PART 1

Literacy for the 21st century

Classrooms are different today: they have become communities of learners where students assume more responsibility for learning. There's a hum as students talk about the texts they are reading, share their writing and work together in small groups. Students are more culturally and linguistically diverse, and many are English learners. The role of teachers has changed, too. Teachers teach, model, guide and nurture student learning through the instructional programs they create. Effective teachers:

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- balance explicit instruction with authentic application
- address the Australian Curriculum
- integrate reading and writing, speaking and listening, and viewing
- teach with a variety of texts
- know and use a variety of instructional approaches
- incorporate digital technologies into literacy instruction
- understand the nature of child and learner development
- differentiate instruction so every student can succeed
- link assessment and instruction
- contribute to the learning community in which they teach.

Sample pages

CHAPTER 1

Becoming an effective teacher of language, literature and literacy

PLAN: Preview the learning outcomes

After studying this chapter, you'll be prepared to respond to these points:

LO 1.1 Describe each role represented in the Four Resources Model.

LO 1.2 Describe the three strands of the Australian Curriculum: English, and discuss their usefulness for effective teaching.

LO 1.3 Compare theories about how students learn language, literature and literacy.

LO 1.4 Explain each of the five cueing systems.

LO 1.5 Explain a balanced approach to instruction, with reference to the Four Resources Model and student involvement.

LO 1.6 Explain how and why teachers differentiate instruction.

LO 1.7 Describe ways in which effective teachers scaffold students' reading and writing, and oral language development.

LO 1.8 Describe how teachers link instruction and assessment.

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Check the **Compendium**, which follows **Chapter 12**, for more information on the **teaching strategies** that are highlighted in this chapter.

A requirement of the Australian Curriculum: English is that all teachers appreciate how each of the three interrelated strands—language, literature and literacy—support students' growing understanding and use of Standard Australian English. Each strand 'interacts with and enriches the other strands in creative and flexible ways, the fabric of the curriculum being strengthened by the threads within each sub-strand' (©Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Agency [ACARA], 2017, para. 1). This book supports this curriculum design, and presents a balanced and integrated way of looking at how to develop the skills required to become an effective teacher of language, literature and literacy.

It is no accident that literature is placed at the centre of the Australian Curriculum: English. Children's literature is the vehicle that parents and teachers use to introduce children to ways of speaking, reading, thinking, acting and responding. The use of quality literature, which Paterson (2005) considers goes hand in hand with respecting children's worth, enables children to experience and appreciate the multifaceted dimensions of language and literacy (Hill, 2006). Knowing about language and literacy, and knowing 'how' to teach each of these strands in a balanced and integrated way, is the challenge that all teachers experience.

Equally challenging for some is gaining a clear and concise definition of the two terms 'language' and 'literacy'. In this text, *language* is defined as knowledge of the human communication systems that include speech as well as written symbols, sounds, words, syntactic patterns, gestures and letters. *Literacy*, on the other hand, is now considered a broader concept as it involves not only spoken and written language, but the knowledge to be able to understand and apply their use in a variety of contexts. It is noted that understanding of what it means to be literate has changed.

Traditional definitions of literacy focused on the ability to read print, but now literacy is considered a tool, a means to participate more fully in the technological society of the 21st century. Kress (2003), Kist (2005), and Gee and Hayes (2011) talk about new literacies—sophisticated technological ways to read and write multimodal texts incorporating words, images and sounds—that provide opportunities for students to create innovative spaces for making meaning, exploring their world and voicing their lives. These texts often combine varied forms of representation, including computer graphics, video clips and digital photos. Students read and write these texts differently from the way they manage traditional books (Karchmer, Mallette, Kara-Soteriou & Leu, 2005). Eshet (2012) and Eshet-Alkalai and Amichai-Hamburger (2004) have provided and researched a conceptual model of digital literacy. By 2014, they had listed and supported six skills required for digital literacy:

- **Photo-visual skills:** The ability to 'read' (using all four elements of the Four Resources Model practices of Freebody & Luke, 1990) to comprehend and respond to instructions and messages presented in visual-graphic form, with text and sound added, as in graphic-user interfaces and computer games.
- **Reproduction digital skills:** The ability to analyse, synthesise and create new meanings or interpretations from combining prior knowledge with 'shreds of information' in all forms of media (text, graphic and sound), and the mixture of their presentations.
- **Branching digital skills:** The ability to develop and adapt to new kinds of digital thinking skills in order to manage the multidimensional features of hypermedia technology. That is, 'the ability to stay oriented and avoid getting lost in the hyperspace while navigating through complex knowledge domains' (Lazar, Bessier, Ceaparu, Robinson & Schneidermann, 2003*), caused by the embedding of large numbers of hyperlinks in the text (Meyers, 2011*) (*cited in Eshet, 2012, p. 270).
- **Socio-emotional digital skills:** The ability to operate in cyberspace, detecting fraud and deception in chat rooms, and knowing what and how to share information and emotion in social media, the consequence of the ubiquitous development of the internet. At this level, the coding and text-level resources are well developed so that meaning making and critical analytical resources are free to operate at high levels.

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- **Real-time digital skills:** The ability to manage large volumes of fast-moving sound and visual (text and image) stimuli when using games and graphic interfaces, simultaneously. The skills allow users to text-switch, respond to feedback and 'synchronise chaotic multimedia stimuli' (Eshet-Alkalai & Chajut, 2014; cited in Eshet, 2012, p. 272).
- **Real-time thinking:** The ability to master the simultaneous inputs of data, navigate the complexities of hyperlinked information, understand and adapt to new hardware and software programs, and manage the cognitive, social and emotional elements of the internet. In effect, real-time thinking 'covers the full scope of the critical skills for effective performance in the digital era' (Eshet, 2012, p. 272).

As can be seen from the previous discussion, knowing how to teach literacy, which introduces teachers and learners to the use of various communication modes in a confident and successful way, can be challenging, given that Freebody (2007) suggests that being literate is about 'communicating productively, responsively and responsibly' (p. 9). Equally, learning and teaching language use, vocabulary knowledge, and the patterns and expectations of grammar and discourse to children from a variety of backgrounds can be a daunting task.

In an effort to outline the complexity of the teacher's role in instruction in language, literature and literacy, the following discussion will begin with two elements and a corresponding balanced framework to guide instruction. The two elements that will be a major focus in this book are *reading* and *writing*. The framework is the Four Resources Model developed by two Australian academics in response to ongoing debate about how to teach literacy (Freebody & Luke, 1990). Please note that in no way does this emphasis detract from our understanding of the pivotal role that oral language plays in reading and writing development. In fact, oral language is the basis for the development of literacy skills (Bradfield et al., 2013).

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Reading is a complex process of understanding written text. Readers do more than simply recognise letters and words; they interpret meaning in a way that is appropriate to the type of text they are reading and to its purpose. Peter Afflerbach (2007) describes reading as a dynamic, strategic and goal-oriented process. Freebody and Luke (1990) state that an effective reader has to adopt four roles: *code breaker*, *text user*, *text participant* and *text analyst*. These roles are not sequential, and all four need to be developed and used simultaneously from the first stages of learning to read and write. We will argue that these roles apply equally to the reading and writing of both digital and print texts, especially in terms of Eshet's notion of real-time thinking (2012).

Writing is a complex process of producing text. Writers do more than write and spell words correctly. They use the grammar and structure of texts to create meaning in a way that is appropriate to the text type and to their purpose. The activity in which writers and readers engage is therefore *dynamic*. At the same time, readers and writers consciously monitor their learning and so are *strategic*. Reading and writing are purposeful; readers and writers have a plan in mind, so their reading and writing are *goal-oriented*. Reading and writing are not passive activities, and a balanced approach to instruction is therefore required.

Appreciation of the balanced position that readers and writers need to adopt is provided in the Four Resources Model. According to Freebody and Luke, who acknowledged that 'texts and discourses have a way of taking on a life of their own' (1990, p. 1), there are four roles that participants practise to achieve successful literacy outcomes. These roles are referred to throughout this text, and they are outlined here in this opening chapter.

We explore these roles further in Principle 2, later in this chapter, where we connect the roles to language learning theories and the ways in which effective teachers scaffold, model, guide and nurture the development of reading and writing for student success. In Principle 2, we also consider the reciprocal relationship between speaking, reading and writing, and expand the Four Resources Model to writing, speaking and production.

The Four Resources Model

The code-breaker role

In reading and writing printed text, this role is concerned with recognising the marks on the page; and in non-print texts, recognising the visual and auditory representations on computer screens or in other media formats. These marks or codes can be linguistic, visual, auditory, spatial and gestural, together with the cues or bits of information that assist code use. Recognition of such cues is a necessary, but not sufficient, aspect of making meaning from texts (Hornsby, 2000). For example, children might recognise the letter 'X' on an ancient map (code breaker). However, they would need to use prior knowledge of pirate stories to realise that this is a treasure map (text user), and that 'X' marks the spot where the treasure is buried (text participant). Even then, the children would want to know who created the map so that they could determine its reliability/authenticity (text analyst). The code-breaker role refers therefore to more than phonics (the sound–symbol relationship of letters).

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The text-user role

Proficient text users are aware of text type and purpose. If the text is a set of instructions, text users need to read carefully or they may be unable to complete the task it is directing them to do, perhaps to construct a set of drawers from an IKEA flat pack or to bake Anzac biscuits. On the other hand, if it is a novel they are reading for leisure, they can skip some of the 'boring bits' without necessarily losing the thread of the plot. A text user is always aware of text structure, and that texts are read and written in different ways. Anstey and Bull (2004, p. 96) list some pertinent questions that text users may employ:

- What is the purpose of this text, and what is my purpose in using it?
- How have the uses of this text shaped its composition?
- What should I do with this text in this context?
- What are my options or alternatives after reading?

In the later chapters on developing fluent readers and writers, we will use examples of these questions to train children to become proficient text users.

The text-participant role

From a very early age, children are text participants because they learn to make and share meaning of the world around them (Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), 2009). Can you think of the way in which babies create text using oral language? When engaging with a text, an essential requirement is that the text makes or creates understanding and meaning. The reader draws upon prior experiences, including social, cultural and prior reading experiences, and applies them to the text. If we did not use prior experience and

knowledge, words would just be a collection of symbols to which we attached sounds. You get a feel for this concept of meaningless 'barking at print' if you attempt to read something written in Spanish when you have no knowledge or experience of that language. Similarly, it is very difficult to write about an unknown topic; there is little or no information to draw upon.

