

ELA Paper 3: An analysis of pedagogical practice 2006

Evaluation of literacy approaches for ESL Indigenous students project

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Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
APF	Accountability and Performance Framework
ACER	Australian Council for Education Research
AL	Accelerated Literacy
ALLP	Commonwealth Government's Australian Language and Literacy Policy
ATSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
DEET	Department of Employment Education and Training
DEETYA	Department of Employment Education and Youth Affairs
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELA	Evaluation of Literacy Approaches for ESL Indigenous Students Project
ESD	English as second Dialect
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	English for Special Purposes
ET2	Executive Teacher Grade 2
FS	First Steps
IESIP	Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme
ILSS	Indigenous Language Speaking Students
LADD	Modified Linderwood Literacy Approach
LLANS	Longitudinal Literacy and Numeracy Study
MAP	Multilevel Assessment Program
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
NATSIEP	The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy
NALP	National Accelerated Literacy Project
NIELNS	National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy
NILNS	National Indigenous Literacy and Numeracy Strategy
NLNP	National Literacy and Numeracy Plan
NT	Northern Territory
NTCF	Northern Territory Curriculum Framework
NT DEET	Northern Territory Department of Employment Education and Training
OECD	Organisation for Economic and Cultural Development
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
PD	Professional Development
SA	South Australia
SAE	Standard Australian English
SSP	Special Support Program
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TL&S	Teaching, Learning and Standards Division
WA	Western Australia
WAACHS	Western Australia Aboriginal Child Health Survey (WAACHS)
WALNA	Western Australia Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
WTT	Walking Talking Texts

Part I: Introduction

This project is a Northern Territory Department of Employment Education and Training (NT DEET) initiative funded from the Commonwealth Targeted funds for the quadrennium 2005 – 2008.

The project evaluates the main literacy approaches used in NT primary schools over a three-year period. The evaluation focuses on measuring and assessing the effectiveness and the value added of each approach to student literacy outcomes. In addition further work will be completed to measure the resource costs of each approach and compare the educational outcomes achieved to arrive at conclusions around cost effectiveness of each approach.

Research design for the ELA project

The evaluation takes a longitudinal view of the multiple factors in schools and system organisations that contribute to the literacy outcomes of students. A number of theoretical frameworks have been adopted to conceptualise the structure of schooling and to describe the factors impacting on literacy education.

Student Cohort and Sample Schools for the ELA Project

A cohort of years 1-4 primary school students is followed over the three years of the project through a series of standardised assessments using the Longitudinal Literacy and Numeracy Study (LLANS) surveys, (Meiers M, Khoo S K, Rowe K, Stephanou A, Anderson P, Nolan C, 2006) commencing 2006. The overall sample size as recorded in Term 1 of 2006 was 2050, with 843 Indigenous and 1207 non-Indigenous students who will be followed during the project.

The selection of schools in the sample followed a stratified clustered sampling technique that identified fifty schools from among all NT primary schools. These schools were identified as using specific literacy approaches in 2004, and were as representative as possible of the approaches, size, and location of primary schools in the NT. With the assistance of the staff in Curriculum Services Division, schools were invited to apply to participate in the project. Schools were asked to commit to a specific and explicit whole school approach to teaching literacy until 2008. In return each school was provided with a small grant and access to professional development to establish the approach in their school. A panel of project steering group members comprising General Managers of Teaching Learning and Standards Division (hereafter TL&S), Remote Education Division and Schools Division selected the final list of schools, which again met all criteria outlined above.

Each sample school is committed to implementing an approach to teaching literacy and to a policy of explicit literacy and numeracy teaching of two hours per day in their annual Literacy and Numeracy Strategy.

The sample included three groups of five schools implementing each of the three main approaches to literacy in the Northern Territory.

- ⊖ Accelerated Literacy (AL) or Scaffolded Literacy
- ⊖ First Steps (FS)
- ⊖ Walking Talking Texts (WTT)
- ⊖ Other school based approaches. Five more schools in the sample are developing their own approach to teaching literacy either using a combination of commercial programs to reach specific outcomes in early childhood and primary education or the development of specific interventions to support literacy learning. Approaches represented here are the Modified Linderwood or LADD program, Gateways to Literacy and the Ann Morrice cycle. Two other schools are using First Steps in combination with other resources/programs.

The sample is representative of types of schools and teaching contexts in the Northern Territory such as:

- ⊖ Bilingual and non bilingual schools
- ⊖ Primary, Community Education Centres and Group schools
- ⊖ Schools in provincial, rural, remote and very remote locations and schools in the top end and central areas of the Territory

Schools with varying numbers of enrolments (small, medium sized, large, and very large school)

The study is concerned with addressing the following research questions:

- ⊖ Is the overall design and pedagogy of each approach consistent with the Northern Territory Curriculum Framework (NTCF) planning, programming and assessment and to what extent are these literacy approaches incorporated into the school and NT-DEET structures?
- ⊖ What are the teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of the literacy approach being implemented in the school? And what are their perspectives on students' improvement as a result of the implementation of the approach in the school?
- ⊖ What services (professional development, teaching aides, resources, etc) are provided to the school and to the teacher to assist in the implementation of the literacy approach?
- ⊖ What are the schools and systems policies and practices in place to enhance the implementation of the literacy approaches in the school?
- ⊖ How effective are these literacy approaches on the NT primary school students, in particular, how suitable are the literacy approaches for the Indigenous students?
- ⊖ What are the general and specific characteristics of the school that may impact on the implementation of the literacy approaches in the school?
- ⊖ What level of system and school support is required to maintain each approach over time? at what cost? and in particular what demands does each literacy approach make on school budgets and human resources?

The methodology was designed to draw on multiple sources of data using both quantitative and qualitative approaches to data collection. Quantitative data included student related data as collected by the system and specifically for the project through the implementation of the LLANS as an assessment tool to measure the literacy achievement in reading and writing, from all participating students in the 20 schools, collected at the beginning of 2006, then at the end of 2006, 2007 and 2008.

Scope of this paper

This report is one of a number of reports for the Evaluation of Literacy Approaches for ESL Indigenous Students Project (hereafter referred to as the ELA project) produced in 2007. The other reports includes (a) a detailed description of the methodology, (b) a detailed analysis of the baseline data 2006, and (c) analysis of the 2006 data using the school improvement framework. These reports will also be followed by detailed case studies for each school in the sample. This report primarily addresses the first and third research questions,

Is the overall design and pedagogy of each approach consistent with the NTCF planning, programming and assessment and to what extent are these literacy approaches incorporated into the school and NT-DEET structures?

and

What services (professional development, teaching aides, resources, etc) are provided to the school and to the teacher to assist in the implementation of the literacy approach?

It does so by providing:

- ⊖ An overview of the policy and NT context for delivery of literacy, in particular the NTCF and its usage;
- ⊖ An overall description of each of the main approaches using Danielson's (Danielson C 1997 *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*, Virginia) domains of practice using observations of professional development and an analysis of documentation for the three main approaches only; and
- ⊖ An assessment of the issues and status of these approaches in 2006

The term 'main approaches' here refers to the fact that there are proportionally more schools in the NT and in the sample that follow these approaches than any of the other approaches. In this instance, the main approaches refer to Accelerated Literacy, First Steps Reading and Writing 2nd Edition Resources and Walking Talking Texts. These approaches are among those 'endorsed' by Teaching Learning and Standards Division.

Describing approaches to literacy

In order to make judgements about the approaches it is necessary to:

- ⊖ Understand the NT DEET policies, in particular the NTCF and its usage, in guiding the delivery of educational services
- ⊖ Describe what each of the approaches purports to do and the resources, processes and practices that they require; and
- ⊖ Describe to what extent these approaches are actually practiced in schools.

Analysis tools

A classroom-teaching framework and a description of classroom teaching checklist based on the work of Danielson (Danielson, C 1997) have been developed as an analysis tool to identify information about each of the approaches in a consistent format and to observe its application in classrooms by teachers (Refer to Appendix 1). The Classroom-teaching framework consists of four domains covering the daily work of teachers

- ⊖ Domain 1: Planning and preparation fleshes out understandings and knowledge needed about the content and pedagogy of the approach, the knowledge needed of students, the means of selecting instructional goals, resources required and the process for designing coherent instruction.
- ⊖ Domain 2: Classroom environment is concerned with how the approach creates an environment of respect and rapport, a culture for learning by setting and articulating expectations; manages classroom procedures and behaviours, that is, how activities are timed and participants grouped; and finally how the physical space is organised.
- ⊖ Domain 3: Instruction is concerned with the preferred means of communicating clearly and accurately; the use of questioning; strategies for engaging students, providing feedback and being flexible and responsive.
- ⊖ Domain 4: Professional responsibilities is concerned with teacher professionalism through reflective practice, the maintenance of accurate records of students and own activities, strategies and responsibilities for communicating with families and the community, responsibilities in contributing to the school, and contributing to professionalism in all aspects of school. The analysis tool uses three of the four domains. Domain 4, Professional responsibilities, has not been used, as it is more concerned with the teachers' activities outside the classroom.

Descriptions of the approaches were developed in the following way:

- ⊖ Developers of two approaches – Frances Murray, Walking Talking Texts 1989 and 1995 and Dr Ann Morrice – Willowra CEC approach, were directly asked to describe their approaches using the framework.
- ⊖ The Implementation team for National Accelerated Literacy Program, DEET, approved a description provided after lengthy consultation among the team and with the research team at Charles Darwin University.

- ⊖ The ELA project team accessed published materials for First Steps: Reading 2nd Edition (First Steps Professional Development 2005,) and Writing 2nd Edition (First Steps Professional Development 2006) as part of delivery of facilitator training for First Steps in the Northern Territory and wrote the description using the framework.
- ⊖ The Project team accessed professional development, resources and documentation for LADD and Gateways to Literacy programs

Professional development sessions for facilitators¹ and at schools were observed by the project team and documentation in use at schools and distributed as part of professional development sessions were collected and analysed.

Thirty-nine teachers were observed teaching. Interviews were conducted with all of them, in most cases immediately after the classroom observation. Comments from the observation checklist and transcription of interviews were coded using NVIVO 7 qualitative data and text analysis software.

¹ 'Facilitators' is used here refer to those trained to deliver professional development for any of the approaches. First Steps have accredited facilitators and NALP refer to their trainers as coordinators, Walking Talking Texts has no formal train the trainer structure.

Part II: Contexts

This section examines Australian Government and Northern Territory policies in relation to literacy education and in particular for Indigenous students. It provides an overview of the contexts for literacy education in the primary years. It also provides a review of the relevant literature on literacy, literacy in English and literacy for Indigenous students.

National Literacy and Numeracy Policy

The acquisition of literacy is seen as a fundamental building block affecting individuals' life chances, their socio-economic status and social well being (United Nations, 2002). Successful literacy outcomes are linked to completion of education, and in Australia, literacy and numeracy form the basis for education benchmarks (ACER, 2002; ABS, 2003). A major policy objective of Australian governments is to provide all young people with strong foundational skills in literacy and numeracy, through funding projects for the improvement of achievement outcomes for Australian students, and supporting the monitoring of achievement standards in literacy throughout all Australian States and Territories. In April 1999, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) agreed on a common set of goals for education in Australia, updating a 1989 agreement on common goals. The National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century (known as the Adelaide Declaration) specified literacy goals that "every student should be numerate, able to read, write, spell and communicate at an appropriate level" (MCEETYA, 1999, p.ix).

The National Literacy and Numeracy Plan (NLNP) focused on the early years of school and comprised an assessment of all students in their first years of schooling; implementation of early intervention strategies for individual students when required; development of national benchmarks for Years 3, 5 and 7, including testing and reporting against these benchmarks; and teachers' professional development (DEST, 2002). National benchmarks for literacy and numeracy in Years 3, 5 and 7 were set out in 1997 to help support the nationals in literacy and numeracy. These benchmarks represent "minimum standards of performance below which students will have difficulty progressing satisfactorily at school" (MCEETYA, 2004, p. 2).

Over the course of more than 35 years, there have been many policy and program reviews and many reports dealing with the literacy achievements of Australian children in general and of Indigenous children in particular. These reports acknowledged that Indigenous people are significantly educationally disadvantaged (Hughes, 1988; Commonwealth of Australia, 1994; 1995; 1997; Johnston, 1991; Kemp, 1999). In fact, "Indigenous people are the most disadvantaged group within Australia across the full spectrum of socio-economic indicators" (National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (NIELNS), 2001, p. 1). Brendan Nelson, the then Federal Minister for Education, Science and Training acknowledged: There can be no higher priority in a complex and broad portfolio than to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous Australians (Commonwealth of Australia, 2002, p. iii).

An examination of the chronology of selected research and Commonwealth policy initiatives since 1975 (Commonwealth of Australia, Chronology, 1999) revealed that the first attempt to survey literacy and numeracy of Australian children was conducted in 1975, and repeated in 1980. It assessed the achievement of 10 and 14 year olds in the areas of reading, writing and numeracy, and reported a wide range of performance among Australian children. The results confirmed that a significant number of children were failing to reach adequate levels of literacy and numeracy. The final report recommended regular surveys of literacy achievement to assess standards and compare results between school systems within Australia and internationally, however, there "was little wide-scale monitoring of performance until the advent of state-based monitoring studies from the late 1980 and 1990s onwards" (Commonwealth of Australia, Chronology, 1999, p. 1). By the mid to late 1990s greater attention was

given to intervention strategies through the support and encouragement of effective processes in schools.

The first such an attempt was given by the Commonwealth Government's Australian Language and Literacy Policy (ALLP) released in 1991 by the then Minister for Employment, Education and Training, John Dawkins outlining the national literacy strategy. The ALLP's literacy objectives were stated in these terms:

All Australian residents should develop and maintain a level of spoken and written English which is appropriate for a range of contexts, with the support of education and training programs addressing their diverse learning needs (DEET, 1992)

The policy identified and funded a range of programs for Australians of all ages and cultural background. Some of the funding was allocated for programs targeting "literacy in the early years of school and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) communities" (Commonwealth of Australia, Chronology, 1999 p. 2). This funding, however, was relatively small (de Lemos and Harvey-Beavis, 1995). In 1993, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training produced the Literacy Challenge report which recognised in the absence of national data that between 10 to 20 percent of Australian children were finishing primary schooling with literacy problems, and thus emphasised the importance of early literacy intervention for these children. It also recommended increased funding for the primary school sector, and put forward proposals relating to the selection and training of teachers, the development of standard assessment tasks, and curriculum revision. The Early Literacy Component gave support to literacy development for children from socio-economic backgrounds in the early years of schooling (K to Year 3). Funding was provided to support intervention strategies and to provide professional development programs (DEET, 1995).

The Commonwealth's policy paper, *Literacy for All: The Challenge for Australian Schools* (DEETYA, 1998) consolidated and explained the national literacy and numeracy policies for Australian schools. The paper included an outline of policy principles and goals, funding strategies, contextual framework, and particular aspects of literacy, including the pedagogy of literacy, the needs of English as a Second Language (ESL), bilingual and Indigenous students, assessment and intervention, home-school partnerships, technology and early schooling. These were the basis for the NLNP, which advocated the government's position on literacy: The government believes that schools should equip all children who enter education with basic literacy and numeracy skills. It is in the first years of school that all children can be helped to acquire the foundation skills which will set them on the path of success in reading and writing . . . if children have not achieved appropriate literacy and numeracy skills by the end of primary school, they are unlikely to make up the gap through the rest of their schooling (DEETYA, 1998, p.8).

Assessment of children against national benchmarks was also endorsed and the first ever National School English Literacy Survey of Australian school children was carried out in 1996. Funding was allocated to the NLNP, which was previously allocated under the Disadvantaged School Program and the English as a Second Language component of the National Equity Program for Schools. The initial allocation for funds was based on three elements. First, existing indicators of educational disadvantage were to be used for allocating funds to states and sectors. Second, there was a requirement for education authorities to specify a plan for ensuring students reach "minimum acceptable literacy standards" (DEETYA, 1998, p.9). Third, outcomes data was to be used by school authorities to improve outcomes for the most disadvantaged students. In 1999-2000 funds to the tune of \$47.1 million were allocated to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for students in the middle years of schooling (Years 5 to 10).

A survey of primary principals found that primary schools were spending more class time on literacy and numeracy albeit at the expense of other subjects, as schools struggled with the problems of a crowded curriculum. However, a majority of principals felt that student literacy performance was improving particularly for low achieving students (Hill, Hurworth, & Rowe, 1999). Still, the Commonwealth literacy programs had focused on the early years of schooling and, through the Full Service Schools Program, at

risk students in the final years of schooling or those who had returned to school as a result of the mutual obligation provision.

As for Indigenous children, the 1999-2000 budget provided for a National Indigenous Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (NILNS), supporting the general goals for literacy and numeracy by addressing specific needs of Indigenous students through the identification and dissemination of best practice models and teaching methods drawn from various pilot projects. Funding for the NILNS would be provided through existing funds under the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme (IESIP).

Definitions of literacy and literacy in these policies are implicit and over time governments have used a range of understandings. The generally accepted definitions of literacy and language and literacy in English embedded in current policies are:

Literacy is the ability to read and use written language and to write appropriately, in a range of contexts. It is used to develop knowledge and understanding, to achieve personal growth and to function effectively in our society. Literacy also includes the recognition of numbers and basic mathematical signs and symbols within text.

Literacy involves the integration of speaking, listening, and critical thinking with reading and writing. Effective literacy is intrinsically purposeful, flexible and dynamic and continues to develop throughout an individual's lifetime.

Language in its broad sense . . . is the primary means of human communication, manifest generally in systematic ways through the communication skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Language in terms such as 'language and literacy proficiency' is an inclusive term, covering both English and other languages.

Australian English is the variety of English that has developed in Australia in response to the Australian physical, social and cultural environment. Within it, there are further varieties, including Standard Australian English, which is spoken and recognized by most native speakers of English in Australia. (DEET, 1991)

While Australia is a pluralist society and cultural and linguistic diversity is recognised, education policies locate literacy generally within the English learning area although funding and provision is made for learners to learn ESL. The teaching of ESL has become a mainstream strategy (Dawkins, 1991). Education policy and strategies for improving English literacy sit within an implicitly monolingual education language policy.

Indigenous Education Outcomes and Literacy

Indigenous education policy in Australia has long been highlighted by recognition that improvement of Indigenous educational outcomes is one possible measure for the improvement of future prospects of the Indigenous population. The then Federal Minister for Education, Science and Training acknowledged that "a continuing concern remains the low achievement levels in literacy and numeracy . . . If students, literacy and numeracy skills are insufficient to cope with more complex and abstract content of secondary education, many study and career options may be closed off to them" (DEST, 2002, pp. iii-iv). Enhancing the academic achievement of Indigenous students at the school level is considered critical in order for them to access further schooling and education and engage in employment and the wider community. This engagement and participation enables Indigenous students to contribute to their community and the nation and become less welfare dependent thus reducing the burden on societal and community resources. It is important, therefore, to examine how Indigenous Australians fare as the general level of educational attainment continues to rise. If they do not keep up with the rest of the population, then it is likely that they will remain uncompetitive in the labour market and that high rates of Indigenous poverty will be perpetuated indefinitely (Hunter & Gray, 2001). Groome and Hamilton (1995), for example, found that Aboriginal students are likely to lose between two and four years of schooling through absenteeism, while the rates for the total population are less than half these (p.3).

Obviously it is highly unlikely that a student can do well in an educational environment if they do not fully participate. A large number of Indigenous students do not participate in education at all. In fact “13% of Indigenous 5-14 year olds are not attending an educational institution compared with 5% of their non-Indigenous peers” (DEST, 2002, p. 30). Of the Indigenous students who do participate in schooling, attendance rates are of concern. Attendance rates are also of concern, in government and Catholic school systems in 2001 average attendance rates for Indigenous primary students varied between 75%-92% compared with 85%-95% for non-Indigenous students. School retention rates for Indigenous students are still significantly lower than those of the general community. School retention rates for Indigenous students are still significantly lower than those of the general community (DEST, 2002). In 1998 only one in three Indigenous students remained at school until year 12 (Frigo et al, 2004, p.2). Absenteeism is also a problem, “students are likely to lose between two and four years of schooling through absenteeism . . . rates for the total population are less than half these” (Groome & Hamilton, 1995, p.3).

Numerous policy reviews highlighted that Indigenous students are significantly disadvantaged, and that they are “the most disadvantaged group within Australia across the full spectrum of socio-economic indicators” (NIELNS, 2001, p.1). These reviews emphasised the needs for Indigenous students to be competent in English literacy by the end of year five “at least to the level of their non-Indigenous peers . . . with similar spread of ability between the two groups” (Schools Council, 1992, p. 7), because if children have not achieved appropriate literacy and numeracy skills by the end of primary school, they are unlikely to make up the gap through the rest of their schooling.

A number of key issues in the educational disadvantage experienced by Indigenous students have been identified and include: culturally inappropriate teaching strategies and forms of assessment, the relevance of school, teacher training, teacher expectations, student motivation, student- teacher relationships, language issue, attendance, housing, health, substance abuse and community funding resources (Mellor & Corrigan, 2004). The consistent underperformance of some students is generally explained by socio-economic status (Rowe, 2003). Taylor (2003) provides a comprehensive analysis of Indigenous socio-economic in the NT based on 2001 census data, and points out that there are much deeper structural hurdles, including low literacy and numeracy levels, to be overcome if Indigenous people are to successfully compete for mainstream jobs. Numerous reports demonstrate the impact of poor literacy on life opportunities. These reports point to impacts on individual opportunities to access further education and training, to secure employment and affects on income and health (Schwab & Sutherland, 2004).

All levels of government have taken steps to redress Indigenous disadvantage and to improve English literacy outcomes. The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (NATSIEP) were endorsed by all Australian governments and are reflected in the Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Act 2000. The policy guides program initiatives across Australia in a continuing effort to achieve equity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The Australian Government provides Indigenous-specific funding as a supplement to other mainstream funds, which is intended for strategic interventions that aim to accelerate Indigenous students’ learning outcomes. A discussion paper (May 1994) titled *National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Peoples* reported that approximately 45 percent of ATSI primary school students had significantly lower levels of achievement in literacy and numeracy, compared to about 16 percent of other Australian students (Reference Group Overseeing the National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People 1994). The final report recognised that English was not the first language of many ASTI peoples and recommended that ATSI English language and literacy support services be provided in a similar manner to ESL services provided to non-Indigenous students whose first language was not English.

In 1995, the NATSIEP, (1996-2000) was endorsed by all education ministers and included literacy priorities across the educational spectrum (MCEETYA, 1996). The priority for the primary and middle years of schooling was for improved English literacy and numeracy outcomes through the delivery of culturally appropriate programs that recognise the home language of ATSI people.

In 1996, the Desert Schools project examined the English language and literacy development of secondary school age remote Aboriginal students. The report indicated that in spite of the various educational strategies which had been promulgated for ATSI peoples there appeared to be little achieved in terms of positive literacy outcomes, with the majority of students in the teenage years educated to functional English for oral communication in local situations and to Year 4 or 5 equivalent levels in English literacy. The report called for culturally appropriate pedagogical approaches, equal status for English and community languages in a bilingual context, utilisation of Aboriginal educators with real teaching responsibilities, and the treatment of English as a second language.

National Benchmarks

The most recent national benchmarks National Report on Schooling Preliminary Paper reports on the proportion of students achieving the benchmark in reading, writing and numeracy in each State and Territory, and as a nation. It also reports on the proportion of students (tabulated by gender and subgroup, including Indigenous) achieving the benchmarks in Australia in each year from 1999 to 2004. The paper notes that there are limits to comparability across jurisdictions. The results reported are for assessed students, which includes those who sat the test as well as those who were exempted. Table 1 summarises the 2004 results for each year and for Indigenous and Australian students.

Table 1 Percentage of Children Achieving Benchmarks in Reading and Writing in the NT in Comparison with all Australian Children

	Student Achieving benchmarks in reading (%)		Students achieving benchmarks in writing (%)	
	<i>All children</i>	<i>Indigenous children</i>	<i>All children</i>	<i>Indigenous children</i>
Year three				
NT	76.00	44.7	83.8	56.7
Australia	93.0	82.9	92.9	76.8
Year five				
NT	77.2	47.1	81.1	49.5
Australia	88.7	69.4	94.2	81.7
Year seven				
NT	79.4	42.2	66.1	26.8
Australia	93.6	78.8	82.1	51.9

Source: Summary Table Compiled from the "National Benchmark Results: Reading, Writing and Numeracy Years 3, 5 and 7 (MCEETYA, 2004).

Year Three Data

In 2004 Year Three (average age 8 years, 8 months, average years of schooling 3 years, 3 months) students in the NT achieved very poor results compared with the national averages in reaching the reading benchmark. While the NT's Indigenous students achieved the lowest results at almost half what Indigenous students on a national level achieved, the results for all students in the NT were substantially lower than those for students nationwide. The data on writing benchmarks shows a smaller gap between the NT and Australia as a whole, though the NT is still the lowest performing state or territory with 83.8% of students overall meeting the benchmark (compared to 92.9% nationally) and only 56.7% of Indigenous students in the NT meeting the benchmark (compared to 76.8% nationally).

The Preliminary Paper provides data on reading and writing benchmarks broken down by geolocation (metropolitan, provincial, remote, very remote) by State and Territory. Again, the NT scores were mostly below the national averages across the different categories of location (the NT isn't considered to have students in a metropolitan setting). The greatest gap is between students in very remote settings in the NT compared to the same categorisation nationally, just 41.8% of NT students in very remote regions met the benchmark in reading compared to 78.7% nationally, for writing the figures were 50.3% and 66.9% respectively. Paradoxically the NT in fact out-performed every other state and territory

except for Tasmania and Victoria in the remote category for achieving writing benchmarks. However the paper does note that comparisons of remote and very remote data across jurisdictions should be made with caution due to the very small numbers of students involved (MCEETYA, 2004, p. 12).

Year Five Data

The percentage of all Year 5 students achieving reading benchmarks in the NT was 77.2% compared to 88.7% nationwide. The gap is almost twice as wide however for Indigenous students; 47.1% of Indigenous students in the NT reached benchmarks compared to 69.4% nationally. In writing, the disparity is more marked again with 13% less NT students achieving benchmarks than all Australian students. The results for Indigenous students show an even greater gap of 32% (49.5% compared to 81.7%). With regard to the geolocation data the NT results are on par with national results for provincial and remote settings. However for students in very remote settings (which in the NT means almost entirely Indigenous kids) the NT rates at half the national average (with 35.3% in the NT achieving writing benchmarks compared to 70.2% nationally). An examination the percentage of Year 5 students achieving benchmarks in reading and writing from 1999 through to 2004 reveals that for all students the improvement over the six years was 3% (moving from 85.6 to 88.7%) in reading and only 1% in writing (93.0% to 94.2%). However, for Indigenous students the improvement in results is more significant, with an increase of 11% in reading (58.7 to 69.4%) and 7% in writing (74.6 to 81.7%). Despite these results in 2004 20% fewer Indigenous Year 5 students were reading at benchmark levels than overall students and 13% fewer Indigenous students achieved benchmarks in writing.

Year Seven Data

The number of the Territory's Year 7 students achieving the reading benchmark is significantly lower than the national average (73.9% compared to 91.0%), again with an even greater disparity between Indigenous students in the NT and nationally (38.8% & 71.0%). Similar figures and disparity are evident in the Year seven writing benchmark data. Consistent with the data sets for earlier school years, the Year 7 geolocation data shows that the NT is roughly on par with the rest of Australia in achieving benchmarks in provincial regions, but the disparity grows a little in remote regions and is a large gulf in the very remote category (for example only 32.3% very remote students in the NT achieved the writing benchmark compared to 65.8% nationally). The benchmark data over time for Year 7 students only reaches back to 2001 (as opposed to 1999 for the other age sets) and shows a great improvement in the numbers of Indigenous students nationwide achieving reading benchmarks. In 2001 only 60.1% of Indigenous students met the benchmark and in 2004 the figure was 71.0%, a climb of 11%. There was also improvement in writing, though not as marked with 74.3% in 2001 rising to 78.8% in 2004.

There was a large gap between students in very remote settings in the NT compared to the same categorisation nationally and this is the case in each of the three-year groups (School Years 3, 5 & 7). While the rate of improvement of Indigenous students meeting benchmarks in reading and writing has been more pronounced than for students overall, this shouldn't mask the fact that there is still a vast disparity between the percentage of Indigenous students achieving benchmarks compared to non-Indigenous students. Furthermore the NT consistently displays the lowest percentages of Indigenous students meeting benchmarks in reading and writing across each three year levels compared to any other state or territory.

PISA Results

The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) surveys reading, mathematics and science every three years, while the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) surveys of mathematics and science every four years. PISA results show Australian students have a level of reading, mathematics and science among the best in the world. In reading, only three countries out-performed Australia. However, there is a stark contrast between these achievements and those of Indigenous and remote students.

