

A LITERACY PRACTICES GUIDE

Years 5 to 7

This guide provides a means for Principals to check on those literacy practices that are seen to be important in the improvement of literacy learning.

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The PALL* Leadership for Learning Framework rests on research findings that particular leadership actions are closely linked to improved literacy learning and student achievement. The literacy model in the project **“The Big Six”** was presented by Deslea Konza. The **“Big Six”** was based on research relating to **“The Big Five”** plus one: oral language experiences.

This **Literacy Practices Guide** has been developed by Sandra Easey and Pam Pearson to support principals and schools. It is based on the concept of a Literacy Practices Guide developed by Deslea Konza from Edith Cowan University in association with Greg Robson, Keith Newton and Paul Woodley.

This Guide provides a focus for obtaining qualitative data about the literacy practices happening across the school in the areas of:

Literacy Instruction in: Oral Language, Reading, Writing and Spelling
Classroom Environment
Intervention Practices.

There are a number of ways to use the guide: by ticking to indicate whether an action has not been observed, whether there is some evidence of the action in practice or whether there is ample evidence of the action in practice in the school.

For example:

- (i) Principals could complete all sections or selected sections themselves.
- (ii) Leadership Teams could complete all sections or selected sections.
- (iii) Teachers in cohorts could complete all or selected sections.
- (iv) Teachers could use all or some sections as a tool for mentoring and coaching.

Once responses have been gathered, Principals could analyse their own results against those of teachers, results from combined teams could be compared, results from particular staff sectors e.g. para-professionals /professionals and so on. Where consonance occurs or gaps or differences in the findings are identified, discussions employing the techniques of Disciplined Dialogue can be arranged.

i.e. What are we seeing here?
Why do we think this is so?
What, if anything, do we need to do about it?

THE TEACHING OF ORAL LANGUAGE	The focus in this first section of the instrument is on the explicit teaching of the codes and conventions of oral/spoken language and the use of Standard Australian English.	Not observed	Some evidence	Ample evidence
	Explores a range of purposes for speaking according to the school scope and sequence.			
	Explicitly teaches the codes and conventions of spoken texts.			
	Identifies roles and relationships and the impact of “talking” in informal and formal contexts.			
	Analyses models of spoken texts to identify salient features.			
	Provides opportunities for purposeful interactions –whole group, small group & one on one.			
	Practises short conversations with a specific purpose to develop particular skills in the codes and conventions of oral language.			
	Creates a classroom climate that encourages the expression of ideas and opinions.			
	Collaboratively develops criteria sheets for oral presentations, including for use in peer and self assessment.			
	Comments:			

THE TEACHING OF READING	The focus here is on the explicit teaching of active comprehension strategies. A range of literary, non-literary and multi-modal texts should be included in class programs.	Not observed	Some evidence	Ample evidence
	Ensures modeled, guided and independent reading occurs.			
	Groups students for guided and independent reading at instructional level.			
	Uses a range of literary and non-literary texts according to school scope and sequence.			
	Provides clear before, during and after reading strategies.			
	Activates prior knowledge of content.			
	Teaches new vocabulary including subject specific vocabulary instruction as a routine component of the program.			
	Uses graphic organizers such as mind maps across subject areas.			
	Explicitly teaches active comprehension strategies e.g. predicting, summarizing, analyzing, making inferences, visualizing.			
	Uses “read-alouds” and “think-alouds” as a means of modeling comprehension strategies and higher level thinking.			
	Uses “accountable talk” to seek evidence or justification for opinions, statements, etc.			
	Displays graphic organizers used for comprehending or “unpacking” texts.			
	Displays charts to assist with referencing comprehension strategies.			
	Models good oral reading, including a focus on fluency, for performance purposes.			
Continually monitors progress to inform future teaching.				
Comments:				

THE TEACHING OF WRITING	The focus in this third section is the explicit teaching of the “craft” of writing and the techniques that writers’ use. Students should compose a range of texts but MUST be explicitly taught the skills of written English	Not observed	Some evidence	Ample evidence
	Composes a range of texts according to school scope and sequence.			
	Provides regular group or shared writing activities to model a variety of purposes, skills and techniques.			
	Provides regular opportunities for short writing tasks to practise the “craft” of writing or authors’ techniques.			
	Emphasizes the need for awareness of audience and purpose.			
	Analyzes written exemplars that demonstrate writing techniques, text types, aspects of grammar, sentence structure, vocabulary, etc.			
	Ensures student use of glossaries, dictionaries or thesauruses for reference purposes.			
	Explicitly teaches the writing process and collaboratively develops charts that explain the process, for use as reference sources.			
	Explores genuine opportunities to share published pieces.			
	Distributes criteria sheets for work that is to be published and assessed.			
Comments:				