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Imagine city children reading a story set on a farm. They might encounter problems with concepts such as *irrigation*, *agistment* or *mulching*. Effective teachers discuss topics, themes, unknown words and text knowledge with children before introducing a new and unfamiliar text to them.

The text-analyst role

A text analyst looks at the text with a critical eye (and sometimes with a cynical eye) and asks:

- Who wrote this?
- Why did they write it?
- What do they want me to believe?
- How are they trying to position me?
- What are they not telling me? (Deliberately or unconsciously?)

A text analyst is aware that authors make choices in terms of text structure, grammar, words, ideas and concepts. These choices reflect the world view of the author. Commenting on the same tennis match, the headline in an Australian newspaper might read 'Brilliant Stosur defeats Williams', while an American newspaper might have 'Injured Williams' brave loss'. An English paper might say 'Grand Slam Final a Classic Match'. All are reporting on the same tennis game, but to the Australian editor it is all about the winning Australian player; and to the American editor it is about the losing American player; while to the British editor the important issue is the game itself (especially as there is no English player competing). These differences are neither bad nor good. In fact, they are unavoidable. Even if an author tried *not* to include his or her own world view in a text, such avoidance in itself is an ideological statement.

The important point for teachers and student readers is that even if the author's ideology is couched in conscious choices or unconscious assumptions, a critical reader and writer is aware of the ideological dimensions of texts and their authors. The reader and writer then learns how to observe the silences in the text, to make choices and to evaluate the text.

To sum up, the four roles that are part of the Four Resources Model are:

- Code breaking, which involves working out the sound–symbol relationships of the text, and using the syntactic patterns of the language.
- Text using, which entails deciding on the purpose and use of a particular text type.
- Text participating, which is about making or creating meaning in a text.
- Text analysing, which involves critical evaluation of the ideological dimensions of the text.

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Applying such a powerful framework to reading and writing instruction enables us to avoid some of the arguments that have filled professional journals and newspapers over the last three decades: 'phonics' versus 'whole word'; 'Whole Language' versus 'skills-based' approaches; and 'meaning' versus 'word recognition'. In effect, knowledge and application of the Four Resources Model, a balanced and integrated theoretical approach to instruction, provides the foundation for a balanced program in teaching English and English literacy. The model also applies to reading and writing instruction in any other language, and to the reading and creating of visual and digital texts. The model enables us to set clear goals for literacy instruction.

In summary, the overriding goal of literacy instruction is to ensure that all students achieve their full potential as effective users of literacy. We believe this potential is best achieved through a balanced literacy program, and this chapter introduces six principles that underpin such a program. These principles are stated in terms of what effective teachers do and they provide the foundation for the chapters that follow.

Before engaging in that discussion, there is a final point that needs to be considered in discussions about what effective teachers do. From the first day of the school year, effective teachers collaborate with the most important group of contributors to children's literacy development: parents and carers.

Edwards (2004) explains that parent–teacher collaborations 'involve rethinking the relationship between home and school such that students' opportunities to learn are expanded' (p. xvii). Teachers begin by accepting that parents and carers view their role in different ways, and by becoming more knowledgeable about cultural diversity and how it affects parent–teacher relationships.

Teachers respect the literacy activities of families. Nearly all families incorporate speaking, reading and writing activities into their daily routines, but these activities may differ from school-based literacy activities that teachers value. Because culture and learning are closely linked, some children are at risk of failing because they are not familiar with the literacy activities and language patterns that teachers use (Gay, 2000; Purcell-Gates, 2000). Miller (citing Beck, McKeown & Kukan, 2013) highlights problems for many EAL/D students and students from economically disadvantaged communities who have not been exposed to literature and rich spoken interactions (2017, p. 2). Nieto (2002) urges teachers to recognise and appreciate the value of parents' and carers' knowledge and use of literacy activities, even though they may not match teachers' expectations. Nieto suggests that teachers use the activities that occur at home to develop a literacy program that provides children with knowledge of the inextricable link between the class and home, and is culturally responsive.

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▶ Principle 1: Effective teachers know the curriculum, and organise for language, literature and literacy instruction

Effective teachers know the curriculum and they know their students. In a balanced approach to literacy, teachers organise for instruction by creating their own programs to meet their students' needs and their school's standards. The major influence on the organisation of those programs is the Australian Curriculum: English, developed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), and regularly updated since its first appearance in 2008. The English Curriculum is organised around three strands:

- **Language strand.** Students learn, apply and make choices about the ways in which language works when they compose and comprehend particular text types. In studying a range of texts, students learn how to apply knowledge of grammar, spelling, vocabulary and punctuation.
- **Literature strand.** Students appreciate, analyse and compose a range of literary texts in both print and multimodal formats. Texts include contemporary and traditional examples of world literature, Australian and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander literature, and texts from the Asia-Pacific region.

- **Literacy strand.** Students develop a growing sophistication in analysing, composing and comprehending a range of texts appropriate to the school, local, national and world communities. These texts necessarily include print, digital, visual and multimodal texts.

However, effective teachers of English are contributing members of a profession that links literacy to other dimensions of the curriculum: general capabilities in using literacy that encompass information and communications technology across different disciplines, for intercultural understandings, for personal purposes and in social contexts, for critical and creative thinking, and for ethical understanding. Curriculum priorities for teaching Indigenous Australian culture and Asian studies are addressed as well (Morgan, Comber, Freebody & Nixon, 2014, p. 6).

The strands, capabilities and priorities overlap and support each other, and there are programs that allow integration of the strands: school work programs, units of work, literacy blocks, literature focus units, and reading and writing workshops, guided reading and writing, and basal reading programs. All the programs, except for basal reading programs, allow effective teachers to develop and implement instructional programs that reflect the principles introduced in this chapter, and thus:

- create a community of learners in their classroom
- implement the components of a balanced approach
- scaffold students' reading and writing experiences through modelling, joint constructions of texts and guided analysis of texts
- demonstrate knowledge of the curriculum and of their students, and in the process, continue to add to their curriculum knowledge.

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PLANNING FOR INSTRUCTION

There are three principal ways that teachers organise their daily teaching. Firstly, they consult the School Work Program in each discipline area. Next, they refer to the Units of Work that are developed for individual year levels in every school. Finally, they write their own lesson plans that provide more detail of the daily teaching and learning to occur during a Literacy Block.

Every school has an English work program that is compiled by staff. The work program depicts the developmental nature of the Australian Curriculum as it applies to the school, and the children in every year level. Work programs are broken down by classroom teachers in each year level and they address more specifically what needs to be taught and learned in individual year levels. These programs are termed Units of Work that can run for one semester or less, and again they are constructively aligned to curriculum requirements. Examples of Work Programs and Units of Work can be found on education sites in every Australian state.

THE LITERACY BLOCK

Units of Work are enacted by teachers who plan for integrated explicit literacy instruction for approximately one and a half hours daily. The time is called the Literacy Block. The idea of having a set time for balanced instruction was developed further by Fountas and Pinnell (1996) who divided the time so that children received instruction and exposure to reading (shared, guided and independent reading), speaking, listening, viewing and writing (shared, guided and independent writing) in groups and on an individual basis. Units of Work are distilled by teachers who write lesson plans that include the balanced approach to instruction that the daily Literacy Block should provide.

The following is an example of a Unit of Work that was developed by Year 6 teachers. The unit's focus can be aligned to the Australian Curriculum descriptor for literature and context (ACELT 1613). In making the connections between their own experiences and those of the characters, the students compare three texts in regard to story content, character development and the authors' language use.

Colin Thiele published *Storm Boy* in 1964 and it has generated two films, produced in 1976 and 2017. One of the featured characters in the 1976 film is the wise and knowledgeable Fingerbone Bill, an Indigenous man who introduces Mike (whom he calls Storm Boy) to the world of the Coorong. One comparison novel in terms of language, characters and theme is Tim Winton's *Blueback* (1997), where a boy, Axel, lives alone with his mother, again in a remote seashore location. A third novel, Leonie Norrington's *The Barrumbi Kids* (2002), explores relationships among families in an Indigenous community in northern Australia, and presents another perspective on Indigenous Australians.

In daily lesson planning, teachers will engage the children in responding to the books and comparing the themes, which could include setting and conservation. Teachers will plan ways in which to explore the relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous characters that are presented in two of the books. Teachers can also take the opportunity to explore the language of advertising used in the *Storm Boy* films, and especially the reliance on colourful persuasive language. Finally, the teachers will demonstrate to their classes how to explore the language of newspapers and of book and film reviews. In this kind of integrated unit all three strands, as well as general capabilities and priorities, are addressed, studied and learned as students read and write about the many possibilities for exploring language, literature and literacy.

Effective teachers have developed literature focus units at every year level, and in early childhood there are a wide variety of quality picture books that can be used. *Possum Magic* and *Are We There Yet?* are two picture books that feature places visited as the characters travel around Australia. The ways in which the respective authors have included their settings can be discussed by younger students who can view the text from the position of the young main character, or from the author's perspective and methods used for crafting the texts. For example, what language features have been included to describe characters and setting?

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SHARED AND GUIDED READING AND WRITING

When planning a balanced Literacy Block, teachers need to know what they are teaching, how they will teach and how to differentiate the instruction for individual learners.

The 'what' to teach comes from the curriculum, and in many schools teachers use literary texts to teach the curriculum. The texts are introduced to children in a session that is called shared reading. Shared reading is often the first session in the Literacy Block. The children sit on the floor and the teacher shares the story, discusses its features and then directs the children to the next stage, which is frequently referred to as guided reading.

Teachers use guided reading and writing to personalise instruction and meet individual students' needs. In guided reading, small homogeneous groups of students meet with the teacher for a set amount of time to read a book, or another text, at their instructional level. The teacher introduces this text and guides students through it, using knowledge of earlier assessment blended with knowledge of detailed instruction required to meet the group's learning needs. Teacher-directed lessons and **minilessons** often take place as teachers introduce, consolidate and guide students as they apply and practise skills and strategies that support word identification and comprehension. Guided writing programs operate similarly to teacher-directed minilessons, but with the aim of students taking responsibility for their own writing as the teacher supervises and guides the members of the group.

Effective teachers plan to read stories to and for older children in small groups, literature circles and book clubs. To begin, teachers select five or six books at varying reading levels to meet the needs of all students in the class. Often, the books are related in some way—perhaps representing the same theme, or written by the same author. The teacher collects multiple copies of each book and gives a book talk to introduce the set of books. Students then choose one book from the set, and form a group to read and respond to that book. They set a reading and discussion schedule and work independently,

although teachers sometimes sit in on the discussions. Through the experience of reading and discussing a book together, students develop responsibility for completing assignments and learn more about how to respond to books. Some children can be assisted by the teacher providing a recorded version of the story, which the child listens to while following the text. Buddy readers can supply a similar support.