By all available measures in recent international and national studies the gap between the literacy outcomes for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is wide. The PISA results show that the bulk of Australians are performing above the OECD mean while Indigenous students are performing well below. Analysis of PISA results showed that Indigenous students performed at a lower level than the non-Indigenous students in three assessment areas – reading literacy, mathematical literacy and science literacy. Indigenous student’s performance on all three- assessment areas was below the OECD mean (De Bortoli & Cresswell, 2004). The Multilevel Assessment Program (MAP) data from 2000 – 2003 which tests reading and writing outcomes for all year 3, 5 and 7 students against a national benchmark shows that Indigenous student results in reaching national benchmarks is improving but the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students remains, especially in NT’s schools and is evident at year 5 despite several years of schooling. The aggregated data, however, mask the poor performance of specific groups (Mellor & Corrigan, 2004), such as Indigenous students in remote areas: within the Indigenous cohort there is also a significant difference in the performance of students located in urban and remote locations.

The PISA assessments of reading literacy in 2000 & 2003 showed that 28% of 15-year-old students in the NT are not developing the literacy skills necessary for further education, training and work. When looked at as a whole various international assessments show that reading comprehension for 14 year olds between 1975 and 1998 the estimates has remained constant, though as Rothman notes, “for some groups, there has been improvement, most notable for students from language backgrounds other than English. For other groups, however, results indicate a significant achievement gap. The most significant gap is between Indigenous Australian students and all other students in Australian schools” (Rothman, 2002, p. ix).

De Bortoli and Cresswell (2004) reported that Australia’s Indigenous students performed at a lower level than the non-Indigenous students in the three assessment areas – reading literacy, mathematical literacy and scientific literacy – below the OECD mean. Gender differences were similar to the other Australian students, with females outperforming the males in reading literacy. No significant gender differences were found in mathematical or scientific literacy.

Results using the reading proficiency levels show an over-representation of students in the lower levels. However, 40 percent of Indigenous students performed at levels 3 or better. Home background: resources such as books in the home were fewer in homes of indigenous students than non- indigenous students’ homes. SES - for Indigenous students was lower than that of non- indigenous students. Learning strategies: indigenous students had less preference for a competitive learning environment, and were less likely to use elaboration and control strategies.

Worryingly, schools often give Aboriginal students information on Vocational and Technical Education and not on university courses. One key finding is that the three main factors contributing to poor academic performance among Aboriginal students are: the lower levels of academic achievement of student’s carers; higher absenteeism from school; and the higher proportions of Aboriginal students at risk of significant emotional or behavioural difficulties. The range of factors that were found to be independently associated with low academic performance were grouped into student-level, class-level and school-level. School-level factors included: lower student to teacher ratio, poor attendance, unexplained absence, school suspension, and repeating a grade.

Similarly to the Frigo, Corrigan and Hughes (2004) study, the survey found that Aboriginal English spoken in the classroom was a predictor of low academic performance: “The task of developing appropriate resources and teaching Aboriginal students to become proficient in Standard Australian English should be achievable” (p. ix). Three key areas of action have been identified that are necessary to improve the academic performance of Aboriginal students.

⊖ The need for schools to engage carers and communities to break the cycle of the transfer of educational disadvantage between generations;

- ⊖ The need to improve early childhood and early schools learning for Aboriginal children to prevent children falling behind in the crucial early years of school; and
- ⊖ The need to provide appropriate support and assistance to Aboriginal students who are at high risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioral difficulties.

The recommended actions are bracketed in a similar way to those borne of the DEST reading inquiry (DEST, 2005), with an emphasis on the evidence base and a call to conduct research to inform it. The first Recommended Action is:

Education systems should implement educational programmes and curricula based on developmentally appropriate, evidence-based practices that support Aboriginal children in the early primary school years.

The last action (no.15) is:

A *national* research agenda into Aboriginal education outcomes should be developed that establishes a systematic, rigorous and sustained programme aimed at both charting progress in achieving improved educational outcomes for Aboriginal students and at developing and evaluation programmes and strategies that produce measurable improvements.

Northern Territory Curriculum Policy

The Northern Territory Curriculum Framework (NTCF) is the primary vehicle for curriculum policy guiding the delivery of education from Transition to year 10.

The NTCF, implemented in 2002, replaced the subject committees of the Board of Studies who formerly provided the curriculum policy in the NT. The NTCF is made up of two components: Layer 1 NTCF and Layer 2 resources.

Layer 1 identifies the learning outcomes for Transition to Year 10 providing guidance for classroom planning, assessment and explicit teaching. School staffs are accountable for all students reaching these outcomes. The NTCF covers eight Learning Areas including English and cross curricula perspectives and learning including ESL. Outcomes are described in “bands”, that is, as six sets of outcomes statements covering developmental progress at school entry points and at the end of year 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10. The outcomes are further broken up into strands and elements. The outcomes in each band are the mandatory standards for assessment in the NTCF.

Layer 2 comprises support materials developed or recommended by NT DEET or teacher devised and recommended through the NT Schools Portal. Schools and teachers have the flexibility to use their professional judgement in the selection of these resources. Resources such as the FS suite of publication and professional development activities, and Accelerated Literacy resources could be considered as second layer choices for the English Learning Area. The WTT manual is a second layer resource for ESL across the whole curriculum.

The policy outcomes for both the Australian Government and the NT DEET are expressed in terms of English literacy as follows:

Literacy is defined as the ability to understand, analyse critically respond to and produce appropriate spoken, written, visual and multimedia communication in different contexts. It includes the cultural knowledge, which enables speaker, writer or reader to recognise and use language appropriate to different social situations. (NTCF, 2001, p.8)

The policy goes on to say that the literacy pathways are articulated through the English Learning Area and the ESL component of NTCF. The Languages Learning Area and the Indigenous Languages and Culture components of the NTCF also claim to contribute to “the awareness of how language works and in the development of literacy” (NT DEET, 2001, p.259), “learners will use their first language to develop cultural understandings and knowledge of the processes needed to succeed in school”, and “. . .

the knowledge developed through their first language assists them in learning a second language and in learning through the second language (NT DEET, 2001, p.484).

The term, ESL, is used in the NTCF to describe learners who speak languages other than Standard Australian English (SAE) at home. The ESL component of the NTCF describes pathways for learning acknowledging that “students learn a second language differently from their first” (NT DEET, 2001, p.97) and applies to learners in all aspects of the curriculum. It focuses attention on ESL as a description of learners not as a pedagogical approach. Table 2 outlines the characteristics of NT ESL learners.

Table 2 ESL Learners in NT Schools

<p>Indigenous students who come to school speaking one or more local Indigenous languages.</p>	<p>These learners may</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • live in a local community where English is generally not used for everyday social and business interaction outside of the school • have developed good oracy skills in their first language • have had little ‘school-orientation’ to the printed word • know that English is used in the ‘wider Australian world’ through television, adults’ interactions with non-Aboriginal people in their community • experience periods of disrupted schooling due to family and ceremonial obligations
<p>Indigenous students who come to school speaking Kriol.</p>	<p>These learners may</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • live in a local community where English is generally not used for everyday social and business interaction outside of the school • have developed good oracy skills in their first language, which, being Kriol, will have many vocabulary items identifiable as English derivatives • have had little ‘school-orientation’ to the printed word • know that English is used in the ‘wider Australian world’ through TV and adults’ interactions with non-Aboriginal people in their community • believe they speak English due to the similarities of many Kriol words with English • have older relatives or can identify older people in the community who still speak ‘language’ that is the traditional language of the area • experience periods of disrupted schooling due to family and ceremonial obligations.
<p>Indigenous students who come to school speaking Aboriginal English.</p>	<p>These learners may</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • live in a local community where English is generally used in everyday social and business interaction outside the school • have developed good oracy skills in Aboriginal English • have had varying degrees of ‘school-orientation’ to the printed word – some will have had a lot while others will have not had as much • believe that they speak the same English as everybody else • experience periods of disrupted schooling due to family and ceremonial obligations.
<p>Students newly arrived in Australia who have a language background other than English.</p>	<p>These learners may have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spent time in refugee camps • had periods of interrupted schooling • no previous schooling • developed good oracy and literacy skills in their first language • some experience with written English but lack oral skills.
<p>Students born in Australia of migrant parents who enter school with little or no English.</p>	<p>Many children who enter Transition may be included in this category.</p>
<p>Students who have had all or some of their schooling in Australia, and whose home background includes at least one language other than English.</p>	<p>These learners may have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • been born in Australia or elsewhere • come from homes where English is not used, English is not the only language used, and/or English is used as a second language between parents who do not speak the same first language fluent ‘playground language’ but difficulty with language demands of the curriculum entered school with a good command of both English and their first language.

Source: NTCF http://www.deet.nt.gov.au/education/ntcf/docs/d_esl.pdf viewed 12/05/07




The NTCF advises teachers that the ESL component of the framework should be used for ESL learners. The NTCF provides specific guidance to teachers for remote Indigenous learners and new immigrant arrivals (NTCF, 2002, p.197):

- ⊖ Learners in NT remote Indigenous schools spend most of their Primary schooling as First Phase learners and teachers need to use the ESL component of the NTCF for ESL learners in these contexts.
- ⊖ Teachers of ESL First Phase learners in the urban Intensive English Units need to access the ESL component of the NTCF.

In the NTCF ESL is organized into four strands – listening, speaking, reading and writing. There are also four elements – Communication; Socio-cultural understandings; Language structure and features; and Learning how to learn. The ESL section does not use bands but levels. In addition it identifies phases of learning. The phases are used to describe the language development of ESL learners as the different stages of learning make demands on English competency. The phases, 3 are commonly referred to, describe learners and the teaching emphasis required to develop competency in English. Table 3 shows the ESL levels and phases of early childhood and primary pathways.

Table 3: ESL Levels and Phases Early Childhood and Primary Pathways

Listening and Speaking	BL1	BL2	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5	L6
Reading and writing (For students with no initial literacy concepts)	BL1	BL2	BL3	L2	L3	L4	L5	L6
Reading and writing (For students who have some literacy concepts in their first language)			L1	L2	L3	L4	L5	L6

Key: Phase 1  Phase 2  Phase 3  BL = Beginning Level L= level

Adapted from ESL Levels and Phases diagram in NTCF http://www.deet.nt.gov.au/education/ntcf/docs/d_esl.pdf viewed 12/05/07

The status of an ESL learner is therefore not static or fixed indicating that support to these students needs to be monitored and adjusted and the data maintained and updated on a regular basis. A student’s ESL phase of learning is expected to change as they move from early childhood through primary, middle and senior years of schooling and as students gain control of concepts in English in each of these stages.

The NTCF is based on policies and guidelines from the NT Board of Studies such as the ESL Policy (1999). However, the interpretation of ESL in this policy differs from that represented in the NTCF. The NT Board of Studies ESL Policy relates ESL to provision or specific programs.

The term English as a Second Language in this policy is used in the Northern Territory to include English as a second or further language (ESL), English as second Dialect (ESD), English as a foreign language (EFL) and English for special /specific purposes (ESP). (Northern Territory Board of Studies, 1999).

While schools exercise autonomy or flexibility in choosing their approach to pedagogy and selecting assessment and intervention strategies to facilitate their learners making progress to reach NTCF and national benchmarks, they are required to provide 2 hours per day of explicit teaching of literacy, oracy and numeracy. The English literacy and Numeracy Strategy Guidelines (NT DEET, 2002) require schools to articulate a ‘whole school’ literacy and numeracy strategy annually.

NT Curriculum Framework Layer 2

In 2006 Teaching Learning and Standards Division (TL&S) identified a set of “endorsed” approaches to literacy (ESL is subsumed in literacy) outlined in the table below. This appears more like a set of preferred approaches to guide TL&S resources than as guidance to schools. The endorsement process is not clear nor has the table of endorsed approaches been communicated to schools in any systematic way. The three main approaches being studied are among those “endorsed” and are highlighted in grey in the diagram below provided by Teaching Learning and Standards. The three approaches examined in the ELA project are all “endorsed” approaches, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: DEET Endorsed² and Supported Approaches to Literacy

	Early Years (Pre-3)	Primary (4-6)	Middle Years 7-9	Senior Years (10-12)
System supported literacy approaches	Accelerated Literacy			SSABSA Literacy Policy
	Walking Talking Texts			[NTCE Yrs 11-12]
	First Steps		Stepping Out	VET literacy programs
Underpinned by ESL programs: Specialist Support Programs (SSP), Teacher Capacity Building Courses; New Arrivals – DEST Indigenous Language Speaking Students- DEST				

Source: Teaching Learning and Standards 18 May 2007

Northern Territory Context

The Northern Territory is distinct from all other Australian education jurisdictions in the extent of the language diversity present in its population. As well as the diversity provided by immigrant groups, there are Indigenous learners with language backgrounds other than English. These languages include Indigenous languages, Kriols and Aboriginal English.

Languages

There are a large number of Indigenous languages used in the NT. More than 49 languages are for example, recognised in the NT as part of the Indigenous languages and culture program (NT DEET, 2006, p. XI). Indigenous languages are closely associated with cultural practices and family groups. These languages are oral languages although many of the main languages have developed orthographies. It is not uncommon for Indigenous Australians to speak more than one Indigenous language and/or Kriols.

ESL is the term used to describe both the learners and approaches to second language acquisition in English. Research in second language acquisition focuses on the developing knowledge and use of a language by children and adults who already know at least one other language. Knowledge of second language acquisition by educational policy makers informs the goals for programmes for both foreign language courses and the learning of the majority language by minority language children (Spada & Lightbown, 2002, p.115). ESL theory applied in education provides a developmentally staged introduction from knowledge and usage of the first language to the second language as learners’ language becomes close to that of a native speaker (Krashen, 1982).

² This endorsement process is not transparent. The meaning of ‘endorsed’ here is more consistent with a TL&S ‘preferred’ approaches

A distinction is often made between “second language” and “foreign language”, the latter being learned for use in an area where that language is not generally spoken. Learners in very remote schools in the NT are learning English in conditions similar to learning English as a foreign language.

ESL also includes the acquisition of a second dialect. In the NT context this refers to people who speak a Kriol or Aboriginal English and are learning SAE. Kriol is recognised by linguists as a language in its own right, defined as a creole³ like hundreds of others in the world because it is complex with a wide vocabulary and established rules and because people speak it as their first language. Aboriginal English is a dialectal form of English, as is Australian English. The form and structure of both Aboriginal English and SAE exhibit some speech patterns of Standard English as well as speech characteristics and words originating from Aboriginal languages. Many Indigenous learners are faced with learning two dialects of English, Aboriginal English spoken within their community and SAE, which is the medium of instruction at school. The speakers of both Kriols and Aboriginal English benefit from second language acquisition teaching methodologies in learning SAE.

It has been established through research that children learning English as a second language take an average of between five and seven years before they can operate on the same academic level as their English speaking peers. Ability to achieve this goal depends on the learners’ background and the amount of teaching they receive (Dawkins, 1991, p.51 and research for second language learning in general cited in Kosonen, Young and Malone (2006, p.16).

Geolocation

Both the Australian and the NT governments classify schools by their geolocation for funding purposes. NT schools are represented in Provincial, Remote and Very Remote geolocation categories. These are the classifications for funding through the Indigenous Education Special Initiatives programme from the Australian Government. Learners within these three geolocation categories demonstrate distinct language characteristics. These characteristics impact on language development generally and the acquisition of English in particular as the language of instruction in schooling and the language of interaction with the broader Australian community.

Provincial schools, located in the urban and rural areas of Darwin, are like other Australian schools in the language profile of their learner cohort, that is, learners predominantly have an English speaking background with only a small proportion of learners from other language backgrounds including Australian Indigenous and other immigrant languages. All these learners have everyday access to an English-speaking environment.

Remote schools such as those located in Alice Springs and small towns within the NT have the most diverse linguistic learner profile with a mixture of language backgrounds including English, Aboriginal English, Kriol and Indigenous and other languages. These learners have some access to an English-speaking environment.

Very Remote schools have learners with Indigenous or Kriol language backgrounds. The lack of exposure to SAE as the lingua franca in these schools has a significant impact on the acquisition of English to the benchmarked standards. These learners do not have access to SAE. Using English as the language of instruction is akin to learning English as a foreign language (EFL).

Many Very Remote schools have adopted a two-way learning approach to education. This term is used to describe models of bilingual education operating in the NT since 1973. Bilingual education is informed by the view that the initial attainment of literacy skills in a student’s first language will lead to greater success in the acquisition of second language proficiency (NT DEET, 2006, p. ix). While there are four bilingual models that have been implemented in the NT, including two-way learning, the bilingual

³ Explanation of Kriol and creole

approach most commonly implemented is the step model, where students are taught in their local vernacular and are introduced to English oracy and literacy over the first years of schooling (NT DEET, 2006, p. ix).

In 2004, in government schools alone, there were over 13,000 enrolled Indigenous students, comprising over forty percent of the total NT Government school population. This is the largest ratio of Indigenous students in any Australian jurisdiction, and Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data indicates that this ratio is increasing (NT 2006, p6). The majority of NT schools have Indigenous enrolments of greater than fifty percent. Forty percent or eighty-seven of the one hundred and eighty-six NT schools have an Indigenous enrolment of above eighty percent. There are just twenty schools in the NT where Indigenous student enrolments are less than ten percent. (NT DEET, 2006 p.6). The issue of language background is therefore critical to the majority of NT Schools influencing the curriculum and skills and knowledge needed by teachers.

Staff Recruitment Policies

The NT implements an aggressive marketing strategy across Australia to attract teachers to the jurisdiction at a time when there is a global teacher skills shortage (Lonsdale and Ingvarson 2003) . The NT offers among the highest remuneration in the country and generous allowances for living in remote communities. Packages that include fly in and out for short-term contracts are also available. While this assists to fill positions it tends to promote short-term contracts and a high level of mobility in the NT teacher workforce. The profile of teachers in the NT includes new graduates recruited during their pre-service training, some of whom complete a practicum or internship in the NT or older teachers in post retirement from other countries or Australian jurisdictions. Teachers recruited may therefore lack general experience in the profession, specific experience with the language and cultural diversity of the student profile of the NT and ESL or EFL training or qualifications.

General induction occurs in major centres and schools are meant to have induction processes at the school level. However, effective teaching is jeopardised by the lack of familiarity by recruits to the NTCF, lack of ESL qualifications and the time needed to make the cultural adjustment to NT schools and their communities.

Providing adequate and timely professional learning opportunities for the majority of teaching staff is therefore a critical function of TL&S and a responsibility of DEET in order to establish and maintain quality standards for the system.

Curriculum Development and Professional Support

Teaching, Learning and Standards Division is responsible for supporting all learning areas of the NTCF (NT DEET, 2002) including English and ESL. Providing system-wide professional learning for teachers in all stages of schooling and in all major projects areas by:

- ⊖ Working strategically with schools, regions and other business areas to develop and implement school-based professional learning
- ⊖ Providing onsite, intensive support to teachers in planning, programming, pedagogy and assessment
- ⊖ Providing grants to establish communities of practice and learning communities.
- ⊖ Allocating specialist support staff
- ⊖ Negotiating school literacy and numeracy strategies

There are also a number of projects and initiatives designed to meet the literacy and numeracy needs of students including those who are learners of ESL and/or ESD. Many of TL&S staff are involved in the implementation of Australian Government programs such as ESL for ILSSS. In other instances Australian Government funds are used in conjunction with NT core funding to support initiatives to improve literacy outcomes and outcomes for Indigenous learners.

Literacy and ESL Professional Learning

There are a number of projects and initiatives designed to meet the literacy and numeracy needs of students including those who are learners of ESL and/or ESD as well as providing for the professional development needs of teachers. Professional development is provided on-site at schools or in central locations by one of the TL&S professional learning teams. In 2006 three separate teams: Literacy, ESL and National Accelerated Literacy Project (NALP) were responsible for delivery of these services to support literacy achievement.

The ESL and literacy teams provide school based professional development on teaching methodologies for ESL and literacy, advice on how to use the NTCF, and access resources. TL&S staff support teachers with programming, implementation of the Curriculum E Tool (CeTool), a component of the Schools Administration and Management System (SAMS) and other advice on assessment and moderation. These services are provided on request. A program of centralised professional development using outside experts of consultants is also widely advertised and available to schools on a fee for service basis.

ESL Teacher Development Project

This project incorporates the delivery of professional development courses designed to support teachers in improving the learning outcomes for students who speak ESL or ESD. The two courses offered are:

- ⊖ ESL in the Mainstream Teacher Development Course and
- ⊖ ESL for Indigenous Students (adapted from ESL in Anangu Schools) Teacher Development Course.

In 2006 ESL for Indigenous Students was delivered in Alice Springs. ESL for Indigenous Students is delivered from Alice Springs. An officer located in Darwin delivered ESL in the Mainstream to the Top End and coordinated delivery of the two courses as well as being involved in the delivery of other TL&S ESL/ESD professional development work in schools such train the trainer course for WTT and ESL/ESD Across the Curriculum. A team of two NT DEET officers facilitated these two original courses until the end of 2005.

In recent years these courses have been offered at times to suit teachers, for example, in afternoon sessions or 2 x 3 or 3 x 2 day workshops. One office is currently engaged in delivering both courses, in workshop format over a number of days. Overall there is limited interest in the courses and low levels of take up despite the Territory's student profile and lack of ESL training in the teaching population. Take up of the courses is adversely affected by the difficulty in getting teacher relief and the commitment to time out of work hours. Attempts have been made to offer shorter courses. These have proved to be popular. There is considerable customization and cross over in content of the delivery of both major courses in recent times.

The ESL in the mainstream course and its resources were developed more than 20 years ago and are quite antiquated. They need updating supplemented by new resources, research and practice. ESL for Indigenous students has been transferred into a power point presentation and linked to ESL in the Mainstream manual.

The adaptation of ESL for Indigenous Students has never been negotiated and permission to do so was never sought from the South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) In the meantime, SA DECS has long since outsourced and updated their original tutor programs and the NT DEET officer currently responsible for the facilitation of the above is currently seeking permission to attend their ESL for Students in Mainstream Classrooms in Term 3. This will enable her to offer regular relevant, contemporary ESL Professional Development that will enable participants completing the course work to seek university accreditation and will enable access and usage of updated resources.

Regular professional development was offered in all regions by regional ESL coordinators. This has not occurred in the Darwin region during the first semester of 2007. However, there are proposals for this practice to resume in the second semester.

Allocation of Specialist Support Staff

In 2006 NT DEET implemented a regional structure to ensure services are more closely aligned to meeting the needs of schools. ESL and Literacy specialist support staff are allocated to TL&S Division and located in major regional centres throughout the Northern Territory with Program Managers based in both Alice Springs and Darwin to oversee and coordinate the delivery of professional development to school clusters. ESL, literacy and AL Coordinators are attached to group schools or regional clusters of schools with a focus on the provision of strategic assistance to schools based on identified outcomes. These officers deliver the TL&S curriculum and professional development support services to schools and other divisions within DEET.

TL&S officers are also allocated to manage the reporting and implementation requirements of Australian Government funded initiatives such as the ESL for ILSS program and the General Support Program.

ESL/ESD SSP (Specialist Support Program)

Above establishment or non-formula teachers are also allocated to schools to support ESL learners and learners with literacy needs from the ESL for ILSS program and the General Support program. These teachers are allocated on numbers based on a census of ESL students in school collected annually and through a follow up submission by the school, however in reality they reflect historical staffing rather than current distribution of learners with other language backgrounds. The ESL Census is conducted in the first week August 2006 and collected data across pre-schools, primary schools (including year 7), junior/ungraded secondary and senior secondary schools and about Indigenous and Non Indigenous students and their phase of learning in ESL.

Schools with these positions are required to track a sample of ESL students and submit an end of year report on ESL students including:

- ⊖ Evidence of learning from a sample of ESL students. The number of samples is determined by the time fraction of the ESL teacher.
- ⊖ Qualitative report on ESL on professional development undertaken by staff during the year, evaluate the success of the provision of the additional ESL/ESD specialist teachers in the school in relation to improved outcomes, teacher knowledge and practice in meeting ESL/ESD needs, contribution to the whole school approach in supporting ESL/ESD learners. The report is signed off by the teachers and Principal.
- ⊖ Schools who are allocated staff identify teachers to play the role of ESL support teacher, however, there are no role descriptions or qualifications required to fill these positions.
- ⊖ The NALP program and schools delivering AL are using ESL positions to support this program. In some cases the position is used to provide an additional intervention to AL and in others to deliver AL although it is an English only program and it does develop English as a second language using knowledge of the first language or ESL pedagogy.

ESL for ILSS program

ESL for ILSS funding is available to education providers for Indigenous students who have been assessed locally at being below Level 1 on the NTCF – ESL Speaking Strand; have a home language that is an Indigenous language, Kriol or Torres Strait Creole and live in a community in which the predominant language is not English; are in their first formal year of schooling; and are at least six years of age on the 30 June of the year of commencement (younger students are accepted if they have been levelled at BL2). Forty-seven schools and Homeland Centres benefit from the funding.

Nineteen full-time and eight part-time over-establishment teachers were employed in twenty-two government schools. The teachers are appointed from within the school staff at the discretion of the principal. Teachers do not necessarily have an ESL qualification. There are also three roving teachers attached to group schools.

Cash grants totalling \$120,524 for the purchase of resources and/or employment of part-time instructors and relief teachers were released to schools that were not allocated an over-establishment teacher.

Thirteen days of professional development in major centres was provided in 2006. In addition ILSS teachers delivered professional development to a further 324 teachers and support staff in school based workshops. In 2006, a total of 699 students enrolled in 66 schools and 20 Homeland Centres participated in the program.

New Arrivals

Eligible students supported through this program are newly arrived migrant or refugee students with particular permanent residency visa subclasses or a temporary visa granted under the Humanitarian Program.

Funds from this program support the costs of the Intensive English Unit at Anula Primary School and the Senior Intensive English Unit at Darwin High. Schools receive the additional funding for students unable to access either of the Intensive English Units in Darwin.

Planning and Reporting

Since 2003 each school in the NT has been required to submit an annual English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy and to provide an annual report. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategy is submitted to TL&S Division. The annual report is provided to Business Planning and Information Division.

In 2007 an Accountability and Performance Framework (APF) has been developed which will streamline the compliance reporting required of schools in the future.

School English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy plans

NT DEET Executive approved this strategy in 2002 and the Minister launched a booklet with guidelines (NT DEET, 2004) for schools that outlined the process by which schools would be held accountable to meeting the objective that “all students achieve or exceed national English literacy and numeracy benchmarks”. The guide sets out the accountability measures for all teaching and executive staff to among other things:

- ⌘ Work together to improve English literacy outcomes
- ⌘ Undertake a whole school approach to planning and implementing literacy and numeracy within the context of the NT Curriculum Framework
- ⌘ Assess and monitor outcomes against the NTCF
- ⌘ Explicitly teach English literacy and numeracy
- ⌘ Implement intervention strategies for those not meeting benchmark.
- ⌘ The strategy template requires schools to:
 - ⌘ Identify assessment and reporting strategies
 - ⌘ Allocate human and fiscal resources to meet school needs
 - ⌘ Target professional development and support for the whole school community to meet the diverse needs of students

- ⊖ Find and adopt approaches to literacy and numeracy, strategies and programs that have a proven capacity to achieve measurable improvement in student outcomes. This includes how schools address at least 2 hours per day of explicit teaching and learning of English oracy, literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum
- ⊖ Identify students at risk of not meeting benchmark
- ⊖ Work in partnership with parent and community to help improve English literacy and numeracy skills

In 2006, schools developed these strategies in negotiation with staff from the Literacy and Numeracy Team, TL&S Division. The plans require schools to identify students at risk but there is no preferred or standardised set of diagnostic tools to do this.

Perspectives from the Literature

Teaching Reading is the report from The National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy (DEST, 2005). At the foundation of the report is a conviction that the teaching of literacy (especially reading) should be firmly grounded in evidence-based research. The report places a very heavy emphasis on the quality of teachers and their ability to effectively teach reading. The Committee conducting the Inquiry found that many literacy approaches used in schools are not informed by evidence-based research and that many teachers did not have a clear understanding of what particular literacy strategies are, and why, when, and how to use them.

The national survey of primary teacher preparation courses undertaken for the Inquiry found that less than 10% of time in compulsory subjects is devoted to preparing student teachers to teach reading.

The Committee found that it is absolutely crucial for students in the early years to receive “*direct systematic instruction*” in phonics in order for them to succeed in reading. Combined in an integrated approach the other key elements of instruction were determined to be phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary knowledge, and comprehension. Recommendation 1 was that:

... teachers be equipped with teaching strategies based on findings from rigorous, evidence-based research that are shown to be effective in enhancing the literacy development of all children.

