

Read ‘The Eaglehawk and the Kangaroo’ to the class and then briefly discuss the following inferences.

Inferences

- People developed ingenious ways of getting food.
- Sometimes they went hungry.
- The baby could have suffered the same plight as the mala.

Teaching focus

- Like most children, Yinti sometimes teased others.
- His little brother, Kana, bore the brunt of his teasing.
- The illustration depicts a story Yinti’s mother used to tell him.
- This story was lesson in what teasing can lead to.
- It was told to Yinti to try to help him grow out of his jealousy and teasing.

Read ‘Yinti and Kana’ to the class and then briefly discuss the following inferences.

Inferences

- Many features of human relationships cross the boundaries of lifestyle and culture.
- Adults needed to be able to rely on older children to look after younger siblings, since they were often away during the day hunting.

Teaching focus

- This is another story with a moral that Yinti’s mother would tell.
- A powerless boy is starved and bullied by his older brother-in-law.
- The boy grows up and avenges this treatment.

Read ‘Another Desert Story’ to the class and then briefly discuss the following inferences.
Inferences

- The severity of the revenge on the older man illustrates the importance placed on fulfilling family obligations and caring for younger siblings.

Teaching focus

- Yinti is called on to fulfil another family obligation. Examine the illustration.
- Yinti’s age is gauged by his stage of hunting expertise— he is still quite small when this story takes place.
- Though small, Yinti has a keenly developed sense of direction and knowledge of the country.
- Being young, Yinti makes a careless mistake. Examine the illustration.

Read ‘Yinti the Guide’ to the class and then briefly discuss the following inferences.

Inferences

- Desert children were relatively independent.

Teaching focus

- Hail is small, round lumps of ice that fall from the sky like rain.
- It hurts if you are standing unprotected in the falling hail.
- Discuss the damage hail can do.
- How Yinti’s family copes with a heavy hailstorm.

Read ‘Hailstorm’ to the class and then briefly discuss the following inferences.

Inferences

- Yinti’s family used alternatives to housing to protect themselves from the weather.

Teaching focus

- Yinti’s impatience and anger get the better of him and he does something cruel.
- His nieces lose their favourite hunting dog.
- His family is not happy.

Read ‘Yinti in Trouble’ to the class and then briefly discuss the following inferences.
Inferences

- Yinti has a bad temper.
- It was cruel to kill his nieces’ favourite dog.

Teaching focus

- Yinti and Kana are very scared when something goes wrong while they are looking after their little nephew.
- Sadly, the little boy dies.
- But that is not the end of the sadness.

Read ‘A Desert Tragedy’ to the class and then briefly discuss the following inferences.

Inferences

- The little boy’s blind mother had lost the will to live.

Teaching focus

- Up to this point, most of Yinti’s bush skills have been learnt from his mother.
- Yinti is growing up and, along with the older boys, his peers are taking over as the chief instructors.
- This story tells us how Yinti learns to use spears, boomerangs and a shield.
- Yinti takes his training for manhood a bit too far and starts practising on himself and his little brother and nephew.

Read ‘Yinti Goes Training’ to the class and then briefly discuss the following inferences.

Inferences

- Yinti is still a child, despite his growing independence.

Teaching focus

- Wild dingos were hunted as food in Yinti’s country.
- Yinti’s hunting skills are growing.
- This particular story marks a proud moment in his life.

Read ‘Yinti and the Dingo’ to the class and then briefly discuss the following inferences.
Inferences

- Yinti’s mother’s surprise, and the fact that the dingo was too heavy for him to carry, suggests that killing the dingo was an impressive achievement for that time of Yinti’s life.

Teaching focus

- The weather becomes very hot towards the end of the desert’s dry season.
- At this time of the season, desert people relied on jilas, waterholes that last throughout the year.
- This story describes an ingenious method by which Yinti gets a feed for the family on one such hot day.

Read ‘Yinti Catches Birds’ to the class and then briefly discuss the following inferences.

Inferences

- Yinti is proud to have provided for his family.

Teaching focus

- Hot weather time meant that many families would share the one jila.
- It was the time of year when Yinti’s relations would catch up with one another.
- It was the time for meetings and singing.
- It was also the time for sorting out any troubles that had arisen during the year.
- Yinti witnesses a man’s punishment for stealing another man’s wife.
- The punishment goes ahead as planned by the old men but then the rules are broken. The man who breaks the rules is then punished.
- The whole ordeal nearly ends in tragedy for the wife-stealer.
- Later on, Yinti and his friends play a game acting out the scenes they had witnessed.

Read ‘A Punishment’ to the class and then briefly discuss the following inferences.

Inferences

- Adult life is revealing itself to Yinti as he grows older.

Teaching focus

- Another hot weather story.
- Yinti has an unsuccessful hunt.
- He becomes very hot and thirsty.
- He begins to hear a frightening noise.

Read ‘Ranyjipirra!’ to the class and then briefly discuss the following inferences.
Inferences

- The dangers of hunting alone.

Teaching focus

- Yinti is having a bad time with his hunting.
- He tries hard, but every day comes home empty-handed.

*Read ‘Out of Luck’ to the class and then briefly discuss the following inferences.*

Inferences

- A run of bad luck hunting would leave Yinti dispirited.

Teaching focus

- Yinti has a cousin whom he enjoys spending time with.
- This is the story of an adventure they have together.
- They hunt, find water, make a fire and wander home completely satisfied.

*Read ‘Yinti and Wara’ to the class and then briefly discuss the following inferences.*

Inferences

- The story demonstrates Yinti’s growing bush skills and independence.

Teaching focus

- Yinti takes his younger brother and nephew on an adventure.
- They find food and water and decide to spend the night out on their own.
- The following morning their family come looking for them.

*Read ‘Running Away’ to the class and then briefly discuss the following inferences.*

Inferences

- Yinti continues to grow towards manhood.