THE TEACHING OF SPELLING	The focus of this section is on the explicit teaching of the phonological, visual, morphemic and etymological systems of spelling, as well as the study of words to enhance vocabulary.	Not observed	Some evidence	Ample evidence
	Explicitly teaches syllabification and pronunciation.			
	Explores Greek and Latin roots and rules relating to syllable junctures.			
	Develops a “no excuses” word list.			
	Develops and extends vocabulary e.g. visual displays of word webs.			
	Encourage risk taking to extend vocabulary.			
	Explores words e.g. word of the week.			
	Uses and maintains Student Spelling Journals /Logs.			
	Expects self correction and proof reading to be evident in writing.			
	Uses a range of assessment techniques.			
Comments:				

Assessment tools:

- Checklists to continue to monitor development and skills
- Standardised tests
- Dated and analysed work samples

Student portfolios are well organised with dated samples and criteria sheets where relevant.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT	Students in this phase of learning should be immersed in an environment that is multi-modal and language rich. The explicit teaching of higher order thinking skills in literacy will enable them to enhance their literacy skills and gain confidence in themselves as successful speakers, readers and writers.	Not observed	Some evidence	Ample evidence
	Implements teaching sequence for all aspects of English as per school program.			
	Ensures classroom layout supports whole group, small group and independent instruction & literacy learning			
	Ensures program planning caters for differentiated instruction and whole group, small group and individual instruction.			
	Provides opportunities for students to negotiate some aspects of the English program.			
	Ensures students understand the purpose of literacy activities through the use of e.g. advance organisers.			
	Provides meaningful opportunities for students to publish, celebrate and publicise their work.			
	Establishes a class library that contains a range of literary and non- literary books, magazines, newspapers and digital texts.			
	Ensures hard copy and online reference materials are accessible and available for independent use.			
	Develops task checklists with students and displays for research and editing purposes.			
	Ensures procedural charts are displayed for reference and used constantly e.g. comprehension strategies			
	Establishes and maintains a respectful, ethical and safe environment in which collaborative problem solving is a feature.			
	<u>Comments:</u>			

Assessment

The school assessment plan articulates universal common assessment of all students to enable monitoring of progress, as well as identifying those with difficulties. Moderation occurs across and within year or cohort levels. Criteria sheets and rubrics for tasks are given to students. There is evidence of students' self- reflection and peer assessment.

INTERVENTION ACTIONS	The PALL Project uses a wave analogy to identify intervention phases. Wave 1 involves the deliberate acts schools take to ensure most students can participate productively in the general classroom curriculum as described above. Wave 2 applies to those students unable to achieve the goals of the classroom curriculum who need specialised assistance in the form of scaffolded learning or specialized direct teaching. Wave 3 comprises students with specific needs who require highly focused individualized intervention. This will always be a minority of students.	Not observed	Some evidence	Ample evidence
	Wave 2: A systematic approach to intervention is in place, common goals are understood and pedagogy appropriate to the phase of learning implemented.			
	Explicit teaching is evident in all classes and is highly specific in areas needing improvement.			
	Diagnostic assessment is used to identify specific needs of students and target accurately areas of difficulty. Additional assessments are used when required to pinpoint difficulties.			
	Interventions are appropriate to needs and supplement, but do not replace core instruction.			
	Regular, ongoing monitoring occurs.			
	Duration of interventions is short term (8-20) weeks.			
	An 'add-on' rather than deficit approach is part of the classroom ethos			
	Resources used in programs are suited to the phase of development and interests of students.			
	Students are aware of the program goals they are trying to achieve. These are realistic.			
	Wave 3: A team approach is evident in assessing individual student needs.			
	Regular monitoring to check progress and adjust programs is evident			
	Data analysis continues to form the basis for program decision making, including formative, diagnostic and qualitative data.			
	Correct procedures for specialist referral are known and implemented.			
	Caregivers are kept informed and their input is welcomed.			
<u>Comments:</u>				