With careful planning, these same strategies can be adapted to incorporate other texts, including digital texts. Another way that teachers plan for learning is in reading and writing workshops that can be aligned to guided reading and writing. Students select texts, read independently at their own pace and conference with the teacher about their reading. Similarly, in a writing workshop, students write texts on topics that they choose, and the teacher conferences with them about their writing. Teachers set aside a time for reading and writing workshops, and all students read and write while the teacher conferences with small groups. Again, with careful planning, the use of digital publishing platforms and online resources can be incorporated into the workshop. Children can use computers to research a chosen author or sometimes even talk to the author using Skype!

Teachers also teach minilessons on reading and writing strategies and skills. In a workshop program, students read and write more like adults do, making choices, working independently and developing responsibility. Many teachers report that reading and writing workshops are motivational, and that children in Years 4 to 8 particularly value the opportunity to make choices and work independently.

In their planning, teachers sometimes make use of commercially produced reading programs that include sets of basal readers, workbooks, supplementary readers, digital and multimodal texts and other instructional materials. The teachers' guide provides detailed procedures for teaching, and often includes assessment instruments. These commercial reading programs are offered to schools as complete literacy programs, but the preselected and purpose-developed texts, together with accompanying resources, are insufficient. They do not offer the balanced program offered by effective teachers of English language, literature and literacy. Beyond these commercially produced resources, effective teachers provide learning programs where students engage with real books and other meaningful texts in authentic learning activities during the Literacy Block. As students develop confidence and responsibility, effective teachers also balance the ways in which they introduce their students to difficult and challenging texts.

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▶ Principle 2: Effective teachers understand how students learn language, literature and literacy

Effective English teachers know their students as individuals, and their teaching is informed by a solid foundation of theories about learning and language learning. Language learning theories and associated models and approaches for teaching language are embedded in a range of psychological, sociological and philosophical learning theories. The major learning theories concerned are behaviourism, social constructivism, cognition and nativism. Theories of cognitive development and information processing theories are important, and are covered in other publications. As well, other publications provide implications for language teaching arising from sociocultural and social-critical theories.

Effective English teachers also know their craft; they know about English language, literature and literacy, and have an understanding of a range of language theories that underpin a curriculum that seeks to engage a diverse range of learners. Theories enlighten teachers' classroom practices, and good practices enliven theories.

Tracey and Morrow (2006) argue that multiple theoretical perspectives improve the quality of literacy instruction. There is evidence of a range and balance of language theories in the Four Resources Model (Freebody & Luke, 1990) that include skills-based language learning, Whole Language, genre, critical

literacy and multiliteracies. Figure 1.1 presents an overview of those learning theories that have influenced policy developments and teaching practice, an overview that links theories and practice to a balanced approach to teaching reading and writing. The following discussion will highlight those theories, models and approaches that have influenced language and literacy teaching and learning in the past four decades.

BEHAVIOURISM

Behaviourists focus on the observable and measurable aspects of student behaviour. They believe that behaviour can be learned or unlearned, and that learning is the result of stimulus-and-response actions (O'Donohue & Kitchener, 1998). How does this relate to literacy teaching? Firstly, reading and writing are viewed as conditioned responses. Behaviourism is teacher-centred theory because it focuses on the teacher's active role as a dispenser of knowledge, together with the use of teacher-proof resources and classroom materials. Skinner (1974) argued that students learn to read by learning a series of discrete skills and subskills. Teachers use explicit instruction to teach these skills in a planned, sequential order. Information is presented in small steps and reinforced through practice-oriented activities until students master it because each step or subskill is built on the previous one, in a 'bottom-up' approach to developing skills for reading and writing. Students also practise skills they are learning by completing fill-in-the-blank worksheets, often not effectively.

Importantly, effective teachers know what, when and how to use the skills-based approach (bottom-up approach) as part of a balanced literacy education program. Effective teachers are also aware that behaviourist explanations of language learning do not apply to every child in every situation. In fact, behaviourism does not offer any help to effective teachers who see some children fail to progress in their language and literacy skills despite repetitive instruction or feedback of the use of syntax (Ambridge & Lieven, 2011).

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CONSTRUCTIVISM

Constructivist theories describe students as active and engaged learners who construct their own knowledge. Because it involves mental processes, learning is not just an observable practice. Constructivists believe that student competence is always more than what is on show (their performance), because learning is what the brain does naturally (Smith, 1971) by integrating new knowledge with existing knowledge. Effective teachers engage students with experiences so that they construct their own knowledge. Constructivist theories are therefore student-centred and are now widely applied to literacy instruction, especially in the ways in which prior knowledge and experience is used in making meaning, in a 'top-down' approach in developing reading and writing, incorporated into the Whole Language approach to literacy education.

Students bring the following elements of learning to language learning, and to developing their resources for reading and writing:

1. **Students relate what they know to what they are learning.** Any student's knowledge is organised into cognitive structures called *schemas*, and schema theory describes the cognitive processes of accommodation and assimilation that students use as they learn (Piaget, 1950).
2. **Students create their own knowledge.** John Dewey, one of the first constructivists, advocated an inquiry approach because he believed that students are innately curious and actively create their own knowledge. Through the inquiry process, students collaborate to conduct investigations in which they ask questions, seek information, create new knowledge to solve problems, and reflect on their learning.
3. **Motivated students are more successful.** Students who are engaged in their language activities are intrinsically motivated, do more reading and writing, enjoy these activities, and have higher achievement (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). Engaged students have self-efficacy, the belief in their capability to succeed and reach their goals (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy plays a major role in how each student approaches a writing goal, task or challenge. Hattie (2012) defines self-efficacy as 'the confidence or strength of belief that we have in ourselves that we can make our learning happen' (p. 45). Students with high self-efficacy are resilient and persistent, despite obstacles and challenges that get in the way of success.

Figure 1.1 Theories in action: effective teaching of language, literature and literacy

ROLE	RESOURCES	SUCCESSFUL TEACHERS AND LEARNERS	TEACHING STRATEGIES	THEORIES IN ACTION (are essentially…)
Code breaker as reader (and/or viewer, listener)	Decoding codes of print and multimodal texts Decoding grammars, conventions and patterns of print and other multimodal texts	Understand: ▶ the relationships between symbols and sounds (grapho-phonic knowledge) ▶ language grammar, patterns and conventions (syntactic knowledge) ▶ conventions of text format (paralinguistic knowledge)	Word sorts Elkonin boxes Minilessons on phonics or alphabet knowledge	Behaviourism Bottom-up theory Skills-based Teacher-centred
Code breaker as writer (and/or speaker, producer)	Using letters, sounds, symbols and codes for communicating Using the grammar, patterns and conventions for communicating through print, speech and multimodality	Apply knowledge of: ▶ text structures ▶ graphophonic relationships ▶ morphemes ▶ digital and multimodal codes and systems ▶ handwriting skills ▶ keyboard and keyboard use ▶ intonation and use of voice and gesture in oral language	Word sorts Elkonin boxes Cut-up sentences	Behaviourism Bottom-up theory Skills-based Teacher-centred (with increasing student command)
Text user as reader (and/or viewer, listener)	Understanding purposes and contexts of a range of printed, spoken and multimodal texts	Understand: ▶ that different texts have different purposes ▶ how to respond to different texts ▶ the structures of different types of texts (e.g. paragraphs, dialogue, top level structure, cohesive devices, etc.) ▶ the processes and systems of multimodal texts ▶ the ways in which speakers use pitch, pause and pace in both monologic and dialogic discourses	Literature circles Author's chair Readers' theatre	Sociolinguistics Sociocultural theory Genre (types of texts) Student-centred
Text user as writer (and/or speaker, producer)	Using the conventions and structures of types of texts and genres in print, speech and multimodal communication	Apply knowledge of: ▶ paragraphs in information and persuasive texts (topic sentence, supporting detail and theme) ▶ the ranges of paragraph use in narrative texts ▶ conventions of everyday texts in written and multimodal forms ▶ organisation of printed, oral and multimodal presentations ▶ body language and intonation in spoken presentations according to context, audience and purpose	Quickwriting (and quickdrawing) Story boards Innovations on text	Sociolinguistics Sociocultural theory Genre (types of texts) Student-centred

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Figure 1.1 Theories in action: effective teaching of language, literature and literacy (*Continued*)

Text participant as reader (and/or viewer, listener, meaningmaker)	Comprehending written, spoken and a range of multimodal texts	Understand and use: ▶ ways to bring prior knowledge and own experience to texts ▶ prior reading experience and knowledge of similar texts ▶ vocabulary and nuances of meaning ▶ word recognition skills with challenging vocabulary ▶ a range of experience in multimodal communications ▶ prior experience of a range of speaking contexts	Grand conversations Open-mind portrait RAFT Top level structure	Whole language Constructivism Top-down theory Student-centred
Text participant as writer (and/or speaker, producer)	Composing a range of texts for print, oral, visual and multimodal communication	Apply knowledge of: ▶ composing informational, persuasive, narrative, poetic and everyday texts for purpose, context and audience ▶ presenting information in print, speech and multimodal texts ▶ word processing and slide presentation programs, and other programs for producing digital and multimodal texts ▶ visual information in multimodal and other presentations ▶ rhetoric and logic to support meaning and purpose	Open-mind portrait RAFT Interactive writing Top level structure	Whole language Constructivism Top-down theory Student-centred
Text analyst as reader (and/or viewer, listener)	Understanding how texts present information to position readers, listeners and viewers of multimodal texts	Understand: ▶ the ways in which writers, speakers and composers select information and structures to present their perspectives ▶ how readers, listeners and viewers respond to texts, and are influenced by texts and their creators ▶ the ways in which texts marginalise, empower and alienate groups and individuals ▶ how to detect and discern what is missing in texts	Double-entry journals Hot seat Open-mind portrait	Sociolinguistics Critical literacy
Text analyst as writer (and/or speaker, producer)	Composing argument, information, leisure, story and poetry for writer's voice and audience effect	Apply knowledge of: ▶ ways to compose and create written, spoken and multimodal texts to influence audiences ▶ argument and debating skills	Questioning the author Semantic feature analysis Socratic questioning	Critical literacy

Sample pages

SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY

Sociocultural theory adds a cultural dimension to our understanding of how students learn. Sociocultural theorists view reading and writing as social activities that reflect the culture and community in which students live, and explains that students from different cultures have different expectations about literacy learning and preferred ways of learning (Heath, 1983; Moll & Gonzales, 2004; Exley & Bliss, 2004). Teachers apply sociocultural theory when they create culturally responsive classrooms that empower all students, including those from marginalised groups, to become more successful readers and writers (Gay, 2000).