Teaching focus

- Yinti’s father is now an old man.
- He can no longer go hunting.
- Occasionally, Yinti stayed back from hunting and spent the day talking with his father.
- Yinti relates a story his father tells him about meeting a *kartiya* (a non-Indigenous person).
• Yinti’s father decides he wants to return to the country of his birth. He goes with the younger of his wives.
• After about a year the wife returns, alone.

Read ‘Yinti Loses His Father’ to the class and then briefly discuss the following inferences.

Inferences
This description of how long it was until the second wife returns – The moon waxed and waned many times, and the seasons had swung through their cycle – highlights how time was measured in the desert.

Teaching focus
• People are departing for stations along the river.
• Station life is attractive to many.
• This is an account of Yinti’s sister returning from the station.
• She stays in the desert for a few seasons.
• Yinti and his cousin decide to go back to the station with his sister and her family.

Read ‘Yinti Leaves the Desert’ to the class and then briefly discuss the following inferences.

Inferences
• Desert society is dying.
• This story explores some of the attractions of station life.

Teaching focus
• Yinti and his relations set off on the long journey to the station.
• At one point, water becomes scarce.
• The appearance of a range of hills signals their arrival in station country.
• We hear a story that belongs to these hills.

Read ‘The Journey’ to the class and then briefly discuss the following inferences.

Inferences
• The journey to the station is long and arduous and suspense builds about what life will be like there.
Teaching focus

- The station homestead is still a long way off.
- There are many cattle around.
- It is wet season time.
- Yinti’s brother-in-law decides that they will kill a bullock.
- It is Yinti’s first experience of cattle.

*Read ‘Killing a Bullock’ to the class and then briefly discuss the following inferences.*

Inferences

- Bullocks must have appeared an unbelievably rich bounty to people accustomed to the smaller, leaner game of the desert.

Teaching focus

- Some of the differences between the station country and the desert are described.
- Yinti sees his first windmill.
- Yinti is feeling nervous about arriving at the station.
- Yinti is puzzled about some footprints.
- Yinti sees his first horse.
- He sees his first *kartiya* (non-Indigenous person).
- He tastes his first bread and sugar.
- He encounters the strangeness of the station camp.

*Read ‘The Station’ to the class and then briefly discuss the following inferences.*

Inferences

- Yinti is beginning a new chapter in his life.

Read the story aloud

Having read the whole book, sections at a time, you may choose to read the whole book or parts of it again, particularly the sections that include the study passages. This rereading will help keep the study passages in context.

Refine the focus to the study passages

Once you have started reading the book and have read at least the first five or six stories, return to passage one (‘The Baby and the Eaglehawk’) to start looking at the author’s language choices in closer detail.
Low order literate orientation – Passage one

Passage one (‘The Baby and the Eaglehawk’) describes an extraordinary incident. The orientation introduces concurrent events: what the baby boy and woman are doing and, at the same time, what the eaglehawk is doing. There is a dramatic contrast between the innocence of the baby and the murderous intent of the eaglehawk. Next, there is an action/reaction sequence, with the eaglehawk seeking to carry off the baby and the mother seeking to prevent it. Finally, there is a happy resolution, with the baby surviving this ordeal. The coda tells us that he grew to be a strong man, which has been attributed to this incident.

Teaching focus

Points that could be discussed include the following.

The three characters:
- victim
- predator
- rescuer.

The contrast between the baby and the eaglehawk:
- The baby is innocent, happy, blissfully unaware of danger, kicking and gurgling in joy.
- The eaglehawk is hungry, watchful, makes powerful sudden movements and is intent on capturing its prey.

More than one thing happens at a time:
- The baby lies in a coolamon, kicking.
- The mother gathers seed.
- The eaglehawk watches.

Action/reaction sequences used to describe the events:
- The baby kicks/the eaglehawk swoops.
- The eaglehawk swoops/the mother shouts and waves.
- The mother shouts and waves/the eaglehawk drops the baby.
- The eaglehawk drops the baby/the mother runs to the baby.

While the focus is on action and plot movement, there is some building of suspense:
- The eaglehawk is watching.
- The description of the swooping eaglehawk is drawn out.
- The description of the effort of the lifting delays the baby’s escape.

The use of particular words and phrases to stage the events of the story:
- One day.
- Meanwhile.
- Suddenly.
- All in a moment.
What you could say

Preformulation
We’re looking at this amazing story about how a baby survived being taken by an eaglehawk. It hardly seems possible, does it? This is the baby here [point to the picture]. Can anybody see what’s happening to that baby? … It’s only one baby. When this man draws his pictures he draws the same characters in the pictures more than once to show the story. So an eaglehawk stole the little baby, but what do you think happened?

Question: Can you see what happened to this baby?

Reconceptualisation
That’s right: it stole the baby but he was too heavy to carry away. And also, the little baby’s mum – we can see her here – starts to shout and wave at the bird.

Question: Why do you think the eaglehawk dropped the baby?

Reconceptualisation
Yes. The mother has startled him or frightened him, the baby is heavy and so he has just dropped him. But look where he has landed…

Complete the teaching sequence, high order literate orientation, transformations, spelling and writing on passage one before beginning work on passage two (‘Yinti Catches Birds’).

Low order literate orientation – Passage two

Teaching focus

Orientation
- Students have met these characters in earlier stories, so little more is needed than a brief introduction.
- The difficulties posed by the scorching weather during the hot season, such as the waterholes drying up and the scarcity of game, are also described in earlier stories. In ‘Yinti Catches Birds’, one way of coping with these conditions is described.

Series of events
- Copying what he has seen an old man do, Yinti prepares to catch some birds. His mother and Kana help camouflage him.
- Yinti stays hidden in the jila (water hole) for many hours. By taking care and being patient, he is successful.
- Yinti stops late in the afternoon when they have enough birds.
- Yinti’s mother cleans the dirty water out of the jila, so it can fill up with fresh drinking water.
- They collect the birds.
Reorientation
- We get a detailed description of how the birds were cooked.
- There is enough food to feed everyone.

Coda
- Yinti didn’t boast, but he was feeling very pleased with himself. This final comment on his feelings rounds the story off nicely. It sums up the day for Yinti.