The Committee also recommended that:

Teachers provide systematic, direct and explicit phonics instruction so that children master the essential alphabetic code-breaking skills required for foundational reading proficiency. Equally, those teachers provide an integrated approach to reading that supports the development of oral language, vocabulary, grammar, reading fluency, comprehension and the literacies of new technologies.

The recommendation of an integrated approach is the result of the Committee determining that no one approach of itself can address the complex nature of reading difficulties and that teachers need a range of strategies at their disposal as well as the knowledge of how and when to use them (DEST, 2005, p. 14). The report places a great deal of emphasis on teacher quality. It found that much of the teaching currently practiced in schools is based on “. . . an educational philosophy of constructivism (an established theory of knowing and learning rather than a theory of teaching)” (p.12).

The Committee found a serious lack of evidence that supports the effectiveness of such an approach in teaching literacy to students. In addition, the Committee found that too much emphasis was placed on the nature of the child’s background rather than the teaching itself in relation to poor student outcomes. The Committee also found that “findings from a large body of evidence-based research consistently indicate that quality teaching has significant positive effects on students’ achievement progress regardless of their backgrounds” (DEST, 2005, p. 12). The report recommends that national standards for literacy teaching be developed and that teachers be provided with ongoing opportunities for evidence-based professional learning about effective literacy teaching.

Recommendation 16 is that a national program of literacy action be established, part of which would evaluate the effectiveness of approaches to early literacy teaching and promote research into the most effective teaching practices.

The Inquiry found that where the teaching of reading is most successful is where there is a whole-school approach that is clearly specified in a literacy plan. The importance of strong and consistent school leadership and management was also highlighted.

Recommendation 6 was that:

...all schools identify a highly trained specialist literacy teacher with specialised skills in teaching reading, to be responsible for linking the ... literacy planning process with classroom teaching and learning and supporting school staff in ...monitoring progress against individual literacy plans

The Committee found that the early and ongoing assessment of all children by their teachers at school entry and regularly during the early years of schooling is critical to the teaching of reading and monitoring students who are in danger of falling behind. The Committee also found that student mobility is a significant factor in achieving good literacy for students and this is perhaps particularly relevant in Indigenous contexts. One recommendation is that a nation-wide confidential student monitoring system be established to enable tracking of individual children throughout their schooling. To facilitate achieving literacy goals articulated in the report the Committee recommended that national and State and Territory governments' approaches to literacy improvement be aligned.

Teaching Reading Literature Review

Objective One of DEST's Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy was to review and analyse recent national and international research about literacy teaching approaches, particularly approaches that are shown to be effective in assisting students with reading difficulties. Further as noted earlier, at the foundation of DEST's report on the teaching of literacy is a conviction that the teaching of literacy (especially reading) should be firmly grounded in evidence-based research. This literature review is a first step toward that end.

A great deal of emphasis in the National Inquiry is placed on teachers and the quality of their teaching; a focus that is supported by a review of the literature which finds that teachers are the most valuable resource available to schools and are central to school improvement efforts. Cuttance (2001) supports this sentiment, "a review of the literature on the impact of schools shows that the differences in the impact of teachers on learning outcomes for students are significantly greater than the impact of the differences between schools" (p.xiii).

DEST's review of the literature highlights the importance of literacy competency ". . . not only for school-based learning, but also for student's psychosocial wellbeing, further education and training, occupational success, as well as for productive and fulfilling participation in social and economic activity" (pp. 4-5). The review cites economist James Heckman's overview (2000, 2005) of the economic aspects of human skills formation and concludes that investment in the learning development in the early years is crucial as literacy competence is a "skill that begets many other skills" and is a "key part of our capacity to increase our capacity" (see Heckman, 2000, 2005).

The link between low literacy and poor health is highlighted in the review. "The overlap between students' under-achievement and poor achievement progress in literacy (especially in reading) and their poor behavioural health and wellbeing, is problematic to the extent that what should be an education issue has become a major health issue" (DeWalt M.D., M.P.H., Nancy D. Berkman, Ph.D., Stacey Sheridan, M.D., M.P.H., and others 2004). The review cites US studies by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, which "consider reading failure to reflect a national public health problem" (Lyons, 2003). In Australia parents are increasingly seeking advice from health professionals for their distressed children with behaviour problems that have been triggered or exacerbated by learning difficulties. Oberklaid (2004) refers to this phenomenon as the new morbidity in education and child health. The best strategy to combat the new morbidity is to implement preventive measures in education

so that literacy teaching is the best it can be through building teacher capacity and professionalism and ensuring teachers are equipped with evidence-based teaching strategies that meet student's developmental and learning needs.

The most successful method of teaching students to read has been subject to strong disagreements among educators for at least forty years, especially in relation to teaching students with reading difficulties. The review summarises key findings from research that identify effective teaching practices and presents the actual evidence related to the particular activities that characterises effective approaches. The literature review draws on Cowen's (2003) review of six influential US studies on beginning literacy teaching which were based mainly on evidence-based empirical research in controlled settings. Each study (the earliest was published in 1967) found that the explicit teaching of phonics was essential. Although several of the studies emphasised that phonics instruction is not a stand-alone approach to literacy teaching.

The incontrovertible finding from the extensive body of local and international evidence-based reading research is that for children during the early years of schooling, they must first master the alphabetic code via systematic, explicit, and intensive instruction in: phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension strategies. Because these are *foundational* and *essential* skills for the development of competence in reading, writing and spelling, they must be taught early, explicitly, and taught well (DeWalt M.D et al , 2004, p.25, emphasis in original)⁴.

On opposite ends of the argument are those advocating explicit code-based instruction in phonics and those favouring implicit whole-language approaches. The latter has been the predominant approach for several decades and evidence suggests that it is not well suited to children experiencing either learning difficulties, or those from disadvantaged backgrounds who commonly don't have rich phonological knowledge, this includes Indigenous children. The explicit phonics-based approach focuses on teaching of the structure and function of written and oral language allowing students to learn the way language is used and manipulated, strategies to provide their students with the *essential* alphabetic code-breaking "resources" (DeWalt M.D et al, 2004, p.26, emphasis in original). While the review focuses on various instructional strategies in literacy teaching, it concludes by stating that educational effectiveness is dependent on quality teaching and that there is a need for reform requiring an investment in teacher quality, ". . . real reform directed at improving outcomes for all students calls for substantial change in the quality of *teaching* and *learning* provision, but unless there is total commitment to new ways of working, reform efforts soon falter" (DeWalt M.D et al, 2004p.33).

The review notes the pervasiveness of the "myth" of educational effectiveness, that fails to see that ". . . schools and their structural arrangements are only as effective as the those responsible for making them work (school leaders and teachers) - in cooperation with those for whom they are charged . . . to provide a professional services (students and parents)" (p.35). In a related point the authors attack the view that certain students, e.g., those from disadvantaged background, do poorly at school because of developmental differences thus absolving educators of their professional responsibilities.

Further, numerous studies claim that the smaller the unit of analysis the more influential on the student's experience of education. For example, it is repeatedly claimed that the classroom is much more important in determining student achievement than is the school and that ultimately teachers have the greatest influence.

The key message to be gained from *educational effectiveness* research is that quality teachers and their professional development do make a difference, and that it is not so much what students bring with them

⁴ In their "four resources" model Luke and Freebody (1999, pp.7-9). postulate that effective literacy draws on interdependent practices that allow learners to (1) break the code of texts; (2) participate in the meanings of text; (3) use texts functionally; and (4) critically analyse and transform texts. However while the value of this model is widely recognised in Australia ". . . concern has been expressed that many teachers do not have the necessary training, knowledge and teaching

that really matters, but what they experience on a day-to-day basis in interaction with teachers and other students in classrooms (DeWalt M.D et al 2004, p.37, emphasis in original).

Supporting Indigenous Students in the Early Years

In a project funded by ACER researchers (Frigo, T. Corrigan, M. Hughes, P. Stephens, M. and Woods, D., 2004) selected 13 schools from a range of regional settings (metropolitan, regional, remote, and very remote) that had significant numbers of Indigenous students. Schools were nominated based on them having initiatives in place to support Indigenous students. The students included in the study commenced school in 2000 and were assessed for English literacy and numeracy in 2000, 2001 & 2002. The early years of schooling are critical to student success as achievement at the beginning of school is a major influence on later achievement. The study found that achievement on the first assessment was a strong predictor of achievement at Assessment 5 in both literacy and numeracy. “An implication for policy is that the pre-school years provide the foundation for future learning and student skills at the start of school shape their subsequent learning in powerful ways” (Frigo et al, 2004, p. 34).

Factors found to be statistically associated with student achievement included: school, region, initial achievement, language background, attendance, and attentiveness.

Whilst school and geographical region accounted for much of the variation in student achievement, a number of factors were identified as related to subsequent growth in achievement, including initial achievement, language backgrounds other than standard Australian English, attendance and attentiveness (Frigo et al, 2004, p. iii).

While each school had some degree of programs and activities in place to support Indigenous students, the research found that some were succeeding more than others. Factors identified as important in enabling successful outcomes in schools included leadership that was strong and pro-active in engaging Indigenous leaders and building an Indigenous presence in the school which the researchers found had a positive impact both on students and on parents.

The longitudinal nature of the research meant that

... researchers could determine the extent to which the leadership was reflected in and maintained by the school’s culture. In schools where leadership was dispersed, through a team of educators and parents, the school culture maintained the initiatives once principals moved on (Frigo et al, 2004, p. 60).

This is an important finding despite the fact that in many remote Indigenous school settings the staff turnover may impede the school’s ability to achieve dispersed leadership. Attendance and engagement were crucial to success as was, unsurprisingly, good teaching where teachers truly engaged with Indigenous kids. In terms of finding good teaching in action, researchers found the most impressive classrooms were those with teachers who

“... valued the experiences and qualities that students brought with them to school, and demonstrated a commitment to a belief that all children can learn and have the ability to succeed.” (Frigo et al, 2004 p. 60).

In their early childhood years Indigenous children tend to differ from non-Indigenous children in their participation in preschool, their rates of absenteeism and their early indications of their educational achievement. However, the authors cite Raban, B., Griffin, P., Coates, H. & Flear, M.. (2002) when they state that “. . . research indicates that the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students prior to school entry is small enough to be statistically insignificant” (Frigo et al, 2004, p.1). The LLANS assessment was chosen for this study because the researchers felt that it was consistent with good practice for assessing Indigenous students (meaningful context, one-to-one administration, hands on activities, etc). In his foreword Paul Hughes notes that recent publications have highlighted concerns about the available literacy and numeracy assessment tools used for assessing Indigenous and other students. He asks “is there a way of developing assessment tools that are not first and foremost assessing middle-class

cultural knowledge rather than literacy?” (Frigo et al, 2004, p.iv). He argues that any future research be rigorous action research that trials promising literacy interventions across many sites.

The study found that in Year 2 students who attended metropolitan and regional schools out-performed students from schools in remote and very remote regions. Students in remote and very remote schools reported higher levels of non-attendance as did students whose main home language was Aboriginal English. Findings suggest that inconsistent attendance in the early years does have a negative impact on subsequent achievement in literacy and numeracy. Age and gender did not seem to statistically impact on student achievements, whereas those who spoke SAE at home achieved significantly higher results than those who spoke Aboriginal English or an Indigenous language across all three years. However in an interesting finding, the teacher awareness of students mother’s occupation did seem to impact on student achievements, which the author’s hypothesise may reflect the extent to which the teacher had contact with a student’s family.

Improving the Educational Experiences of Aboriginal Children and Young People, was a survey undertaken by the Western Australia Aboriginal Child Health Survey (WAACHS) between 2000 and 2002 (Zubrick S R, Lawrence D M, Silburn S R, Blair E, Milroy H, Wilkes T, Eades S, D’Antoine H, Read A, Ishiguchi, and P Doyle S. 2006). The Survey provided epidemiological information on the health, wellbeing and schooling of Indigenous children in West Australia (WA). This, the third volume, focused on education, while volumes one and two were concerned with the physical health and the social and emotional wellbeing of children. The broad scope of the survey allowed researchers to compare data across fields. Further, the survey showed that “educational disparities in school performance between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children are larger than disparities found in health and mental health” (p.26 summary booklet). For example, the disparity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children born with sub-optimal foetal growth is 8%, while in relation to students with low academic performance the disparity is 38%.

The third volume focuses on students’ overall levels of academic achievement and the factors that influence attendance, behaviour, and outcomes and its approach is vastly different from the DEST Inquiry into Teaching Reading (DEST, 2006). There is little if any mention of the efficacy of particular educational strategies or literacy approaches. Rather, the report focuses on the broader contextual circumstances of Aboriginal student’s lives at home, school and in their communities, as well as historical elements that may contribute to the low levels of academic achievement among many Aboriginal students. The approach is perhaps best reflected in the following: “what education systems are presently doing to improve educational outcomes of Aboriginal children is not working because the drivers of educational disparity are not being addressed” (DEST, 2006, p.2). In national benchmark tests in 2004 Aboriginal students in WA were 20-30% behind non-Aboriginal students and by Year 7 the gap had widened to 40% (Zubrick S R et al, 2006, p.xxix). The Survey itself included three measures of academic performance including teacher’s assessment of students’ academic abilities, two standardised tests (matrices and word definitions), and the annual Western Australian Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (WALNA) tests. For the two standardised tests, scores declined with age, average test scores dropped markedly after age 4-5 for Aboriginal students, whereas a similar decline among all students did not occur until age 9-10 (Zubrick S R et al, 2006, p.5).

The report provides some historical context of Indigenous education in Australia, including a paragraph on the fact that the move toward “Aboriginal learning styles” which gained credence in the 1980s failed to be the “hoped for panacea for Aboriginal education” (Zubrick S R et al, 2006, p.xxvi). The authors also make the point that “in Australia, the education of Aboriginal peoples is inextricably linked with the education of non-Aboriginal peoples, about Aboriginal peoples, issues and rights” (Zubrick S R et al, 2006, p.xx). Certain findings challenge prevalent thinking:

It is clear from the findings of the survey that physical health problems and poor nutrition are not the major factors holding back the performance of Aboriginal children in school. Until the more deep-seated problems of the social and emotional wellbeing and the ongoing consequences of past policies of

exclusion from school- based education are addressed, the prospects for major improvements in academic performance are limited (Zubrick S R et al, 2006 (2) p.27).

Echoing other studies, the Survey found that the lower level of education achievement of Aboriginal students has become tacitly accepted and expected among some educators. In a related point the report highlights a concern that the growth of Vocational and Technical Education programs in schools is contributing to the trend leading Aboriginal students away from university study and more

Part 111 – Analysis of pedagogies

This section includes a description of the three main approaches to teaching literacy examined in the study. The description provides details of the background to the development of each approach and some characteristics of the schools in the study using the approach. The analysis of the approaches is based on three of the four domains of professional practice developed by Danielson, Planning and preparation, Classroom environment, and Instruction.

Accelerated Literacy

Background

Accelerated Literacy (AL) is delivered in the five schools in the sample through the National Accelerated Literacy Program. NALP has adopted the applied intervention, originally known as Scaffolding Literacy™ developed by Dr Brian Gray and Ms Wendy Cowey at the University of Canberra. It is built on Dr Gray's earlier work on "Concentrated Language Encounters" at Traeger Park School in Alice Springs and the work of others at the University of Canberra. Dr Gray and Ms Cowey conducted a pilot program in 30 schools in five States and Territories between 1998 and 2003. NT DEET is implementing NALP, with funding from the Department of Education Science and Training (DEST), to take the Accelerated Literacy methodology from the pilot stage to a program for meeting the literacy needs of Indigenous students in the Northern Territory and selected schools in South Australia and Western Australia over four years from 2004 to 2008.

The Charles Darwin University NALP team is progressively developing professional learning, post graduate and in-service professional development programs and curriculum and assessment resources for the program. These are distributed to teachers in participating schools through formal professional development sessions delivered by the DEET NALP team located in Teaching Learning and Standards Division and at the University.

In 2006 schools in the ELA sample were provided with support to ensure that the approach could be fully implemented. In the case of the AL schools this was provided through the NALP project. The NALP teams in DEET and CDU have made this data available to the ELA project. This data includes details of participation in NALP professional development programs and level of service to schools by NALP team. These schools also have been allocated additional staffing resources to implement this approach not available to other schools. Officers undertook onsite visits for professional development, demonstration lessons and assisted with programming. Program materials, list of approved texts, assessment materials, and teaching notes on texts were distributed through the professional development package and by the NALP team.

NALP's professional development includes three separate sessions:

- ⊖ Professional Development One (PD1) - a two day course
- ⊖ Professional Development Two (PD2) - a one day course
- ⊖ Professional Development Three (PD3) - a one day course

PD1 provides teachers with skills to implement the Accelerated Literacy teaching sequence. PD2 and PD3 focus on spelling and writing. All three sessions include handouts for teachers, which serve as a reminder of key aspects of the sessions and an aid to workshop activities during the sessions.

Characteristics of AL schools

Among the sample of Accelerated Literacy schools are one provincial school, one remote and three very remote schools. Students in the very remote schools are all Indigenous and are learning English as a

second language or as foreign language. The other two schools are located in urban areas and have a large number of Indigenous students who may have had greater exposure to Standard Australian English than those in very remote locations and may be speakers of non Standard English.

Four of these schools have been implementing Accelerated Literacy for at least three years. Two schools had joined the National Accelerated Literacy Program in 2005 and were considered as in the first phase of development. Some, but not all teachers, had received professional development at the time of the observations and interviews.

Two of the classes observed were in urban settings, two in a remote location and four were observed in very remote areas. Lessons were usually two hours in length and were sometimes broken by a recess period.

Domain 1: Planning and preparation

Knowledge of content and pedagogy

The first component of the domain of planning and preparation deals with the knowledge teachers need to have of content and pedagogy and their pre-requisites relationships. In this domain of practice it is expected that AL classroom teachers would demonstrate in their classroom practice and at interview a knowledge and application of the conceptual frameworks on which AL is built. These comprise:

- ⊖ The notion of discourse as a primary goal for teaching
- ⊖ An application for the Vygotskian Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)
- ⊖ A staging of a teaching a sequence structured around the two points above; and
- ⊖ Integration of scaffolding (Wood, Bruner and Ross 1976) as a teaching framework for teaching learning process within the ZPD and the AL teaching learning sequence.

The teacher should be able to demonstrate awareness of the developmental level and language/literacy proficiency of the range of children in the class established through the Independent Reading Level (IRL), in order to be able to choose appropriate texts to construct an appropriate dialogue with the students, and scaffold the students in their reading and writing.

Teachers should be seen to focus on ‘discourse’, in this case narrative texts, as exemplifying a ‘culturally situated discourse’ in schooling. Learning is pitched at the highest possible level in response to the theoretical potential offered by the ZPD.

The teacher should be able to show awareness of each student’s interpretation of the learning context known as ‘situation definition’ and creates common understandings or ‘intersubjectivity’ by connecting to the children’s perception of the task.

Teachers will be focusing on development of:

- ⊖ Reading – including comprehension and decoding, as realised through the literate discourse
- ⊖ Writing and spelling
- ⊖ Speaking – with particular focus upon enabling students to take part in classroom learning

Classroom teachers should be using the pedagogic sequence beginning at the level of the context of the chosen text including a general orientation to matters such as the overall topic of the subject, what the text is about and what stages the genre goes through to achieve its purpose and then to work at the overall level of meaning and to look for sequences of meaning in specific parts of the text.

Discourse analysis techniques will be used in the analysis of texts and teachers will need to demonstrate the capacity to model, deconstruct and reconstruct parts of texts, text and text types and to provide a meta analysis or 'thinking aloud' of the processes being used to derive or give meaning.

Teachers will be showing this knowledge by offering meta-commentary about: the text; the audience for the text; its social purpose and structure; 'common' or cultural knowledge; the author's techniques; the understanding of and use of literary terms in relation to the text; and the semantics of the text.

Of the eight teachers observed all demonstrated knowledge of Accelerated Literacy pedagogy. All but two based their lesson on literate texts on the recommended list of texts. The other two used their own selection, one demonstrating a thorough knowledge of the genre and the grammatical structure, the other not showing any awareness of text structure and features.

The following observations were common among the group of teachers

Knowledge of text and text features around author's use of language around physical and mental representation of 'being scared'. (Provincial school)

Demonstrated knowledge of genre structure of text. (Very remote school)

At interview, four of these teachers explained in some depth their choices of text and the judgements they use in selecting specific passages or linguistic structures to focus the learning. For example, one teacher raised the issue of choosing texts to suit cognitive ability not language ability.

The other thing that I've always found very important is that you engage in kids cognitively irrespective of what their language levels are. (Provincial school)

Below are two examples of how teachers in a remote school and in a provincial school understand the content and pedagogy of AL and demonstrated how they used the AL sequence

So roughly what I do in AL would be to start the session with spoken English, talking about the text and modelling the spoken English about the text and modelling the answers when I talk about the text. Then, I maybe in the following session [I] get the children to answer in sentences rather than one-word answers, using the language of the text and feeling confident and understanding that. Then we would go onto the high order, which would be the reader's interpretation . . . and underlining parts of the text in the book. I'd ask questions about that and then we'd go onto the transformations which would be the writer's intentions part and we'd go over the same part of the text and cut out various phrases and chunks and this is just a rough outline, and then we'd go onto the spelling section. So that's just a rough outline of AL. (Very Remote School)

...the main focus is a narrative based approach which is from our literacy program and that's based very much on pitching the level. It's a whole class based approach to teaching literacy and it's teaching at a level higher than the students are capable of on their own, so therefore the teacher's role is to scaffold the students through an understanding of the text and through decoding of the text and modelling writing. I think the explicit use of English language is a really essential part of this literacy program and, in that as part of the scaffolding, is the questioning technique, which I'm sure you're familiar with. It's pre-formulating questions so you can prepare students to be able to contextualise or easily find, within the context, the elements of the text that you're looking at and then following up via questions, so they then have to come out and underline specific elements of the text that you're looking for. That's higher order, it's also lower order and transformation but and then to re-conceptualise any answers that they give and show in a modelled way how the answer could be improved upon so that over time students start to build their own language around texts and discussions around text. That does take a long time, although in the course of studying one text you will get some hand over of knowledge and understandings about that particular text but the intentionality that you're trying to build with students

about texts and words and structures is built over a much longer period of time. With the explicit teaching of spelling, there's a lot of work on word recognition, letter and sound work. There's group negotiated writing and modelled writing . . . (Provincial school)

There were a number of teachers who commented on the limitation of the sequence and the selection of text in AL. The response was to cover these areas in other parts of the curriculum and not in the time set aside for AL.

The other thing that worries a number of people is that the only texts we look at are actually fiction. So we don't look at non-fiction texts. I'm attempting to do that as part of the science or SOSE program that I do in the afternoons. (Remote school)

Knowledge of students

The second component of the domain of planning and preparation is the knowledge that needs to be demonstrated about the students, their age characteristics, their knowledge of students varied approaches to learning, their knowledge of the skills and knowledge that students bring to their learning and their knowledge and awareness of the students' cultural interest and heritage.

In practicing AL, teachers will need to use their knowledge of the age characteristics of their students for identifying the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In planning for AL the teachers do not take account of child psychology nor are children's individual learning styles a factor. Information about capacities in reading and writing in English using the AL reading levels are important.

A characteristic of most of the AL lessons observed was the application of the instruction to the whole group with little differentiation to individuals in the group. This is consistent with AL pedagogy outlined above. In most of the classes observed there was no obvious attempt to build on previous knowledge outside of previous AL sessions. For example, in response to the comment 'You're not looking at individual performance to inform your teaching overly much ...'

No. And you teach to the whole group. In periods where I've had high kids and low kids you've got to change how you ask the questions . . . (Remote school)

However not all AL teachers followed this practice and in all but two observations, classes were streamed on the basis of the knowledge of the students such as ability with English based on the AL assessment irrespective of age and cognitive ability, by frequency of attendance, and in one school, children were being withdrawn from the AL class for other interventions such as phonics with ITAS or ISA tutors. The rationale for these arrangements was explained in the interviews and related to knowledge of patterns of attendance and knowledge of language background.

AL assessment data about reading fluency was frequently used as the bases for these programming decisions. The types of streaming practices to identify instructional groups observed were:

- ⊖ New ESL Indigenous students to have their own AL session and also withdraws other individuals to practice aspects of the AL instruction
- ⊖ Multi-age groups streamed on ability in English across years 3 – 7
- ⊖ Attendance based groups

I know it's not, it doesn't fit well with the AL methodology, but because of poor attendance and because some children were seen to be moving ahead fairly quickly and some children were stuck and there were huge gaps we decided to bring . . . [in streaming based on attendance and ability] (Very remote school)

These practices do not fit with the groupings being based on age and pitching instruction to the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky) of age based classes as recommended in the literature for Accelerated Literacy.

Some AL teachers raised issues about some of the elements of the program from their understanding and knowledge of early childhood development and second language learning development. Many were concerned about the demands of long periods of listening in English for young children with English as a second language.

And you can't ask a T/I kid to sit down for 40 minutes. You can be the most brilliant person in the world but you're asking too much. If you look at the wrigglers it's the boys and it's the boys that need much more movement. (Remote school)

Teachers with an ESL background pointed to their frustration with the approach because it did not use the knowledge of students' language and cultural background in planning for classes. They believed, for example, that the narrow selection of texts prohibited learning important aspects of language particularly practice in interpersonal English and the development of oracy in English as a precursor to literacy development.

I would actually devise my own program that involved the sorts of language if we were going shopping. So you've got language function, the sort of vocab that you need and we would go shopping. You don't get that sort of stuff from the texts that we're studying. (Remote school)

I've also found it extremely difficult to maintain the teacher dialogue that seems to be needed like constantly because I look at these kids and they are starting to squirm or they are starting to fall asleep or disengage or whatever and I think this is not what I intuitively think I need to be doing. Scaffolding, modelling making explicit what they need to listen for making explicit what this endless dialogue that... (Provincial school)

Selecting instructional goals

The third component of the domain for planning and preparation relates to the teacher's knowledge and capacity to select instructional goals.

In planning for AL, teachers are expected to clearly enunciate statements of purpose of the lesson and these are carried through the whole teaching sequence. The lessons will be planned with a consistent, coherent thread and the instruction discourse enables all students to access the learning. The focus of AL is on explicit teaching to scaffold learners' reading comprehension of specific texts, transferring linguistic knowledge into their own writing, and building semantic and grammar knowledge from known text to writing and new texts. The teaching is clear and explicit at every stage of the sequence and instructional goals are shared with learners. Lessons will be suitable for multilevel and age providing relevant cultural/common knowledge associated with the chosen text. AL follows a sequence of activity to reach reading, spelling and writing outcomes derived from the selected text. The AL sequence of activities is repeated with different instructional goals over a period of time to form a unit of work with a chosen text. The learning sequence is balanced through different activities that develop shared knowledge about the 'story' and conceptual knowledge about how language works. By the end of the unit of work a handover to the student will have occurred and balance achieved.

In most classes observed, the goals of lessons were clearly explained to students. The goals were largely about the aims for learning for the day related to the specific narrative text. The selection of text and learning goals were frequently but not always derived from the Teaching Notes provided. Where the lesson was part of a sequence using a text that had been well established, the instructions were clearly understood and appeared to be routine. The following two quotes from class observations provide some sample of the range of practices observed.

Clear structure for the lesson focusing on language structures and semantics. (Provincial school)

[Goal] unable to be determine. Much of lesson in Kriol or mixture of English and Kriol. (Very remote school)

There were no references made by teachers to the goals or outcomes of the NT Curriculum Framework. The weekly planning template relating outcomes to the NT Curriculum Framework available to teachers was not in evidence in classrooms or referred to by teachers at interview when questions about planning were asked.

We have a weekly plan and on it, it includes low book order for each day. At the top it's got the main focus for the week. We've low book order and high book order and transformation. It also has reading activity and at the bottom there's a place for sight vocab and spelling and a writing activity. You'd only put something in the writing activity in the week that you're actually focussing on that. (Remote school)

Demonstrating knowledge of resources

The fourth component relating to the domain for planning and preparation is the teachers' capacity to demonstrate knowledge of resources.

The resources needed by teachers to plan and teach an AL lesson were listed as follows:

- ⊖ Text folder - copy of text 'big book', Teaching notes for the book, individual copies of the book for students and overhead transparencies of focus text.
- ⊖ Programming –weekly planner; lesson planning notes; Early reader checklist (if applicable); Observational Reading Record Sheets; word recognition and spelling checklist.
- ⊖ Student Assessment folder -consent forms, initial assessment reading and writing sample, TORCH Test; ongoing observational reading record; ongoing comprehension sheets, ongoing writing samples with context sheets; attendance records and MAP.
- ⊖ Teacher box with physical equipment needs.
- ⊖ AL Resources for Spelling - patterning, chunking. Information providing morphological knowledge.
- ⊖ Modelled specific texts for teaching reading, spelling and writing.