Teachers often use texts that provide different cultural perspectives. The use of multicultural literature, for example, can develop students' cross-cultural awareness. *Big Rain Coming* (Katrina Germein, Roland Harvey Books, 1999), *My Girragundji* (Meme McDonald, Allen & Unwin, 1998) and *Pigs and Honey* (Jeanie Adams, Omnibus, 1989) are stories describing Indigenous experiences. *Onion Tears* (Diana Kidd, William Collins, 1989), *Two Hands Together* (Diana Kidd, Penguin, 2000) and *Just One Wish* (Sally Rippin, Penguin, 2009) portray the experiences of Asian Australians.

As you proceed through this book you will find frequent references to the diversity to be found among children in contemporary classrooms. There are children from differing language and cultural backgrounds, children with differing learning styles, children with learning difficulties, children with visual and auditory disabilities, children who are gifted and talented in a variety of different ways, and children who present with a range of behavioural challenges.

These categories are not discrete and a child might occupy a number of them. The challenge for the teacher is to include each of these children in all classroom discourses. This changed attitude to diversity in schools was signalled as a key concept by the New London Group (1996, p. 72):

> *To be relevant, learning processes need to recruit, rather than attempt to ignore and erase, the different subjectivities—interests, intentions, commitments and purposes—students bring to learning. Curriculum now needs to mesh with different subjectivities, and with their attendant languages, discourses and registers, and use these as a resource for learning.*

Sample pages

SOCIOLINGUISTICS

Sociolinguists theorise that learners use language to organise their thoughts. Lev Vygotsky (1978; 1986) recommended that teachers incorporate opportunities into their instruction for students to talk about what they are learning; students can work in small groups, for example, and talk about books they read or share their writing with classmates. Social interaction enhances learning in two ways: the zone of proximal development and scaffolding (Cazden, 1983; Dixon-Krauss, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsky realised that students can accomplish more challenging tasks in collaboration with adults than on their own, but they learn very little when they perform tasks that they can already do independently. He recommended that teachers focus instruction on children's *zone of proximal development*, the level between their actual development and their potential development. Teachers gradually withdraw their support as students learn so that they eventually perform the task independently. Then the cycle begins again.

Scaffolding is a support mechanism that teachers use as they teach, presenting new information that builds upon what students already know, but presented in some form or structure that enhances links between known and unknown. (See Chapter 6 for examples of scaffolded lessons.)

Sociolinguistic theory is therefore applied in literacy instruction when students use language to get things done, and learn through culturally responsive and authentic literacy activities that are constructed from prior experience. Genre theory also emphasises social practice; the effective and widespread practice of teaching writing according to types of texts is grounded in writing for a purpose, in context and for a specified audience.

SITUATED LEARNING

Situated learning is an extension of sociocultural theory. Students learn through authentic literacy activities. Learning is a function of the activity, context and culture in which it occurs or is situated. Lave and Wenger (1991) contend that learning is contextual, or embedded in the social and physical environment. This theory rejects the notion of separating learning to do something and actually doing it, and emphasises the idea of apprenticeship (Vygotsky, 1978; Rogoff, 1990), where beginners move from the edge of a learning community to its centre as they learn from knowledgeable mentors and become more involved within the culture. Eventually the learners reach the centre of the community as they become experts.

When applied to literacy, situated learning theory emphasises that students learn to read and write through authentic reading and writing activities, and become readers and writers through social interaction with classmates. The teacher serves as an expert model, setting up students for success in writing and reading across a range of types of texts (Acevedo & Rose, 2007). If a teacher wants to teach her students how to write a letter, she will create a genuine need for letter writing. For example, there may be a need for a clean-up in the local park. Letters could be written to the local newspaper, the local council or the local Member of Parliament. But first the teacher would share examples of appropriate letters with the students, discussing the choices of language and the structure contained in them. The step-by-step process from introduction to models and skills is guided by the teacher in a gradual release of responsibility towards students being in a position to write letters themselves.

Sample pages

INFORMATION PROCESSING AND COGNITIVE PROCESSING

Two closely aligned learning theories are information processing and cognitive processing. These theories attempt to explain unobservable mental processes that occur during activities that include reading and writing (Tracey & Morrow, 2006). Readers and writers are described as active learners who use knowledge and strategies to solve problems.

Information processing theorists believe that the mind functions like a computer, and they hypothesise that information moves through a series of processing units—sensory register, short-term memory and long-term memory—as it is processed and stored (Flavell, 1979). There is also a control mechanism that oversees learning. Information processing theorists create models of the reading and writing processes, often relying on flow charts to describe the complicated and interactive workings of the mind (Hayes, 2004; Kintsch, 2004; Rumelhart, 2004). They believe in an integrated approach to reading and writing, and their models describe a two-way flow of information between what readers and writers know and the letters and words written on the page.

Readers and writers are strategic, and students use both cognitive and metacognitive processing strategies to direct their thinking. Processing strategies are goal-directed mental operations that students use to manage their reading and writing, and solve problems that arise (Dean, 2005; Pressley, 2002). Organising, revising and proofreading are cognitive processing strategies that writers use to compose meaning in texts they are writing. Visualising, drawing inferences and evaluating are cognitive processing strategies that readers use to construct meaning.

Metacognitive processing strategies, such as monitoring, repairing and evaluating, regulate students' thinking and their use of cognitive strategies. The word *metacognition* is often defined as 'thinking about your own thinking'. More accurately, metacognition is a control mechanism (Baker, 2002; Flavell, 1979); it involves students in being both aware of their own thinking and active in control of their own thinking.

INTERACTIVE MODELS

Reading and writing are meaning-making processes. Models of the reading process describe what readers do as they read, and they emphasise that readers focus on comprehension as they read (Ruddell & Unrau, 2004; Rumelhart, 2004; Stanovich, 2000). Readers construct meaning using a combination of

text-based information (information from the text) and reader-based information (information from students' background knowledge). Student attention during reading moves from noticing the letters on the page and grouping them into words to making meaning in the brain (code breaking), or the other way around, from activating background knowledge in the brain to examining letters and words on the page. The two processes take place interactively and simultaneously. The interactive model of reading includes an executive monitor that manages the construction of meaning (Ruddell & Unrau, 2004). This control mechanism monitors students' attention, and determines whether what is being read makes sense, and takes action when problems arise.

Hayes' (2004) model of writing describes what writers do as they write, and emphasises that writing is a meaning-making process. Students do not write one-shot compositions; instead, they move through a series of stages as they plan, draft, revise and edit their writing to ensure that readers will understand what they have written. The model is derived from the earlier work of Donald Graves (1983) and others who advocated the Process Writing Model for teaching writing. Writers use the same control mechanism that readers do to make plans, select strategies and solve problems. Writing is a social activity, too, and students turn to classmates and the teacher to share their writing and to get feedback.

TRANSACTIONAL THEORY

Readers' interpretations are individualised. Louise Rosenblatt's transactional theory (2004) explains how students create meaning as they read. She describes comprehension, which she calls interpretation, as the result of a two-way transaction between readers and the text. Students do not try to figure out the author's meaning as they read; instead, they negotiate an interpretation that makes sense to them based on the text they are reading and on their knowledge about literature and the world. Their interpretations are individualised because students bring different background knowledge and experiences to the reading event. Even though interpretations vary, they can always be substantiated by the text.

There are two overarching purposes for reading. When readers read for enjoyment or pleasure, they assume an *aesthetic* stance; and when they read to locate and remember information, they take an *efferent* stance (Rosenblatt, 2005). This apparent duality of stance does not mean that students read stories and poems aesthetically and information books and content-area textbooks efferently. Instead, these stances represent the ends of a continuum, and readers often use a combination of the two stances when they read, whether they are reading stories, information books or poems. However, when teachers emphasise that students should read to remember specific information from the story being read, they are forcing their students to read efferently. Teachers need to consider the purposes they set for students, because when students read stories efferently rather than aesthetically they are less likely to develop a love of reading and are therefore even less likely to become lifelong readers.

CRITICAL LITERACY

Literacy is a call to social action. Paulo Freire (2000) called for sweeping educational change so that students examine fundamental questions about justice and equity. Critical literacy theorists view language as a means for social action and advocate that students become agents of social change (Johnson & Freedman, 2005). This theory has a political agenda, and the increasing social and cultural diversity in Western society adds urgency to resolving inequities and injustices. Reading and responding to texts that deal with social issues are ways that teachers address social literacy (Lewison, Leland & Harste, 2008). For example, *The Breadwinner* or *Parvana* (Ellis, 2000) is the story of a girl in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan who pretends to be a boy to support her family; *The Burnt Stick* (Hill, 1994) leads its readers to an understanding of the Stolen Generations in Australia; *Freedom Ride* (Black Dog Books, 2015) examines the life of an Indigenous boy in a small Australian town in the 1960s; and *Figgy in the World* (Omnibus Books, 2014) follows the experiences of a girl who lives in Ghana.

Sample pages

There is evidence of many of these theories, and others, in the Four Resources Model. There is evidence of Whole Language, the skills-based approaches, multiliteracies, genre, critical literacy and sociocultural theory. The Australian Curriculum: English (2017) has been developed over a long period of time and its foundation is a range of language learning theories. Effective teachers know the theories that underpin the curriculum and apply them in a balanced approach to literacy teaching.

▶ Principle 3: Effective teachers support student use of the cueing systems

Language is a complex system for creating meaning through socially shared conventions (Halliday, 1978). English, like other languages, involves a number of cueing systems:

- the graphophonic, or sound–letter, system
- the syntactic, or structural, system
- the semantic, or meaning, system
- the pragmatic, or social and cultural use, system
- the paralinguistic, or information around the text, system.

Together these systems make communication possible, and children and adults may use all five systems simultaneously as they read, write, listen and talk, and become involved in perusing or producing multimodal communication. The priority people place on various cueing systems can vary according to the communication medium being used, context, purpose and audience. In effect, elements of most cueing systems are used simultaneously, although the phonological system is especially important for beginning readers and writers as they apply phonics skills to decode and spell words. Information about the cueing systems is summarised in Figure 1.2. The focus of the strategies listed in Figure 1.2 is mainly upon the printed medium, but the underlying principles of each of the cueing systems can be generalised across spoken and multimodal media.