High order literate orientation – Passage one

Teaching focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure of text and wording</th>
<th>Why language choices were made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prologue</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When Yinti was a small boy he often heard people tell the story of the baby and the eaglehawk. This was a true story about Yinti’s grandfather, who had died before Yinti was born.</td>
<td>The prologue provides the origin of the story and describes how it relates to Yinti. The story is told as an account of something that actually happened to Yinti’s grandfather. The story must have been retold many times to be remembered even long after the baby has grown old and died.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orientation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One day, a young woman went to gather food, taking her baby son with her.</td>
<td><em>One day</em> indicates that the particular time is not significant to this story. We just need to know that it is in the past. We meet two of the main characters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She left the baby lying in a coolamon while she was gathering seeds from the bushes nearby.</td>
<td><em>While</em> here indicates that two things are happening at once. The mother is busy with food gathering at the same time as the baby is lying down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The baby lay there happily kicking and gurgling to himself. His mother was not far away.</td>
<td>The baby does what babies do. He is comfortable, happy and safe. The mother is close by, so she can still care for him.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Meanwhile a big eaglehawk was circling overhead, looking for a meal.**

*Meanwhile* signals that what the eaglehawk is doing is happening at the same time.

**Seeing the woman working below, he flew down and settled in a tree, where he sat watching her. He was waiting to see if she would flush out some game.**

*Seeing the woman* tells us what the eaglehawk did first. Then he flew down, settled, watched her and waited for game. The mother would not have been surprised by the presence of an eaglehawk. This is the same relationship described in the next story, ‘The Eaglehawk and the Kangaroo’.

**Then he would dive down to try to catch it before she did.**

*Then he would* signals the usual course of events if the eaglehawk spotted some game.

**Complication**

*But his attention was caught by something moving.*

*But* shows that something out of the ordinary is about to happen. We are seeing things from the eagle’s point of view.

**Action**

*The baby waved his legs and arms in the air.*

The happy contentment of the baby contrasts with the eaglehawk’s watchfulness.

**Reaction**

*The eaglehawk sat watching.*

This sentence creates suspense. Will the eaglehawk do the unthinkable?

**Attack events**

1. *Suddenly, with a swish of wings, the big bird swooped down to the coolamon.*

   The suddenness of the attack would have taken the mother off guard. *Swish* and *swoop* reinforce the speed of the attack.

2. *He seized the gurgling baby in his talons,*

   *Seized* and *talons* contrast with *gurgling* to make the eaglehawk sound cruel and deadly.

3. *and lifted him up.*

   Once the baby was firmly grasped the bird could fly up into the sky with him.
### Rescue attempt events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>At the sound of the eaglehawk’s beating wings, the baby’s mother looked up from her work.</strong></td>
<td>The timing words <em>suddenly, at the sound, all in a moment</em> move events along and provide a sense of urgency. Again, we have two things happening: the eagle is flying, and the mother is looking up, and observing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>She saw the eagle swoop, and heard her baby’s cry of fright.</strong></td>
<td>What she sees and what she hears. The author is spinning the action out and this builds suspense by delaying the final outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>All in a moment she leapt up</strong></td>
<td>Verbs express the mother’s panic. She leapt up, ran and shouted and waved all in the same moment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>and ran at the eaglehawk,</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>shouting and waving her arms.</strong></td>
<td>If she was <em>just in time</em> then it sounds like her shouting and waving is going to have an effect on the bird, while it is still safe for the baby to be dropped. Because the baby was heavy the eaglehawk was struggling to take him higher.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Resolution

| Startled by the woman’s shout, he let the baby drop from his claws, and flew away. | We discover that she manages to save the baby by surprising the eaglehawk. Startling or surprising an animal will often make it want to escape. And escape is easier without carrying prey. |

### Observation

| **Luckily, the baby landed in a clump of spinifex.** | We find out why the fall does not badly injure the baby. If students are unfamiliar with spinifex, show them a picture. |
**Action**

The grass pricked his body all over, but saved him from falling on the ground.

It would have been very painful for the baby to fall into this tough spikey grass but the alternative – falling straight onto the ground – would have killed him. This is why the author says *luckily* in the previous sentence.

**Reactions**

He gave a loud yell, and his mother ran to pick him up in her arms.

The baby is reacting to the pain he is feeling.

**Observation**

He was safe. But on both sides of his body blood was running from deep cuts made by the eaglehawk’s sharp claws.

The damage the baby suffers is clearly not fatal. *But* signals a change into something less positive than safety. He has quite severe wounds that are still bleeding.

**Coda – Observations**

The baby boy grew up to be a man, and lived to a good old age.

Not only did this baby grow to be a man, but he lived to old age. So his ordeal did not disadvantage him at all.

**Observations - Effect**

1. He was very strong, and people used to say the eaglehawk had given him strength.

Rather than having harmed the child, the whole experience is believed to have strengthened him.

2. But all his life he bore on his body the scars of the eaglehawk’s talons.

The earlier observations were all positive. The word *But* here signals something less positive. He *bore* the scars is another way of saying he had the scars on his body.

3. People called him Waparnujangka, which means “from the eaglehawk”.

His nickname came from the incident.
What you could say

Preformulation
Let’s look carefully at the beginning of the story of ‘The Baby and the Eaglehawk’. We have already looked at the bit that tells us where this story comes from. Now let’s look at the way Pat Lowe has told us all about when it happened and who the main characters are in this story.

Question: So how does the author start off her story about Yinti’s grandfather?

Reconceptualisation
Yes, good. This story has been told a lot, but people don’t know exactly when it happened. So Pat Lowe just says it was ‘one day’. It was fairly long ago, wasn’t it, because it’s about Yinti’s grandfather when he was a baby? First, the author introduces the baby’s mother. She is the young woman.

So we know when it happened and we know about one of the characters.

Question: What was this young woman doing?

Reconceptualisation
Yes. Pat Lowe just tells us she went to gather food. I think it was away from other people because they are not mentioned.

Complete the teaching sequence, high order literate orientation, transformations, spelling and writing on passage one before beginning work on passage two.