Resources for students were the copy of the selected texts, whiteboard/blackboard for spelling and exercise books.

Resources for teaching were fairly standard across all classrooms observed. They included a big book or multiple copies of text, OHP and transparencies, a transformation board, strips and scissors. Small whiteboards or blackboards were used for spelling, exercise books for independent writing and spelling. At one school the two classes used smart boards, electronic whiteboard with capacity to manipulate texts and bring in external texts and audiovisual material from the Internet and other sources. These were used with great effect instead of the manual transformation board and for manipulating word chunks to make patterns in the spelling session.

In one class there was neither a big book nor individual copies of the text. The teacher's text was a large print photocopy and, while placed on a transformation board, it was unable to be read by the children.

Transformation boards were not always visible to all children. Whiteboards with OHP were often very dirty and difficult to read. The use of green and red texta was not always easily visible to the class.

Designing coherent instruction

The fifth component of the planning and preparation domain relates to the teachers ability to plan learning activities, to gather the appropriate resources, group children for learning and design a lesson structure.

These are critical aspects in teaching using AL pedagogy. All AL activities are related to the chosen text. AL has a series of structured learning activities progressing from low to high order literate orientation through to transformations from reading to spelling and writing. The process aims, through this

sequence, to ‘handover’ to the students’ knowledge and understandings about the text and the language choices the author made for particular purposes. The following is the usual sequence of learning activities that make up a structured AL lesson:

- ⊖ Low order literate orientation – includes discussion of: context, characters, plot structure; links between words and illustrations; inference; role of illustrations to extend meaning; motivation of characters; author’s purpose; reader judgement; and taking a stance. The teacher models these.
- ⊖ High order literate orientation draws children’s attention to the precise wording of the text; how the author’s language choices create an effective text; how the text is organised; particular word choices; and the meanings of particular words, groups of words and concepts.
- ⊖ Transformations focuses on deconstructing the text to show the word, and word order choices, the author made to realise their intentions and to have an effect on the reader: including the structure of the text; the linguistic or literary devices or techniques used by the writer; realisation of the themes; and positioning in relation to character.
- ⊖ Spelling – word segmentation; visual patterning based on known patterns through lists based on taught words; word analysis skills. All items are selected from chosen texts. Selection of items for learning should come from the text or pattern derived from the text. There are no decontextualised sight word lists used in AL.
- ⊖ Writing – joint construction focused sequence of teaching leading to applying what learner’s know about writing and the text for the generation of new text.

The sequence is a routine that will vary only in emphasis depending on the focus of the particular lesson.

AL has a list of recommended books and one would expect the texts used in the classroom to come from this list. There is a set of teaching notes provided for many texts and PD materials have been developed for primary and secondary teaching that may be referred to in planning lessons. Typed copies of text, text in clauses, lesson plan, assessment sheets, low order literate orientation resources (these are chosen by the teacher to support instruction and may include posters, maps, students art work or personal items to provide a visual support for the text will all be in evidence in a typical AL classroom. The environmental print in the classroom will be relevant to the work and shared knowledge of class.

In AL the teacher works with the whole class with instruction pitched at ZPD. There may be some individual or small group activities in spelling and writing

Lessons should be planned using the weekly lesson plan template. The sequence of activities should follow the lesson focus:

- ⊖ Low order book orientation, read story or part of the text, Pre-formulation and re-conceptualisation is integral at this stage and builds on the students knowledge and skills from previous sessions.
- ⊖ High order book orientation, transformations from reading, spelling and writing, scaffolded spelling, joint reconstruction, writing workshops and free writing.

As progress is made through the sequence there is handover of control to the student.

Each sequence has overall focus or goal depending on the features of the text. There will be many joint and teacher modelled activities, activities around transformations workshop opportunities to use new techniques.

The lesson structures observed across the classrooms visited were fairly standard. Mostly started with a form of low order orientation introducing a segment of text for the day or to the whole text, reading aloud and guided reading as a whole class or in groups. All lessons incorporated a spelling session using segmenting or chunking words from the text. However, there was little evidence of the sequence of learning getting to the independent writing task or activity. Teachers talked about how difficult it was to get students to write. The following teacher found it difficult to do the chunking activities.

I tell you ... they can't write. I write and maybe they copy. That's the only way to get them to do it. (Very remote school)

There was often no clear sense from the observations of where the lesson was in relation to the full unit of work suggesting that the clear articulation of lesson goals was not always practiced as suggested. It appears that similar activities are done daily with reviews of earlier sections of text or by selecting a new passage of text to highlight a grammatical or semantic feature.

Some of the common teaching activities observed across the classes included:

- ⊖ Recap of story using pictures
- ⊖ Guided reading
- ⊖ Questioning about the illustrator's or author's intentions
- ⊖ Providing the language to talk about characters
- ⊖ Eliciting from the children the author's use of physical description
- ⊖ Deconstruction and reconstruction of sentences from text
- ⊖ Games such as tic tac toe using words from text
- ⊖ Measuring and listening games
- ⊖ Mystery envelope- a game to extend transformations
- ⊖ Spelling – chunking and segmenting using words from text
- ⊖ Reading comprehension worksheets from text

Most activities were undertaken as a whole group as recommended in the literature. No teachers grouped children in self- selected or self-managing groups. Two teachers engaged in small group work with the assistance of paraprofessionals and there was some withdrawal for one to one work with AT or tutors.

I take the whole group for AL and [tutor] take out individual children and usually work on the last sentence that we've done with that transformation thing. She goes over it on an individual basis.

It was observed that almost 80% of class time was spent on teacher directed activities, much of it requiring long periods of listening. Spelling and writing were conducted predominantly as individual activities in most classes. There were few examples of independent writing observed in the classes visited.

There were some practices that did not support AL using the ZPD to group students and that other criteria, like ability, was being used for streaming to other AL sessions.

...with the exception of a couple of my really lower kids who are the ESL kids that go to an ESL group during literacy where they do AL but they do a text that is more appropriate to their ability level, everyone else does the same. (Remote school)

Few teachers observed were using the AL sequence outlined above with fidelity.

The AL sequence of activity was observed to be quite demanding of the teacher. The teaching sessions were frequently quite long – up to 90 minutes. The students' capacity to listen for long periods of time and to maintain their concentration was often very difficult and commented on by many teachers during interviews.

Tried to insert physical and practical input from children in recognition that most children cannot listen and sit for extended periods of time. (Provincial School)

Tried to keep engagement by varying the activities such as games but did not follow the usual AL process. (Very remote school)

Teachers were particularly concerned for learners whose language background was not English. It was frequently observed that teachers inserted other activities within the AL sequence to main concentration and ensures their engagement in the lesson. For example, these observations show the range of practice in implementing the sequence in AL classrooms

Moved through expected AL structure from spelling to joint writing and independent writing and added games activity. (Very remote school)

As well as doing my AL every day I do some extra stuff on phonetics and extra things on the alphabet because I personally don't feel that it's being covered and that's because even though I really believe in AL and I think it is working for the children in my class in particular and other classrooms around the school but if you did just AL stand alone there's some things that the kids might miss out and I know that in the spelling for AL you do look at the chunks, so you're looking at blends and sounds in words but I feel that with my children they need something extra but all that extra stuff I do within the context of the book. (Very remote school)

Other teachers introduced more interpersonal English to scaffold English in addition to the style of questioning and answering recommended in the AL teaching notes and professional development.

Assessing student learning

The final component of this domain is the preparation and planning for assessing student learning. This component is concerned with the congruence of assessment with instructional goals, the setting or recognition of criteria and standards, and using assessment data for planning.

The text notes provided for each text on the AL lists provides the instructional goals for each unit of work. Students are assessed initially using a text (assessed as being age grade appropriate) to establish their Individual Reading Level (IRL). Progress is monitored through assessing students' reading levels as they work with the chosen text or their Independent Working Level (IWL). For older students the TORCH test is used. Aspects of Marie Clay are also used for formative assessment.

The teacher from the texts taught derives Word recognition and spelling checklists.

Writing is assessed through the collection of 3 samples at the commencement of the program and 3 at the end of each year in the program. These are assessed against the writing goals and techniques taught. There is no agreed link or mapping to outcomes in the NT Curriculum Framework for the English Learning Area or ESL or across other Learning Areas. Criteria and standards relate to the instructional goals set for texts in the teaching notes and not the NT Curriculum framework.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to meet the goals of the NT Curriculum Framework.

IRL assessments and IWL inform the teacher of levels of reading in the group and the teacher's uses the teacher notes and complete the weekly planner to focus lessons.

In theory there is congruence between the assessments used in AL, although they are limited, and the teaching notes on selected texts. The reading assessment is limited to fluency through the use of miscue analysis. This does not assess some of the emphases of AL pedagogy such as deriving cultural meaning, orientation to genre, semantic development, etc. nor does it assess transference to other texts or text types. The TORCH test is limited in its application to student grade 4 and above and derives information about reading comprehension. The NT Curriculum Framework contains the mandatory outcomes schools are required to deliver. There is little or no congruence between AL and the NT Curriculum Framework and outcomes for either the English Learning Areas or for phases of learning in ESL.

In observing AL classrooms and talking with teachers it was clear that many could not explain the criteria for the selection of texts for the reading assessment. Frequently the AL coordinator or the NALP team chose the texts. Teachers did maintain portfolios of writing samples and spelling

assessments are also maintained but there is not criteria for assessing the level of outcome against NT Curriculum standards or any other set of criteria.

When asked what criteria are used for assessment most teachers interviewed needed to be prompted to discuss their program and students' progress in terms of the NT Curriculum Framework pointing to a tension for many. As one teacher described it

. . . There will continue to be that conflict because AL is based on the overall need for students to read, write comprehend and spell in a literate way whereas the NTCF pulls it all apart and makes it so that the students are able to do particular things ... The fact that the texts are actually selected outside of the NTCF too means that everything's based on text and that's not inked that's very difficult. Having said that though there are lots of parallels in the program. (Provincial school)

While it was expected that the teacher was responsible for assessing students in practice it was frequently the AL coordinator or other staff, rather than the classroom teacher who administered assessments like the IRL, IWL and TORCH in practice

The AL coordinator at some stage during the year will test them on their transference ... they've got a set of books that they test them on... they're unseen texts (Remote school)

Some teachers were aware of a mapping of AL to the NT Curriculum Framework and it was believed that AL produces NT Curriculum Framework but teaching is not directed towards meeting them. One teacher explained this lack of congruence in the following way.

Yeah I do [plan with the NTCF] Probably not as much ... like with maths and science I follow very closely but with AL a bit more broadly because the routines are already set out so much, I know that I am covering all the areas, but it sort of already been covered in a way by the program. [Teacher referring to AL NTCF mapping or linking document]. (Very Remote school)

The limitation of AL to a single genre, literate narrative texts, does not provide adequate exposure to other genres are required by the NT Curriculum framework to adequately meet the curriculum policy of the NT. The scope of the AL as a whole school approach to fulfilling the literacy outcomes of the NT Curriculum Framework has to be questioned.

Domain 2: The Classroom Environment

Creating an environment of respect and rapport

The first component of the classroom environment domain is concerned with the nature of the teacher's interactions with students and interactions between students.

In AL during the low order literate orientation the teacher is expected to lead the interactions between teacher and students but there are expectations of increasing levels of participation from students. As lessons progress through the teaching sequence, and from one lesson to the next in a unit of work around a text, students develop resources to discuss the text meaning, the intentions of the author and the language choices they made to realise their intentions.

The lesson is guided by the teacher in their role as literate adult scaffolding induction of the student into the discourse. Student input is actively sought and handover given at every opportunity. Teacher constructs questioning interaction to maximise student involvement and may seek multiple responses to questions. All responses are validated and affirmed. Interaction between students is not deliberately facilitated.

Accelerated Literacy classrooms were observed to be very teacher centric with teachers directing activities. The handover was more evident in Provincial classrooms than in classrooms where the

majority of students were Indigenous. Students' views were respected but only considered if they were focused on the text and lesson. In most classrooms there was little or no interpersonal interactions with the teachers or between the students.

There was little evidence of collaboration among students or interaction between students. The following comments from the classroom observation capture these classroom practices.

Very teacher directed with focus of interaction on following order of procedures and answering questions. No formal collaborative work. (Remote school)

Teacher directed interaction with all students selecting individuals to respond to questions, 'what can you tell me about the author... Does this make sense?', 'Is this what the writer intended...? No interaction between children. Student constructed as helping the teacher. (Very Remote school)

Knowledge of children demonstrated in differentiated approach and praise of individuals Mostly teacher directed. Little interaction expected between children during the lesson. (Provincial school)

Establishing a culture for learning

In the second component of this domain, the importance of content, developing pride in students' work and establishing expectation for learning and achievement all contribute to developing a culture for learning.

In an AL classroom the culture for learning is established by a focus on the content, in this case, content is the text, that is, the intentions of the writer and meta-analysis of how texts are written. Student pride in work is demonstrated through developing self-confidence to read, write and offer opinions or interpretations about the text and the choice of text is designed to stretch literacy and engage at the level of ZPD. There is an expectation that all children will learn to read.

In practice the learning culture of the AL classrooms were established by high expectations of students being able to contribute to understanding about what the author intended for a text and their understanding how the text works. Some examples of how this was established from two classroom observations.

Content about the story and linguistic features of this story. Expectations for learning and achievement: Children expected to be able to answer questions and to follow directions. (Remote School)

Focus clearly on building knowledge to deal with the specific text on character of Ulf that lesson focuses on. Clear pride in reading and completion of tasks. Expected to be able to contribute to building knowledge about the text and to answer questions. (Provincial school)

Managing classroom procedures

The third component of the classroom environment domain deals with the management of instructional groups, transitions between activities, organising teaching and learning resources as well as managing the other adults or paraprofessional who assist in classrooms.

An AL class is managed as a whole group. The teacher engages productively with the whole group for the body of the lesson. Small groups may be used as a complementary means to reach clearly defined discrete ends for short periods of time. For example, high level spellers can be set a task to research the origin of a word and report back to class as a whole; or small groups may act out parts of the story.

You would expect to see explicit transition in the sequence of instruction from low order literate orientation to high order, to transformation and spelling and writing etc all relate to the features of the

text and focus of the lesson in relation to the intentions of the author and choice of writing techniques to be explored.

Commonly used resources such as texts, whiteboards, marker pens and placement of transformation board and other resources are easily accessible. The overhead projector where applicable is visible to all students. Other complementary resources are utilised where required. There will be displays of spelling words and students work in evidence.

Support staff in AL classrooms are expected to be in-tune with the methodology and are able to fulfil a role complementary to the teaching. Support staff do not have a role in discipline

In practice classroom procedures were observed to be vitally important in Accelerated Literacy classrooms as they are strongly connected to the AL sequence of activity.

Instruction was mostly through whole group and then individual activities for spelling and writing. There are quite defined transitions in the AL sequence of instruction as are demonstrated below. There was no small group work observed though in some classes students were withdrawn to work with a tutor.

Management of instructional groups: tight control of high order orientation group. A low order orientation through listening and checks on understanding. Transitions occurred between High Order, Low order orientation and transformation. Children well drilled in these routines and knew what was expected. The teacher briefed aide during the lesson. She has been trained and knows her role to help children to focus on task. Moved around the room unobtrusively. (Provincial school)

This teacher demonstrated highly skilled management of instructional groups showing understanding of limit of some activities for children with poor concentration. Allowed lapses (children rolled on floor) but no interference with other children. Excellent management between activities all related to the purpose of the lesson using these transitions as a time to reiterate or clarify goals. Presented varied activities but all linked to instructional goal a number of volunteers and paraprofessionals are present in class. The role of the paraprofessionals was to manage learning for small groups and assist individuals. (Provincial school)

Not all teachers adhered to these structures and used other activities as transitions to engage interest, reinforce learning or simply to change pace or re-establish behaviour.

Many classrooms had additional adults playing support or specialist roles. These include ESL support staff, Assistant Teachers, parents and paid tutors. The following are some samples from the interviews with AL classroom teachers use ITAS teachers or Assistant teachers.

*We've identified 5 at risk children that she [ITAS tutor] works with every day. That's working really well. . . What the **ITAS** tutor does is go back to what we did at the beginning. If a child is finished say the first 4 sentences she'll go onto the 5th sentence. If they're only capable of doing two sentences she'll work with the 3rd sentence . . . Most of the children who are left with me are able to do the written work that I put on the board. (Remote School)*

In that class I have two. I don't have them every day but I have Katie every day but I don't have Rebecca every day. But they are given professional development by myself early in the year. They are new to the school and they have a range of professional development for maths, literacy and for their own performance enhancement and they in the ALPD tutors get, which is our final two hours, and we go through very briefly, the theories behind AL. I think it's important that people understand if they are going to be working in the classrooms and then we talk about how their input can be maximised and also the acceptance that

sometimes they can do nothing. Which is very, very hard for tutors, actually sitting back and listening. (Provincial School)

ITAS and other support teachers are not always used to support the implementation of AL. This is particularly the case in very remote schools

If they don't know their letters, that's the time that I use my ITAS tutor and I actually inform my assistant teacher that we focus on that child. I have target children. All children in my class have their alphabet and their numbers so the assistant teacher can point ... (Very remote school)

We've used Fitzroy Reading schemes, we've used other phonics approaches and, so we've introduced that this year. Prior to that I'm pretty sure, and I've only had this position this year, I'm pretty sure they were exclusively AL, they definitely didn't have tutors last year.(very remote school)

Managing student behaviour

Establishing expectations of standards of behaviour, monitoring behaviour and responding to behaviour make up this component of the classroom environment domain.

In AL there are expectation of success and engagement within a scaffolded environment through supportive questioning techniques. Behaviour is monitored through their engagement and feedback about the lesson, which is paced to maintain engagement while remaining with the AL sequence. Teachers will proceed through activities at an appropriate level to maximise engagement and provide clear instruction and familiar routines ensure that students know what to do and how to behave.

In the course of observing AL classrooms some challenging behaviours were displayed and there were periods when some students were not fully engaged in the lesson. Often children were sleepy or simply seemed bored. Teachers had high expectation for participation and for demonstrating acceptable school behaviour such as sitting still and being quiet. The follow behaviour management and monitoring techniques were observed.

Expect children to sit and listen for low order orientation for long periods of time. Children know routines of the session. There were unobtrusive responses to poor behaviour, which was immediate and unequivocal. Explained what to do. (Remote school)

Expected that student will focus on activity and assist teacher with the task. Rewards such as stickers and praise used extensively as was comments on unsociable behaviour and who was 'ready to learn'. Used voice, reward, touch, and construction of seating on ground and at desk to modify behaviours. Classroom behaviours monitored, students engaged, selected through questioning, hand and voice. . . Used techniques of lowering voice to get attention, pace for engagement, clapping etc. (Remote school)

Very little overt management behaviour, some direction about seating but kept up pace of lesson and allowed some coming and going of individuals. Allowed some children to disengage for short periods as long as not disturbing others. (Provincial School)

Organizing physical space

The final component of this domain considers the organisation of the physical environment in the classroom.

Seating arrangements to optimise effective engagement with learning eg U shaped formation is recommended for the AL classroom. It is important that students can see the text. Other resources and hardware should be easily accessible and utilised safely.

The organisation of physical space observed in AL classrooms seemed dependant on the age of children. Early childhood classroom organisation followed similar pattern as other schools where much of the activity was done on floor with teacher on chair. Early childhood rooms were highly decorated. One was more likely to see traditional rows of desks in Accelerated Literacy classrooms for the older age group than in schools using other approaches. On the whole the classrooms were not very print rich.

Materials accessible but quite simple physical resources used. (Very remote schools)

Not a print rich classroom. (Remote school)

Worked from low order orientation on the floor in early session. Children squashed. Materials in children's desks. (Remote school)

Spacious classroom with floor space, desk space and equipment around the room including OHP, Teacher used whole space, floor for reading and small group activity, tables for writing and spelling, separate round table for art/craft activity. Classroom had displays by the teacher of children's artwork around words in text and plot and character maps (see photos). (Provincial)

There were some examples in schools where the equipment was not used safely and materials were not able to accessed by all children.

Not much space for circle activities and sometimes text would be obscured for some children. Movement of transformation board and its propping seems quite dangerous. (Very remote school)

Domain 3: Instruction

Communicating clearly and accurately

The first component for this domain, Instruction, considers how the teacher communicates clearly in accurately in providing direction and procedures and the use of oral and written language in the classroom

In AL pedagogy the teacher states the overall purpose of lesson from the outset and outlines the role of each stage of the teaching sequence. Directions are specific and clear and the rationale for teaching given- [explains why]. Teacher makes the thinking visible by articulating her thought processes and makes her thinking available to all the students. Procedural elements of the lesson are well in place .The level of teacher direction and guidance of the process diminishes as class moves through sequence of lessons related to the chosen text.

The language of instruction is English. The teacher describes in oral English the meaning and structure of a written English text and the writing techniques used. There is a lot of questioning and discussion in English and students are provided opportunities to develop a meta-language to discuss language choices in the text and for handover.

Observation of communication practices in AL classrooms revealed the high level of procedural or discursive communication required. Teachers provide oral directions in English to the children and a commentary on the text – plot, characters and grammatical devises and this was followed by eliciting responses through questioning from students. Indigenous ESL students were not observed asking questions.

Very little interaction between students was observed in these classes. In remote schools there was no evidence of students using English in the classroom outside of techniques described above or for interpersonal exchanges.

All except one teacher used oral English exclusively as the medium of instruction.

Using aspects of AL pedagogy but in Kriol not English. (Very remote school)

There was only one example of a written comprehension activity using a worksheet based on the text. This activity was highly scaffolded in oral English so the children did not have to rely on reading and interpreting the questions to complete the task.

Using questioning and discussion techniques

This component of the instruction domain covers how teachers use question and discussion techniques and engage students to actively participate in the lesson.

In AL pedagogy the following advice is given about the nature of questioning and discussion

- ⊖ All questioning is directed at unpacking the discourse being studied. There is common use of closed questions early in a teaching sequence as an aid to scaffolding learning, such as preformulated and reconceptualized questions.
- ⊖ Open -ended questioning is used as students' gain confidence with their knowledge of the text and genre and their capacity to use English.
- ⊖ Questions and instruction are modelled in teaching notes and include specific techniques:
- ⊖ Questioning sequence: pre-formulation (eg. From Rosie's Walk – Session 1 the students mostly listening as the teacher explains the illustration and the first page. Session 2 the teacher points to the hen and might ask, "Who can remember the name of the hen?" The children respond "Rosie" and then the teacher replies and asks " Yes and what is Rosie going for?" The children respond "A walk".)
- ⊖ Re-conceptualisation: follows pre-formulation (To continue the above example – to re-conceptualise the teacher would say "Yes, it must be getting on for her dinner time and she wants some exercise before her dinner ...").

The teacher also models language and behaviour required to access literate discourse and invites students in to be active participants in the discussion process. 'Intersubjectivity' is established by connecting learning to students' knowledge and understanding of the world. At every opportunity the teacher capitalises on the 'common knowledge' acquired by students to 'hand over' to them. Teachers validate each student's contribution and is intent on 'pointing their brains' at literate features of text. The teacher usually seeks to draw all students into the discussion.

Students are actively involved in the thinking and discussions that are conducted around the text as well as in the conduct of the phases of the teaching sequence.

Questioning techniques were observed being applied in most of these Accelerated Literacy classrooms with few examples of structured discussion about the text. For example, the following observations are typical:

No real discussion only in response to questions. Mostly one-word answers (Remote school)

Some teachers used questions like, 'Can someone help me here?' ... to invite students to come to the role as reader. (Very remote school)

These types of questions were typical of AL in comparison with other approaches. Teacher's questions did not elicit personal responses to the text or relate to experience of students and their feelings but were designed to get students to respond only using the text as the linguistic resource. The answers to questions were generally found by locating words or phrases from the text.

'Choice of words for Ulf shows he's ugly. There are 6 bits of description.' Teacher then elicited the words from the text'. There was extensive input from teacher on good/ bad and physical description of 'blue -eyed', 'sensible', etc. (Provincial school)

One remote teacher set up a discussion about where the authors came from in north Australia. The children were asked to find the cues in the text leading to lively discussion in English and unpacking of many of the words in the text. This type of discussion was the only example of a discussion in the AL

classrooms observed. Children were attempting more than one word answers although much of responses were in non-standard English.

Engaging Students in Learning

This component of the Instruction domain deals with those classroom practices designed to engage students in learning and include such things as representation of content, activities and assignment, the grouping of students within classes and the quality of instructional materials and resources. The way that teachers structure the lesson and use pace to slow down and speed up is also an important factor in how they engage students in learning.

Meta-discussion of what the text is about, the author's intentions and the construct of the text features in AL. All activities are implemented in line with the purposes of the lesson and the AL teaching sequence. The Teacher ensures staging of teaching capitalises on the fundamental premise of ZPD in which socially constructed learning caters for all students in the group. Students complete the body of the lesson as a class and may revert to group activities during spelling and writing.

The teaching resources include: the list of books levelled for teaching AL; Teaching notes; PD materials for primary and secondary; typed copies of text; text in clauses; lesson plan; observational assessment sheets; low order resources. (Chosen by the teacher to provide context for text); and teaching notes and PD notes modelling strategies with specific texts to students

Explicit teaching using sequence is recommended for the selected text. There is a need to keep up the pace but also scaffold when needed. Children should become familiar with routines and be focused on content of the lesson. Pacing is consistently maintained to achieve maximum engagement.

In many cases the choice of text appeared to be critical for engaging students particularly in remote and very remote schools. Only in two cases was the text chosen with student's interests and experience in mind. The first consideration is the age appropriateness and the richness of language for teaching purposes.

Choice of book had high interest and teacher contextualised to a familiar place. (Very remote school)

The AL teachers in the classes observed seemed very aware of using pace to maintain student interest. Many teachers used the pace of the activities to maintain student engagement- the texts were read together at a fast pace, questioning could be quite rapid. Some teachers set up competitions between students or groups cueing them into reading aloud. Some moved from activity to activity quite fast allowing no more than 15 to 20 minutes for each activity and introducing games between AL strategies to re-energise students. Below are some of the strategies observed:

Low order quite fast paced with questions. (Very remote school)

Children responded to questions by show of hands and teacher instruction quite fast paced requiring fast responses. (Remote schools)

Used cued reading between boys and girls to increase pace and provide a challenge. (Very remote school)

Providing Feedback to students

The quality of feedback to students can be provided in a number of ways. Are they accurate substantive constructive and/or specific? The timeliness of feedback is also considered as important.

Feedback to students in AL is seen as part of the continuous shared meta-commentary/ literate discourse about text and text functions. In AL it was considered important that the teacher always capitalises on opportunities to provide timely positive reinforcement and that the teacher realises instruction must essentially be conducted before the task is set and that once 'in task' it is too late for intervention.

Outside of the direction of the teacher there was little interaction between student and teachers and among students. Where responses were required in relation to organisational or behaviour issues the teachers were very constructive and specific before moving back to the focus of the lesson as quickly as possible.

The Indigenous teacher sometimes used first language for substantive explanations and there was a greater level of student-to-student interaction but not in English.

Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness

Lesson adjustment, responses to students and persistence

Responses to students are structured within the purpose of the lesson.

Questioning is used to monitor students' understanding and questioning and tasks are adjusted, in response to that feedback.

The teacher always persists and maintains focus on intended learning outcomes using purposeful teaching strategies.

Most teachers appeared to be working within routine structures to plan focused activities for the sessions observed. There were few interruptions to the session so no need for teachers to adjust their plans. At the same time there appeared little room for a spontaneous diversion in response to student interest. Classes remained very focused on linguistic instruction, unpacking of cultural understandings and building word recognition. One teacher tried a new activity but used her judgement to abort it when it was not working well. Teachers demonstrated a remarkable level of persistence to continue with lessons, sometimes in the face of poor behaviour or lack of apparent engagement from students.

First Steps

Background

Research and development of *First Steps* commenced in 1989 by the Western Australia government. Since the initial phase of development, continual revision has been undertaken to ensure that the developmental continua, resource materials and professional development reflect research in the areas of literacy and learning. Resources and professional development were provided to all Western Australian schools. A Consultancy Unit was established in 1993 to provide development to schools and educators outside the state of Western Australia. In 1995 *First Steps* formed an alliance with Heinemann REPP to publish resources, services and courses. A trading company was established at Edith Cowan University, ECU Resource for Learning Ltd to manage the suite of First Steps, Next Steps, Stepping Out developments, licensing agreements and service delivery. In 2005 and 2006 the 2nd editions of First Steps Reading and First Steps Writing were released.