Sample pages

Figure 1.2 Relationships between the cueing systems

System	Terms	Applications and strategies
Phonological system: The sound system of English, with approximately 44 sounds and more than 500 ways to spell them	Phoneme (the smallest unit of sound) Grapheme (the written representation of a phoneme using one or more letters) Phonological awareness (knowledge about the sound structure of words, at the phoneme, onset-rime and syllable levels) Phonemic awareness (the ability to orally manipulate phonemes in words) Phonics (instruction about phoneme-grapheme correspondences and spelling rules)	Pronouncing words Detecting regional and other dialects Decoding words when reading Using invented spelling Reading and writing; alliteration and onomatopoeia Noticing rhyming words Dividing words into syllables
Syntactic system: The structural system of English that governs how words are combined into sentences, plus the word-development system of morphemes	Syntax (the structure of the patterns in a sentence; and the order of words in English phrases, clauses, groups and sentences) Morpheme (the smallest meaningful unit of language; e.g. *car*) Free morpheme (a morpheme that can stand alone as a word; e.g. *run*, *bind*) Bound morpheme (a morpheme that must be attached to a free morpheme; e.g. *ing* in *running* or *binding*; *s* in *cars*)	Adding inflectional endings to words Combining words to form compound words Adding prefixes and suffixes to root words Using capitalisation and punctuation to indicate beginnings and ends of sentences Writing simple, compound and complex sentences Combining sentences

System	Terms	Applications and strategies
Semantic system: The meaning system of English that focuses on vocabulary	Semantics (meaning) Synonyms (words that mean the same or nearly the same thing; e.g. *smart*, *clever*) Antonyms (opposites; e.g. *good*, *bad*) Homophones (words that sound alike but are spelled differently; e.g. *pear*, *pare*, *pair*)	Learning the meanings of words Discovering that many words have multiple meanings Using context clues to figure out an unfamiliar word Studying synonyms, antonyms and homonyms Using a dictionary and a thesaurus
Pragmatic system: The system of English that varies language according to social and cultural uses	Function (the purpose for which a person uses language) Standard English (the form of English used in textbooks and by well-spoken television newsreaders) Non-standard English (other forms and dialects, regional, social and historical dialects of English)	Varying language to fit specific purposes (register) Reading and writing dialogue in dialects Comparing standard and non-standard forms of English
Paralinguistic system: Factors outside the actual language used that contribute to the meaning of the text	Punctuation, font, layout, illustrations, captions, bullets, textual contrast, audio, visual, gestural and spatial patterns of meaning	Assists in predicting what might be happening in the text Combinations of modes assist meaning

Sample pages

THE GRAPHOPHONIC SYSTEM

There are approximately 44 speech sounds in English. Students learn to pronounce these sounds as they learn to talk, and they learn to associate the sounds with letters as they learn to read and write. Sounds are called *phonemes*, and they are represented in print with diagonal lines to differentiate them from graphemes (letters or letter combinations). Thus, the first grapheme in *mother* is *m*, and the phoneme is /m/. The phoneme in *soap* that is represented by the grapheme *oa* is called 'long o' and is written /ō/.

The phonological system is important for both oral and written language. Regional differences exist in the way people pronounce phonemes; for example, New Zealanders pronounce vowel sounds differently from Australians. A West Indian cricketer and a South African cricketer may be speaking English to each other, but there are obvious differences in the way they pronounce words. Neither speaker is incorrect, just different. Students learning English as an additional language/dialect learn to pronounce the sounds in English and, not surprisingly, they have more difficulty learning sounds that are different from those in their native language. For example, because Chinese does not pronounce *r* as /r/ and many Chinese speakers confuse /l/ and /r/, pronouncing this sound often presents obvious difficulties. Consider words such as 'coral' and 'corollary', for example. Younger children usually learn to pronounce the difficult sounds more easily than older EAL/D children and adults.

The phonological system plays a crucial role in reading instruction during the primary years. In a purely phonetic language, there would be a one-to-one correspondence between letters and sounds, and teaching students to decode words would be simple. But English is not a purely phonetic language because there are 26 letters and 44 sounds, and many ways to combine the letters to spell some of the sounds, especially the vowels. Consider these ways to spell long *e* /i:/: *sea*, *green*, *Pete*, *me* and *people*. As well, the patterns used to spell long *e* do not always work; *bread*, *lead* and *great* are examples.

Phonics, which describes the phoneme–grapheme correspondences and related spelling rules, is a necessary component of reading instruction, but it is not the only one. Students use phonics to decode words, but it is not a complete reading program, because many common words cannot be decoded easily and because reading involves more than just decoding.

THE SYNTACTIC SYSTEM

This system concerns the structural organisation of English. It is carried in the syntax that regulates how words are combined, grammatically, into phrases, clauses and groups in spoken English, and all of these

patterns into the utterances of spoken English, and into the sentences of written English. Students use the syntactic system as they combine words to form sentences. Word order is important in English, and English speakers must arrange words into a sequence that makes sense. For example, English speakers learn to say, 'this is my red shirt', not 'this is my shirt red' as would be the case in some European languages.

Students use their knowledge of the syntactic system as they read. They expect that the words they are reading have been strung together into the syntactic patterns that contribute to the make-up of the sentences. When they come to an unfamiliar word, they recognise its role in the sentence even if they may not know the terms for the parts of speech. In the sentence 'The horses galloped through the gate and out into the field', students may not know the word *through*, but they can easily substitute a reasonable word or phrase, such as *out of* or *past*.

Another component of syntax is word form. Words such as *dog* and *play* are morphemes, the smallest meaningful units in language. Word parts that change the meaning of a word are also morphemes; when the plural marker *-s* is added to *dog* to make *dogs*, or the past-tense marker *-ed* is added to *play* to make *played*, these words now have two morphemes because the inflectional endings change the meaning of the words. The words *dog* and *play* are free morphemes because they convey meaning while standing alone; the endings *-s* and *-ed* are bound morphemes because they must be attached to free morphemes to convey meaning. Compound words are two or more free morphemes combined to create a new word; *birthday* is a compound word made up of two free morphemes.

THE SEMANTIC SYSTEM

This system focuses on meaning. Vocabulary is the key component of the semantic cueing system, as well as background knowledge about the topic being read. Stahl and Nagy (2005) claimed that children have 5000 words by the time they enter school, and add a further three to four thousand words each year of schooling, thus graduating from high school with about 50 000 words. That figure can be disputed, as a search of numerous online tests of vocabulary will show. The testyourvocab.com website listed the results from two million test-takers, and found that most adult test-takers, whose first language is English, ranged between 20 000 and 35 000 words (2013).

But words used 'on their own' often do not mean very much. Consider, for example, a very ordinary word like *run*. The *Macquarie Dictionary* lists 17 meanings for this word depending on how it is used: a cricket score, a run on the stock market, a ladder in a stocking, a car engine running and so on. Clearly, we have to look at the word in the context in which it is used and bring to bear both our background knowledge of the content and our language knowledge. What kind of word is this? What is its function? Children must use the semantic cueing system if they are reading for meaning. An over-reliance on phonics instruction and oral reading can lead to the formation of the idea that the sole purpose of reading is to pronounce the words correctly.

Sample pages

THE PRAGMATIC SYSTEM

Pragmatics deals with the social aspects of language use. People use language for many purposes; how they talk and write varies according to their purpose and audience. Language use also varies among social classes, ethnic groups and geographic regions, and these varieties are known as *dialects*. School is one cultural community, and the language of school is Standard English. This dialect is formal—the one used in textbooks, newspapers and by well-spoken television newsreaders. Other forms, including those spoken in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and migrant communities, are generally classified as non-standard English. These non-standard forms of English are alternatives in which the phonology, syntax and semantics differ from those of Standard English. They are neither inferior nor substandard; instead, they reflect the communities of the speakers, and the speakers communicate with fellow community members as effectively as anyone who uses Standard English. The goal of schools is for students to add Standard English to their repertoire of language registers, not to replace their home dialect with Standard English.

THE PARALINGUISTIC SYSTEM

In reading, the font, layout, illustrations and punctuation often contribute to the meaning of the text. These factors are referred to as the paralinguistic features of the text and they assist readers to predict what might be coming next in the text.

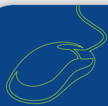
Teachers understand that effective readers and writers use all the cueing systems as they read and write. For example, when students read the sentence 'Josh is throwing a ball to his father' correctly, they could be using any combination of the cues. When a child substitutes *dad* for *father* and reads 'Josh is throwing a ball to his dad', he might be focusing on the semantic or pragmatic system rather than on the phonological system. When a child substitutes *basketball* for *ball* and reads 'Josh is throwing a basketball to his father', he might be relying on an illustration or on his own experience of playing basketball. Or, because both *basketball* and *ball* begin with *b*, he might have used the beginning sound as an aid in decoding, but he apparently did not consider how long the word *basketball* is compared with the word *ball*.

When the child changes the syntax, as in 'Josh, he throw ball to his father', he may speak a non-standard dialect. Sometimes a child reads the sentence as 'Jump is throw boat with his father', so that it does not make sense. In this instance, the child chooses words with the correct beginning sound and uses appropriate parts of speech for at least some of the words, but there is no comprehension. This is a serious problem because the child does not seem to understand that what he reads must make sense. Clearly, the above considerations of the reading cues make meaning central to the reading act, and we must therefore begin the reading task with texts that are meaningful to the reader.

Sample pages

▶ Principle 4: Effective teachers provide a balanced approach to explicit and differentiated instruction

Traditional definitions of literacy focused on students' ability to read words, but as discussed previously, literacy in the 21st century is viewed as a tool for participating more fully in a technological society. Kress (2003) and Kist (2005) talk about *new literacies*, sophisticated digital ways to read and write multimedia texts incorporating words, images and sounds, all of which provide opportunities for students to create innovative spaces for making meaning, exploring the world and voicing their lives. These texts often combine varied forms of representation, including computer graphics, video clips and digital photos, and students read and write them differently than traditional books (Karchmer, Mallette, Kara-Soteriou & Leu, 2005).



GO DIGITAL! New literacies

The internet is rapidly changing what it means to be literate. Students are increasingly becoming involved in online activities, such as:

- reading electronic storybooks
- playing interactive phonics and spelling games
- crafting multimodal stories
- posting book reviews
- emailing messages
- researching informational topics
- exploring the websites of favourite authors
- participating in virtual book clubs
- collaborating with students in other schools on projects.

Students who engage in these activities are excited about literacy because the internet fosters their motivation and engagement with reading and writing. Away from school, some children:

- engage with online and social media such as Facebook and Twitter
- play a range of reality and fantasy games, both as individuals and with people from around the world
- communicate with friends and strangers through text messages, posts and emails, and by sharing photography and video on different online platforms.