High order literate orientation – Passage two

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</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yinti’s mother was camping with the two boys at a jila, a waterhole that lasts all through the year.</td>
<td>The setting is introduced. The family are camping at a waterhole that contains water all year around. This also draws birds to the location.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One morning she asked Yinti to catch some birds. It was hot-weather time, and most of the seasonal waterholes called jumu had dried up. Yinti’s mother had cleaned out the jila with her nguwalkarlam so that fresh water could come in. Soon a whole flock of birds came down to drink at this, the only waterhole for a long way. Yinti and Kana sat under a tree on a sandhill with their mother, and watched the birds coming in for water. A good many of them perched on trees nearby talking to one another and making a lot of noise, while others flew down to the waterhole to drink.

In the heat, a low-energy method of feeding oneself would be better than a method that required a lot of work. A lot of birds have come to drink the water. The scarcity of water is repeated because this is a reason for so many birds arriving. The large numbers of the birds is repeated. It was this that causes Yinti, Kana and their mother begin to think about bird catching.

Event 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yinti had once seen an old man catching birds in a waterhole, so he knew what to do.</th>
<th>Yinti has learnt how to catch birds by observation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He went down to the jila with his mother and waited while she filled up her big makura with enough water to last all day.</td>
<td>The mother’s need for water reminds us of the extreme heat and tells us how long Yinti is expected to be in the hole.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then Yinti climbed into the hole and sat down in the water, which came up to his waist.</td>
<td>The water-filled hole is not very big. Possibly only big enough for a child to fit in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He put his hands under the water, and pulled out handfuls of mud, which he rubbed all over his upper body and his arms, and even his head.</td>
<td>Yinti is disguising his body and his smell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While Yinti was doing this, Kana and his mother collected leafy branches from the bushes growing near the jila. They piled these into the waterhole, to cover Yinti.</td>
<td>The amount of detail in the description of how Yinti sets up for the task of catching birds gives the reader a thorough understanding. It actually provides directions that one could follow if one were hungry on a hot day in the desert.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When they had finished, Yinti could not be seen at all from outside. They left a space in the top of the bushes for the birds to fly in. 

This is the effect of their activity. The birds would think that Yinti is a tree growing out of the jila. The trap was set.

When all was ready, Yinti’s mother and brother went back to their camp and left Yinti sitting by himself in the waterhole.

The next part of the work is done by Yinti. His mother and Kana needed to stay out of sight if Yinti was to be successful.

### Event 2

All covered with grey mud, Yinti sat very still. He held his muddy hand just above the surface of the water. Before long, the birds started to come back to the jila for water. A few at a time, they came flying down through the heaped-up branches. They didn’t notice Yinti sitting in the water, as still as a log. A bird settled on his outstretched hand. Yinti barely moved. He simply closed his fingers on the bird’s claws, and quickly pulled it under the water. In a few moments it had drowned. Yinti let go, and the body floated up to the surface. Then another bird settled, and Yinti did the same thing again. Soon, there were a number of little wet bodies floating around Yinti in the jila. But the birds kept coming and landing, and Yinti kept on drowning them.

Catching the birds takes patience and skill. Again, the step-by-step account of Yinti’s actions give a clear image of the procedure he follows.

Many, many birds are killed. They are only little so a large number are needed to feed the family.

While Yinti sat in the waterhole drowning birds, the sun was moving across the sky. His mother and Kana stayed away in their camp. They could see the birds flying into the bushes over the waterhole, but they did not see many flying out again.

The movement of the sun across the sky indicates that Yinti is in the hole many hours. Kana and his mother can observe his success but do not come near the waterhole because this would scare the birds away.
After a long time, when the sun had gone well past overhead, no more birds came down to drink. Yinti was starting to feel tired and cramped from sitting in one place, even though it was cool there in the water, shaded from the sun by all the branches. He decided he had caught enough birds for one day. So Yinti stood up, pushing his head and shoulders out through the bushes that had been hiding him, and shouted out.

The length of time is repeated to emphasise Yinti’s patience and perseverance. Even a relatively relaxed sort of hunting like this is tiring after many hours. Yinti’s actions show that he has finished his task.

### Event 3

| Kana and his mother had been watching from the sandhill, and could see there were not many birds around now. They walked down to the jila, and Yinti climbed out. Between them, they picked up all the dead birds and threw them out to one side. Then Yinti’s mother used her tarta to bale the now dirty water out of the jila so that it could slowly fill up again with fresh. |
| It is now Kana’s and Yinti’s mother’s turn to work. They collect the birds and restore the waterhole to a fit state for drinking. |

### Event 4

| The woman and her two boys collected all the dead birds and carried them up to their camp. Yinti’s mother built a big fire. When it had burnt down to red coals, she dug a shallow pit next to it, and raked in some of the coals. Kana helped her to put all the birds, big ones and small ones, into the cooking pit. His mother raked more coals and hot ash and then sand over the birds, and left them to cook. |
| A description of the cooking procedure. The mother makes the fire and prepares the ‘oven’. Kana assists her when the ‘oven’ is ready. There is a range of different sized birds. |

### Final result of the sequence of events and feelings

| Later that day, the family had a good feed. Yinti, who had caught all the meat for the day, didn’t say much, but he knew his mother was pleased with him, and he was proud of having provided for them all so well. |
| The meal is a satisfying one for the family. Yinti is proud but not boastful and his mother is pleased, which nicely concludes the story. |
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.

