



Accelerated Literacy pedagogy in a balanced literacy program

Introduction

The South Australian Accelerated Literacy Program (SAALP) provides a teaching and learning *routine* or *cycle* which serves as a scaffold, initially in the learning area of English, to support teachers and students. At the same time, it provides an *explicit pedagogy* inside that routine, a language for negotiating teaching and learning which can be employed in all areas of the curriculum.

Since the program began in DECD schools in 2006, the focus on literacy education has grown considerably. The Literacy Secretariat provides guidelines on effective teaching in a balanced literacy program. The following diagram represents the different dimensions considered by the Literacy Secretariat to be held in balance for effective literacy learning:

MODELS OF BALANCED LITERACY PROGRAMS
MODES: Speaking & Listening, Reading & Viewing, Writing & Representing, Multi-modal
LITERATE RESOURCES: Code breaker, Text participant, Text user, Text analyst
TEXT TYPES: Recount, Procedure, Narrative, Report, Explanation, Persuasion, Review
SKILLS: Oral language, phonemic awareness, phonics/spelling/sight words, fluency, comprehension/vocabulary
MULTI-LITERACIES MAP: Functional, Meaning Maker, Critical, Transformer

SAALP contributes to the development of effective literacy teaching and learning within a balanced literacy program. It provides both a routine and the pedagogy for the foundational instructional time. However, this teaching routine does not provide all the elements needed for a balanced literacy program. *Importantly, consolidation and extension is required if students are to become independently literate.* On the following pages, the contribution of the Accelerated Literacy in each of these dimensions listed above will be outlined.

The Accelerated Literacy teaching routine and the four literate roles (Freebody and Luke)

The teaching routine engages students as **text analysts** throughout the teaching routine, as they discuss why and how the author has constructed the text, from its cultural purpose, through to particular word choices. Students are supported as **text participants** from Low Order Literate Orientation in order to build meaning, then use this knowledge in High Order Literate Orientation, Transformations, and Spelling to develop their role as **code-breaker** to finally become informed **text users**, as readers, speakers and writers.

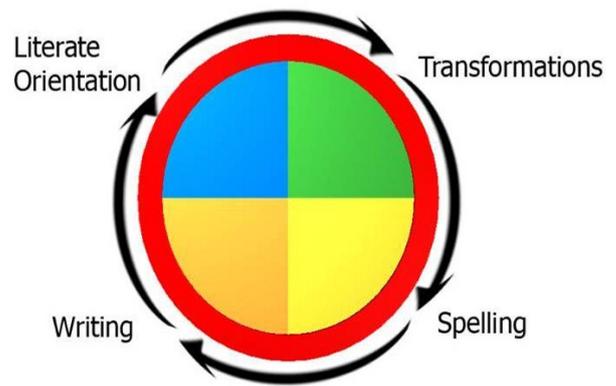
Application and Consolidation: the language, understandings and orientation developed through this intensive teaching and learning routine are applied through supported engagement with less familiar texts, whether written, visual, or multimodal, until students are able to independently and critically engage with a range of texts created for different purposes.



The Accelerated Literacy teaching routine & the three modes:

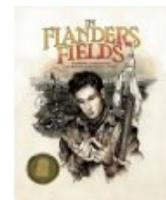
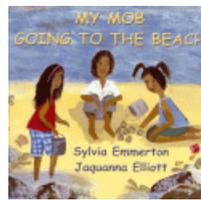
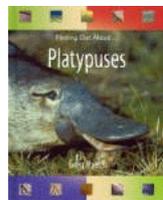
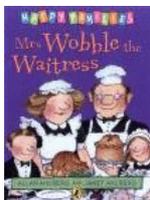
reading and viewing; speaking and listening; writing and representing

The Accelerated Literacy teaching routine begins with the analysis of written and multimodal texts. The early focus is on **reading, viewing,** and **oral language**, as the class identifies and discusses the literate resources made available in the text, from whole text down to individual words and parts of words. The teacher then works with the class to **write and illustrate** new texts, employing those literate resources for the students' own purposes, and representing student worlds in rich and satisfying ways.



Speaking and listening is a focus throughout the teaching routine, as teacher and students together negotiate the learning with identified learning goals. An important principle of the scaffolding routine is the monitoring and facilitation of 'handover', the take-up of literate knowledge by students, realised through their talk which becomes increasingly extended as their literate knowledge grows. An important end goal is the 'long turn', where students are able to construct coherent blocks of talk, either by themselves, or as a class, with highly reduced teacher support.

Application and Consolidation: this gradual move from analysis (through reading and viewing) to synthesis (in writing) negotiated through intentional classroom conversation is a principle which can be applied in all learning areas, when engaging with any text type, oral or written.



The Accelerated Literacy teaching routine and text types: written, visual, oral and multi-modal, relevant for different learning areas

Accelerated Literacy pedagogy focuses on the teaching and learning about narratives as its foundation. The reasons for this are:

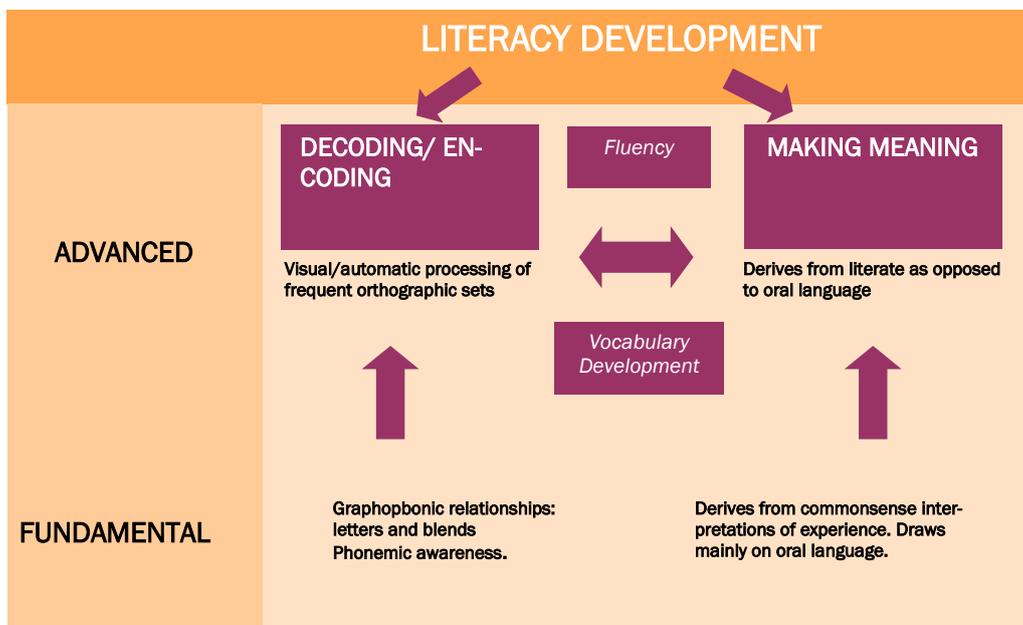
- ◆ For students with little literate knowledge, narrative provides a strong emotional attachment with which they can identify, and which provides an entry point into literate knowledge
- ◆ Highly literate narratives are a complex and rich resource for developing knowledge and ways of talking about language (a meta-language).
- ◆ The deciphering of written text is a great hurdle for low-literate students to overcome. It is important that explicit instruction addresses this decoding/encoding strand adequately, in order that students are able to attend to making meaning.
- ◆ While teachers are themselves becoming familiar with the AL teaching routine, it is sensible to remain focused on one genre or text-type, until they are confident and ready to apply their new pedagogic knowledge to another text-type.

Application and Consolidation: While the teaching routine is practised fundamentally in the learning area of English, it can be used for any text type in any learning area. Consultants support teachers in applying their pedagogic and linguistic knowledge in teaching literacy through, for example, science and society and environment. Importantly, the AL teaching routine can be adapted for explicit instruction in non-fiction texts such as information reports, expositions and procedures, which are highly valued in many learning areas.

Regardless of their learning area focus in Accelerated Literacy program, teachers are responsible for teaching the literate requirements of all learning areas. Accelerated Literacy pedagogy will support teacher knowledge in achieving this.

The Accelerated Literacy teaching routine and the ‘big six’: phonological knowledge, phonics, vocabulary development, fluency and comprehension and oral language.

The Accelerated Literacy Literacy Development model identifies the two strands of teaching and learning required for success in literacy acquisition.



Adapted from NALP professional development resources

The Decoding / encoding strand attends to the ‘constrained’ skills needed to decipher the English language. At the **fundamental** level, these include Phonemic awareness and Phonics, including names and sounds of letters, and basic blends. In order to be able to attend to making meaning, students need to attain automaticity in decoding, and **advanced** spellers are able to spell through recognising by sight a wide range of English letter patterns that enable them to spend by analogy. As students are supported from fundamental to advanced level, they are introduced to all four aspects of spelling knowledge; phonic, visual, morphemic, etymological.

The AL Spelling model begins with analytic phonics and spelling, ie taking apart words from the text, and moves to synthetic phonics and spelling where students construct new words using chunks previously learned.

The Meaning making or comprehension strand attends to the 'unconstrained' skills of making meaning. At the fundamental level, students draw on their common sense to make meaning within a text, but the AL Literate Orientation draws student attention to the literate meanings realised within the text.

Fluent reading both contributes to, and is supported by decoding and comprehension. Fluent reading requires regular reading of a familiar text. This is an important goal of Literate Orientation.

Vocabulary development is supported by familiarisation of commonly used words and through deep study of complex and context appropriate vocabulary. Both of these are addressed in all stages of the teaching sequence, with a strong emphasis on handover, not just superficial introduction. Students attend to meaning, decoding, encoding of words from the text and extrapolate from these words to expand vocabulary with familiar patterns .

Oral language is developed in two ways. First, through classroom discussion and role play around rich texts, the pedagogy develops student control of the highly literate language available in the texts selected for study. Second, strategies learned from the study of rich texts, are used in the joint and independent construction of new, written texts, with teacher and students working together to expand vocabulary that will represent student worlds in rich and satisfying ways.

Application and Consolidation: the explicit teaching within the AL teaching sequence makes the 'invisible visible'. Skills and knowledge from the decoding/encoding strand need to be consolidated to the level of automaticity through regular systematic practice outside the AL lesson, ie both sight words and spelling. Learning from the decoding and meaning making strands is applied through the supported analysis of unfamiliar texts for students who need the additional support, and with the support of one-to-one reading instruction for those who are not reading at age appropriate level.

All students need to regularly read and write independently for a range of purposes in all learning areas. Their application of knowledge will be supported by what they have learned in explicit literacy lessons. Schools are encouraged to participate in the SA *Premier's Reading Challenge* to support frequent reading for enjoyment.

The Accelerated Literacy teaching routine and the Australian English curriculum

The Accelerated Literacy teaching routine focuses predominantly on highly literate texts within the learning area of English. Many, but not all of the learning goals in Literacy, Language and Literature are addressed through this process.

Application and Consolidation: Accelerated Literacy consultants will support teachers in planning for learning goals within the learning area of English and workshops may be offered from time to time on using AL pedagogy with additional text types. Teachers are responsible for ensuring that required texts are introduced to students, either through text selection for explicit teaching, or in other learning areas.

Bibliography

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