



OVERVIEW

Focus on Writing

Introduction

For students to become effective, lifelong writers, teachers need to be explicit in demonstrating and talking to students about what effective writers do. Teachers also need to provide opportunities for students to apply new understandings in their own authentic writing contexts.

The teaching and learning program should take into account the following *Western Australian Curriculum: English* content requirements:

- › Integration of the three strands of Literacy, Language and Literature
- › A balanced approach with students learning to write imaginative, informative and persuasive texts for different purposes and audiences
- › Using personal knowledge and literary texts as starting points to create imaginative writing and different forms and genres for particular audiences
- › Exploring how effective authors control and use a range of different structures and language features; paying attention to usage at a word, sentence and whole text level
- › Focus on learning to communicate effectively through coherent, well structured sentences, paragraphs and texts.

1 Characteristics of teaching and learning programs that develop confident, effective writers.

It is through a well planned, focused daily program that all students will have the best opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and strategies they need to become capable, effective writers. This includes:

- › Daily independent writing across learning areas
- › Regular involvement in modelled, shared and guided writing
- › Explicit teaching of writing processes and strategies related to planning, drafting, revising and publishing
- › Explicit teaching in regards to the structure and features of different text types
- › Explicit teaching in regards to patterns of language features and literary devices
- › Use of exemplary literature to teach the authors' craft
- › A strong focus on vocabulary development
- › Monitoring and feedback against specific success criteria for the three text types of writing
- › Student use of reflective journals for recording ideas and progress against success criteria
- › A print-rich classroom environment with a range of resources that support the planning, drafting, conferring, refining and publishing stages of the writing process.

2 The reading and writing connection

The use of exemplary literary texts to teach students how effective authors control and use a range of different structures and language features in their writing is integral to an effective writing program. Teaching strategies include:

- › Supporting students to read like a writer; noticing word choice, sentence structure and organisation
- › Use of mentor or anchor text as an example of good quality writing to teach a specific aspect of the writer's craft ie ideas, structure, style, ways with words
- › Guided analysis of a variety of exemplary texts to develop success criteria for different forms of writing
- › Comparing and ranking texts
- › Using a problem-solving approach to identifying structure and features of different text types (highlighting, annotating, labelling one and multi-text models)
- › Text innovation (innovating on an original text to create a new one)
- › Engaging in exploratory talk to share and clarify ideas about different texts.

3 Explicit teaching of narrative writing

- › Use of the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (GRRM) to explicitly teach each element of the narrative writing process
- › Using structured scaffolds to teach the narrative writing structure of orientation, complication and resolution
- › Use of mentor texts/exemplary literature to teach different aspect of the writer's craft for narrative writing ie ideas, structure, style, voice, ways with words
- › Guided analysis of a range of narrative texts to develop awareness of different styles and narrative genres
- › Developing student awareness of how to support their reader by providing a sense of time and or place or building tension or drama into their story
- › Developing success criteria to support student monitoring of their progress. The ten categories of the NAPLAN Narrative Marking Guide is a useful tool for this purpose.

4 Explicit teaching of persuasive writing

- › Use of the GRRM to explicitly teach each element of the persuasive writing process ie the structure of introduction, body and conclusion and the function and content of each component part
- › Using structured scaffolds to teach the persuasive writing structure of introduction, body and conclusion
- › Guided analysis of a range of persuasive texts to develop criteria to support student monitoring of their progress
- › Use of mentor texts to teach different aspect of the writer's craft for persuasive writing ie ideas, structure, style, ways with words
- › Developing awareness of different styles of responding to a persuasive topic
- › Building student knowledge of precise vocabulary relating to persuasive writing
- › Discuss and demonstrate persuasive devices used to express opinions. For example, the use of modality and emotive words and phrases, cause and effect, and figurative language
- › Teaching top-level structures such as list and describe, compare and contrast, problem and solution, cause and effect (moving on from the 'ordinal' connectives of firstly, secondly, thirdly)
- › How to take a position on a topic and understanding the difference between fact and opinion.

5 Vocabulary and spelling

- › Focus on the use of precise language for effective communication
- › Teaching specialised terms that are used to describe argument and persuasion itself ie counter argument, criticise, refute
- › Teaching the metalanguage of words eg suffix, prefix, contraction
- › Teaching the verbal signposts of top-level structures (list and describe, compare and contrast, problem and solution, cause and effect)
- › Strategic spelling of multisyllabic words based on phonology, visual patterning, morphology and etymological knowledge (four forms of spelling knowledge)

6 Environment and attitude

A supportive classroom environment for writing provides students with a range of materials that support the different stages of the writing process. It is also important to provide students with examples of exemplary writing through teacher modelling, the use of mentor texts and writing samples. Teachers build students' confidence in their writing development through encouraging reflection against success criteria, providing specific feedback and opportunities to share and celebrate progress.

- › A print-rich environment that provides a range of support materials, including writing text type scaffolds, word banks, planning sheets, graphic organisers and writers' tools (computers, laptops, mini whiteboards, dictionaries, a thesaurus)
- › A focus on self-monitoring using success criteria
- › Displays of students writing for a range of purposes across different learning areas' including class books and annotated work samples referenced to success criteria
- › Providing daily opportunities for students to write on relevant topics with a clear sense of purpose and audience in different learning areas
- › Providing opportunities for students to use a range of technology to support the writing process
- › Establishing routines and structures where students have the opportunity to share, discuss and receive feedback about their writing.

7 Monitoring and assessment

- › Systematic monitoring and assessment of each student's writing development to determine progress over time
- › Specific assessment in relation to criteria for each of the ten writing components of the NAPLAN Narrative and Persuasive Writing Marking Guides.
- › Use of assessment data to determine the focus for shared, modelled and guided writing lessons
- › Student self-monitoring and reflection against specific writing criteria
- › Providing each student with specific feedback in relation to success criteria.

8 Supporting students with the NAPLAN writing task

Familiarising students with the requirements and conditions of the NAPLAN Writing test will enable them to effectively demonstrate their writing competence in a test situation. This is most effectively managed through building this learning content into lessons across the term. Knowledge and skills include:

- › responding to writing prompts
- › addressing the topic presented in the prompt
- › engaging effectively in 'timed' independent writing activities
- › use of planning frameworks
- › identifying and using the correct structure for the form of writing
- › a focus on the structure of paragraphs ie a topic sentence followed by sentences giving examples or illustration of the point and then a sentence which links the paragraph to the rest of the text.

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