Transformations – Passage one

Text

*When Yinti was a small boy he often heard people tell the story of the baby and the eaglehawk. This was a true story about Yinti’s grandfather, who had died before Yinti was born.*

*One day, a young woman went to gather food, taking her baby son with her. She left the baby lying in a coolamon while she was gathering seeds from the bushes nearby. The baby lay there happily kicking and gurgling to himself. His mother was not far away.*

*Meanwhile a big eaglehawk was circling overhead, looking for a meal. Seeing the woman working below, he flew down and settled in a tree, where he sat watching her. He was waiting to see if she would flush out some game. Then he would dive down and try to catch it before she did. But his attention was caught by something moving.*

*The baby waved his legs and arms in the air. The eaglehawk sat watching. Suddenly, with a swish of wings, the big bird swooped down to the coolamon. He seized the gurgling baby in his talons, and lifted him up.*

*At the sound of the eaglehawk’s beating wings, the baby’s mother looked up from her work. She saw the eagle swoop, and heard her baby’s cry of fright. All in a moment she leapt up and ran at the eaglehawk, shouting and waving her arms. She was just in time. The eaglehawk had lifted the crying baby into the air and was struggling to take him higher. Startled by the woman’s shout, he let the baby drop from his claws, and flew away. Luckily, the baby landed in a clump of spinifex.*
The grass pricked his body all over, but saved him from falling on the ground. He gave a loud yell, and his mother ran to pick him up in her arms. He was safe. But on both sides of his body blood was running from deep cuts made by the eaglehawk’s sharp claws.

The baby boy grew up to be a man, and lived to a good old age. He was very strong, and people used to say the eaglehawk had given him strength. But all his life he bore on his body the scars of the eaglehawk’s talons. People called him Waparnujangka, which means “from the eaglehawk”.

Goals of the transformations

Comprehension
These paragraphs introduce the characters and setting of this particular story. The contrast between the baby and the eaglehawk, and the fact that the eaglehawk is looking for food, sets up a degree of tension and provides a hint of what is to follow. It is important that students understand that the author knows how the story is going to progress before she starts writing it, and that this part of the story is designed to set up what comes next.

Word recognition leading to spelling
The main spelling focus for this transformation will be engaging in joint reconstructed writing so that students can take on the role of the author to consider the language choices that are important in the orientation to the narrative.

Writing
Joint reconstructed writing on this passage will prepare students for other writing exercises in which they experiment with using Pat Lowe’s strategy for writing the orientation for a narrative. She introduces the characters and uses contrast and descriptive expansions to build tension by providing a hint of the danger to come.

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

One day / , / a young woman / went to gather food / , / taking her baby son with her / . / She left the baby / lying in a coolamon / while / she was gathering seeds / from the bushes nearby / . / The baby lay there / happily kicking / and gurgling to himself / . / His mother / was not far away / . /
Meanwhile a big eaglehawk was circling overhead looking for a meal. Seeing the woman working below, he flew down and settled in a tree where he sat watching her. He was waiting to see if she would flush out some game. Then he would dive down to try to catch it before she did. But his attention was caught by something moving.

Teaching focus

- Many narratives start with an orientation. Most of the stories in this book do.
- The role of a story’s orientation is to set readers up for the problem that follows. It tells us the setting, who will be in the story and what they are doing at the time of the story.
- Expansions on location and activity emphasise that these are important points to take note of.
- Authors often give the reader a little hint of what is to come, to whet their appetite for the story.
- Suspense is an important part of a narrative. Pat Lowe uses descriptive expansions and contrast to create an initial sense of unease and tension.

Mother and baby

When
The exact time of the story is not given. The earlier prelude has set it in the past.

Who
Being young, she is possibly a new mother.

What the mother is doing
She is taking part in her daily and usually harmless routine.

Expansion on what
The baby is introduced into the story.

Where
The author locates the baby a little distance from the mother.

This helps set up the problem.

The mother is busy with her normal activity and therefore less likely to notice the threat posed by the eaglehawk.

The author repeats that the mother is nearby to make sure that the reader realises that this is important.
What the baby is doing
This is usual behaviour for a baby.
Nothing seems to be wrong at all.

Expansions
Later in the story the kicking is important; it is what makes the eaglehawk notice the baby.

Expansions underline the happy innocence of the baby, which will contrast with the hungry watchfulness of the eaglehawk we are to meet shortly. This contrast highlights the baby’s vulnerability.

The mother is not being careless. She is just engaging in her usual daily tasks within hearing distance of the baby, ready to go to him if he should need her.

The predator the eaglehawk
*Meanwhile* indicates that this is happening at the same time as the mother’s and baby’s actions.

*Overhead* tells us that the eaglehawk was in the same place as the mother and baby.

We meet the eaglehawk. Knowing he is hungry explains his viewpoint when he sees the baby.

What the eaglehawk is doing
This is what prompts the eaglehawk’s next action.

The woman is still going about her normal activity.

The response of the eaglehawk.

Where the eaglehawk went.

The eaglehawk’s attention is on the woman.

Watching is part of a predator’s normal behaviour.

This is not unusual behaviour; a relationship existed between hunters and hungry eaglehawks. This repeats and therefore stresses that the eaglehawk was hungry.

Expansion of the response
*Then* tells us that something would automatically follow if the woman flushed out some game.

The detail of the eaglehawk’s intention and the baby’s vulnerability gives us a hint of the danger to come, creating tension for the reader.

This is the eaglehawk’s natural behaviour when he sees game.

This is, again, normal behaviour for an eaglehawk when he sees game.
What you could say

**Preformulation**
Let’s discuss how Pat Lowe describes the baby, so we know he is alone and vulnerable. We know he is kicking and that that’s what babies do when they are lying down. They love it, don’t they? He was also doing something else.

**Question:** What else was he doing as well as kicking?

**Reconceptualisation**
Yes, he was gurgling. But remember his mother was busy gathering seeds.

**Question:** So who was he gurgling to?

**Reconceptualisation**
Very good! He’s alone. His mother is close by, but he is happy making baby noises to himself. So by making sure the reader knows the baby’s kicking a lot and alone, Pat Lowe makes him sound vulnerable. He is open to attack by a predator.

**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 – Passage one

This text is an upper primary level text, so it would be reasonable to assume that students would be well into negotiating the transitional stage of spelling. Therefore, work on words that help students use visual strategies to notice larger chunks of letters that go together to make orthographic patterns.

**Spelling Suggestions for spelling – Passage one**

This text is an upper primary level text, so it would be reasonable to assume that students would be well into negotiating the transitional stage of spelling. Therefore, work on words that help students use visual strategies to notice larger chunks of letters that go together to make orthographic patterns.