The Northern Territory has facilitated the access to the new editions of First Steps Reading, Writing and Spelling and Stepping Out through licensing arrangements to support training of accredited facilitators for the delivery of the professional development. These facilitators then offer school based professional development to teachers.

First Steps is a resource that helps individual teachers, schools and education systems achieve targeted literacy outcomes and standards for their students. First Steps comprises the following components:

⌘ Teacher Resource Materials

- Four Developmental Continua, each mapping a student's development in either reading, writing, spelling, or oral language. Each continuum enables teachers to assess, monitor, record and report on students' literacy and language development, and to select appropriate teaching and learning activities to support students' ongoing progress.
- Four Resource Books, comprehensive books which complement the Developmental Continua, and provide teachers with additional teaching strategies and learning activities to enhance literary development. They also contain classroom organisation, assessment and implementation ideas.
- A 'Parents as Partners' book designed to help schools encourage and support parents' involvement in their children's literacy development.

⌘ Professional Development

- First Steps professional development courses train teachers in the use of the First Steps materials. The professional development is conducted at two levels.
 - ♣ School Based Courses - whole school professional development sessions delivered by First Steps Consultants. Ideally suited for schools committed to raising the profile and performance of reading, writing, spelling, or oral language.
 - ♣ Tutor Training Courses - train the trainer courses, facilitated by First Steps Consultants for teachers, who are then able to deliver their own school based professional development. Ideally suited for literacy support, teachers, or coordinators at either school or district level.

⌘ Ongoing Support and Additional Professional Development Courses

- Next Steps Tutor Course
- Footnotes, a quarterly tutor newsletter
- Website bulletin
- Electronic access to First Steps Consultants

Teaching Learning and Standards Division in conjunction with First Steps Facilitators have mapped the new editions of the First Steps to the NTCF. This mapping has been widely circulated to schools and teachers.

First Steps is not a literacy program or an approach like Accelerated Literacy or Walking Talking Texts. It provides professional support to teachers through courses and resources to support approaches to the teaching of reading and writing supported by recent research. Teachers are then able to use their professional judgement to select the curriculum and strategies to reach learning outcomes. In the Northern Territory First Steps is used as a second layer resource to meet the outcomes of the NT Curriculum Framework.

Analysis of practice 2006

Observations were made of ten teachers and their classroom teaching strategies in schools using First Steps resources during 2006 and followed up with interviews to discuss the features of the approaches they took and explanations of the lessons observed.

These observations occurred after First Steps Reading 2nd Edition professional development for facilitators had been provided but before any input from First Steps Writing Second Edition. Training may not have been delivered at schools prior to the field visits. Many teachers observed were familiar with the First Steps first edition resources and experienced in using the strategies but had not yet had the updated training.

Characteristics of First Steps schools

Two of the schools using First Steps are located in urban areas of Darwin and one is located in the Darwin rural area. All are classified as provincial. One school is located in Alice Springs and is therefore classified as remote.

A significant feature of these classrooms was that all used multi-aged groups or composite grades to group children for learning. Most of the classes observed were on groupings of grade 3, 4 or 5 children and class sizes were all quite large, ranging from 17 children to 40 children with team teaching arrangements. One observation was of an integrated activities session in a library with a group of grade 4 planning to work with younger children.

Analysis of observation and interview data

Domain 1: Planning and preparation

Demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy.

The first component of the domain of planning and preparation deals with the knowledge teachers have of content and pedagogy and their pre-requisites relationships.

In this domain of practice it is expected that First Steps classroom teachers would demonstrate in their classroom practice and at interview knowledge of theory of learning to read outlined in Ch 1 *Reading Map of Development*. This refers in particular to the four sub streams around which the approach is framed. These include:

- ⊖ Use of texts;
- ⊖ Contextual understanding;
- ⊖ Conventions; and processes and
- ⊖ Strategies

First Steps implementation is dependent on a number of factors being present in the school including the following: high quality professional development, the Principal as learner and leader, ongoing support for teachers, whole-school implementation, providing time, maintaining continuity through planning,

reflecting and celebrating, developing and articulating a vision, monitoring and evaluating outcomes and involving parents. First Steps uses a map of development for reading and writing.

First Steps is based on a developmental understanding of reading and writing. The developmental stages for reading and writing in which the prerequisite skills are developed are broken into 6 phases: role-play; experimental; early; transitional; proficient and accomplished.

Teachers will be demonstrating in their planning strategies for reaching each phase of development and/or major teaching emphases for appropriate level of the phase for sub strands, the environment and attitude. These provide the pedagogic scaffolds for children to reach the next phase.

Teachers may employ eclectic approach to teaching of reading incorporating: use of a range of reading procedures; use of grouping structures; use of a range of data-collection tools; introduction of a variety of texts; explicit teaching of reading strategies; development of knowledge within cues; support for reading development across the curriculum; and a use of a range of effective teaching and learning practices.

Teachers may employ an eclectic approach to the teaching of writing including: writing as production or encoding, writing as creativity, writing as a process writing as genre and writing within the context of setting and culture. Teaching writing includes building prior knowledge (three cueing systems); using writing strategies (self questioning, predicting, creating images, paraphrasing, etc.); using the writing process – planning drafting publishing conferring and refining; understanding the range of texts forms or genres; and understanding the context of the writing event – purpose, roles and relationship subject matter, socio cultural influences and situation.

Groups of teachers observed and interviewed who used First Steps resources demonstrated a high level of understanding about language development for primary aged children and were observed using strategies recommended in First Steps resources to construct learning activities to foster development. While some used a specific text for deriving activities for literacy learning the bulk of teachers were using integrated units of work across learning areas. Significant time in each unit of work was devoted to explicit teaching of literacy skills.

Typical comments made during observations of classroom teaching strategies in regard to their understanding of the pedagogy include:

Showed highly developed knowledge of applied literacy practices in the classroom, knowledge and application of Essential skills from NTCF and understanding of language development and scaffolding. Used metalanguage with children to be explicit about their learning. (Provincial school)

Demonstrating knowledge of students

The second component in the domain of planning and preparation is the knowledge that needs to be demonstrated about the students, their age characteristics, their knowledge of students varied approaches to learning, their knowledge of the skills and knowledge that students bring to their learning and their knowledge and awareness of the students cultural interest and heritage.

Teachers all showed a great awareness of and accommodation for difference in learning needs within their composite classes. The structure of activities made allowances for different levels of participation among disparate age and ability groups. Teaching strategies were frequently related to recommended activities from the Developmental Continuum (1st Edition Reading) or Map of development (2nd Edition Reading).

Teachers explicitly planned units of work around areas of interest to the children. Some of the following were typically observed.

Some variety within the task to accommodate [different learning styles] approaches. Pitched explanations and expectations that showed knowledge of abilities of individuals and building on existing knowledge and experience. (Remote school)

Task allowed individual and creative input. (Remote school)

Evidence of building on previous lessons to bring to report writing task such as English oral preparation of descriptive words, use of books about animals using similar structure. Evidence observed of application of theory of developmental steps for early childhood literacy – range of reinforcing activities including practical and tactile activities. (Provincial school)

A range of activities ensured all learning styles [were] covered particularly for large numbers of boys in choice of topic and physical movement around the room. Set up group work by setting tasks and expectation for different groups. (Provincial school)

Choice of topic tapped into rural children's interest and experience. Discussion drew on children's knowledge and experience. (Provincial school)

In all classrooms attempts were made to vary and balance the activities in the session. For example, it was observed that:

Varied activities form listening, individual and group interactive work. Also included some drawing. Different tasks set for groupings within the classes composite (Provincial school)

Activities were balanced providing periods of listening, individual and group work. (Provincial school)

Provided a variety of explanation, activity and mix between listening, demonstration, questioning and activity. Used concrete materials.' (Remote school)

3 activities, 2 were routine – phonics sound routines and then rotating activities and some have routines embedded in them as well and tactile and creative aspects. (Provincial school)

These large integrated classes often appeared quite chaotic as children moved around the room to different groups, were engaged in discussion or shared tasks. Classes were also noisy reflecting the level of oral English being used for class and interpersonal communication that was going on.

Selecting instructional goals

The third component of the domain for planning and preparation relates to the teacher's knowledge and capacity to select instructional goals.

Those teachers who have participated in First Steps will be seen:

- ⊖ Applying the map of development that provides a range of tools for assessing the stage of development for all children. First Steps is developmentally focused not age or grade focused. It caters for heterogeneous groupings of children not based on either age or grade. First Steps Indicators are used for describing behaviours at a phase of development.
- ⊖ Demonstrating uses of First Steps links to assessment, teaching and learning. Each learner is placed on the map of development. Knowledge about each student is gained through the use of a number of procedures for collecting information about learning including: focused observations, reading and writing products and conversations.
- ⊖ Using long and short term planning using Linking Assessment, Teaching and Learning book including drawing on the interests and strengths of students. This influences the choice of texts, themes and activities.
- ⊖ All teachers observed demonstrated highly focussed planning and application of explicit teaching in classrooms. All but one showed high level of commitment to using First Steps strategies. This teacher identified more strongly with a skill based pedagogy- favouring explicit isolated teaching of literacy skills such as spelling programs rather than in integrated content focused approach.

Clear rewards when children responded on task and from previous knowledge. Very focused on topic words and report writing structure such as stem sentences, focus on descriptive words and then sentences structure and use of full stop. (Provincial School)

Showed knowledge of construction of text and plot and use of Readers' Theatre, a first Steps strategy, that was used to teach paraphrasing.(Provincial school)

At least three teachers were observed linking activities directly with goals in NTCF. For example the following was observed:

'[It is] part of routine to review work at the end of the week. Used the Essential Learning to explicitly talk with students about generic skills and cooperative learning strategies.'
(Provincial School)

' Handouts show relationship with Essential Learning component of NTCF' (Provincial School)

Teachers also were able to select teaching strategies to match individual needs as this teacher highlights:

The other thing I like about First Steps is ...you're selecting your teaching to the strengths or the weaknesses of the individual. There's not one focus for all.(Provincial school)

All schools talked a lot about release time for teachers to plan together and building teaching teams across areas of the school.

We do have access to collaborative planning every term. So as a team they work together. We would, during ...because the school's so big we decided not to have early childhood, middle primary and upper primary. We've got two early childhood teams, middle primary and two upper primary teams. A senior or obviously as AP or Principal ... a resource team, that's the other one, they're the non-contact people. So each team has an opportunity one day per term, usually preceding the term to do what we call collaborative planning. ...On the formal basis, the collaborative planning, through informal discussion through program sharing times and team meetings that will generate planning as well. (Provincial school)

Okay, we have a planning day in Week 8 of each term where the whole step each group of teachers that plan together, because we have collaboratively planning ...The AP checks the programs each term (Provincial school)

Other schools have less formal planning but are moving towards it. For example,

... the programs are started because we know by teachers committing to their written program that helps their planning but we also know that teachers can hand up a program that doesn't always reflect their practice. So I'm very much in kind of developing a culture of reflective practice within the school. (Provincial school)

Demonstrating knowledge of resources

The fourth component relating to the domain for planning and preparation is the teachers' capacity to demonstrate knowledge of resources.

First Steps provides a range of resources and suggested activities in *The Reading Resource Book*, *The Writing Resource Book* and CDs for teaching both reading and writing are applied within the learning and teaching cycles – evaluating student needs, identifying resources and planning, selection teaching and learning experiences, monitoring student progress and teacher effectiveness and ongoing reflection.

First Steps provides resources for teachers to make and adapt learning resources for students: CD contains templates for all activities and generation of classroom displays, charts, etc.

In the classes observed a vast array of resources were brought into classrooms to aid teaching. Many classrooms had First Step charts and other materials on display. Journal writing was frequently referred to. Computer banks were evident in most rooms but there was no observed use of them.

Resources commonly used across the classes included:

- ⊖ Blackboard/whiteboard generally used for noting new words and for keeping on task. Sometimes had outline of session's activities written up.
- ⊖ Big books for modelling reading and shared reading
- ⊖ Access to other texts on integrated study theme
- ⊖ Yellow Post it notes to stick on blackboard/whiteboard to keep track of student input from discussion and modelling note taking
- ⊖ Plasticine
- ⊖ Card for making flashcards
- ⊖ Listening posts
- ⊖ Butchers paper
- ⊖ Photocopies of text selections for an activity
- ⊖ Handouts for specific activity

From the interviews it is clear that most classrooms are well resourced and teachers feel that they can get access to most things that they need.

Well I haven't received any funding for what I do in my classroom but there are resources such as your set templates as to how to do your report writing or explanations or all the different genres. There are posters that you can have around in the classroom that guide the kids as to what they have to do. So, yes, there are plenty of resources. (Remote school)

Designing coherent instruction

The fifth component of the planning and preparation domain relates to the teachers ability to plan learning activities, to gather the appropriate resources, group children for learning and design a lesson structure.

Learning activities are drawn from the 18 strategies from Reading Resource Book adapted to the appropriate phase from map of development. First Steps recommends use of the essential elements of a writing block for the explicit teaching of writing including the selected focus from procedures and practices.

In regard to this component an observer would expect to see the following:

- ⊖ Replications of charts, and adaptations of materials from the CDs, the Reading Resource and Writing Resource books in classroom.
- ⊖ Grouping considerations include a comprehensive approach to teaching needs to ensure that throughout the course of the day and week, students have the opportunity to work with different peers in a range of different – sized groups. It is important to provide opportunities to learn literacy as part of the whole class groups as well as in small groups, with partners and or on an individual basis.
- ⊖ Whole class activity ensures a shared context is created for explicit teaching in a community of learners. Small group or pairs ensured cooperative learning behaviours. Individuals also need the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning by working independently on self-selected or teacher directed-tasks. This also allows time for the teacher to monitor individual progress and provide individual support. Advice is provided on how to group for different purposes.
- ⊖ A unit of work is the long term plan covering a four to six week period in which teachers consider: the selection of outcomes and major teaching emphases; the content, theme or topic (entry point); a selection of sequenced

teaching and learning experiences for a whole class, small groups and if necessary, individuals; the resources to be used; and the assessment tools to be used.

- ⊖ Depending on the school timetabling, effective teachers will be ensuring, within a daily plan, that there is a balance of explicit teacher instruction and independent student activity; working as a whole class, in small group and as individuals; and effective teaching and learning practices (These practices in First Steps refers to strategic selection of activities such as familiarising, modelling, sharing, guiding, analysing, practising, applying, investigating, playing, discussing, innovating, transforming, simulating and reflecting.)

A broad range of explicit literacy instruction was observed. The following is a sample. They demonstrate the link between literacy learning and integration with other learning areas, the exposure to a number of genres for both oral English development and for development of reading and writing that is prominent for schools using First Steps resources.

Samples of long term and lesson planning were observed in many classes:

Learning activities modelled report-writing structure – teacher directed. Orally works through what a chicken looks like using resources on the blackboard. Use words already on board into sentence. ‘What does a report look like? Using big book on echidnas, looked at heading. [Start making] sentences using notes made on Friday. Today just doing the ‘look’ part of the matrix on the board.’ What will the sentence start with to tell us what echidnas look like? ...’ Used another example from a child’s book. As the children drew their animal they wrote two sentences about what they looked like. (Provincial school)

Read book on killer whales, modelled how to scan, second go at writing a report, provided a structure- classification, appearance, locality what it does, and a summarising sentence for the report. The teacher recalled past procedures. (Remote school)

Setting up students for oral presentation to class on design of submersibles - making notes to prepare a presentation and providing a structure for the notes and presentation. (Provincial school)

Within a session all teachers used structuring of small groups for explicit teaching and routines such as reviewing and recapping previous work. Team teachers and other support staff were used to manage explicit teaching in small groups. Opportunities for concentrating on literacy within a larger integrated unit of work frequently apparent, for example, from notes on classroom observations:

This lesson was at the end of a cycle of teaching unit on underwater theme – covered all team and led into pollution, environments etc. Children had already designed submersibles now opportunity to concentrate on writing particularly stem sentences and endings. (Provincial school)

Whole class was assembled for modelling with one teacher. Set tables for individual but collaborative work under supervision of teaching and four other support teachers. (Provincial school)

Teachers talked about these strategies for explicit teaching and grouping students for instruction at length in interviews of which the following is typical:

Generally we have the morning session the specific focus for literacy and the later sessions. Literacy is still covered but it’s more incidentally as it happens in the other subject areas and things. Usually the morning’s the focus on the literacy areas where you have your actual spelling program, your reading program and that sort of thing happening. (Provincial school)

We actually have a designated language time and where we incorporate reading, writing spelling which is where we do our explicit teaching of certain things you know bits of grammar that we can see that’s glaringly in need of looking at but its also integrated within

the other stuff like their other stuff like there plp's we do one to one conferences so then you'll talk about with their writing so you talk about that stuff as well so its a combination. (Provincial school)

We break into smaller groups for more intensive lessons, spelling especially. Sometimes it's important to have that separation so that everyone can get assistance at their level. (Provincial school)

Assessing student learning

The final component of this domain is the preparation and planning for assessing student learning. This component is concerned with the congruence of assessment with instructional goals, the setting or recognition of criteria and standards, and using assessment data for planning.

First Steps emphasises the application of a the teaching and learning cycle, that includes evaluating student needs, identifying resources and planning, selecting teaching and learning experiences, monitoring student performance progress and teacher effectiveness and ongoing reflection.

The standards for assessment are clearly identified the map of development indicators for reading and writing. These expectations are articulated in the learning goals anticipated using the phases in the map of development. Predicting location of bulk of group on the Map of Development and using focused teaching to reach the next phase.

Implementation of First Steps requires a number of factors being in place in the classroom and at school level such as: high quality professional development, The principal as learner and leader, ongoing support for teachers, whole-school implementation, providing time, maintaining continuity through planning, reflecting and celebrating, developing and articulating a vision, monitoring and evaluating outcomes and involving parents.

First Steps, in practice will show evidence that time is provided for planning that may take the following forms: common planning or preparation time for same -year- level teachers; hiring roving relief/substitute teachers to release teachers from classrooms; allocating time at regular staff meeting for First Steps discussions; breakfast meetings at school; releasing teachers from classrooms – principals providing the relief; reviewing school staff and finish times to create a monthly 'early release' day; making use of school assemblies or other school wide events to release pairs or small groups of teachers.

Standards setting was clearly observed in all the schools visited and the alignment between the First Steps and the NT Curriculum Framework was highlighted by a number of teachers using First Steps, however others planned using the continuum or the map of development and had to be prompted to relate their practice to the NT Curriculum Framework.

For formal assessment I use checklists and observation grids (templates from First Steps). I am working with KGB3 – B1 and a few at B2 English. We moderated writing samples using common writing tasks (MAP). We use five samples pieces from the school as part of team meetings. (Provincial school)

It's a huge difference. The NTCF is ... on the laptop as it is and I can find a section, highlight and put it straight into the program so my long term goals I can put in initially, I can put in what I do with the NTCF, is I usually pick like the First Steps one in one cycle and the indicators from the NTCF that match it so if anyone is checking they can see where the two are meeting, where they're meshing. (Provincial school)

Domain 2: The Classroom Environment

Creating and environment of respect and rapport

The first component of the classroom environment domain is concerned with the nature of the teacher's interactions with students and interactions between students.

Effective teaching and learning practice is based on the following principles articulated in First Steps: focused on strategies, investigative, reflective, scaffolded, tailored, embedded, purposefully practised and shared. All resources and activities provide guides on the role of the teachers.

Students, in theories promoted by First Steps, are constructed as active and reflective learners who are practising their growing literacy purposefully in the classroom.

There are many examples of first steps strategies that were designed to develop individual responsibility as learners. For example

Teacher led activity to stimulate journal writing then working individually with students. Students worked quietly at tables. Quiet discussions. (Provincial school)

I always use integrated units of work to really engage children. I negotiate my curriculum at the beginning of each year with the class I have, so we talk about what they've done, what they're interested in, what they definitely don't want to do, what they think . . . learning areas are . . . we go right back to link the curriculum, essential learnings, then I'll try and get topics that will really engage them. (Provincial school)

First Steps classrooms were observed to be highly interactive. Comments below are typical of what was generally observed:

Interaction between group of teachers and groups of students was continuous. There was vibrant interaction among students in their groups and very responsive as whole group in modelling session. (Provincial school)

The class was very interactive with teacher responding to individual questions and giving feedback. She worked at tables with the children and drew small groups into different section of the room. There was a lot of activity in the room and children were helping each other. (Provincial school)

Establishing a culture for learning

In the second component of this domain, the importance of content, developing pride in students' work and establishing expectation for learning and achievement all contribute to developing a culture for learning.

First Steps beliefs provide a sound basis for making decision about the physical setting and the culture of learning in the classroom - being focused on strategies is the first of the effective teaching practices to be emphasised.

Reflecting and celebrating are essential ingredients of factors for implementing First Steps - students' efforts; collaboration and products are displayed and celebrated. Through classroom and school displays, performances and events.

First Steps classrooms were all concerned with developing learning to learn strategies by children appropriate to age with a lot of emphasis on responsibility for learner's own learning and behaviour and showing respect for others. The following comments indicate teacher and student interactions observed.

The content of the lesson was a critical for most teachers as was the establishment of routine for having a culture for learning in classrooms. A successful culture of learning was often demonstrated by expressions of pride by students in their work and the level of display in the classroom.

The content of this lesson was about learning to learn and articulating progress. Children were highly articulate about success and their feelings. There were high expectations about the students' capacity to reflect and take responsibility for own learning. (Provincial school)

Students took a lot of pride in their inventions and desire to communicate about them. There was an expectation that all children would learn something from the activity including the special needs students in the room. (Provincial school)

The teacher kept attention on finding new words for paraphrasing and using grammar clues for summarising the dialogue. Teacher didn't appear confident about children's ability to participate in activity, which has not been done before. She showed some surprise at its success. (Provincial school)

Managing classroom procedures

The third component of the classroom environment domain deals with the management of instructional groups, transitions between activities, organising teaching and learning resources as well as managing the other adults or paraprofessional who assist in classrooms. Establishing expectations of standards of behaviour, monitoring behaviour and responding to behaviour make up this component of the classroom environment domain.

First Steps provides considerable guidance on the types of groups that can be organised and their purposes and products. Group behaviour, role assignment and transitions are developed early on in the year so that these become routine classroom behaviours. Expect to see supportive and collaborative behaviour as part of core classroom management.

Attention is paid to advising teachers how to move between activities. For example, roles are assigned within activities and routines are established, for example, numbering off, structuring responses, a key communicator, etc.

First Steps provides advice to teacher on the physical organisation of the class and takes consideration of fixed features, climate, traffic, noise, student numbers, supervision, furniture safety, student attention, and proximity. These areas need to cater for the range of activities offered and for the display of student work on wall space. There should be evidence of core routines using standard resources in classroom practice.

Home school partnerships are discussed within First Steps literature. The roles of paraprofessional and volunteers in the classroom not explicitly referred to except for parents.

Learning in these classrooms was more facilitated than managed but a high level of planning and cooperation among teachers was displayed in preparing for the work of the classroom and there was a high level of collaboration in monitoring groups. All classrooms observed broke up whole lesson into sessions rotating through instructions to whole group, modelling to whole group and then break out into small groups. These groups were sometimes self-selected, routine groups in ability or age or selected for the days activities.

Teacher made sure there was turn taking. Children appeared used to moving into pairs and remained focus on task. Volunteer came in and out. Her role was not apparent (Remote school)

Worked as whole group, then divided into small groups and individual. An aide came to look after newly enrolled girl. Made her feel interested and conscripted other girls as support. (Provincial school)

Classroom management was very tight but children responsive and cooperative. They are used to clear routines and moving around. There were some disruptive Indigenous children who are not used to school. Wandering tolerated as long as not interfering with others. These children provided with bursts of 1:1 explicit teaching from the teachers. There were a lot of transitions from whole group to small groups working independently and with explicit teaching with teacher. Some children had been withdrawn from class for motor sensory program. (Provincial school)

Explicit teaching to whole group then worked in pairs. Large group so worked fairly well under the circumstances. Moved from spelling to whole groups to pairs. Transition for Readers Theatre well managed through purpose of tasks. Tutor worked in corner of room with three Indigenous students on individual programs. (Provincial school)

The interviews reflected a commitment to team teaching and teaching to the needs of children, which was accommodated through whole group teaching and modelling and then allowing for time to meet individual needs through groupings within the classroom or use of team teachers or paraprofessionals. This commitment to team teaching was evident in most schools and demonstrated in one room in the following way:

There was explicit teaching to whole group then by the team with small groups. The transition worked smoothly from modelling to groups aided by team who were always available. There were a lot of resources apparent in the two open rooms. The aides ensured things were ready for each activity. A team teaching approach was used for instruction – two teachers, 4 aides ISA and ITAS or school based support. All the team played role in giving direct instructions in small groups. The team was well managed. (Provincial school)

There was quite a lot of variation in how paraprofessionals were used in classrooms. Some schools left it to the teacher to work out and others had clear support mechanisms. The following is a sample of comments made about how they are utilised in First Steps classrooms.

Team teaching – two teachers, 4 aids one ISA and rest parents or ITAS or school based support. All played role in giving direct instructions in small groups. Appeared well managed. (Provincial school)

...the aide was used to support small group writing. Briefed before the class (Remote school)

They help the students, especially the ITAS tutors. Like they have this set program which I have developed myself in talking to the ESL teacher where there's set goals those students need to achieve. (Remote school)

They have sort of once a week they have meetings, with the ESL teacher, where they talk about different strategies they can use, different things they can try with the kids but they haven't actually had any formal ... (Provincial school)

He just works 11:00 - 12:30 and he doesn't work at any other time. So unless he comes in early I don't have a lot of time to discuss things with him. (Remote school)

Managing student behaviour

Establishing expectations of standards of behaviour, monitoring behaviour and responding to behaviour make up this component of the classroom environment domain.

Expectations are set up through the understandings of childhood development within the phases of the map of development. Look for a focus of teaching to adhere the Indicators for the next phase. Exercising professional judgement in the framework of teaching learning and assessment cycle. Teacher will use the clear guidelines in management of groups and transitions provided to manage behaviour.

Giving clear instructions and implementing routines deal with misbehaviour. The responses and routines are developmentally appropriate and there is recognition of special needs and diversity. Teachers are encouraged to adapt activities and to be flexible. Strong emphasis on a positive environment in which all children can be successful

Observations were made about how teachers demonstrated expectations of students, the strategies they use for monitoring students behaviour and their responses to student misbehaviour. Most had high expectations for students and employed strategies, often from TRIBES training, to manage behaviour and to instil values of cooperative behaviour in the class. In interviews teachers mentioned use of TRIBES strategies as being very compatible with First Steps and described many of the strategies observed below.

The teacher told children what she was looking for. Explained how to go about the tasks. She managed and monitored behaviour through use of active voice and engagement strategies. Moved around groups to ensure children on task. In responding to poor behaviour she gave opportunity and then told two children to leave the group for five minutes. (Remote school)

The teacher showed she had expectations of good behaviour and helpfulness. She was clear about what she wanted to see. Groups were busy and chaotic but productive. The teacher physically moving children around room so boys kept active. Quick scold to manage behaviour but kept pace of lesson going and kept reminding students of expectations. (Remote school)

Teacher displayed some apprehension about the cooperation of large class. She experienced some difficulty in managing behaviour but generally most kids kept to task and were engaged. The teacher's response to misbehaviour was a bit shrill (noisy from open classroom shared with upper primary) but moved back to task quickly so that behaviour management did not dominate the session. (Provincial school)

In this class there were 2 quite disruptive students. Teacher asked the children if they were hungry (some food provided). She used her voice and physical control (steady hand on shoulder) and used TRIBES type strategies to control behaviour. (Remote school)

Organizing physical space

Finally the organisation of the physical environment concludes the issues covered in the classroom environment domain

Physical organisation of the class takes consideration of fixed features, climate, traffic, noise, student numbers, supervision, furniture safety, student attention, and proximity. These areas need to cater for the range of activities offered and for the display of student work on wall space. Maps and suggestions are provided in First Steps.

Most of these schools had large open plan classrooms with separate wet area spaces, floor activities for early childhood classes and quiet nooks for listening posts, reading corners and place for excluding children to control behaviour. Most were highly decorated either with stimulus material for the unit of integrated work or with children's art work. Behaviour management posters were also prominent.