They engage in these activities through a range of connected or smart devices: on computer screens, interactive whiteboards, tablets and mobile phones. Children today process so much information from so many sources, it is imperative they are given the tools to process this information critically. Teaching students how to read and write responsibly and critically online has become a priority so that they can become fully and safely literate in today's digital world (Henry, 2006).

Online texts are different from books (Castek, Bevans-Mangelson & Goldstone, 2006). Whereas print materials are linear and sequential, online texts are a unique text type with these characteristics:

Non-linearity. Hypertext lacks the familiar linear organisation of books; instead, it is dynamic and can be used in a variety of ways. Readers impose a structure that fits their needs and reconfigure the organisation when necessary.

Multiple modalities. Online texts are multimodal, integrating words, images and sound to create meaning. Readers need to know how to interpret each mode and how it contributes to the overall meaning.

Intertextuality. Many related texts are available on the internet, and they influence and shape each other. As students read these texts, they prioritise, evaluate and synthesise the information being presented.

Interactivity. Webpages often include interactive features that engage readers and allow them to customise their searches, link to other websites, play games, listen to video clips and send emails.

Because of these features, reading and writing on the internet require students to become proficient in new ways of accessing, comprehending and communicating information; these are referred to as *new literacies*, and involve internet strategies such as navigating, evaluating and synthesising web-based information.

In addition to print literacy, children in the modern world are engaged in both *multiple literacies* and *digital literacies*. Multiple literacies include computer literacy, media literacy, mobile phone literacy and visual literacy. Most homes and businesses use multiple digital devices (phones, tablets, game consoles and other smart technologies). Many of these literacies and devices overlap, and being able to use them in critical ways is an important aspect of functioning in the modern world. Literacy in the 21st century involves more than teaching students to read books and write using paper and pencil. It is essential that teachers prepare their students to use the internet and other information communication technologies successfully (Karchmer et al., 2005).

Sample pages

A BALANCED APPROACH TO LITERACY INSTRUCTION

The balanced approach to instruction is based on a comprehensive view of literacy. It is an approach that combines explicit instruction, guided practice, collaborative learning, and independent reading and writing (Madda, Griffo, Pearson & Raphael, 2011). That balanced approach embodies characteristics of both teacher-centred and student-centred instruction, and variation is a constant between and across programs of balanced approaches to instruction and student learning. Cunningham and Allington (2016) compare the balanced approach to a multivitamin, suggesting that it brings together the best of teacher- and student-centred learning theories.

All balanced approaches to reading and writing usually embody these characteristics:

- Literacy involves both reading and writing, and incorporates understanding the reciprocal relationship between reading and writing.
- Oral language is integrated with reading and writing.
- Reading instruction includes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension: literal, inferential and critical.
- Writing instruction includes the writing process, elements of the writer's craft, knowledge of genre, syntactic patterns of English, and the conventions of punctuation, spelling and expectations of standard written English.
- Reading and writing are used as tools for content-area learning.
- Reading and writing are developed through effective classroom and personal use of a range of literature, both imaginative and informative.
- Strategies and skills are taught explicitly, with a gradual release of responsibility to students.

A balanced approach effectively incorporates students' involvement in their own learning, when:

- Students often work collaboratively and talk with classmates
- Students participate in authentic literacy activities, activities that use models of well-written literature and poetry that reflect societies of different times and places, and content that connects to their world and their future
- Students believe that what is being taught has some potential value, purpose and use
- Students believe they are capable of learning what is being demonstrated*
- Students like, trust, admire, respect and want to emulate their teacher*
- Students are free from crippling anxiety*.

Sample pages

Madda, Griffo, Pearson and Raphael (2011) explain that 'achieving balance is a complex process that requires flexibility and artful orchestration of literacy's various contextual and conceptual aspects' (p. 40). The characteristics of the balanced approach are embodied in an instructional program that includes these components, which are described in Figure 1.3.

A balanced literacy program, which the Four Resources Model can provide, includes integrating these components for all students. This includes those students in schools experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage, struggling readers and students learning a new language (Braunger & Lewis, 2006). When writing Units of Work and lesson plans, teachers must create a balanced approach to instruction because, according to Peterson (2013), when one component is over- or underemphasised, the development of the others suffers.

Much of teaching involves instruction, a process of directing, enlightening, delivering and conveying information in ways that are able to be understood by learners as they move from novices to full participants in their own learning about any topic. Again, much instruction is explicit, taught to class groups and individuals as an initial or intervening stage in the learner's development. Often instruction is less explicit and more guided as teachers support their students in a gradual release of responsibility for learning.

Effective teachers also adjust their instruction because students vary in their levels of development, academic achievement and ability. Tomlinson (2004; 2014) explains that the one-size-fits-all instructional model is obsolete, and teachers respect students by honouring both their similarities and their differences. Differentiation is based on Vygotsky's idea of a zone of proximal development. If instruction is either too difficult or too easy, it isn't effective; instead, teachers must provide instruction that meets students' instructional needs.

As they differentiate instruction, teachers vary instructional arrangements, choose instructional materials at students' reading levels and modify assignments (Opitz & Ford, 2008). They monitor students'

* Cambourne, 1995, pp. 186–87; cited in McLean (2013).

Figure 1.3 Components of the balanced approach to literacy

Component	Description
Comprehension	Students apply reader factors, including comprehension strategies, and text factors, including text structures, to understand what they're reading.
Content area study	Students use reading and writing as tools to learn about social studies and science topics in thematic units.
Literacy strategies and skills	Students use problem-solving and monitoring behaviours called *strategies* and automatic actions called *skills* as they read and write.
Literature	Students read and respond to fiction and poetry and learn about genres, text structures, and literary features.
Oral language	Students talk with classmates, participate in grand conversations, give oral presentations, and listen to the teacher read aloud.
Phonemic awareness and phonics	Students manipulate sounds in words and apply the alphabetic principle and phonics rules to decode words.
Reading	Students participate in modelled, shared, interactive, guided, and independent reading experiences using picture-book stories and novels, non-fiction books, poetry, basal readers, content-area textbooks, and internet materials.
Spelling	Students apply what they're learning about English orthography to spell words, and their spellings gradually become conventional.
Vocabulary	Students learn the meaning of academic vocabulary through wide reading, listening to books read aloud, and content-area study; and they apply word-learning strategies to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words.
Writing	Students employ the writing process and their knowledge about the six traits to draft and refine stories, poems, reports, essays and other compositions.

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learning and make adjustments, when necessary, and they assess learning in multiple ways, not just using paper-and-pencil tests. Differentiation involves adjusting the content, the process and the product.

DIFFERENTIATION

Differentiating the content

Teachers identify the information that students need to learn to meet year-level standards so that every child will be successful. They differentiate the content in these ways:

- Choose instructional materials at students' reading levels
- Consider students' developmental levels as well as their current year placement in deciding what to teach
- Use assessment tools to determine students' instructional needs.

Differentiating the process

Teachers vary instruction and application activities to meet students' needs. They differentiate the process in these ways:

- Provide instruction to individuals, small groups and the whole class
- Scaffold struggling readers and writers with more explicit instruction
- Challenge advanced readers and writers with activities requiring higher-level thinking
- Monitor students' learning and adjust instruction when the learning is not successful.

Differentiating the product

Teachers vary how students demonstrate what they have learned. Products include both the projects that students create and the tests used to measure their academic achievement. Teachers differentiate the products in these ways:

- Have students create projects individually, with partners or in small groups
- Design projects that engage students with literacy in meaningful ways
- Assess students using a combination of visual, oral and written formats.

As teachers differentiate instruction, they consider the background knowledge and literacy demands of the reading selection, create a text set of related books, design activities with varied grouping patterns, consider students' preferred language modalities and thinking styles, and determine how much support students are likely to need.

Figure 1.4 lists some of the ways teachers differentiate instruction.

Figure 1.4 Ways to differentiate instruction

Technique	Description
Books	Teachers create text sets with a variety of fiction and non-fiction books and magazines about a topic. The collection includes interesting resources that are appropriate for year-level readers as well as for those who read above and below year level.
Grouping patterns	Teachers consider grouping patterns—whole class, small groups, partners and individual students—as they plan instruction. Grouping patterns are important because students are often more motivated when they work with classmates, and struggling students are more likely to be successful when classmates provide support.
Instruction	Teachers provide explicit instruction to build students' background knowledge, introduce vocabulary, and present information. Then they supervise students as they complete practice activities and, finally, provide opportunities for independent application.
Language modes	Teachers encourage students to use a combination of oral, written and visual language modes to learn and demonstrate new knowledge. Some students learn best by listening to oral presentations or reading a book, but others are more successful when they view video presentations. Similarly, some students can more effectively show what they've learned by making graphic representations or performing dramatisations, but others prefer to create artistic posters or written reports.
Modalities	Teachers recognise that students learn through different modalities, so they allow students to choose activities that incorporate auditory, visual or tactile modalities.
Scaffolding	Teachers provide varying levels of support so that all students can be successful. They use a combination of modelled, shared, interactive, guided and independent reading and writing activities.
Technology	Teachers provide opportunities for students to use digital tools, including word processing, online games, digital cameras and WebQuests, to increase engagement and support their learning.
Thinking styles	Teachers design projects that provide opportunities for students to apply newly learned knowledge in analytical, relational and creative ways that reflect their thinking styles.
Tiered activities	Teachers create a range of related projects that take into account students' reading and writing achievement levels, their preferred language modes, and their thinking styles. They also consider students' motivation, their interest in technology, and whether they prefer to work independently, with a partner or in a group.

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A balanced approach applies to programs for all learners, including those who have diverse linguistic needs. Boxed features for 'Supporting EAL/D students' can be found throughout the chapters of this text.