**drop – e to add – ing**

- g/urgl/ing
- c/irc/ling
- t/ak/ing
- str/uggl/ing
- s/ettl/ing

**compound words**

- eagle/hawk
- mean/while
- near/by
- be/fore
- over/head
- be/low
- grand/father

**–er**

- g/ath/er
- m/oth/er
- ove/er
- high/er
- gr/and/father

**–ing**

- t/ak/ing
- k/ick/ing
- g/urgl/ing
- g/ather/ing
- l/ook/ing
- w/ork/ing
- w/at/ch/ing
- w/ait/ing
- see/ing

**–oo–**

- f/oo/d
- g/oo/d
- c/oo/l/a/mon
- l/oo/king
- sw/oo/p/ed
- bl/oo/d

**–sh**

- sh–
  - she
- sh/out
- sh/out/ing
- sh/arps

- sw–
  - sw/oo/p/ed
  - sw/ish

- str–
  - str/ength
  - str/ong
  - str/uggl/ing

**–gr–**

- gr/ound
- gr/and/father
- gr/ass

- fr–
  - fr/ight
  - fr/om

- fl–
  - fl/ight
  - fl/ew
  - fl/ush

- str–
  - str/ength
  - str/ong
  - str/uggl/ing

**–le**

- gurgl/le
- struggl/le
- sett/le
- circ/le

**–le**

- s/udder/ly
- l/ucki/ly

**–ly**

- s/eed/s
- b/ush/es

**–s and – es**

- for plural
- s/eed/s
- b/ush/es

**–ing**

- w/ing/s
- some/th/ing
The passage is rich in descriptive verbs that contrast the movements of the baby with those of the eaglehawk.

**Words that describe the baby’s innocent behaviour:***

- ly/ing
- h/appil/ly
- g/urgil/ing

**Words that describe the eaglehawk’s hungry, watchful behaviour:***

- c/ircl/ing
- l/ook/ing
- s/ettle/d
- w/atcl/ing
- w/ait/ing
- d/ive

**A good word to use if you want to have two things happening at the same time:**

m/ean/wh/ile

What you could say

**Looking at ‘le’ at the end of words**

**Preformulation**

_T_: To be good writers, you’ve got to be able to write easily. And writing easily means that spelling comes to you easily. Okay? So I’m just going to show you a few patterns that come out of that passage… Now what’s this word here?

_S_: Gurgle.

_T_: Gurgle without the –ing. Okay, it’s the same thing. It’s what the baby was doing, gurgling. And what’s this word here?

_S_: Circle.

_T_: And it’s coming from circling [pointing to word in sentence]. This is a verb, this is what they were doing. If you add the –ing, it means it’s going on over and over. It’s continuing to happen, okay? When you add the -ing on. Now I want to make sure you know how to add the –ing on these words…

**Question:** What’s the pattern you can see on all of these words? [gurgle, circle, eagle, settle, struggle]

_S_: The all have _le_ at the end.

**Reconceptualisation**

_T_: Good boy, they all end with –le: gurg–le, circ–le, eag–le, sett–le, strugg–le.
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.

Examples

gurgle: c.1400, gurgitation, a medical term for ‘gurgling heard in the abdomen’, from M.L. gurgulationem (nom. gurgulatio), of imitative origin. Extended use, in reference to water over stones, is first recorded 1713

circle: c.1305, from O.Fr. cercle, from L. circulus ‘small ring’, dim. of circus (q.v.)

happy: 1340, ‘lucky,’ from hap ‘chance, fortune’ (see haphazard), sense of ‘very glad’, first recorded c.1390. From Gk. to Ir., a great majority of the European words for ‘happy’ at first meant ‘lucky.’ An exception is Welsh, where the word used first meant ‘wise’.

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.
Examples

Example one
How Pat Lowe makes the baby sound vulnerable.

**Who and what**  The baby lay there
**expansion 1**  happily kicking
**expansion 2**  and gurgling to himself.

**Teaching focus**
- The baby presumably can’t move away.
- The baby is happily unaware of the danger; expansions are used to tell the reader this.
- The baby’s innocent movement draws the attention of the hungry eaglehawk.

**What you could say**
Now we are going to write the sentence where Pat Lowe describes the baby’s behaviour and also makes it clear to us, when we later hear about the eaglehawk, that the baby can’t defend itself. What does the baby do in the coolamon? It’s not sitting, up is it? The baby can’t crawl yet.

That’s right. The baby lay there. What sort of a letter do we use to start a sentence? A capital letter, that’s right.

Now, we already know the baby is in a coolamon, so what word does Pat Lowe use instead, to avoid repetition? That’s right: there.

Next we have expansions that tell us more about what the baby does in the coolamon. What is he doing while he lies there? Happily kicking, that’s right. Now happily is made from happy, isn’t it? But who remembers what happens when we add the ‘-ly’ on to happy? That’s right: the $y$ becomes $i$. There’s another expansion that reinforces the happiness of the baby …

Continue like this, mixing a discussion of the meaning of the text with reasons for writing it like this and how to spell the words.

**Further examples**
Reconstruct sentences, paragraphs and sections of text as appropriate. For example:
- how Pat Lowe introduces the mother and baby
- how Pat Lowe makes the eaglehawk sound dangerous
- how contrast is used in the orientation to heighten the threat of the eaglehawk and the vulnerability of the baby.
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 *Yinti: desert child* would include:

- overall goals such as writing about an incident that involves a predator in a gripping narrative format using the simple structure studied: prologue (which provides the origin of the story), orientation, complication, resolution, coda
- short-term goals such as contrasting characters to increase tension, including actions/reactions to add drama, using expansions to add suspense, using expansions to provide vivid mental pictures, and using action/reaction sequences to describe events.