There were issues in some classrooms where it was difficult to hear due to noise coming from from activities in adjoining rooms. At other times the large number of students in a small space led to the Bigpok or other learning material being obscured. The following observations are typical:

Large open plan classroom materials around perimeter bank of 4 computers. Tables arranged for group work. Materials easily accessible with phonic blends charts, class goals behaviour rules cricket display of children's work, writing cues on whiteboard, clock face, wet area. (Provincial school)

Large well organised space. Floor space at one end and then desks organised for ability groups covering gr 3/4/and small number of 5s. Two class open classroom but larger than at other schools. 2 blocks of 4 computers but not used in this session. (Provincial school)

Classroom was extremely crowded and not safe. Crowded in by hanging displays. Too many desks and very cramped working space on the floor. Noise was coming from adjoining classrooms. It was quite stressful for teacher being heard and to encourage cooperative learning. Many children could not see her nor hear her. The teacher had to extend her voice to deliver instructions. Open classroom connected to four other classes. Difficult to get access to children's books and very cramped for whole class floor lesson. (Provincial school)

Domain 3: Instruction

Communicating clearly and accurately

The first component for this domain, instruction, considers how the teacher communicates clearly and accurately in providing directions and procedures and the use of oral and written language in the classroom.

Procedures and directions related to First Steps activities are clearly articulated in the resource books with adaptable examples provided. Communication in English is used as the language of instruction.

Lessons from this group of teachers usually commenced with setting up of goals for the session and recapping previous work related to the whole unit. New content is modelled and explained then children are usually set a task to complete in small groups. In team teaching situations, one teacher took the lead in giving directions and others assisted with group instruction and keeping children on time and task.

Clear direction, set out what was being done and why, explained terms and set up activities to cover those who had been away and those who had finished. Remote school)

Clear directions are given in routine session for spelling. [She then] explained and modelled the lesson on Reader's Theatre and related the purpose of the activity to previous task on paraphrasing. (Provincial school)

Oral English was used as the medium of instruction with limited reliance on written English either through work sheets or black/white board.

Using questioning and discussion techniques

This component of the instruction domain covers how teachers use question and discussion techniques and engage students to actively participate in the lesson.

Preference in First Steps is for open-ended questions and activities that either elicits knowledge of learner's about the content or personal relevance

Discussion techniques provided for in First Steps include: referencing to collaboratively generated work, recapping techniques, provision of links to other curriculum areas. Meta-cognitive language provided for reflection. Guides are provided within each activity to facilitate discussion. Classroom routines about roles are established early in the year.

Students are expected to participate in whole class, small group and individual activities, to practice their literacy purposefully

Teachers were observed using a number of questioning and discussion techniques. There was a consistent practice of modelling and then eliciting questions and moving to discussions if students were confident with the content before moving to small group or individual tasks. Questions were used to recap previous

sessions and to elicit what children know about the content. Mostly open ended questions and teachers were prepared to exploit opportunities to go into unplanned areas.

What have we learnt [this week]? (Provincial school)

Excellent questioning during modelling drawing on children's knowledge of 'chickens' and of words previously worked with and grammar. Constantly checked for meaning. (Provincial school)

Questioning difficult in crowded and noisy environment. (Provincial school)

Questioning designed to scaffolding content about animal and report genre structure. (Provincial school)

Question about orientation to big book, recognising sounds, and cooperative behaviours. (Provincial school)

Discussions were conducted with whole groups as well as within small groups. Tutors or paraprofessional sometimes used to lead groups; while at other time the groups were self-managed.

Teacher allowed lots of discussion in small groups. Promoted collaboration and 'helping'. (Provincial school)

Engaging students in learning

This component of the instruction domain deals with those classroom practices designed to engage students in learning and include such things as representation of content, activities and assignment, the grouping of students within classes and the quality of instructional materials and resources. The way that teachers structure the lesson and use pace to slow down and speed up is also an important factor in how they engage students in learning.

Content or focus of explicit teaching uses many modes of representation but are not prescriptive. First Steps resources provide vast choice for exercising effective teaching learning strategies with teaching and learning cycle and to meet needs mapped to the phases of development. An observer would expect to see many different groupings of children for different purposes including whole classroom, small groups and individual work and see the establishment of core routines. Expect to see supportive and collaborative behaviour. All sessions are structured for explicit teaching and balance of activities and grouping over time. Structure and pace will follow expectations for teaching to appropriate phase of development.

Teachers used the structure of activities, groupings and focus on content to maintain students interest in learning. While classes were multi-age and students were of disparate ability, teachers used grouping within class to ensure engagement and participation. At some points children self selected at others they were in structured groups for ability, behaviour or maturity reasons.

Plenty of time was allowed for the task. Clock used to pace activity and foster self-management within the group. (Provincial school)

Under circumstances, noisy and crowded, fairly good participation and well spread. (Provincial school)

Teacher made strong representation of the content to engage students. She 'put a very positive spin' on producing a fabulous report and by exciting curiosity about the topic. (Remote schools)

While the activities were routine, [the teacher] pitched activities at level of children's understanding and experience, eliciting information from them using their words to predict what they might read about once they get into the text of the book. (Provincial school)

Providing feedback to students

The quality of feedback to students can be provided in a number of ways. Are they accurate substantive constructive and/or specific? The timeliness of feedback is also considered as important.

Teachers using First Steps as a guide to their teaching are provided with developmentally appropriate responses to focus learning on planned objectives and they are expected to take opportunities for explicit teaching and for meta-cognitive strategies. Investigative and problem solving techniques used as appropriate. Opportunities to link with other curriculum areas and students interest and knowledge will be taken.

Teachers were observed providing substantive and constructive feedback to students. Most classes provided opportunities for interaction with the teacher and with peers.

Very warm response to questions and in interaction around the room. The teacher spent her time among the students. (Provincial school)

Very responsive, giving immediate feedback in context of what is planned and extra information to stimulate further interest or to relate to previous knowledge or interests. Adjusted all the time to accommodate interest and engage. (Provincial school)

Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness

The final component of the instruction domain deals with how teachers demonstrate flexibility and responsiveness including capacity to adapt resources, ability to respond to individual students and using pace and persistence to implement plans.

With teacher using First Steps resources expect to see activities and resources adapted to suit purpose or to focus of instruction and the learning needs of students in line with phases of development. First Steps provided advice on how planning will shape how teachers respond to individual students in way that is appropriate to their phase of development. Expect to see persistence in implementing plan or learning objectives and the use of multiple approaches to reach the intended outcomes for students at varying phases of development.

Most teachers showed a valuing of essential skills and some flexibility to be responsive to their learners.

My integrated unit of work, even though I plan out heaps, I like to be able to move with the kids and be flexible. Because if you're rigid I feel you can lose interest.

These First Steps classrooms featured many transitions between different and pre-prepared activities many of which were familiar to the children but all expected a high level of collaboration among students and ability to manage time on task.

Part of routine to review work over the week. Appears to use Essential learnings to explicitly talk with students about generic skills and cooperative learning strategies. (Provincial school)

Considerable time spent explaining expectations of behaviour and being task oriented. Many First Steps activities based on cooperation and expectation of children being responsible for their own learning in the context of their stage of development.

Walking Talking Texts

Background

Walking Talking Texts, a program for teaching and learning English as a second language, was developed by Frances Murray over a long period and using experiences of remote teachers in the Northern Territory during the 1980s and 1990s. It has been written specifically for teachers of Aboriginal community schools to enable them to respond to the English language situation of these learners, however, it has broader applicability for ESL learning in schools. There are few, if any, English language contexts outside of NT remote schools in which children can reinforce their English. The context for the learning of English is therefore based on the spoken and written genres of schooling across all areas and stages of learning in the school curriculum.

Originally called Walking Talking Stories it was copied and circulated among teachers by DEET from 1983 onwards and through informal teacher networks. It was rewritten as Walking Talking Texts in 1989. A manual to guide teachers in the program was published by DEET for the Northern Territory Board of Studies in 1995. It includes a petal planner for use in early childhood used as a guide for the ILLS program and the Column Planner, which outlines a sequence of 42 activities for the teaching of English as a second language. This version has over time been augmented with some additional sections were sold by Curriculum Services Division. A video of classroom practice has also been developed to support implementation of the program. It is shot in a number of very remote NT schools and takes the viewer through each activity in the planners. There is a separate section on assessment. The video provides examples or models of the program in action. In 2005, a community of practice for WTT teachers was established on EDNA providing a forum for sharing ideas and resources about the using WTT.

Since publication, Frances Murray has continued to work in the Catholic Education Office, and as a consultant with Teaching Learning and Standards Division, to provide professional development to schools, for teachers and to train trainers on demand. In the course of these activities, and in working with other schools in other states using the program, additional and new material has been distributed to assist teachers. These materials cover developments since the publication of the manual responding to changes in the NT curriculum such as the introduction of the NTCF and teaching practice. These additional materials include the mapping of WTT activities to the NTCF ESL outcomes, advice about scope and sequence of units of work, advice and processes for setting targets and assessment, validation and moderation processes, recommended new texts, revised language analysis process, and audit and action plans for WTT schools.

TL&S maintain the supply and distribution of the WTT manuals. At the end of 2006 these were distributed during the professional development. Many schools were operating with old editions and incomplete editions. During the year the supply of these resources ran out and the republication of the manual has not proceeded due to technical copyright issues. The video of teachers using a text to go through the sequence of the column planner was also distributed to each school. Classroom teachers have access to a digitised version of this same material on their laptops since early 2007. There are issues about the continued access to WTT resources.

TL&S has provided train the trainer courses for teachers. However take up of this training has been very limited.

The ELA project funded professional development activities 2006 to assist the five sample schools implement the program and provide capacity to TL&S to support schools in sustaining the program during the course of the project.

Five days of school based professional development was provided to the whole-of-staff in two separate sessions in term 1 and term 3 2006. It ensured that all staff members had a recent copy of the manual, the NTCF and a number of other relevant handouts. However, due to the lack of access to relief teachers and access to pupil free days these professional development programs were often not attended fully by

all staff or the program not fully delivered to all staff. Staff members were asked to attend sessions outside of school hours, which further limited the attendance of the Indigenous staff who had family responsibilities. An audit of school practices to determine if the schools were fully implementing Walking Talking Texts was undertaken at each school and an action was developed on processes to facilitate the planning of units of work, allocation of planning time and professional learning sessions and timetabling of sharing of practice through the language flood were timetabled. In many case services from TL&S were also planned in advance.

A moderation session, bringing two staff members from each school to Darwin to moderate assessment samples, was also conducted in October 2006.

Characteristics of WTT schools

All these schools are in very remote areas of the Northern Territory, that is, the student cohort all have an Indigenous language background and English is not the main language for communication in the community. Three of these schools are also two-way accredited schools using a bilingual approach to language development. Bilingual programs are structured in such a way as to build first language competence and to gradually transfer knowledge of first language to the second language, in this case English. In early childhood the Indigenous language is the language of instruction with the gradual introduction of oral English followed by greater time spent in English until year four when children are introduced to reading and writing in English. Second language acquisition indicates that students from a second language background need immersion in English for at least five years before they will start to display use of the second language close to the competency of the native speaker. There is, therefore, no expectation that students in the ELA assessment cohort will be reaching comparable outcomes to other children in the cohort until at least year 4 and beyond. Progress in English should then be marked, sustained and rapid as they consolidate both first and second languages through the NT Curriculum Framework band level for Indigenous language and phases of ESL.

Walking Talking Texts is frequently used as the approach to English as a second language in conjunction with a bilingual step or staircase model for accredited two-way learning. The petal and column planners have been developed with these steps to English oracy and literacy in mind. There are three bilingual Walking Talking Texts schools. One of these schools is funded as a two way school but is running a revitalisation program, that is another local language is being learned as a second language by the children as well as English as second language. The first language of these children, Kriol, is not being used as the medium of instruction for either language.

The vast majority of students have language backgrounds other than English and have had little exposure to Standard Australian English.

Some schools would describe themselves as having used Walking Talking Texts for some time. Others described their involvement in the project as re-introducing the approach after some loss of impetus and expertise or introducing it as a whole-school approach for the first time.

Observations covered two composite 1 and 2 classes and the rest were composites of grades 3 to 6. Only one school ran age for grade classes. Classes varied in size and composition. One school had straight age for grade groupings as is recommended in WTT, others school had composite grades determined by staffing based on attendance. Class sizes in some schools were as low as 2 students for the session and others had up to forty students in one room.

Analysis of observation and interview data using the description of the approach

Domain 1: Planning and preparation

Demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy

The first component of the domain of planning and preparation deals with the knowledge teachers have of content and pedagogy and their pre-requisites relationships. In this domain of practice it is expected that WTT classroom teachers would demonstrate in their classroom practice and at interview a knowledge and application of the conceptual frameworks on which WTT is built such as:

- ⊗ Knowledge of second language acquisition theory and practice
- ⊗ Use of the activities 27 – 30 based on outcomes relevant for age for grade and phase of language development
- ⊗ Knowledge of what the students bring to the units of work – language development, prior learning and unit/work topics
- ⊗ Use of scaffolding of oral and written English outcomes through every activity: communicating clear goals for each lesson, modelling of process and product, group practices after teaching and scaffolding before independent construction.

Teachers generally displayed some knowledge of the content of the selected texts and the pedagogy used in WTT. For example, these teachers were all using a text as the basis for a unit of work and were observed using WTT strategies recommended in the column planner at specific stages of the unit of work.

[The teacher] showed knowledge of the grammar features of the text, related concepts and linguistic structures to previous units of work and used typical activities at the early stage of a WTT text. (Very remote school)

'The teacher demonstrated use of WTT procedures of reading a group negotiated text on the wall. She showed understanding of preparation of semantics and structure of modelling writing for a negotiated text. (Very remote school)

On the other hand, new teachers to the school and teacher new to WTT used their early childhood strategies and showed interest and curiosity and establishing relationships in the class but these were not strategies specific to WTT.

Evidence of WTT not apparent at this stage. (Very remote school)

Some schools viewed their knowledge and understanding about WTT as not being fully established yet with many teachers and senior teachers not having had any training or induction to WTT.

For those schools with an established program a high level of understanding was demonstrated like the following

WTT is an ESL framework but it's also a program and the program runs through a very definite set of activities that need to be followed depending on the petal or column planner. You have a focus text and all the activities revolve around that focus text. It's important that the teachers do a whole lot of pre-planning so a) they know that it's suitable and b) they know the elements what they're trying to bring out and making sure that in that pre-planning they've also got an understanding of the assessment tasks that they need to be bringing out when they're delivering within their focus text. (Very remote school)

In contrast other schools just adopting WTT as a whole approach have said,

So we do have WTT in place in every class in a shape but there's still a lot of looseness about, teachers still don't have a lot of the basic understandings of literacy teaching as well. (Very remote school)

Another interviewee talked about the cross-curricula aspects of WTT and how it can deal with school literacies and other genres.

There is a sequence of activities and the petal planner helps you to make a plan of those activities. First of all you spend a lot of time with the kids talking about text or discovering text and doing lots of activities associated with discovering text. Later on you do activities that are related to other subject areas that fit in to your WTT. For example if we're doing an art and craft activity related to the text then afterwards we might do a procedural text . . . a short one in transition, but a procedural text based on that art and craft activity. (Very remote school)

Demonstrating knowledge of students

The second component of the domain of planning and preparation is the knowledge that needs to be demonstrated about the students, their age characteristics, their knowledge of students varied approaches to learning, their knowledge of the skills and knowledge that students bring to their learning and their knowledge and awareness of the students cultural interest and heritage.

In WTT the knowledge of characteristics of age group is acknowledged through planned activities relevant in topic and activity to the age group of the learners. There are varied approaches to learning through provision in WTT for multiple ways to engage in the process and to demonstrate learning knowledge of learners. The students' level of English is established to set learning and teaching goals and targets. A language analysis of the text is needed to plan each unit of work. This analysis is then used in conjunction with knowledge of students' levels of oracy and literacy to plan the content of the unit of work – the semantic, syntactic and phonic content for activities in the sequence. Knowledge of students' interests and cultural heritage is taken account of in the choice of text and in the chosen aspects of English to teach (based on the characteristics of the students home language).

Many WTT teachers showed great awareness of language and cultural background of students. This was demonstrated through the care taken in the choice of texts in relation to its use of English, the topic of the text, and its usefulness in demonstrating the language structures to be developed. The following is an example of how a teacher selected a text with the learners' interest in mind:

Homemade books on body parts used pictures of the children with body parts painted on from the previous unit. The teacher cued students into the new text, 'Billy Goats Gruff', by using the illustrations to orient them to the likely plot and to introduce semantics by likening aspects of the story to the experience of students. (Very remote school)

This teacher uses her knowledge of the learners' first language to teach writing.

[Teacher] clearly building on knowledge from previous sessions and used Tiwi language to scaffold understanding of the topic to prepare for writing. Teacher provided semantic information and modelled linguistic structure for writing in selected genre. (Very remote school)

Other examples show how WTT teachers used knowledge of students to shape their teaching practice.

Showed different expectation for children in the group. [First day at school for one child]. (Very remote school)

Showed knowledge of language need in early childhood students in ESL environment. (Very remote school)

Other teachers observed and interviewed were too new to the situation to know the children, their needs and interests, or to be familiar with specific needs, but they all employed typical early childhood strategies.

In the interviews teachers explored some of the issues relating to poor attendance and English as a second language demonstrating an understanding and knowledge of students impacting on pedagogy.

At this point in time the students are grouped basically age for grade with two-year levels. We did try and experiment in first term where we put non-attenders and attenders together but that created an awful lot of problems. We had some classes with over 30 kids and then another class loaded with behaviour problems because they weren't school kids. (Very remote school)

... quite a few of them went to preschool so they've got quite a lot of English words and some school instructional language too. Mostly the core group of regulars who come to school so they speak lots of English words now they understand lots of classroom instructional language. When they're out of context or with somewhere unfamiliar you'll find they often don't understand the instructions at all and they'll go off . . . (Very remote school)

Selecting instructional goals

The third component of the domain for planning and preparation relates to the teacher's knowledge and capacity to select instructional goals.

WTT is underpinned by sets of theories about language, language development and second language pedagogy. The clarity of goals, outcomes, process and product are communicated to and demonstrated with students. WTT is suitable for diverse students through the teacher's active knowledge and use of ESL methodology in delivery of WTT and in the catering of a range of levels within activities and exercises. There should be a balance between introducing new English and new content and embedding previously learned English and content.

Most teachers, whether using WTT yet or not, explained their instructional goals. Those using WTT generally followed one of the activities recommended in the planner. The following are some samples of what was observed. Lessons were generally well balanced using different media and activities. Activities were broken up and varied to maintain concentration.

Session well balanced between different activities. Demonstrated 'active teacher' required for WTT delivery. Kept students quite active and provided visual and matching type activities in recognition of the boys need to keep engaged and physically active. (Very remote school)

The range of activities accommodated range of abilities and school readiness. (Very remote school)

On the other hand, one teacher did not show that any planning had taken place for the lesson in relation to a sequence of WTT nor did she demonstrate any understanding of how and why the activities are sequenced.

Introduction to the lesson was a 'rambling dialogue ... over the heads of the children'. There was no balance in the lesson with children sitting and listening. There were no planned activities for explicit teaching or attempt to engage interest. Only one copy of the text was available so children were read to. (Very remote school)

Many teachers did not understand the importance of their own understanding of language and grammar and the ways in which the NT Curriculum Framework needs to be referred to in planning units of work to set targets for learning and to meet the specific learning needs of their learners. One teacher pointed this out in the following way.

But in order to teach the book you have to be able to do a language analysis and to relate it to the NTCF to see that you're teaching to the level that you want to teach. ... they need to understand that all the steps that are in the column planner or petal planner, they need to follow all those steps to be able to finish it. (Very remote school)

Demonstrating knowledge of resources

The fourth component relating to the domain for planning and preparation is the teachers' capacity to demonstrate knowledge of resources.

To teach Walking Talking Texts teachers need to be able to select appropriate texts, that is a core book, and other reading material to support the topic and well as electronic, film and other real life resources. Students learning in a Walking Talking Texts environment need access to, and use of, authentic texts.

A distinctive feature of Walking Talking Texts is the classroom 'flood' in which displays of the resources and products of lessons are placed around the classroom for ready reference for the students as they build their English language skills from a text.

Few of the classrooms visited in the schools using Walking Talking Texts displayed material from previous units of work nor was there evidence of the WTT sequence of activities being used for the current unit. There were few resources available for students to reference their learning.

On the other hand there were some schools in which there were some print rich classrooms. These were rooms where the environment was very print rich with resources for both first language and second language.

Wall displays of previous sessions such as retell of Tiwi story. (Very remote school)

During interviews one teacher described the 'flood' in her classroom. The description shows the richness of the oral and written language being derived from a single story and its application to other genres and cross curricula outcomes in art and science.

You can see we've got our story map over there. We've got our song that we sang and wrote up about the tiger. We've got a procedural text there, the kids have pinched the balloon, but we made instruments to go along with our song and then we did a procedure to go with that. They were balloon shakers. ... We've got arts and craft activity here and there's a procedure to go after that - the text following that. That was a science related activity - we looked at factual texts on tigers and then we did a labelling activity about body parts. (Very remote school)

Some examples of the resources available to students were:

- ⊖ Word list on the wall
- ⊖ Drawings with labels
- ⊖ Big books
- ⊖ Group negotiated texts on butchers paper
- ⊖ Musical instruments and other props for role play of section of text
- ⊖ Exercise books
- ⊖ Photocopies of text or section of text
- ⊖ Worksheets
- ⊖ Listening posts
- ⊖ Cards and games with words from units of WTT
- ⊖ Computer

⊞ Home made reading texts from previous units

At interviews there was a general agreement that there was no shortage of resources to support WTT.

We're well resourced in terms of books and all that kind of stuff. My concern still is even after the PD that everyone has had it. (Very remote school)

There were concerns raised about the human resource capacity to implement WTT and the organisation of resources like having a selection of recommended books levelled to meet the targets set for each class.

Designing coherent instruction

The fifth component of the planning and preparation domain relates to the teachers ability to plan learning activities, to gather the appropriate resources, group children for learning and design a lesson structure.

In WTT it would be expected that learning activities be modelled and scaffolded first, then followed by some group work before children asked to do the activity independently. The instructional materials and resources are large enough for the whole class to see and access and are able to be manipulated by the students. Finally, unit structure and lessons follow the WTT sequence and allows enough time for new learning to occur but not so much that students get bored or the unit of work drags out for an inappropriately long time.

From the observation and interviews it was apparent that teachers were all working with a text to structure the unit of work. They were at varying stages of the sequence but mostly at the beginning. It was observed that in some instances teachers felt unable to implement the WTT lesson sequence, as there were too few children present at the time. Some typical structures and sequences of learning typical of WTT were observed and described below.

Reading whole text together and parts individually, reviewing rhyming words, then reading through song they wrote yesterday, sing the song with guitar and other instruments, then in pairs write their own song. Title with capital letters then at least two line/ Using board charts to find rhyming words. (Very remote school)

Revising words, 'Yesterday was Sunday. Today is Monday'. Counting children's names as they arrive, Song body parts from previous unit. Matching words to body parts. Emphasis on end 's' sound and plural. Drawing S in the air. Intro to new book Three Billy Goats Gruff – orientation using illustrations to elicit plot. Mixture of reading and telling. Worksheet – introduced activity – writing name, locating and matching G to words from the story. Activity modelled then children working at tables with AT. (Very remote school)

Teachers, in their interviews, discussed the impact of poor attendance and spasmodic attendance on designing and implementing coherent instruction. As one teacher put it

It's a real juggling act and I think the hardest thing for teachers is that they are really dealing with kids with a real range ... It's very difficult to try and keep the kids who are consistent and working well and working hard and extend those kids because quite a lot of time is spent with kids who aren't achieving or very low achievers. So there's the range factor and it's entirely to do with attendance. (Very remote school)

I mean multilevel teaching is the hardest thing and that's the biggest weakness that we have is that there are so many levels in each class and people still throw it at the middle to a degree. (Very remote school)

One teacher explained the relationship between the WTT Column Planner and the collection of evidence to meet NTCF outcomes illustrating the coherence between instruction and assessment offered by WTT if the sequence of activities is followed.

We use the WTT program for that as well. So we do an oral assessment in three to four different activities. Then we do writing samples from all the genres that we've covered throughout the unit and reading assessment through running records and other activities. A lot of it's as you go assessment through the column planner.... We're using the NTCF, which is simplified for us in our folders. So when we do our assessment, we've actually got the criteria of Band 1, 2, 3 in our folders so we can pretty much listen to the tape, transcribe it and say right, that definitely fits in there, doesn't fit in there, I've got evidence for that, don't have evidence for that. (Very remote school)

Assessing student learning

The final component of this domain is the preparation and planning for assessing student learning. This component is concerned with the congruence of assessment with instructional goals, the setting or recognition of criteria and standards, and using assessment data for planning.

In WTT the congruence between assessment and instruction is established by using planned targets for ESL mapped from the NT Curriculum Framework. The outcomes from the NTCF are the assessment criteria, evidence of learning folios of students samples of work are collected and moderated within the school and where feasible externally. Teachers are expected to use the students assessed levels of English for setting goals and targets for the next unit of work. Teachers are expected to plan from and teach to the 'age for grade' level of outcomes for integrated curriculum areas and identifies ESL outcomes targets with in each learning group.

In one WTT school the teachers planning process and targets are displayed in the staff room so that the planning for assessment is congruent with the curriculum but also transparent to students, parents and other teachers.

The CJs are everyone's planning put down on paper and it actually explains what the teachers are meant to be doing in the class with the kids, so what unit of work they're doing, what assessment will be done during that unit of work. It's got all the kids profiles up until that stage so the teacher knows where their target level is level 3 or level 4 so they know what to target.

This process was further described in the following way

We look at where the kids are now; we look at the targets and say how are we going to get the kids to that target? Then we look at our strategies and our unit and work and work out how we can get them there the best way. They're shared with the whole school. Myself as the upper primary can see what the early childhood have been doing and leading into and vice versa. Everyone knows what people are doing

Domain 2: The Classroom Environment

Creating an environment of respect and rapport

The first component of the classroom environment domain is concerned with the nature of the teacher's interactions with students and interactions between students.

A WTT classroom is expected to be very active with continuous interaction between teacher and learner always highlighting positive learning behaviours in the implementation of the unit. Learners will interact with the teachers and with other learners in all of the activities.

The classroom environment in WTT is created through the interactions by the teacher(s) with the students and the nature of interaction between students.

Teacher was quite directive. She was modelling language always saying what she is doing to support English language development. There was quite a bit of social interaction among children in first language. (Very remote school)

In classes with an Indigenous teacher or other active Indigenous staff opportunities to establish relationships in first language were observed.

Highly interactive in two languages, questioning, directions and explaining concept in Kriol and modelling English. Children offered suggestions. Pointed to painting. (Very remote school)

The difficulties for teachers using English as the language of instruction for children as it is being learned are reflected in the observations below. These teachers struggled with managing learner behaviour where there was limited understanding of English.

The teacher tolerated poor behaviour otherwise positive. Often children did not understand or respond to questions. There was a lot of destructive interaction between children off topic. (Very remote school)

The teacher struggled to create a positive environment with children coming and going but she persevered. The children were very fractious, coming in and out. They could do short tasks but displayed distracting behaviour among themselves. (Very remote school)

These difficulties were often overcome by the use of paraprofessionals, Indigenous tutors or assistant teachers working in partnership with the teachers and working in both first language and English. In very remote bilingual schools such as two within the ELA cohort there are policies of pairing teachers in Indigenous staff to provide language support.

Establishing a culture for learning

In the second component of this domain, the importance of content, developing pride in students' work and establishing expectation for learning and achievement all contribute to developing a culture for learning.

In WTT the content is the selection of material at age appropriate level of cognition irrespective of the learners level of English literacy. Learners are given the opportunity to show pride in their work by keeping portfolios of their work and the ongoing display of their work. Expectations for learning are established through explanation of the learning goals and providing information on what they know they can do and can't do and what they will learn next.

During the observations attendance patterns at some schools were very low. The pattern for WTT schools is reflective of very remote schools and it is not necessarily an effect of WTT. The impact on teaching however in WTT schools has meant that teachers tend to wait for a critical mass of students or their regulars to commence teaching, the opportunities to set up learning were not frequent.

In some cases where there were teacher absences classes were combined together so that one grade was confronted by the text and sequence of work from the other group with which they were completely unfamiliar.

Most teachers were explicit about their lesson goals. For example

Explicitly set up lesson about writing. (Very remote school)

Learners were very proud of their work and showed great willingness to learn. This was demonstrated in the following ways

Many children joined in reading aloud with exuberance. A lot of work was on display such as word lists and texts. (Very remote school)

Enthusiastic contributors to semantic web and reading aloud. (Very remote school)

Taking care with writing, rough copy to final. Learners very pleased with their song and singing. (Very remote school)

Teachers were clear about their expectation for learning and achievement. This was very apparent among the Indigenous staff

Strong pride in language and culture demonstrated by the teacher and transmitted to children (Very remote school)

Expected participation and fluent reading from all students. Differentiated expectations of students in the group in the way he directed questions. Seemed to concentrate on boys, as girls were more able and attentive. (Very remote school)

Managing classroom procedures

The third component of the classroom environment domain deals with the management of instructional groups, transitions between activities, organising teaching and learning resources as well as managing the other adults or paraprofessional who assist in classrooms.