Supporting EAL/D students

Effective classroom instruction for students for whom English is an additional language/dialect (EAL/D) involves all students participating in the same instructional programs. Teachers adapt mainstream programs to create classroom learning contexts that respect and meet the needs of minority students (Brock & Raphael, 2005; Peregoy & Boyle, 2013; Shanahan & Beck, 2006). Learning to read and write is more challenging for EAL/D students because they are learning to speak English at the same time as they are developing literacy. Hertzberg (2012) advocates the uses of oracy in classroom activities, as speaking and listening 'ebb and flow' throughout each stage of the learning programs and lessons. Here are some ways that teachers scaffold EAL/D students' oral language acquisition and literacy development:

- **Explicit instruction.** Teachers present additional instruction on literacy strategies and skills because EAL/D students are more at-risk than other students (Hertzberg, 2012). They also spend more time teaching unfamiliar academic vocabulary related to reading and writing (e.g. vowel, homonym, paragraph, index, quotation marks, predict, revise, summarise).
- **Oral language.** Teachers provide many opportunities each day for students to practise speaking English comfortably and informally with partners and in small groups. Through these conversations, EAL/D students develop both conversational and academic language, which supports their reading and writing development (Rothenberg & Fisher, 2007; Hertzberg, 2012).
- **Small-group work.** Teachers provide opportunities for students to work in small groups because classmates' social interaction supports their learning (Genesee & Riches, 2006). EAL/D students talk with classmates as they read and write, and at the same time they are learning the culture of literacy.
- **Reading aloud to students.** Teachers read aloud a variety of stories, informational books and books of poetry, including some that represent the students' home cultures (Rothenberg & Fisher, 2007). As they read, teachers model fluent reading, and students become more familiar with English sounds, vocabulary and written language structures. Most teachers add another reading session in the last 15–20 minutes of the school day, every afternoon, and have found that there is a marked improvement in student listening and behaviour, as well as in their interest in books.
- **Background knowledge.** Teachers organise instruction into themes to build students' world knowledge about year-level-appropriate concepts, and they develop EAL/D students' literary knowledge through minilessons and a variety of reading and writing activities (Braunger & Lewis, 2006; Hertzberg, 2012).
- **Authentic literacy activities.** Teachers provide daily opportunities for students to apply the strategies and skills they are learning as they read and write for authentic, real-life purposes (Akhavan, 2006). EAL/D students participate in meaningful literacy activities through literature circles and reading and writing workshops. These recommendations promote EAL/D students' academic success.

Teacher attitudes about minority students, and their knowledge about how these children learn an additional language/dialect, play a critical role in the effectiveness of instruction (Gay, 2000). It is important that teachers understand that EAL/D students have different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and then plan instructional programs accordingly. Most classrooms reflect a European middle-class culture, which differs significantly from the backgrounds of many minority-group students. Brock and Raphael (2005) point out that 'mismatches between teachers' and students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds matter because such mismatches can impact negatively on students' opportunities for academic success' (p. 5). Teachers and students use language in different ways. For example, some students are reluctant to volunteer answers to teachers' questions, and others may not answer if the questions are different from those their parents or carers ask (Peregoy & Boyle, 2013). Teachers who learn about their students' home language and culture, and who then embed their understanding into their instruction, are likely to be more successful.

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▶ Principle 5: Effective teachers know their learners and scaffold every student's reading, writing, viewing, speaking and listening skills

Effective teachers scaffold students' reading, writing, viewing, speaking and listening skills throughout every teaching session each day. The time when scaffolding occurs in a concentrated way is during the Literacy Block, when teachers demonstrate, guide and teach according to curriculum demands and each child's learning needs. The level of support children receive depends upon their demonstrated skill. However, before teachers can establish support routines and classroom procedures for the Literacy Block as part of a balanced literacy program, they must obtain accurate, up-to-date data on each child's knowledge, ability and skill levels. This information includes each child's preferred learning style and any obstacles that impact on that child's learning. Informal and formal assessment of learning provides the teacher with that data.

Assessment of learning provides teachers with the opportunity to know where each child is placed on a continuum of learning. Additionally, ongoing assessment allows for children to be grouped according to their current and developing skill, knowledge and ability levels. It must be remembered that these levels change constantly—after school holidays, when changes occur in home circumstances, or following the introduction of new work. The effective, observant teacher notices these changes and adjusts teaching and classroom groupings accordingly.

Classrooms are social settings that comprise diverse membership. Together students and teachers create their classroom community, which has a strong influence on the learning that takes place (Angelillo, 2008). However, the teacher plays a pivotal role in the establishment of classroom culture, and so needs to demonstrate ways for children to learn and practise respect, tolerance and valuing of all class members.

When children are developing their reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing knowledge and skills, teachers can role-model behaviours that value-add to the community of learners in the class. Such behaviours include:

- appreciating all class members and their responses
- offering motivation and encouragement to learn
- praising correct and partially correct responses
- building a culture of exploration
- providing constructive feedback that enables children to see that risk-taking is a part of learning.

All of these practices offer children opportunities to see that learning about language and literacy can occur individually and in groups. Moreover, success is achievable for all, and there is enjoyment when the teacher and children share positive relationships. Furthermore, children will grow to appreciate that their teacher, who is interested in them and their development, knows them as people and learners.

The Literacy Block, which traditionally runs for one and a half hours each day, is the time when teachers can further a child's sense of belonging to a community of learners who are engaged in advancing their learning. At the beginning of each semester, teachers need to establish the routines that children will follow during the Literacy Block, so that there is a seamless progression of learning each day. Once initial assessment and diagnosis is completed, and the child's strengths and weaknesses are identified, the teacher can follow curriculum guidelines and the framework offered by Fountas and Pinnell (2016; 1996) to support literacy learning. Figure 1.5 summarises these five levels of reading and writing development—modelled, shared, interactive, guided and independent. It should be noted that these same levels of instruction can be adjusted according to need and they remain the same when children are learning about how to create digital texts.

When children are learning a new skill such as reading fluently or writing a message, there is more teacher input. There is a change-over time as children become more proficient in the skill and they can

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Figure 1.5 The Literacy Block

Level of support		Reading	Writing
High level of support	*Modelled*	Teacher reads aloud, modelling how good readers read fluently and with expression. Books too difficult for students to read themselves are used. Examples: interactive read-alouds and listening centres.	Teacher writes in front of students, creating the text, doing the writing strategies and skills. Example: demonstrations.
	Shared	Teacher and students read books together, with students following as the teacher reads and then repeating familiar refrains. Books that students can't read by themselves are used. Examples: big books, buddy reading.	Teacher and students create the text together; then the teacher does the actual writing. Students may assist by spelling familiar or high-frequency words. Example: Language Experience Approach.
	Interactive	Teacher and students read together and take turns doing the reading. The teacher helps students read fluently and with expression. Instructional-level books are used. Examples: choral reading and readers theatre.	Teacher and students create the text and share the pen to do the writing. Teacher and students talk about writing conventions. Example: interactive writing.
	Guided	Teacher plans and teaches reading lessons to small homogenous groups using instructional-level books. Focus is on supporting and observing students' use of strategies. Example: guided reading lessons.	Teacher plans and teaches lesson on a writing procedure, strategy or skill, and students participate in supervised practice activities. Example: class collaborations.
Low level of support	*Independent*	Students choose and read self-selected books independently. Teacher conferences with students to monitor their progress. Examples: reading workshop and reading centres.	Students use the writing process to write stories, informational books and other compositions. Teacher monitors students' progress. Examples: writing workshop and writing centres.

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work independently. In effect, the influence of the teacher may be viewed in terms of an inverted pyramid, with teacher control at the top, moving towards student independence and responsibility for learning.

MODELLED READING AND WRITING

Teachers provide the most levels of support when they demonstrate and model how expert readers read, expert writers write and expert speakers speak. It is useful for teachers to remember the difference between modelled and demonstrated instruction. Demonstration is the higher order skill, as it allows the teacher to explain why they do what they do. 'If I put a question mark at the end of the sentence it changes the meaning. Why is that so?'

Teachers can model fluent and phrased reading by attending to punctuation as they read. When modelling narrative writing, they can craft their work and introduce the children to teaching strategies such as think-alouds, graphic organisers and sentence starters. Teachers provide instruction in this way so that children learn to see themselves as craftspeople, as writers who consider elements of the text such as:

- What word could I use here? Can I spell it correctly? (code breaker)
- How will I develop this story? (text participant)
- How do I structure this text? Is the form different from the shopping list I wrote yesterday? (text user)
- Does the vocabulary deliver the intended message to all readers? (text analyst).

SHARED READING AND WRITING

Teachers, particularly in the early years, often begin their daily literacy programs by sharing a big book with the children. This is called shared reading. Generally, the teacher reads from a big book that has been chosen for specific teaching purposes. Depending on the children's reading levels, a pointer can be used to instruct the children in one-to-one correspondence with the words on the page (the graphophonic cueing system). When texts are repetitive, the children often join in the reading of predictable words and phrases. Always remember that teachers who work with older children can also use shared reading to practise a number of skills, including fluency (Allen, 2002). The shared reading experience in all year levels can act as a leverage for writing.

Teachers use shared writing in a variety of ways. In early year classrooms, shared writing is the time when children first learn how to craft their work. During shared writing, teachers demonstrate how writing as a form of communication is predicated on delivering a message. The teacher writes texts to demonstrate correct page orientation, the difference between letters and words and so on. When children first write, their script can be a montage of drawing and letters, as beginning writers use a variety of symbols, letters and words to deliver a message.

Teachers can use the teaching strategies, **word walls**, sentence starters and K-W-L charts to introduce children to ways of delivering a message. For children who require additional instruction, repeated use of visual prompts assists the meaning-making process. At the same time, teachers share with their students the knowledge that what is written can be read and spoken. This is called reciprocity. What I speak, I can write and read (Clay, 2005).

Shared reading and writing occur daily during the Literacy Block when children are exposed to ways for delivering messages efficiently, and so teachers use shared reading and writing for these purposes:

- to demonstrate and model literacy activities that children cannot do independently
- to create opportunities for children to engage in literacy activities and demonstrate their levels of competence.

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INTERACTIVE READING AND WRITING

At this stage in the Literacy Block, children become more involved in reading, writing and speaking. When conducting interactive reading, the teacher can scaffold the children's learning through use of the teaching strategies **choral reading** and **readers theatre**. These strategies enable the students to appreciate the benefits of learning with others through active participation and sharing of knowledge and skills.

The principle behind **interactive writing** is the same. Students undertake more control of text composition. This usually follows on from group discussions, **grand conversations** perhaps, where the teacher acts as the guide. Students write a text word by word, and attend to letter formation, word spacing and punctuation. The teacher assists with the process by offering help as required with spelling, punctuation and letter knowledge with younger writers. This group task is followed by students (where possible) independently reading and rereading the text, which is another example of the reciprocal nature of the reading and writing processes. Interactive reading and writing serves the purposes, among others, of:

- having children share a task and their literacy expertise with peers
- providing practice in reading and writing conventions
- developing word knowledge
- applying phonics and spelling skills
- expanding skills in crafting a variety of sentence types
- engaging with others in tasks that cannot be completed independently.