Activities

Workshop one: Using expansions to provide vivid mental images

**Who and what**  
The baby lay there  
**expansion 1**  
happily kicking  
**expansion 2**  
and gurgling to himself.  
**Meanwhile** (ignore this word for now)

**Who and what**  
a big eaglehawk was circling  
**expansion 1**  
overhead,  
**expansion 2**  
looking for a meal

Then imagine possible characters and what they might be doing just before the action and jointly write sentences that describe their activities, using what students have learnt from the sentences studied.

Example

**Who and what**  
A little girl was playing  
**Expansion 1**  
in the sand,  
**Expansion 2**  
making little houses for her leaf dolls.

When students feel ready, they can write their own sentences.
Workshop two: Using contrast between characters to build tension

Who and what  The baby lay there
Expansion 1  happily kicking
Expansion 2  and gurgling to himself.
Joining word  Meanwhile
Who and what  a big eaglehawk was circling
Expansion 1  overhead,
Expansion 2  looking for a meal

With the class, build up a scenario that has a character in danger. Determine who or what is a threat and what will be the eventual outcome. Use what has been learnt from Pat Lowe’s work to write a couple of sentences that use contrast to make the victim sound vulnerable and the predator sound scary. No violent action yet: we are getting ready for action later. Be sure to include expansions to make the images vivid (as practised in the earlier workshop).

Example

Who and what  The small boy squatted on the bank,
Expansions 1  his whole mind occupied
2  with the little bait fish he was quietly trying to hook
3  for his grandmother.
Joining word  Meanwhile,
Who and what  a crocodile lay in wait,
Expansions 1  listening for the splash
2  of his next meal.

Workshop three: Using actions/reactions to add suspense

Action  Seeing the woman
Expansion  working below,
Reaction  he flew down
Expansions 1  and settled in a tree,
2  where he sat
3  watching her.

Continue discussing the scenario.
Example

**Action**  Seeing the boy
**Expansion** sitting on the bank,
**Reaction** he swam closer
**Expansions**
1 and settled in the shallows
2 without moving,

By including action and reaction in their writing, students learn to build suspense.

**Joint construction of a narrative**

The work could begin with the students (or the teacher) collecting interesting oral histories or creating possible scenarios that might have occurred. From these, students would choose the ones they consider would be most interesting for a broad audience. They would decide which characters are central to the plot and what actions to include.

Students may fictionalise the stories and invent a central protagonist or they may prefer to present the stories as short autobiographical accounts.

Make sure that the class discusses the above thoroughly before starting to jointly construct a class story. This joint construction must precede asking students to write a narrative themselves.
Sample weekly 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 plans could actually take three or more 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.
## Text
*Yinti: desert child* by Pat Lowe

### Teaching focus
Introduce the book *Yinti: desert child*. Introduce text 1, 'The Baby and the Eaglehawk' and the overall structure of the text.

<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>Low order literate orientation</td>
<td>Introduce book. Use the illustration to talk through the characters and action of the story. Outline overall structure of the story. Identify the main characters and their roles as victim, predator and rescuer.</td>
<td>Provide opportunity for handover on: the characters and their roles as victim, predator and rescuer; the overall structure of the story. Explore the concurrent nature of actions in the orientation.</td>
<td>Provide opportunity for handover on: the characters and their roles as victim, predator and rescuer; the overall structure of the story. Explore the concurrent nature of actions in the orientation. Explore how contrast is used to emphasise the strength of the eaglehawk and the vulnerability of the baby.</td>
<td>Revise aspects of the orientation that set us up for the eaglehawk’s attack. Discuss the series of actions, reactions and events that constitute the eaglehawk’s attack.</td>
<td>Provide opportunity for handover on: how we are set up for the eaglehawk’s attack; the series of actions, reactions and events that constitute the eaglehawk’s attack. Identify and discuss the five events of the rescue attempt. Discuss the linear nature of the actions, reactions and events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High order literate orientation</td>
<td>Find the prologue. Find the rest of the orientation. Identify the characters and the language used to position them in particular ways.</td>
<td>Provide opportunity for handover, identifying: the prologue and the rest of the orientation; language used to position characters in particular ways; identify the timing words that tell us the actions are taking place at the same time.</td>
<td>Provide opportunity for handover, identifying: the prologue and the rest of the orientation; language used to position characters in particular ways; identify the timing words that tell us the actions are taking place at the same time.</td>
<td>Students identify and circle the complication. Identify the action of the baby and the reaction of the eaglehawk that sets off the chain of attack events. Identify the three attack events.</td>
<td>Students identify and circle the orientation and the complication. Find the five events that make up the mother’s attempt to rescue her child. Contrast the linear nature of the time with the concurrent timeframe of actions in the complication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformations</td>
<td>Focus on the function of the prelude. When <em>Yinti</em> was a small boy ... who had died / before <em>Yinti</em> was born /</td>
<td>Focus on the orientation: when this event occurred and who is involved. One day / a young woman / went to gather food / ... / while / she was gathering seeds / from the bushes nearby /</td>
<td>Focus on the expansion, which emphasises the contentment and vulnerability of the baby. The baby / lay there / happily kicking / and gurgling / to himself / . / His mother / was not far away / . / Meanwhile / a big eaglehawk / was circling overhead / . / looking for a meal / . /</td>
<td>Focus on the introduction of the predator. The function of ‘meanwhile’ and his point of view. Readers know what he will see. Meanwhile / a big eaglehawk / was circling overhead / . / The author has previously established a relationship between hunters and eaglehawks. Seeing the woman / working below / . / he flew down / and settled in a tree / . / where he sat watching her / . /</td>
<td>The author has previously established a relationship between hunters and eaglehawks. Seeing the woman / working below / . / he flew down / and settled in a tree / . / where he sat watching her / . /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>– <em>le</em> (gurg/e, eag/le, circ/le, sett/le, strugg/le, le). Revise ‘drop e to adding’ (gurgling, circling, settling, struggling).</td>
<td>Revise -e words. Revise ‘drop e to adding’ on -e words. Revise timing words (while, mean/while, then, suddenly).</td>
<td>Find other words in the passage that use ‘the drop e to adding’ pattern. Revise timing words.</td>
<td>Revise words and patterns studied this week: <em>e</em> making a vowel long (while, gam/e, div/e, some).</td>
<td>Jointly reconstruct. The baby lay there / happily kicking / and gurgling to himself / . / His mother / was not far away / . / Meanwhile / a big eaglehawk / was circling overhead / . / looking for a meal / . /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Begin discussions for writing workshop.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Sample weekly plan*
When Yinti was a small boy

he often heard people tell the story of the baby and the eaglehawk.