Where Assistant Teachers are available, classes are divided into two groups for instruction. Tutors may also be engaged with groups of 2-3 students engaged in the same task.

Management of transitions is by clearly communicating the end of one activity with a few minutes warning, stating what children have to do to finish off and then informing them what will happen next. At the beginning of the next activity to summarise what the learners have just done and inform them of the steps in the next activity and what is expected of them.

Supplies and materials should be easily accessible for teacher and students to access during a busy lesson. Materials will have been prepared by teaching team the day before the planned activity.

WTT are expected to perform non instructional duties such as engaging in learning together and planning together activities: the first to engage with other staff in broad planning of scope and sequence of units of work in WTT; and, the second, in planning daily lesson activities with assistant teachers and other paraprofessionals in the classroom. The work of volunteers and paraprofessionals is managed through collaborative planning and cooperative teaching where each person knows their role in each activity

In a Walking Talking Texts classroom one expects to see a sequence of activities from the column planner in a session and movement between routine activities such as building on independent writing daily and new activities with an explicit learning focus linked to the chosen text. Management of the classroom involves using all the adult assistance available to focus on the lesson plan. In most WTT primary classrooms there is an Indigenous Assistant Teacher and possibly ITAS tutors and parents. Teachers used a range of resources and these were mainly on hand or pre-prepared.

The following are observations of typical classroom procedures as described above:

ITAS tutor working with child at side of room. Worked independently. Children took turns to work with her. No apparent disruptions and part of a regular routine. Another adult entered room and joined in activity then left. No apparent formal role in class but gave positive feedback to children and helped with reading. Kids more engaged when he was in room. Possibly a good role model. (Very remote school)

At least 3 graduate students acting as tutors in the room. Tutors appeared to be taking own initiative in behaviour management. No indication of planning. They made sure children had books and pencilLSS and took down retell on butcher's paper. (Very remote school)

Managing student behaviour

Establishing expectations of standards of behaviour, monitoring behaviour and responding to behaviour make up this component of the classroom environment domain.

During the observations teachers frequently expressed expectation of the school behaviour they wanted to see such as sitting quietly and putting up hands to answer. Common strategies to monitor behaviour were used as in other schools such as TRIBES.

This teacher used TRIBES strategies to encourage participation and cooperation. Emphasised responsibility. Children responded positively. Transition from group reading from text on wall to floor activity and then to individual writing. Children appeared used to this routine. (Very remote school)

Management of behaviour was exacerbated in very remote schools by constant wandering around classrooms and from students who are obviously either tired or hungry. These children are usually disengaged from the program rather than being naughty or misbehaving. Assistant teachers in very remote schools often played a stronger role in behaviour management than the classroom teacher.

WTT had no unique approach to behaviour management except through engagement of students and keeping students on task.

Organizing physical space

The organisation of the physical environment concludes the issues covered in the classroom domain with a concern for the safety in the arrangement of the furniture and equipment and accessibility and use of learning resources.

There is not prescriptive or recommended arrangement for the organisation of physical space to teach WTT except to allow for safety, to facilitate group work, make resources and materials accessible and to allow for print rich display around the room as scaffolding support for independent reading and writing tasks.

WTT is delivered in very remote schools. Classrooms in these locations can vary markedly from urban schools.

With the exception of one school all had large spaces with desks and floor space for reading together. Many also had wet areas and sometimes a fridge and place to eat. Wash facilities were close to hand. Furniture was generally quite old and marked. Classrooms were sometimes dusty and gritty. Few computers were in evidence. Contrary to expectation for a WTT, most had little decoration of any sort. Only two classrooms could be said to have had a print rich environment with materials from the sequences of the WTT on display.

Domain 3: Instruction

The first component for this domain, Instruction, considers how the teacher communicates clearly in accurately in providing direction and procedures and the use of oral and written language in the classroom.

In WTT teacher directions and procedures are unambiguous, sequential and supported by visual prompts where appropriate; they situate each learning activity within the 'bigger' picture of learning (why/for what purposes). Oral and written language is modelled and scaffolded for students through Standard Australian English for each activity and exercise

Walking Talking Text classrooms are designed to be rich in oral language taking account of second language learning strategies embedded into the sequence of activities. This was reflected in the strategies used by most of the teachers observed. As three of these schools are also bilingual schools the language of

instruction can be either first or second language depending on the bilingual model. In some classes only oral not written English has been introduced. Not all lessons observed were WTT sessions and some lessons did not occur in a planned sense because of the small numbers of children present at the start of the day.

No formal lesson obvious as waiting for children to arrive. (Very remote school)

WTT session not started really filling in with artwork and worksheets. (Very remote school)

As students arrived individual tasks set. Attempted to have whole reading activity. (Very remote school)

Communicating clearly and accurately

The first component for this domain, Instruction, considers how the teacher communicates clearly in accurately in providing direction and procedures and the use of oral and written language in the classroom

Directions and instructions were predominantly in English. Assistant teachers would frequently provide explanation or clarification in first language. Where lessons were observed in first language the teacher usually used English terms for the meta-commentary about grammar and structure.

Transitions and behaviour management were communicated in Kriol. Conceptual explanation of new words and experience was also done in Kriol. Sometimes modelling of English in giving directions. Teacher changed codes frequently. Direct questions about the text were made in English. Answers by students in English were usually one word. (Very remote school)

There were few examples of students being exposed to procedures or directions in written English. Where worksheets were presented they were heavily scaffolded in English and first language and usually the activity was modelled.

In bilingual schools evidence was found of parallel units in first and second language through the displays. In the one bilingual class observed, similar structures for explaining, modelling and questioning seemed to be employed. Students' response was more confident and active.

Teacher provided oral instruction in Tiwi. Key teaching terms also provided in English. All directions and procedures were oral. Procedures were extensively modelled. (Very remote school)

Clear instruction and procedures for what they were to do next were explained and emphasised with her expectations. Reiterated by aide in Yolgnu. (Very remote school)

Instructions given to each child as they arrived. (Very remote school)

Very direct language about school behaviours was used – 'change', 'pack up'. Active listening type techniques were used, 'looking and listening'. (Very remote school)

Using questioning and discussion techniques

This component of the instruction domain covers how teachers use question and discussion techniques and engage students to actively participate in the lesson.

In WTT practice the role of questioning in the school culture is demystified for students through scaffolded practice; questioning progressively moves out of the literal into the affective and abstract matching the age and cognitively appropriate interests, with texts, as children get older. The cultural practices of class discussion are explicitly taught and modelled. All attempts at participation by students are acknowledged and further scaffolded, with teacher modelling through this affirmative process when appropriate.

Questioning frequently used to elicit children's prior knowledge and to prompt response to text such as the following example.

Mostly questioning to elicit what they remember from previous sessions followed by explanation or cue. Discussed possible themes for their songs, reminded them of past activities and what happened in the story. Used new vocabulary in doing this. Boys excited by new words. Provided a lot of modelled English. (Very remote school)

Questioning about the new book. What is the book about? Sheep. What is this writing about? Is it big? Coloured? It is special? Asked questions that they know the answer to. Discussion techniques: Eliciting what is happening in the story from the children and using their words to reconstruct the story from the illustration. 'See I was right....' Children getting some pleasure from predicting what is happening. Pointing out talking marks in the story from what one of the children said. Lets put it into a proper sentence. 'The sheep, him happy' became 'the sheep are the winners. (Very remote school)

Discussion techniques were less obvious though when used by Indigenous teachers in bilingual schools. There was a great deal of modelling answers in English

Indigenous teachers encouraged use of first language to unpack concepts and meanings and these classrooms quite lively with conversation and discussion. In these instances their teachers code switched frequently.

Used Kriol for transitions, explanations and some instructions. Did not encourage children to use English except in relation to the text. No interpersonal English used in the classroom. Specific questions about text were in English. Answers in English usually one word. Written language in displays were in English - Alphabet, charts about fiction and non fiction, etc. (Very remote school)

Engaging students in learning

This component of the Instruction domain deals with those classroom practices designed to engage students in learning and it includes such things as representation of content, activities and assignment, the grouping of students within classes and the quality of instructional materials and resources. The way that teachers structure the lesson and use pace to slow down and speed up is also an important factor in how they engage students in learning.

In WTT the representation of content is achieved by following the planning and teaching requirements and sequence of a WTT unit of work

The WTT planners outline the sequence of activities

Mixed ability groups found in most classrooms are maintained. Small groups of 2 -3 students are based on both learning and behavioural criteria and are ideally mixed ability.

Instructional materials and resources are visual, accessible to the students, displayed on classroom walls, products of activities and exercises are the result of collaborative teacher/student work, represent a level of language use just above that of the most capable member of the class group

The pacing of lessons should be *brisk* in the sense that learning remains dynamic and interesting. The methodology of WTT provides for the natural repetition of the introduced and learned English as the activities and exercises are implemented. For example, if only one unit of work per term is implemented in the Early Childhood Years the natural cycle of repetition of similar linguistic structures and features in a variety of contexts for different purposes is not possible, thus inhibiting language learning. While the upper Primary, Middle Years and Senior Secondary units of work need to extend for the recommended length of times in the left hand column in order to engage in the greater (in complexity and volume) linguistic demands of higher order thinking and application skills as determined by the curriculum outcomes at this level of schooling.

The structure of lessons should be *thorough* in the sense that whILSSt each activity and exercise needs to be implemented, there is no need to wait until all students have achieved 100% success at each activity and exercise before moving on to the next one

Teachers were observed to use focus on content to assist in engaging students in learning.

Kept activity going using singing to break between retelling the story before the reading. Used songs from previous WTT unit – spiders. Activities designed to settle children after recess and then moved into WTT. (Very remote school)

Very little use was made of small group work within the sessions observed.

Students' concentration wavered. Short attention span. Wandered in and out of classroom. Simple task completed but took all time to do so. Not planned groupings. Had to deal with who wandered in and out of room. Tended to work one on one when opportunity arose. (Very remote school)

Most teaching was done directly to the whole group followed by individual tasks. Engaging students frequently quite difficult due to small and mobile numbers and behaviour of students.

Core of children engaged. Some children on the edge did not read aloud and had difficulty completing written task. Class in a whole group activity. (Very remote school)

Mostly whole group activity except for photocopy of text for creating cards for semantic web and wall dictionary. About 10 children in the group. (Very remote school)

Space theme worked well and focused in activities. Enthusiastic participation in reading and singing but less keen on writing but responded to praise and acknowledgement of their effort. Engagement improved with the visit of older man to the classroom. (Very remote school)

Pace of reading and singing maintained to keep interest. Change and variation of activities within the session took account of the age and school experience of children. One child's first day at school. Worked with whole group of 5 boys. (Very remote school)

Providing feedback to students

The quality of feedback to students can be provided in a number of ways. Are they accurate substantive constructive and/or specific? The timeliness of feedback is also considered as important.

Feedback to students should be accurate, substantive, constructive, and specific (in the first instance shows learners what they have done that is correct/right, and works from here to the areas for development by providing a model of the desired outcome/product and then continuous feedback through scaffolding while the student engages in the process). Feedback is given as students are engaged in the process and immediately after.

In those planned WTT sessions feedback to students was very substantive with teachers taking the opportunity to engage students in English.

In some bilingual schools while engagement was spasmodic but participation high when first language used or on topic of local interest.

Feedback was provided in Kriol. Very little feedback made in English. Not constructive from an English modelling perspective. Assuming substantive response was provided in Kriol. (Very remote school)

Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness

This final component of the third domain, instruction, involves the teacher's capacity to adjust lessons, respond to students and persist with reaching planning goals.

In WTT teachers would expect teachers to persist by restating of goals, re demonstrating of process is applied when necessary and providing an immediate and positive response to students.

Teachers in very remote schools had to demonstrate great flexibility to adjust to fluctuating attendance particularly at the beginning of the day. Often teaching was responsive to the individuals who were present and the teacher gradually built group activity as a critical mass of numbers arrived.

Appeared that something else planned and plans changed because of observation. Group made up of mostly grade 3 in composite group. Groups doing different text so had to decide on which text. Did Grade 4 text but unfamiliar to most of the grade 3s. (Very remote school)

Part IV Conclusions

This paper set out to address the project research questions relating to the pedagogies being study and the contexts in which they are practiced. It is necessary to keep in mind that the schools have a further two years in which to develop and implement a ‘whole school’ approach to affect improved learning outcomes for their students. Considerable realignments and reforms are currently underway in the NT DEET. Further improvements are expected between the observations made using 2006 data and when the data collection for the longitudinal study concludes in late 2008.

The research to date throws some light on three of the project research questions:

- ⊖ Is the overall design and pedagogy of each approach consistent with the NT Curriculum Framework planning, programming and assessment and to what extent are these literacy approaches incorporated into school and NT DEET structures?
- ⊖ What services (professional development, teaching aides, resources, etc) are provided to the school and to the teacher to assist in the implementation of the literacy approach?
- ⊖ What are the schools and systems policies and practices in place to enhance the implementation of the literacy approaches?

Status of literacy approaches

At this point in time each of the approaches has in general only been partially implemented in the sample schools. As 2006 was the year in which schools were establishing their approaches fully this is not surprising.

Accelerated Literacy

Accelerated literacy is an approach to teaching English literacy using a sociolinguistic theoretical base in which students are introduced to literate narrative texts and through explicit teaching scaffolded into the linguistic practices and cultural understandings about these text types leading to comprehension and transfer to other genres and individual writing required in an academic or school setting.

It is claimed to be effective in accelerating outcomes for Indigenous learners. Considering that these learners are learning English as a second or foreign language it does not include strategies for second language acquisition.

Having looked at Accelerated Literacy in theory and then as it is applied in the five schools in the ELA sample in practice in the NT policy context, it is concluded that at this point in time it is not well integrated into NT DEET structures nor aligned with the NT curriculum framework for planning, programming and assessment. There is also some confusion about its status as a whole school approach or an intervention and with fidelity to the approach as it is to be applied in the NT. There are a number of factors contributing to this view:

- ⊖ There is no mapping to the NT Curriculum Framework English Bands or ESL levels to demonstrate the links from AL pedagogy to the NT curriculum.
- ⊖ AL, as practiced in the Northern Territory, limits the scope of genres that it enables children to access. It is limited to a particular definition of ‘literate narrative text’ and consequently does not provide exposure to other genres required by the NT Curriculum Framework for example, other narrative forms, reports, recounts, poems, or visual and oral texts.

- ⊖ AL provides only limited and not systematic advice on teaching the phonemic awareness, syntactic and grammar structures of English. These are taught incidentally to the main focus, which is gaining the meaning from text and the author's intentions. The development of this knowledge is derived from the selected text. It is not based on the knowledge of the language strengths or weaknesses of students in either first or second languages.
- ⊖ There is an assumption that what is learned about 'literate narrative texts' will transfer to other academic genres although there is no means of measuring this transfer.
- ⊖ In its description and observed in application it is predominantly focused on reading to the exclusion of the other macro skills of writing, speaking and listening and viewing.
- ⊖ AL is an intervention albeit applied across whole schools to address the English learning area. As the sole approach to the teaching of English literacy it is not able to meet all of the outcomes of the English learning area of the NTCF of the bands covering early childhood and primary education nor is it used across the curricula as a strategy for learning English as second language.

AL schools in the ELA sample are using the time allocated to the explicit teaching of English in the curriculum to deliver AL but, with only one exception, all schools supplement this instruction with other strategies during the day. These supplementary strategies include the systematic teaching of phonics or coding and decoding aspects of English, exposure to other genres in the curriculum and an emphasis on interpersonal oral English to build knowledge of English from first language to second language (ESL). These secondary interventions are often funded from the supplementary schools grants. In some other cases aspect of AL are not implemented at all. It will, therefore, be difficult to attribute gains in literacy in the sample schools to AL instructional practices as in all five schools other instructional practices that are not part of AL were observed. The rationale for these interventions was described by teachers as being necessary to overcome the limitations perceived by teachers in AL pedagogy noted above.

In two schools the supplementary support efforts align with AL methodology, however in three other cases they are deliberately added on and/or intended to compensate for those elements of teaching English not covered in AL such as ESL strategies, early childhood strategies and use of interpersonal English, enrichment stories, phonics, etc.

There is some doubt about the fidelity to the Accelerated Literacy Approach as described for implementation in the NT in the sample schools. Many schools in the ELA sample are not applying some of the principles of AL. In many instances the range of literacy level and experience of schooling by the learners make the application of the ZPD across a broad range of age, cognitive ability and use of English impossible. Many schools are choosing to stream to either attendance or ability in English as teaching groups thus undermining this principal in the grouping of students.

Most classroom teachers interviewed were committed to implementing AL but they were also critical of some aspects of the methodology. The attitudes of senior staff were mixed. In two cases acting principals showed great reservations about AL and one was deliberately utilising ITAS tutors to introduce other interventions.

Many teachers had not received any or full AL professional development.

AL schools all appeared to be well resourced with the types of equipment and literature required for its implementation.

At this stage of the ELA project none of the five schools using an AL approach could be said to be implementing the AL pedagogy fully. There are many factors that impact on a schools ability to implement a whole school approach these are discussed in more detail in ELA Paper 4.

First Steps

First Steps is primarily a professional development package with resources that equips teachers and schools with a developmental view of literacy in the early and primary years. It provides teachers with a theoretical and pedagogic framework on which to base judgements in developing curricula and programs

that are student directed and incorporates explicit teaching techniques. It does not have a prescriptive instruction design but relies on teacher judgement to select and use learning resources appropriate to age and context.

In the five ELA schools where First Steps has been adopted as the second layer resources to the NT Curriculum Framework there was a high level of commitment to it. The two other schools that use it in conjunction with other interventions and programs also displayed a high level of coherence to the values it espouses. Teachers generally like the approach in that it provided high quality professional development and resources for adaptation and there is a high degree of autonomy about the selection and adaptation of the resources.

First Steps seems highly compatible with the multilevel or composite grades and the integrated and thematic curriculum offered in provincial primary schools. Teachers who identified themselves as being more skill based than content based supplemented decoding, phonics, spelling and other commercial programs within their teaching programs alongside resources from First Steps. Teachers were pleased to find activities that enabled adaptation for explicit teaching of literacy within an integrated unit of work that catered for diverse levels and cooperative nature of many of the activities that fitted well with TRIBES and other strategies that were strongly in evidence. First Steps also offered experience with a broad range of genres and media to extend students in both reading and writing.

First Steps is compatible and congruent with the NT Curriculum Framework. First Steps teachers often worked directly with the map of development confident that only one focus was adequate given the closeness of mapping to the English learning area. Its use, in mostly urban environments for predominantly English speaking students, supported teachers' views of developmental learning and immersion in literate practices across a wide range of genres. Intervention strategies for students with special needs or assistance with second language acquisition were seen to be compatible with First Steps philosophy.

The First Steps training was valued highly by all schools and was considered very high quality in terms of a professional learning experience and in the range of electronic and printed resources it provided. There was an appreciation that it was an introduction to a broad approach to English literacy based on well-known and articulated theoretical understanding of language as a social practice.

The leadership in these schools were strongly behind the use of First Steps as second layer resources. Principals and Assistant Principals were prominent in the professional development. First Steps resources were prominent in many classrooms and the professional development materials were evident in staff rooms.

For students with identified literacy or ESL needs other interventions were recommended and accommodated. First Steps was recognised as a general classroom approach but not as a specialist ESL approach.

Walking Talking Texts

Walking Talking Texts is a whole of school, cross curricula second language approach to teaching English Literacy.

From an analysis of the data collected in 2006 related to the descriptions provided of walking Talking Texts as an approach only two schools in the ELA cohort could be said to be implementing Walking Talking Texts as a whole school approach in 2006.

WTT has been mapped to the ESL levels of the NT Curriculum Framework and there is an obligation in following the planning sequence to map planned outcomes to the ESL levels and other learning areas of the NT Curriculum Framework. In this sense it can be used for English as a second language development in other curriculum areas.

There was evidence that some schools were implementing the approach in some aspects although fidelity to using all of the activities and in sequence was questionable. In two other schools only a handful of teachers were implementing the approach and there was little in the way of curriculum leadership in the school to support their practice.

There were some teachers, generally older teachers who had long years of experience in very remote schools, who were resistant to following school policy and implementing all aspects of Walking Talking Texts. It was considered by them to require too much time planning and implementation by the teacher than the prepared worksheets that many had relied on for many years.

There were other teachers who would claim to follow the petal and column planner who clearly use the sequence of activities as a menu from which to select activities that suited them.

Many teachers complained that they did not have the capacity to undertake the language analysis of each text to plan the unit of work and ensure that the activities were contextualised in the text and others inserted worksheets and phonics drill sessions to substitute for developing their own resources using the selected texts. There was a greater level of fidelity to the approach when applied in the early childhood years and with teachers who were or had been part of the ESL for ILSS program.

There was evidence that there was poor curriculum leadership in supporting teachers to implement WTT and to ensure that the programming for units of work through learning together and daily planning sessions with paraprofessionals occur regularly. Many of the ET2 in the sample schools were neither primary trained and qualified teachers, teachers of literacy nor experienced in teaching Indigenous students in very remote schools nor with ESL methodologies in general or WTT in particular.

Walking Talking Texts requires a set level of planning. This includes planning overall units of work periodically and then planning activities with paraprofessional teachers such as Assistant Teachers and ITAS tutors on a daily basis. The audits undertaken during the school based professional development showed that very remote schools did not provide or ensure that teacher release time or outside school hours time was provided for this planning. Only one school organised its timetable to accommodate these activities as well as the regular collection of assessment data and moderation.

Implementation of Walking Talking Texts was being hampered by a lack of access to resources and support materials. The current manual is out of date and out of print. New materials developed after its publication and to assist teacher's to set targets, plan units of work around texts and design assessment tasks aligned to the reporting requirements of the NT Curriculum framework have been developed but are not universally available. School induction professional development and train the trainer type professional development materials need to be developed to support the program. The Intellectual Property issues need to be sorted as matter of urgency for this approach be supported by the NT DEET as an endorsed approach.

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Appendix 1

The appendix comprises three separate tables, one for each of the main approaches, with descriptions using three of the domains from the Danielson Framework (Danielson. C, 1996)

Table 1: Accelerated Literacy

Domain 1: Planning and Preparation	
Component 1a: Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy.	
Knowledge of content	There will be evidence of the four conceptual frameworks on which AL is built in classroom practice: 1. The notion of discourse as a primary goal for teaching; 2. An application for the Vygotskian Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD); 3. A staging of a teaching a sequence structure around 1&2; and 4. Integration of scaffolding (Wood, Bruner and Ross 1976) as a teaching framework for teaching learning process within the ZPD and the AL teaching learning sequence.
Knowledge of prerequisite relationships	The teacher is aware of the developmental level and language/literacy proficiency of the range of children in the class established through the IRL, in order to be able to choose appropriate texts to construct an appropriate dialogue with the students, and scaffold the students in their reading and writing. The approach is focused at the level of 'discourse', in this case narrative texts, as exemplifying a 'culturally situated discourse' in schooling. Learning is pitched at the highest possible level in response to the theoretical potential offered by the ZPD.
Knowledge of content related pedagogy	The teacher shows awareness of each student's interpretation of the learning context known as 'situation definition' and creates common understandings or 'intersubjectivity' by connecting to the children's perception of the task. The focus in AL is on development of: 1. Reading – including comprehension and decoding, as realised through the literate discourse 2. Writing and spelling 3. Speaking – with particular focus upon enabling students to take part in classroom learning, negotiation and scaffolding students to use the language of the text and to talk about the text 4. Viewing with particular attention to students' ability to interpret illustrations accompanying literacy texts. The pedagogic sequence begins at the level of the context of the chosen text including a general orientation to matters such as the overall topic of the subject, what the text is about and what stages the genre goes through to achieve its purpose. The next step is to work at the overall level of meaning and to look for sequences of meaning in specific parts of the text. Discourse analysis techniques are used in the analysis of texts and the capacity to model, deconstruct and reconstruct parts of texts, text and text types and to provide a meta analysis or 'thinking aloud' of the processes being used to derive or give meaning. Teachers will be showing this knowledge by offering meta-commentary about: the text; the audience for the text; its social purpose and structure; 'common' or cultural knowledge; the author's techniques; the understanding of and use of literary terms in relation to the text; and the semantics of the text.
Component 1b: Demonstrating Knowledge of Students	
Knowledge of characteristics of age group	Teachers will demonstrate a knowledge of the age characteristics of their students for identifying the ZPD.
Knowledge of students' varied approaches to learning	Practitioners of AL believe that students will acquire English literacy through a process of inducting them into the literacy practices of an academic discourse (that is, school literacies exemplified by narrative text). There will be no apparent account of child psychology or learning development of accommodation of individual learning styles.
Knowledge of students' skills and knowledge	Teachers will need knowledge of the age characteristics of their students and knowledge of their literacy capacities/levels.
Knowledge of students' interests and cultural heritage	Teachers will show insight and sensitivity towards cultural protocols. Teachers incorporate student understandings, interest and perspectives into the methodology. The cultural or 'common knowledge' of academic or literary texts is not assumed but is explicitly provided through the low order sequence.
Component 1c: Selecting Instructional Goals	

Value	Teaching goals are reflected in clearly enunciated statement of purpose of the lesson and are carried through the teaching sequence.
Clarity	The teacher conducts the lesson with a consistent, coherent 'thread' and instruction discourse enables all students to access the learning. The focus of AL is on explicit teaching to scaffold learners' reading comprehension of specific texts, transferring linguistic knowledge into their own writing, and building semantic and grammar knowledge from known text to writing and new texts. The teaching is clear and explicit at every stage of the sequence. For example 'Today we are going t...' and instructional goals are shared with learners.
Suitability for diverse students	AL is a multilevel/multi-age approach. It provides the relevant cultural/common knowledge associated with the chosen text. AL is seen as an approach best directed at non-achieving and/or Indigenous learners (assumed to be low achievers).
Balance Goals represent a balance between different types of learning	AL follows a sequence of activity to reach reading, spelling and writing outcomes derived from the selected text. The AL sequence of activities is repeated with different instructional goals over a period of time to form a unit of work with a chosen text. The learning sequence is balanced through different activities that develop shared knowledge about the 'story' and conceptual knowledge about how language works. By the end of the unit of work a handover to the student will have occurred and balance achieved.
Component 1d: Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources	
Resources for teaching	Text folder - copy of text 'big book', Teaching notes for the book, individual copies of the book for students and overhead transparencies of focus text. Programming –weekly planner; lesson planning notes; Early reader checklist (if applicable); Observational Reading Record Sheets; word recognition and spelling checklist. Student Assessment folder -consent forms, initial assessment reading and writing sample, TORCH Test; ongoing observational reading record; ongoing comprehension sheets, ongoing writing samples with context sheets; attendance records and MAP. Teacher box with physical equipment needs. AL Resources for Spelling - patterning, chunking. Information providing morphological knowledge. Modelled specific texts for teaching reading, spelling and writing.
Resources for students	Texts. Whiteboard/blackboards Exercise books
Component 1e: Designing Coherent Instruction	
Learning activities	All AL activities are related to the chosen text. AL has a series of structured learning activities progressing from low to high order literate orientation through to transformations from reading to spelling and writing. The process aims, through this sequence, to 'handover' to the students' knowledge and understandings about the text and the language choices the author made for particular purposes. Low order literate orientation – includes discussion of: context, characters, plot structure; links between words and illustrations; inference; role of illustrations to extend meaning; motivation of characters; author's purpose; reader judgement; and taking a stance. The teacher models these. High order literate orientation draws children's attention to the precise wording of the text; how the author's language choices create an effective text; how the text is organised; particular word choices; and the meanings of particular words, groups of words and concepts. Transformations focuses on deconstructing the text to show the word, and word order choices, the author made to realise their intentions and to have an effect on the reader: including the structure of the text; the linguistic or literary devices or techniques used by the writer; realisation of the themes; and positioning in relation to character. Spelling – word segmentation; visual patterning based on known patterns through lists based on taught words; word analysis skills. All items are selected from chosen texts. Selection of items for learning should come from the text or pattern derived from the text. There are no decontextualised sight word lists used in AL. Writing – joint construction focused sequence of teaching leading to applying what learner's know about writing and the text for the generation of new text. The sequence is a routine that will vary only in emphasis depending on the focus of the particular lesson.
Instructional materials and resources	AL has a list of recommended books. There is a set of teaching notes provided for many texts. PD materials have been developed for primary and secondary teaching. Typed copies of text, text in clauses, lesson plan, assessment sheets, low order literate orientation resources (these are chosen

	<p>by the teacher to support instruction and may include posters, maps, students art work or personal items to provide a visual support for the text.</p> <p>Environmental print in the classroom is relevant to the work and shared knowledge of class.</p>
Instructional groups	The teacher works with the whole class with instruction pitched at ZPD. There may be some individual or small group activities in spelling and writing.
Lesson and unit structure	<p>Lesson should be planned using the weekly lesson plan template. The sequence of activities should follow the lesson focus.</p> <p>Low order book orientation, read story or part of the text, Pre-formulation and re-conceptualisation is integral at this stage and builds on the students knowledge and skills from previous sessions.</p> <p>High order book orientation, transformations from reading, spelling and writing, scaffolded spelling, joint reconstruction, writing workshops and free writing.</p> <p>As progress is made through the sequence there is handover of control to the student.</p> <p>Each sequence has overall focus or goal depending on the features of the text. There will be many joint and teacher modelled activities, activities around transformations workshop opportunities to use new techniques.</p>
Component 1f: Assessing Student Learning	
Congruence with instructional goals	<p>The text notes provided for each text on the AL lists provides the instructional goals for each unit of work. Students are assessed initially using a text (assessed as being age grade appropriate) to establish their Individual Reading Level (IRL). Progress is monitored through assessing students' reading levels as they work with the chosen text or their Independent Working Level (IWL). For older grades the TORCH test is used. Aspects of Marie Clay are also used for formative assessment.</p> <p>Word recognition and spelling checklists from the texts taught.</p> <p>Writing is assessed through the collection of 3 samples at the commencement of the program and 3 at the end of each year in the program. These are assessed against the writing goals and techniques taught. There is no agreed link outcomes in the NTCF for English or ESL.</p>
Criteria and standards	<p>Criteria and standards relate to the instructional goals set for texts in the teaching notes.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of the teacher to meet the goals of the NTCF.</p>
Use for planning	IRL assessments and IWL inform the teacher of levels of reading in the group and the teacher's uses the teacher notes and complete the weekly planner to focus lessons.