GUIDED READING AND WRITING

The next level of support provided for students in the Literacy Block occurs during guided reading and writing. By this stage, students have more control over how they read and write. Accurate assessment of

each student's reading levels, using running records, enables the teacher to place children in homogeneous groups where they read to the teacher at their instructional level (90–94% accuracy). The reading is followed up with guided instruction on what the student needs to know next. This may involve further teaching of one or more of the cueing systems—semantic, syntactic, graphophonic or paralinguistic. The teaching strategies that are used at this time can include semantic webs, word walls and **cloze procedures**.

In guided writing, the teacher guides and supervises students as they attempt to complete specific tasks. Again, students can be grouped according to skill levels, and the teacher can offer individual and group instruction on features of writing that require attention. If, for example, a student has difficulty hearing the sounds in words, as evidenced in spelling, the teacher can introduce them to **Elkonin boxes**. This teaching strategy will help early primary students to improve their phonological awareness. There are many teaching strategies that students can be introduced to during this part of the Literacy Block.

Guided reading and writing provide teachers and their students opportunities to work closely together to refine skills and enhance learning. Teachers use guided reading and writing for these purposes:

- to support students to develop further competencies when they are reading at their instructional text levels
- to individualise teaching instruction through the use of specific teaching strategies in reading and writing
- to demonstrate to groups and individuals how competent readers and writers self-correct their work.

INDEPENDENT READING AND WRITING

Student achievement of independence in reading and writing is a gradual process that teachers must monitor. There is benefit in providing every student with independent reading and writing opportunities. To do so, students need to read and write at their instructional levels.

Independent reading occurs when children select a text that they can read, enjoy and respond to when questioned by the teacher or their peers. Independent writing operates in a similar way with the students choosing to write a range of text types (including digital texts) and tasks that they can share with the class (author's chair). A teacher's role in independent reading and writing is to continually monitor, enjoy and support students' progress. As students progress through the levels of schooling, they benefit from seeing their teachers engage with and enjoy their own reading and writing.

Independent reading and writing provide students with the opportunity to enjoy reading for pleasure, and appreciate the craft required to produce effective writing. Teachers use independent reading and writing for these purposes:

- to develop long-term appreciation and enjoyment of reading and writing
- to create opportunities for every child to successfully practise the reading and writing skills and strategies they have learned
- to provide students with choice in the selection of reading and writing texts.

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▶ Principle 6: Effective teachers link instruction and assessment

There are three statements that effective teachers recognise about assessment:

1. Assessment is the bridge between teaching and learning (Lowe, 2017, p. 31).
2. Assessment is an integral and ongoing part of both learning and teaching (Mariotti & Homan, 2005).
3. Assessment is one of the three points in the triangle of classroom interaction of learning and teaching. The other points of the triangle are content and teaching (Campbell, 2017, p. 89).

Parents and carers, and some teachers, sometimes equate standardised high-stakes testing with assessment, but classroom assessment is much more than a once-a-year test. Cunningham and Allington

(2016) describe assessment as 'collecting and analysing data to make decisions about how children are performing and growing' (p. 202). Assessment is a daily part of classroom life, and teachers use a variety of observations, informal procedures and commercial tests to monitor students' reading and writing progress in order to determine ways to assist their students more effectively. Assessment is always linked to instruction, because effective teachers use the day-to-day judgments to make decisions about students' achievement and, more importantly, plan interventions. Marsh (2008, p. 283) argues further for authentic assessment, assessment that assesses what is important, and not what is convenient.

Teachers assess students' learning for these purposes:

- **Determine instructional levels.** Teachers determine each individual student's achievement levels and skills in reading, writing, spelling, oral language use, and skills across a range of multiliteracy activities, so that they can plan appropriate instruction for the class, and for selected groups and individuals.
- **Monitor progress.** Teachers regularly assess students to ensure that they are understanding instruction and making expected progress; and when they are not, teachers take action or intervene to get students on track.
- **Diagnose strengths and weaknesses.** Teachers examine each student's progress in specific literacy components, including phonics, fluency, comprehension, writing and spelling, in order to identify their strengths and weaknesses. Diagnosis is especially important when students are struggling or are not making expected progress.
- **Document learning.** Teachers use a combination of collections of students' work and test results to provide evidence of students' academic achievement and to document that students have met year-level achievement standards, and are meeting expectations beyond the year-level requirements.
- **Evaluate teaching.** Teaching English has been described as 'an applied science every bit as important as medicine, engineering or law' (Boomer, 1991, p. 32, in Christie et al., 1991, p. 160). As such, effective teachers reflect on the outcomes of their English teaching and develop ways to achieve better outcomes for the individual learners in their care (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

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THE INSTRUCTION–ASSESSMENT CYCLE

Classroom assessment is always linked to instruction because teachers use assessment results to inform their teaching (Snow, Griffin & Burns, 2005). As they plan, teachers use their knowledge about each student's reading levels, background knowledge, and strategy and skill competencies to plan appropriate instruction that is neither too easy nor too difficult. Apart from classroom tests that are commercially available, and results of nationally mandated tests, teachers use a combination (McKenna & Dougherty Stahl, 2015) of the following and more valuable assessment instruments:

- observation of students as they participate in instructional activities
- running records of each student's oral reading to analyse their ability to solve reading problems
- examination of students' work (regular samples of children's work are collected and placed in portfolios)
- conferences to talk with students about their reading and writing
- checklists to monitor each student's learning
- rubrics to assess students' performances, written products and multimedia projects.

These assessment tools support instruction, and teachers choose which tool to use according to the kind of information they need. Teachers administer commercial tests to individual students or the entire class to determine their overall reading achievement or their proficiency in a particular component: phonics, spelling, fluency or comprehension, for example. In upcoming chapters, you will learn how to assess students' reading and writing, and which assessment tools to use.

Teachers put in place an instruction-assessment cycle that demonstrates the effectiveness of their teaching by employing the following six-step cycle of assessment and instruction:

Step 1: Diagnose. Teachers do some assessments before they begin to teach, some while they are teaching and other assessments afterwards.

Step 2: Plan. Teachers use their knowledge about students' reading, writing and other learning skills levels to plan appropriate instruction.

Step 3: Monitor. Teachers monitor instruction in progress as they observe students, conference with them and check their work to ensure that their instruction is effective.

Step 4: Modify. Teachers make modifications, including reteaching when necessary, to improve the quality of their instruction and meet students' needs.

Step 5: Evaluate. Teachers evaluate students' learning using rubrics and checklists to assess students' reading and writing projects, and administer teacher-made tests. They also collect samples to document students' achievements.

Step 6: Reflect. Teachers judge the effectiveness of their instruction by analysing students' reading and writing projects and test results, and consider how they might adapt instruction to improve student learning.

It is easy to blame students when learning is not occurring, but teachers need to consider how they can improve their teaching through diagnosing, planning, monitoring, modifying, evaluating and reflecting so that their students will be more successful.

Effective teachers work with students at all phases of the instruction-assessment cycle, and central to student involvement in the cycle is feedback to students. Students are given processes for using feedback so that they take responsibility for developing their writing skills and craft. Chapter 3 provides a process for this part of the cycle. Of great value in this cycle, as well, is the student voice. Lowe (2017) suggests that students be included in negotiating and constructing assessment, and be involved in self- and peer-assessment.

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HIGH-STAKES TESTING AND NAPLAN

All students in Australia, with a few exceptions, undertake national assessment of student reading, writing and numeracy, held each May for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. These tests provide evidence of students' literacy and numeracy achievement, measured against national, state and 'like-school' means. The tests are conducted in classrooms under the auspices of the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), part of the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

The usefulness of the data is limited because the tests are usually administered in May, and only in very recent years have results been available in August. For many years, results had not been available for use in informing teaching until the following year. However, school administrators and system officials study the results for each cohort of students, and classroom teachers study results for individual students. School administrators examine the data and use what they learn in planning for school improvement. The marking schemes for NAPLAN include a remarkably detailed and robust set of skills and knowledge to be learned and applied by students, tested in conditions where there is no support from teachers and parents.

The results are used to measure the effectiveness of teachers' instruction by examining how much students have grown since the previous test, and determining whether students have met expected standards. However, teachers are aware that a one-off test on a particular day is seldom an accurate reflection of all of a student's abilities, and the results of the high-stakes testing are used as one benchmark for assessment, and a guide to further instruction. That is, effective teachers use external systems of high-stakes testing as a marker-post alongside the in-classroom cycle of assessment and instruction, so that the three days in May become little more than part of the program of literacy and numeracy instruction and assessment.

CHAPTER 1 REVIEW

Becoming an effective teacher of language, literature and literacy

Effective teachers demonstrate their responsibility and commitment to ensuring that their students are successful when they adopt the following elements of the principles presented in this chapter:

- Teachers understand and use the Four Resources Model and can describe each role represented in the model.
- Teachers understand the organisation of the Australian Curriculum: English and work with the three strands of language, literature and literacy.
- Teachers explain and show how language learning theories inform their teaching of reading and writing, and the development of students' thinking and communication skills.
- Teachers can explain how they teach and support students to use the five cueing systems. They support students' reading and writing development and their oral language development by explaining strategies for teaching students to use knowledge to decode and understand texts in books, and visual and digital modes.
- Teachers demonstrate how they organise a balanced approach to literacy instruction, using the school's Work Program, Units of Work and daily lesson plans that detail what occurs in the Literacy Block.
- Teachers address learning needs in the ways in which they differentiate instruction, so all students can be successful.
- Teachers can link instruction and assessment, and discuss and demonstrate how they make these links.

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Evaluate and reflect

Apply your understanding about effective literacy instruction. The following questions ask you to observe a Literacy Block in a primary classroom. Collect and analyse data from your observations, and report the results.

1. Describe how students used each of the roles in the Four Resources Model.
2. Describe how the teacher organised for instruction. Consider how the teacher addressed Australian Curriculum requirements. How did the teacher demonstrate knowledge of the curriculum and the three strands of language, literature and literacy?
3. Examine your beliefs about how students learn and how teachers teach reading and writing. Then consider how your beliefs will influence your instruction. Your response should include answers to these questions:
   - Which theories reflect your beliefs?
   - Is your orientation teacher-centred or student-centred?
4. What evidence did you see of the five cueing systems? How did the teacher support students to use cueing systems? What teaching strategies did the teacher use?
5. Interview one or two teachers to learn how they teach reading and writing. Ask questions to examine these points:
   - how the teacher differentiates for learners
   - how the teacher organises for instruction
   - which instructional programs and strategies the teacher uses
   - how the teacher addresses the Australian Curriculum requirements.
6. Interview one or two teachers and write about their approach to assessment. In addition to a short description of each teacher:
   - organise the teacher's assessment procedures into the steps of the instruction–assessment cycle
   - note ways in which the teacher organises the assessment program in that classroom of learners.

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