This was a true story about Yinti’s grandfather,

who had died before Yinti was born.

One day, a young woman went to gather food,

taking her baby son with her.

She left the baby lying in a coolamon

while she was gathering seeds from the bushes nearby.

The baby lay there happily kicking

and gurgling to himself.

His mother was not far away.

Meanwhile a big eaglehawk was circling overhead,

looking for a meal.

Seeing the woman working below,
he flew down

and settled in a tree,

where he sat watching her.

He was waiting to see

if she would flush out some game.

Then he would dive down

and try to catch it before she did.

But his attention was caught by something moving.

The baby waved his legs and arms in the air.

The eaglehawk sat watching.

Suddenly, with a swish of wings, the big bird swooped down to the coolamon.

He seized the gurgling baby in his talons,

and lifted him up.
At the sound of the eaglehawk's beating wings, the baby's mother looked up from her work.

She saw the eagle swoop,

and heard her baby’s cry of fright.

All in a moment she leapt up

and ran at the eaglehawk,

shouting and waving her arms.

She was just in time.

The eaglehawk had lifted the crying baby into the air

and was struggling to take him higher.

Startled by the woman’s shout,

he let the baby drop from his claws,

and flew away.

Luckily, the baby landed in a clump of spinifex.
The grass pricked his body all over,

but saved him from falling on the ground.

He gave a loud yell,

and his mother ran to pick him up in her arms.

He was safe.

But on both sides of his body blood was running from deep cuts made by the eaglehawk’s sharp claws.

The baby boy grew up to be a man,

and lived to a good old age.

He was very strong,

and people used to say the eaglehawk had given him strength.

But all his life he bore on his body the scars of the eaglehawk’s talons.

People called him Waparnujangka,

which means “from the eaglehawk”.

Extracts from Yinti Desert Child are reproduced by permission of the publisher, Magabala Books Aboriginal Corporation. Copyright © Pat Lowe and Jimmy Pike, 1992
Yinti’s mother was camping with the two boys at a jila, a waterhole that lasts all through the year.

One morning she asked Yinti to catch some birds.

It was hot-weather time,

and most of the seasonal waterholes called jumu had dried up.

Yinti’s mother had cleaned out the jila with her nguwalkalarn so that fresh water could come in.

Soon a whole flock of birds came down to drink at this, the only waterhole for a long way.

Yinti and Kana sat under a tree on a sandhill with their mother, and watched the birds coming in for water.

A good many of them perched on trees nearby talking to one another and making a lot of noise,

while others flew down to the waterhole to drink.
Yinti had once seen an old man catching birds in a waterhole, so he knew what to do.

He went down to the jila with his mother and waited while she filled up her big makura with enough water to last all day.

Then Yinti climbed into the hole and sat down in the water, which came up to his waist.

He put his hands under the water, and pulled out handfuls of mud, which he rubbed all over his upper body and his arms, and even his head.

While Yinti was doing this, Kana and his mother collected leafy branches from the bushes growing near the jila.

They piled these into the waterhole, to cover Yinti.
When they had finished,

Yinti could not be seen at all from outside.

They left a space in the top of the bushes for the birds to fly in.

When all was ready,

Yinti’s mother and brother went back to their camp

and left Yinti sitting by himself in the waterhole.

All covered with grey mud, Yinti sat very still.

He held his muddy hand just above the surface of the water.

Before long, the birds started to come back to the jila for water.

A few at a time, they came flying down through the heaped-up branches.

They didn’t notice Yinti sitting in the water, as still as a log.

A bird settled on his outstretched hand.

Yinti barely moved.
He simply closed his fingers on the bird’s claws,
and quickly pulled it under the water.

In a few moments it had drowned.

Yinti let go,
and the body floated up to the surface.

Then another bird settled,
and Yinti did the same thing again.

Soon, there were a number of little wet bodies floating around Yinti in the jila.

But the birds kept coming and landing,
and Yinti kept on drowning them.

While Yinti sat in the waterhole drowning birds,
the sun was moving across the sky.

His mother and Kana stayed away in their camp.
They could see the birds flying into the bushes over the waterhole,
but they did not see many flying out again.
After a long time, when the sun had gone well past overhead,
no more birds came down to drink.

Yinti was starting to feel tired and cramped from sitting in one place,
even though it was cool there in the water, shaded from the sun by all
the branches.

He decided he had caught enough birds for one day.

So Yinti stood up, pushing his head and shoulders out through the
bushes that had been hiding him,
and shouted out.

Kana and his mother had been watching from the sandhill,
and could see there were not many birds around now.

They walked down to the jila,
and Yinti climbed out.

Between them, they picked up all the dead birds
and threw them out to one side.

Then Yinti’s mother used her tarta to bale the now dirty water out of
the jila.
so that it could slowly fill up again with fresh.

The woman and her two boys collected all the dead birds and carried them up to their camp.

Yinti’s mother built a big fire.

When it had burnt down to red coals, she dug a shallow pit next to it, and raked in some of the coals.

Kana helped her to put all the birds, big ones and small ones, into the cooking pit.

His mother raked more coals and hot ash and then sand over the birds, and left them to cook.

Later that day, the family had a good feed. Yinti, who had caught all the meat for the day, didn’t say much, but he knew his mother was pleased with him, and he was proud of having provided for them all so well.
Upper Primary

These notes have been written to help teachers use the Accelerated Literacy teaching strategies in Years 4 and 5. However, they could also be used with older students in Years 6 and 7 who have difficulties with reading.

Outcomes of the teaching sequence

At the end of this teaching sequence, students should be able to:
- read the passages studied fluently and with a high level of inferential comprehension
- 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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