Domain 2: The Classroom Environment	
Component 2a: Creating and Environment of Respect and Rapport	
Teacher interaction with students	<p>In the low order literate orientation the interactions between teacher and students is led by the teacher but there are expectations of increasing levels of participation from students. As lessons progress through the teaching sequence, and from one lesson to the next in a unit of work around a text, students develop resources to discuss the text meaning, the intentions of the author and the language choices they made to realise their intentions.</p> <p>The lesson is guided by the teacher in their role of literate adult scaffolding induction of the student into the discourse.</p>
Student interaction	<p>Student input is actively sought and handover given at every opportunity. Teacher constructs questioning interaction to maximise student involvement and may seek multiple responses to questions. All responses are validated and affirmed.</p> <p>Interaction between students is not deliberately facilitated.</p>
Component 2b: Establishing a Culture for Learning	
Importance of the content	Content is the text, the intentions of the writer and meta-analysis of how texts are written.
Student pride in work	Student pride in work is demonstrated through developing self-confidence to read, write and offer opinions or interpretations about text.
Expectations for learning and achievement	Choice of text is designed to stretch literacy and engage at level of ZPD. There is an expectation that all children will learn to read.

Component 2c: Managing Classroom Procedures	
Management of instructional groups	Class as a whole works and engages productively for the body of the lesson and groups may be used as complementary means to reach clearly defined discrete ends. Eg high level spellers researching the origin of a word and report back to class as a whole, groups acting out part of the story.
Management of transitions	Explicit transition in the sequence of instruction from low order literate orientation to high order, to transformation and spelling and writing etc all relate to the features of the text and focus of the lesson in relation to the intentions of the author and choice of writing techniques to be explored
Management of material and supplies	Texts, whiteboards, marker pens and placement of transformation board and other resources all easily accessible. Use of overhead projector where applicable easily visible. Complementary resources utilised where required. Displays of spelling words and students work in evidence.
Supervision of volunteers and paraprofessionals	Support staff in-tune with the methodology and are able to fulfil a role for the most part complementary to the teaching. Support staff not case in discipline role antithetical to inclusive teaching.
Component 2d: Managing Student Behaviour	
Expectations	Expectation of success and engagement within a scaffolded environment through supportive questioning techniques.
Monitoring of student behaviour	Behaviour is monitored through their engagement and feedback about the lesson.
Response to student misbehaviour	Lesson sequences are paced to maintain engagement while remaining with the AL sequence. Proceed through activities at appropriate level to maximise engagement. Clear instruction and familiar routines ensure that students know what to do and how to behave.
Component 2e: Organizing Physical Space	
Safety and arrangement of furniture	Seating arrangements optimise effective engagement with learning eg U shaped formation. It is important that students can see the text.
Accessibility to learning and use of physical resources	Other resources and hardware easily accessible and utilised safely.

Domain 3: Instruction	
Component 3a: Communicating Clearly and Accurately	
Direction and procedures	The teacher states the overall purpose of lesson from the outset and outlines the role of each stage of the teaching sequence. Directions are specific and clear and the rationale for teaching given- [explains why]. Teacher makes the thinking visible by articulating her thought processes and makes her thinking available to all the students. Procedural elements of the lesson are well in place and transition. The level of teacher direction and guidance of the process diminishes as class moves through sequence of lessons related to the chosen text.
Oral and written languages	The teacher describes in oral English the, meaning and structure of a written English text and the writing techniques used. There is a lot of questioning and discussion in English and students are provided opportunities to develop a meta-language to discuss language choices in the text and for handover.
Component 3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques	
Quality of questions	All questioning is directed at unpacking the discourse being studied. There is common use of closed questions early in a teaching sequence as an aid to scaffolding learning, such as preformulated and reconceptualized questions. Open -ended questioning is used as students' gain confidence with their knowledge of the text and genre and their capacity to use English. Questions and instruction are modelled in teaching notes. Questioning sequence: pre-formulation (eg. From <i>Rosie's Walk</i> – Session 1 the students mostly listening as the teacher explains the illustration and the first page. Session 2 the teacher points to the

	<p>hen and might ask, "Who can remember the name of the hen?" The children respond "Rosie" and then the teacher replies and asks " Yes and what is Rosie going for?" The children respond "A walk".)</p> <p>Re-conceptualisation: follows pre-formulation (To continue the above example – to re-conceptualise the teacher would say "Yes, it must be getting on for her dinner time and she wants some exercise before her dinner ...").</p>
Discussion techniques	Teacher models language and behaviour required to access literate discourse and invites students in to be active participants in discussion process. 'Intersubjectivity' is established by connecting learning to students' knowledge and understanding of the world. At every opportunity the teacher capitalises on the 'common knowledge' acquired by students to 'hand over' to them. Teacher validates each student's contribution and is intent on 'pointing their brains' at literate features of text. The teacher usually seeks to draw all students into the discussion.
Student participation	Students are actively involved in the thinking and discussions that are conducted around the text as well as in the conduct of the phases of the teaching sequence.
Component 3c: Engaging Students in Learning	
Representation of content	Meta-discussion of what the text is about, the author's intentions and the construct of the text.
Activities and assignments	All activities are implemented in line with the purposes of the lesson and the AL teaching sequence.
Grouping of students	Teacher ensures staging of teaching capitalises on the fundamental premise of APD in which socially constructed learning caters for all students in the group. Students complete the body of the lesson as a class and may revert to group activities during spelling and writing.
Instructional materials and resources	<p>List of books levelled for teaching AL</p> <p>Teaching notes</p> <p>PD materials for primary and secondary</p> <p>Typed copies of text; text in clauses; lesson plan; observational assessment sheets; low order resources. (Chosen by the teacher to provide context for text)</p> <p>Teaching notes and PD notes modelling strategies with specific texts</p>
Structure and pacing	Explicit teaching using sequence recommended for selected text. Keep pace but scaffold when needed. Children should become familiar with routines and be focused on content of lesson. Pacing is consistently maintained to achieve maximum engagement.
Component 3d: Providing Feedback to Students	
Quality: accurate, substantive, constructive and specific	Feedback to students is part of the continuous shared meta-commentary/ literate discourse about text and text functions.
Timeliness	The teacher always capitalises on opportunities to provide timely positive reinforcement. The teacher realises instruction must essentially be conducted before the task is set and that once 'in task' it is too late for intervention.
Component 3e: Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness	
Lesson adjustment	Questioning is used to monitor students' understanding and questioning and tasks are adjusted, in response to that feedback.
Response to students	Responses to students are structured within the purpose of the lesson.
Persistence	The teacher always persists and maintains focus on intended learning outcomes using purposeful teaching strategies.

Table 2: First Steps Reading and Writing 2nd Edition

Domain 1: Planning and Preparation	
Component 1a: Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy.	
Knowledge of content	<p>Demonstrates knowledge of theory of learning to read outlined in Ch 1 Reading Map of Development. Referenced</p> <p>Uses the four sub streams around which the approach is framed. These include:</p> <p>Use of texts;</p> <p>Contextual understanding;</p> <p>Conventions; and processes and Strategies.</p>
Knowledge of prerequisite relationships	<p>First Steps implementation is dependent on a number of factors being present in the school including the following:</p> <p>High quality professional development, Principal as learner and leader, ongoing support for teachers, whole-school implementation, Providing time, maintaining continuity through planning, reflecting and celebrating, developing and articulating a vision, monitoring and evaluating outcomes and involving parents. First Steps uses a map of development for reading and writing.</p> <p>First Steps is based on a developmental understanding of reading and writing. The developmental stages for reading in which the prerequisites skills are developed are broken into 6 phases: role-play; experimental; early; transitional; proficient and accomplished.</p> <p>The developmental stages for writing</p>
Knowledge of content related pedagogy	<p>Evidence could take the form of key indicators for reaching each phase of development and/or major teaching emphases for appropriate level of the phase for sub strand and the environment and attitude. These provide the pedagogic scaffolds for children to reach the next phase.</p> <p>Look for an eclectic approach to teaching of reading incorporating: use of a range of reading procedures; use of grouping structures; use of a range of data-collection tools; introduction of a variety of texts; explicit teaching of reading strategies; development of knowledge within cues; support for reading development across the curriculum; and a use of a range of effective teaching and learning practices.</p> <p>Look for an eclectic approach to the teaching of writing including: writing as production or encoding, writing as creativity, writing as a process writing as genre and writing within the context of setting and culture. Teaching writing includes building prior knowledge (three cueing systems); using writing strategies (self questioning, predicting, creating images, paraphrasing, etc.); using the writing process – planning drafting publishing conferring and refining; understanding the range of texts forms or genres; and understanding the context of the writing event – purpose, roles and relationship subject matter, socio cultural influences and situation.</p>
Component 1b: Demonstrating Knowledge of Students	
Knowledge of characteristics of age group	<p>Application of the map of development will provide a range of tools for assessing the stage of development for all children. First Steps is developmentally focused not age or grade focused. Caters for heterogeneous groupings of children not based on either age or grade. First Steps Indicators are used for describing behaviours at a phase of development</p>
Knowledge of students' varied approaches to learning	<p>Demonstrates use of First Steps links to assessment, teaching and learning. Each learner is placed on the map of development. Knowledge about each student is gained through the use of a number of procedures for collecting information about learning including: focused observations; reading and writing products; and conversations.</p>
Knowledge of students' skills and knowledge	<p>Evidence of First Steps ways of documenting learners' skills and knowledge, such as: anecdotal notes, checklists, rubrics, annotations, reading and writing products and the map of development including class and individual profiles for reading and writing.</p>
Knowledge of students' interests and cultural heritage	<p>Shows use of long and short term planning using Linking Assessment, Teaching and Learning book including drawing on the interests and strengths of students. This influences the choice of texts, themes and activities.</p>
Component 1c: Selecting Instructional Goals	
Value	<p>Applies First Steps set of beliefs (LATL) that effective teaching and learning practice is: focused on strategies, investigative, reflective, scaffolded, tailored, supportive, tested, embedded, purposefully, practice and shared</p>

Clarity	Evidence of focus or explicit teaching for range of children across the phases from the map of development and using the major teaching emphases to lead children to next phase of development.
Suitability for diverse students	Evidence in planning for individual and class planning in short term and long term to include diversity in the classroom. Teaching is tailored to meet the needs of many difference4 students without marginalizing them or creating an unsustainable teaching load. Diversity is defined as differences that impact on progress at school such as: gender, age, cognitive ability, physical ability, physical appearance, learning style, social background, economic background, cultural background, linguistic background and religious belief. Practice for catering for gifted students is also included.
Balance	Evidence of using the cycle of teaching, learning and assessment to structure and plan learning activities

Component 1d: Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources

Resources for teaching	Uses activities, charts and aids provided in The Reading Resource Book, The Writing Resource Book and CDs for teaching reading and writing applied within the learning and teaching cycles – evaluating student needs, Identifying resources and planning Selection teaching and learning experiences, monitoring student profess and teacher effectiveness and ongoing reflection.
Resources for students	First Steps provides resources for teachers to make and adapt learning resources for students: CD contains templates for all activities and generation of classroom displays, charts, etc.

Component 1e: Designing Coherent Instruction

Learning activities	Evidenced by use of 18 strategies from Reading Resource Book adapted to the appropriate phase from map of development. Use of the essential elements of a writing block for the explicit teaching of writing including the selected focus from procedures and practices.
Instructional materials and resources	Replications of charts, and materials from the CDs, the Reading Resource and Writing Resource books in classroom.
Instructional groups	Grouping considerations include a comprehensive approach to teaching needs to ensure that throughout the course of the day and week, students have the opportunity to work with different peers in a range of different –sized groups. It is important to provide opportunities to learn literacy as part of the whole class groups as well as in small groups, with partners and or on an individual basis. Whole class activity ensures a shared context is created for explicit teaching in a community of learners. Small group or pairs ensured cooperative learning behaviours. Individuals also need the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning by working independently on self-selected or teacher directed-tasks. This also allows time for the teacher to monitor individual progress and provide individual support. Advice is provided on how to group for different purposes.
Lesson and unit structure	A unit of work is the long term plan covering a four to six week period in which teachers consider: the selection of outcomes and major teaching emphases; the content, theme or topic (entry point); a selection of sequenced teaching and learning experiences for a whole class, small groups and if necessary, individuals; the resources to be used; and the assessment tools to be used. Depending on the school timetabling, effective teachers will ensure, within a daily plan, that there is a balance of explicit teacher instruction and independent student activity; working as a whole class, in small group an as individuals; and effective teaching and learning practices (These practices in First Steps refers to strategic selection of activities such as familiarising, modelling, sharing, guiding, analysing, practising, applying, investigating, playing, discussing, innovating, transforming, simulating and reflecting.) Samples of long term and lesson planning are provided.

Component 1f: Assessing Student Learning

Congruence with instructional goals	Application of a the teaching and learning cycle – evaluating student needs, Identifying resources and planning, selecting teaching and learning experiences, monitoring student progress and teacher effectiveness and ongoing reflection.
Criteria and standards	Map of development indicators for reading and writing. These have been mapped to the NTCF
Use for planning	Implementation of First Steps requires a number of factors being in place in the classroom and at school level: High quality professional development, Principal as learner and leader, ongoing support for teachers, whole-school implementation, providing time, maintaining continuity through planning, reflecting and celebrating, developing and articulating a vision, monitoring and evaluating outcomes and involving

	<p>parents.</p> <p>Evidence that time is provided for planning may take the following forms:</p> <p>Providing common planning or preparation time for same -year- level teachers; hiring roving relief/substitute teachers to release teachers from classrooms; allocating time at regular staff meeting for First Steps discussions; breakfast meetings at school; releasing teachers from classrooms – principals providing the relief; reviewing school staff and finish times to create a monthly 'early release' day; making use of school assemblies or other school wide events to release pairs or small groups of teachers.</p>
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!: The Classroom Environment

Component 2a: Creating and Environment of Respect and Rapport

Teacher interaction with students	<p>Effective teaching and learning practice is based on the following principles articulated in First Steps: Focused on strategies, investigative, reflective, scaffolded, tailored, embedded, purposefully practised and shared.</p> <p>All resources and activities provide guides on the role of the teachers.</p> <p>First Steps classrooms are highly interactive.</p>
Student interaction	<p>Students are constructed as active and reflective learners who are practising their growing literacy purposefully in the classroom.</p>

Component 2b: Establishing a Culture for Learning

Importance of the content	<p>First Steps beliefs provide a sound basis for making decision about the physical setting and the culture of learning in the classroom - being focused on strategies is the first of the effective teaching practices to be emphasised.</p>
Student pride in work	<p>Reflecting and celebrating are essential ingredients of factors for implementing First Steps - students' efforts; collaboration and products are displayed and celebrated. Through classroom and school displays, performances and events.</p>
Expectations for learning and achievement	<p>These expectations are articulated in the learning goals anticipated using the phases in the map of development. Predicting location of bulk of group on the Map of Development and using focused teaching to reach the next phase</p>

Component 2c: Managing Classroom Procedures

Management of instructional groups	<p>Guidelines are provided on the types of groups that can be organised and their purposes and products. Group behaviour, role assignment and transitions are developed early on in the year so that these become routine classroom behaviours</p> <p>Expect to see supportive and collaborative behaviour as part of core classroom management</p>
Management of transitions	<p>Roles are assigned within activities and routines are established. For example, numbering off, structuring responses, a key communicator.</p>
Management of material and supplies	<p>Physical organisation of the class takes consideration of fixed features, climate, traffic, noise, student numbers, supervision, furniture safety, student attention, and proximity. These areas need to cater for the range of activities offered and for the display of student work on wall space.</p> <p>Evidence of core routines using standard resources</p>
Performance on non-instructional duties	<p>Advice provided on working with parents in supervision of homework and in the classroom</p>
Supervision of volunteers and paraprofessionals	<p>Home school partnerships are discussed. Role of paraprofessional and volunteers in the classroom not explicitly referred to except for parents.</p>

Component 2d: Managing Student Behaviour

Expectations	<p>Expectations are set in within the phases of the map of development. Look for a focus of teaching to adhere the Indicators for the next phase.</p>
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Monitoring of student behaviour	Exercising professional judgement in the framework of teaching learning and assessment cycle. Clear guidelines in management of groups and transitions provided. See above.
Response to student misbehaviour	Clear instructions and implementing routines. Developmentally appropriate responses and recognition of special needs and diversity. Adaptation of activities and flexibility allowed for. Strong emphasis on a positive environment in which all children can be successful

Component 2e: Organizing Physical Space

Safety and arrangement of furniture	Physical organization of the class takes consideration of fixed features, climate, traffic, noise, student numbers, supervision, furniture safety, student attention, and proximity. These areas need to cater for the range of activities offered and for the display of student work on wall space. Maps and suggestions are provided
Accessibility to learning and use of physical resources	See above

3: Instruction

Component 3a: Communicating Clearly and Accurately

Direction and procedures	Procedures and directions related to First Steps activities are clearly articulated in the resource books with adaptable examples from provided
Oral and written languages	Teaching and learning strategies are assuming oral and written English

Component 3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques

Quality of questions	Evidence of resources from First Steps and books activities are developmentally appropriate and structured. Preference for open-ended questions and activities.
Discussion techniques	Discussion techniques include: referencing to collaboratively generated work, recapping techniques, provision of links to other curriculum areas. Meta-cognitive language provided for reflection. Guides are provided within each activity to facilitate discussion. Classroom routines about roles are established early in the year.
Student participation	Students are expected to participate in whole class, small group and individual activities, to practice their literacy purposefully

Component 3c: Engaging Students in Learning

Representation of content	Content or focus of explicit teaching uses many modes of representation -
Activities and assignments	Resources provide vast choice for exercising effective teaching learning strategies with teaching and learning cycle and to meet needs mapped to the phases of development
Grouping of students	Expect to see many different groupings of children for different purposes including whole classroom, small groups and individual work. See establishment of core routines Expect to see supportive and collaborative behaviour
Instructional materials and resources	There are three First Steps products and CD with templates and charts accompanying activities.
Structure and pacing	All sessions are structured for explicit teaching and balance of activities and grouping over time. Structure and pace will follow expectations for teaching to appropriate phase of development.

Component 3d: Providing Feedback to Students

Quality: accurate, substantive, constructive and specific	Developmentally appropriate responses to focus learning on planned objectives.
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Timeliness	Opportunities for explicit teaching taken. Opportunities for meta-cognitive strategies. Investigative and problem solving techniques used as appropriate. Opportunities to link with other curriculum areas and students interest and knowledge are taken.
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Component 3e: Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness

Lesson adjustment	Expect to see activities and resources adapted to suit purpose or focus of instruction and the learning needs of students in line with phases of development
Response to students	Advice on planning for individuals will shape how teachers respond to individual students in way that is appropriate to their phase of development.
Persistence	Expect to see persistence in implementing plan or learning objectives and the use of multiple approaches to reach the intended outcomes for students at varying phases of development.

Walking Talking Texts

I: Planning and Preparation

Component 1a: Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy

Knowledge of content	Knowledge of content is evidenced through planned and implemented activities 27 -30 based on outcomes relevant to age for grade and language level
Knowledge of prerequisite relationships	Knowledge of prerequisite relationships knowledge of what students bring to a units of work – language development, prior learning /units of work/topics, etc
Knowledge of content related pedagogy	Use of scaffolding for oral and written English outcomes through every activity; communication or clear goals each lesson, modelling of process and product; group practices after teacher modelling and scaffolding before independent construction

Component 1b: Demonstrating Knowledge of Students

Knowledge of characteristics of age group	Knowledge of characteristics of age group through planned activities relevant in topic and activity to age group.
Knowledge of students' varied approaches to learning	Knowledge of students' varied approaches to learning through provision for multiple ways to engage in the process and to demonstrate learning.
Knowledge of students' skills and knowledge	Knowledge of students skills and knowledge through use of knowledge of students levels of English to set learning and teaching goals and targets
Knowledge of students' interests and cultural heritage	Knowledge of students' interests and cultural heritage in the choice of text and in the chosen aspects of English to teach (based on the characteristics of the students home language

Component 1c: Selecting Instructional Goals

Value	Underpinned by sets of theories about language, language development and second language pedagogy
Clarity	Clarity of goals, outcomes, process and product communicated to and demonstrated with students
Suitability for diverse students	Suitable for diverse students through the teacher's active knowledge and use of ESL methodology in delivery of WTT and in the catering of a range of levels within activities and exercises
Balance	Balance between introducing new English and new content and embedding previously learned English and content.

Component 1d: Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources

Resources for teaching	Resources for teaching use of appropriate texts and a other reading material to support the topic as well as electronic, film and real life resources
Resources for students	Resources for students access to and uses of technology, the classroom as a print rich environment to support literacy development, access to and use of 'authentic ' texts as far as possible

Component 1e: Designing Coherent Instruction

Learning activities	Learning activities modelled and scaffolded first then group work before independent application
Instructional materials and resources	Instructional materials and resources are large enough for the whole class to see and access, are able to be manipulated by students

Instructional groups	Instructional Groups allow for hearing problems, are small enough for regular interaction with the teacher using English are not 'streamed'
Lesson and unit structure	Lesson and unit structure follows the WTT sequence and allows enough time for new learning to occur but not so much that students get bored or the unit of work drags out for an inappropriately long time.
Component 1f: Assessing Student Learning	
Congruence with instructional goals	Assessment judged against the planned targets and are mapped to the NTCF
Criteria and standards	Criteria and standards using the NTCF, school based moderation precedes system level moderation and is based on the 'evidence of learning folios' of students
Use for planning	Evidence that teachers use students assessed levels of English for setting goals and targets for the next unit of work; that teachers plan from and teach to the 'age for grade' level of outcomes for the integrated curriculum areas and identifies ESL outcome targets within each learning group.

∴ The Classroom Environment

Component 2a: Creating and Environment of Respect and Rapport	
Teacher interaction with students	Teacher interaction with students is continuous and always highlights the positive learning behaviours in the implementation of the WTT unit
Student interaction	Student interaction with teacher and others is continuous in the implementation of a WTT unit
Component 2b: Establishing a Culture for Learning	
Importance of the content	Importance of the content which needs to be planned for the age appropriate level of cognition of the students irrespective of literacy/English levels
Student pride in work	Student pride in work means that students actively take part in keeping portfolios of work, some work is displayed
Expectations for learning and achievement	Expectations for learning and achievement students know the learning goals and receive information on what they know and can do, and what they will learn next.
Component 2c: Managing Classroom Procedures	
Management of instructional groups	Management of instructional groups where Assistant teachers are available, class is divided into two groups for instruction; tutors may also be engaged with groups of 2-3 students engaged the same task
Management of transitions	Management of transitions by clearly communicating the end of one activity with a few minutes warning, stating what children have to do to finish off and then informing them what will happen next. At the beginning of the next activity to summarise that the learners have just done and inform them of the steps in the next activity and what is expected of them
Management of material and supplies	Management of materials and supplies means these are easy for teacher and students to access and use in the middle of a busy lesson, having been prepared by teaching teams the ay before
Performance on non-instructional duties	There is an expectation that teachers will be engaged in learning together and planning together activities – the first to engage with other staff in broad planning of scope and sequence of units of work in WTT and in planning daily lesson activities with assistant teachers and other paraprofessionals in the classroom
Supervision of volunteers and paraprofessionals	Supervision of volunteers and paraprofessionals through collaborative planning and cooperative teaching where each person knows their role in each activity
Component 2d: Managing Student Behaviour	

Expectations	Expectations of student behaviour clearly communicated to students before each lesson begin
Monitoring of student behaviour	Monitoring of student behaviour through positive feedback by the teacher on the students' application to the WTT lessons
Response to student misbehaviour	Response to student misbehaviour does not mean the WTT time on task ends

Component 2e: Organizing Physical Space

Safety and arrangement of furniture	Safety and arrangement of furniture in a way that allows for group work by students
Accessibility to learning and use of physical resources	Accessibility to learning and use of physical resources in the print rich classroom means that student use the print around them as scaffolding support in independent reading and writing tasks, as well as being able to access the teacher for appropriate scaffolding as needed.

3: Instruction

Component 3a: Communicating Clearly and Accurately

Direction and procedures	Directions and procedures are unambiguous, sequential and supported by visual prompts where appropriate; they situate each learning activity within the 'bigger' picture of learning (why/for what purposes).
Oral and written languages	Oral and written language is modelled and scaffolded for students through Standard Australian English for each activity and exercise

Component 3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques

Quality of questions	Quality of questions: the role of questioning in the school culture is demystified for students through scaffolded practice; questioning progressively moves out of the literal into the affective and abstract matching the age and cognitively appropriate interests, with texts as children get older.,
Discussion techniques	Discussion techniques: the cultural practices of class discussion are explicitly taught
Student participation	Student participation: all attempts at participation by students are acknowledged and further scaffolded, with teacher modelling through this affirmative process when appropriate

Component 3c: Engaging Students in Learning

Representation of content	Representation of content: follow the planning and teaching requirements and sequence of a WTT unit of work
Activities and assignments	Activities and assignments: implement WTT as required; collect the assessment evidence required
Grouping of students	Grouping of students: mixed ability groups found in most classrooms are maintained, small groups of 2 -3 students are based on both learning and behavioural criteria and are ideally mixed ability.
Instructional materials and resources	Instructional materials and resources are visual, accessible to the students, displayed on classroom walls, products of activities and exercises are the result of collaborative teacher/student work, represent a level of language use just above that of the most capable member of the class group
Structure and pacing	<p>Brisk in the sense that learning remains dynamic and interesting. The methodology of WTT provides for the natural repetition of the introduced and learned English as the activities and exercises are implemented. For example, if only one unit of work per term is implemented in the Early Childhood Years the natural cycle of repetition of similar linguistic structures and features in a variety of contexts for different purposes is not possible, thus inhibiting language learning. While the upper Primary, Middle Years and Senior Secondary units of work need to extend for the recommended length of times in the left hand column in order to engage in the greater (in complexity and volume) linguistic demands of higher order thinking and application skills as determined by the curriculum outcomes at this level of schooling.</p> <p>Thorough in the sense that whLSSt each activity and exercise needs to be implemented, there is no need to wait until all students have achieved 100% success at each activity and exercise before</p>

moving on to the next one

Component 3d: Providing Feedback to Students

Quality: accurate, substantive, constructive and specific

Quality: accurate, substantive, constructive, and specific (in the first instance shows learners what they have done that is correct/right, and works from here to the areas for development by providing a model of the desired outcome/product and then continuous feedback through scaffolding while the student engages in the process).

Timeliness

Timeliness: feedback is given as students are engaged in the process and immediately after

Component 3e: Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness

Lesson adjustment

Lesson adjustment: restating of goals, re demonstrating of process is applied when necessary

Response to students

Response to students is immediate and positive

Persistence

Persistence in ensuring that each learner knows what is expected and how to go about doing this, is evident
